Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow gears up for campaign launch

In 1999, a small group of organizations started discussing a joint communications crusade to address the nursing shortage. Now 30 members strong, Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow is about to launch its much-anticipated campaign.

The coalition of leading national nursing and health care organizations, with Luci Baines Johnson and Elizabeth Dole as honorary co-chairs, has developed a national campaign designed to boost the attractiveness of nursing as a profession. The campaign targets middle and high school youth, although retaining current nurses is also an objective.

"Sigma Theta Tau is proud to serve as founding partner and fiscal agent of Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow," says Patricia Thompson, RN, EdD, president of Sigma Theta Tau International. "The campaign reflects our unwavering commitment to nursing's future."

Initially the campaign will feature seven print advertisements and one television public service announcement (PSA). The coalition plans to add a radio spot, brochures and other materials if more funding is secured.

"Nursing. It's Real. It's Life." serves as campaign tagline

"Nursing. It's Real. It's Life." was selected as the tagline for Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow. Developed by campaign sponsor JWT Specialized Communications, the tagline will be incorporated into all of the coalition's materials if more funding is secured.

"It's Real" shows young students that nursing is hip, it's cool, it's exciting, it's respected, it demands real brain power, and it provides incredible benefits to all humankind," says Greta Sherman, senior partner of JWT Specialized Communications' health care group.

"It's Life" reminds students that humankind would not exist as we know it without the nurturing, life-saving aspects of nurses and the nursing profession," Sherman continues.

Students educate public about nursing

We have all seen the figures—more young people are ignoring nursing as a career and entering fields that are perceived to be more exciting, glamorous or lucrative.

My Cedar Crest College colleagues and I have enlisted our students to brainstorm ways to reverse this trend. Each nursing major is required to take "Leadership in Nursing." In class we ask our students to find individual solutions to the problem and put them into practice. Students are not only developing programs and initiatives that will help relieve the shortage, but also discovering new things about the nursing profession and themselves.

Just ask Brenda Keller, RN, BS, a 2000 graduate. Now a critical care nurse, Keller designed an outreach project for local youth organizations, creating a "What's My Line?" inspired game to help young people reevaluate their images of nursing. Keller asked the youths four questions about nurses—touching on areas of educational background, training, personality and the future of nursing.
Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow campaign features seven nurses.

As a silver sponsor of Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow, JWT Specialized Communications donated $25,000 in research and creative services to the coalition.

The agency's focus group research with students in grades two through 10 indicated that young people are not receiving adequate positive information about nursing as a profession. The Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow advertising campaign features specific messages aimed at improving the image of nursing while encouraging young people to enter the profession.

In addition to showcasing clinicians, the campaign features successful nurses in a wide range of work environments and positions. Communicating the message that nursing is for everyone, the campaign also includes men and minorities. Nursing is portrayed as a career in which professionalism, teamwork, and leadership are key.

The following seven nurses are featured in the campaign:

- Sharon Brigner, RN, MS—Senior Health Policy Analyst, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare in Washington, D.C.
- Aurora Hernandez, RN—Staff Nurse, George Washington Hospital in Washington, D.C.
- Jeff Jefferies, RN, CEN—Staff Nurse, Emergency Department, Laurel Regional Hospital in Laurel, Md.
- Sandra Lea, RN, CNOR—Clinical Administrator, Diagnostic Clinic Center for Outpatient Surgery in Largo, Fla.
- Garry Olney, RN, BSN, MBA—Chief Executive Officer, San Dimas Community Hospital in San Dimas, Calif.
- Janice Phillips, RN, PhD, FAAN—Program Director, National Institute of Nursing Research in Bethesda, Md.
- John Wroblewski Jr., RN, CRNA—Staff Anesthetist, R.A. Cowley Shock Trauma Center, University of Maryland Medical System in Baltimore, Md.

Each nurse in the campaign represents one of the many opportunities and attractions of the nursing profession. Their bios and photos are featured on the Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow Web site, www.nursesource.org.

"It's an honor to have been selected to work on this campaign," says a nurse that’s been selected to boost awareness of our image among the public, specifically our youth," says Sharon Brigner, RN, MS, a member of the Honor Society of Nursing. "There are so many opportunities within the profession, such as policy, research, pharmaceutical sales, news and media reporting, and education. For me, nursing has been an on-going board to these different avenues."

Janice Phillips, RN, PhD, FAAN, also a member of the Honor Society of Nursing and the first African-American to receive the American Cancer Society professional recognition award, strongly believes that nurses need to be a part of the nursing shortage solution.

"We need to really re-energize those who are in the profession to help recruit," Phillips says. "We really need to work on enhancing our image rather than waiting for others to help us. If we can go back to the roots, which we selected nursing as a profession, continue to strengthen our ties, talk about the issues, and be proactive, I feel optimistic that we can make a difference."

Distribution to begin this summer

Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow will use both formal and grassroots methods to distribute the advertising campaign this summer. Due to limitations with airtime rights, the ads must be placed as public service announcements and not as paid advertising.

The 30-second television PSA will be distributed to 200 television stations nationwide. The distribution list will be available on the Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow Web site. Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow encourages everyone to contact stations in their area and ask to air the PSA. For $100, organizations, facilities and individuals will be able to order a PSA kit via the Web site to distribute to their local stations not included in the initial distribution. For an additional cost, an organization's logo can be placed at the end of the PSA.

The seven print ads may be viewed on the coalition's Web site this summer, along with a mechanism to request copies of the ads for local distribution.

Campaign directs prospective nurses and funders to Web site

The Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow campaign directs audiences to the coalition's Web site, www.nursesource.org, developed by silver sponsor VitalCareers.com. With an estimated 40 percent of nurses using the Web today, the site has been a critical tool in the coalition's recruitment and fund-raising arsenal.

VitalCareers.com, an Internet company focused on career content for health care employers and professionals, was the first organization to sign on as a major sponsor of Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow.

"The Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow ads will direct prospective nurses to the Web site, where they will discover more about nursing. The site is being redesigned to complement the look and feel of the ads, and more content will be added, including career profiles of nurses, career resources and links to educational programs.

The site is linked to an interactive health careers job-bank database, operated by VitalCareers.com, allowing Internet users to search for career opportunities nationally. The site also provides links to the home pages of all coalition members.

"The Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow site not only is a great tool for attracting new members to the nursing profession, but also provides health care care-takers-based on personal and professional needs," says Maurice Salter, chairman of VitalCareers.com.

Other sponsors join the cause

Joining major sponsor VitalCareers.com and JWT Specialized Communications, Nursing Spectrum is now a bronze sponsor of Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow.

"In addition to donating advertising pages in seven magazines, we expect to make contributions of online and editorial coverage," said Patti Rager, RN, MSN, MBA, president and publisher of Nursing Spectrum. "Our mission, to support and recognize registered nurses, is in the heart of all we do at Nursing Spectrum. We are dedicated to programs that further nursing's public image and that encourage today's nurses to stay in the profession. We admire Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow's united efforts to address the nursing shortage with an innovative communications campaign.

The Helene Fuld Health Trust, HSBC, Trustee, whose purpose is the improvement of the health welfare or education of student nurses, is also a bronze sponsor. Their major grant was used to produce advertisements and will help place them across the country.

Other major contributors to the coalition include the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, Independence Foundation and Kaiser Foundation Health Plan Inc.

Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow continues to seek tax-deductible monetary contributions to help fund production and placement of radio spots and recruitment materials, as well as efforts to reach thousands of counselors. To make your pledge, please contact Kathy Bennison at kbennison@stti.iupui.edu or 1.888.634.7757 toll free. You may also pledge online at www.nursesource.org.

Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow members

1. Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
2. American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
3. American Academy of Nursing
4. American Association of Colleges of Nursing
5. American Association of Critical-Care Nurses/ACCN Certification Corp.
6. American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
7. American College of Nurse Practitioners
8. American Hospital Association
9. Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
10. Emergency Nurses Association
11. Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International
12. International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses
14. National Association of Neonatal Nurses
15. National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses
16. National Association of School Nurses
17. National League for Nursing
18. National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
19. National Student Nurses' Association
20. Oncology Nursing Society
21. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

For an easy, timesaving way to keep up with all the new developments taking place in your professional areas of interest, subscribe today to the Online Literature Review for Nursing and Book Review for Nursing.

Online Literature Review for Nursing (subscription rates: member $39.95; non-member: $49.95)—Let clinical experts sift through more than 6,000 new articles listed in Medline each week. You will receive weekly e-mail bulletins summarizing the latest articles published in your prescreened interest areas. You may also review concise abstracts of the articles and gain access to the full text, if available.

Online Book Review for Nursing (Free)—This service offers a quick and convenient way to access more than 65,000 book and software titles online. You may look forward to receiving expert reviews of selected titles!

To subscribe log on to www.nursingsociety.org and select “My Info Search” and create your customized profile.

As part of the service you will receive concise weekly e-mail bulletins identifying the must-see books and articles that fit your profile.
How you can affect the future of nursing

By May Wykle

With every challenge comes opportunity. And today, nurses are facing their share of both. From severe staffing shortages and fewer young people entering the field to sicker patients and information overload, many nurses are being stretched to maximum capacity. Unfortunately, the big picture of opportunity sometimes gets lost in the commotion.

Affecting the future of nursing in this hectic environment takes leadership—nurses who are committed to improving the growth and experiences of others. According to Dr. May Wykle, nursing leaders throughout the world, says Richard Smith, RN, MN, assistant professor with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Nursing. “One morning at convention, I sat at the breakfast table with Luther Christian as he shared his perspective on nursing. Listening to him reinforced my own philosophy of profession.”

For more information about the schedule of events, registration and accommodations, please visit our Web site or call toll-free: 1.888.634.7575 (U.S. and Canada) or +1.800.634.7575.1 (International). Register for convention today!

International volunteer positions

Following each biennial convention, the board of directors makes appointments to the Sigma Theta Tau International standing committees, building corporate and foundation boards, task forces, and review panels. Whether you have a penchant for communications or a desire to join one of our diverse committees, serving as a volunteer has great benefits.

As a member of the international public relations committee, I have had the opportunity to expand my network of nursing colleagues and learn new skills,” says Beth Brooks, RN, PhD, senior consultant with HR Partnerships in Chicago. “I also feel more connected with the organization and able to contribute to nursing as a whole.”

No matter which volunteer position interests you, you have an opportunity to impact the future of Sigma Theta Tau and nursing, work toward a common goal with nurses from diverse backgrounds, and extend your network of colleagues to a regional, national, and international level.

For specifics about the volunteer positions available, visit www.nursingsociety.org or contact May Wykle, RN, PhD, FAAN, president-elect of Sigma Theta Tau International and dean and Florence Cellar Professor of Gerontological Nursing, Case Western Reserve University, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing.

Dr. May Wykle

Attracting clinicians, educators, researchers and administrators, the 2001 Biennial Convention features information uniquely targeted to nurses in today’s environment. Throughout the November 10-14 event, speakers will cover a wide range of topics, including clinical excellence, global leadership through nursing research and how to gain knowledge to accomplish goals.

“I met with the counselor at my own high school who said he was actually dissuading students from pursuing a nursing career,” she recalls.

After persuading the counselor that nurses were a necessity, Horton developed a presentation to take into the classroom—showing students at all age levels who nurses are and what they do. “The kids love to try out the stethoscopes and other equipment, take each other’s blood pressures and get a wonderful hands-on experience for them. Many of them wrote us letters saying they now wanted to be nurses,” she says.

Robert Pencil, RN, BS, and Susanne Lane, RN, BS, took the opportunity at the 2001 Biennial Convention—they brought the students into the nursing classroom on Cedar Crest’s campus. Pencil, a recent graduate who is now working in a critical care internship, says, “Most of them hadn’t considered becoming a nurse, certainly not an OR, ER or a MedSurg nurse—because they thought of nurses as only someone who helps a patient at the bedside. They didn’t see all the other opportunities.”

Pencil and Lane gave the students a tour of the nursing lab and spoke to them about nursing careers. They provided students with exercises and experiments, giving them experience with clinical procedures.

“They were impressed by the starting salaries in nursing and were encouraged that you can do this in the medical field on this level and really make a difference,” he says. “But are these exercises having an impact?” Keller thinks so. “I’ve seen young people change their mind about nursing. Few of them had any idea about the possibilities and opportunities there are in nursing before we met with them.”

“I spoke with a nurse who entered the field more than 25 years ago, and he has outreach programs. Students have come to him later to say what the reason they entered nursing. I’m sure there are young people who are considering a nursing career because of our projects. I’m just now learning about the impact that I can have on presenting positive role models to kids.”

Laurie R. Murray, RN, DSN, is chair of the Nursing Department at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pa.

Help support nursing research!

What if you could contribute to nursing research without actually donating money? With Sigma Theta Tau’s upcoming credit card program, you will help support our programs with every retail purchase you make.

Issued by MBNA America Bank, N.A., the new Sigma Theta Tau credit card provides members with a convenient opportunity to support the society’s efforts to promote the learning and professional development of nurses. This card was selected because it provides competitive rates and offers our members MBNA is the largest independent credit card lender in the world and has a long-standing reputation for providing exceptional customer service.

Details about this new program, as well as application forms, will be available on the society’s Web site, www.nursingsociety.org/new. Please look for updates in the very near future.

www.nursingsociety.org

EXCELLENCE IN NURSING EDUCATION • July 2003
shrinking when 77 million baby boomers retire, to be followed by only 44 million Generation Xers. We know that these retiring boomers will require more nursing care as their age-related illnesses call for an increased utilization of health care services.

We also think we know some of the solutions to our national shortage. Besides changing work environments and salary schedules, we believe we need to work on the supply side by improving the image of nursing and informing both children and adults about the joys of a nursing career. "If we can just get students to choose nursing as their field of study," the thinking goes, "we'll be able to fill the pipeline with the next generation of caregivers.

It's an admirable goal and makes intuitive sense to do everything we can to attract bright, talented and caring people to our profession. That's a daunting enough challenge without even considering the next piece of the nurse supply-side puzzle: when are we successful in marketing nursing as a career to students, will we have the dedicated, educated faculty necessary to educate them? According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the supply of faculty will be a major constraint in improving the supply of nurses. Their 2000 survey of BSN and MSN nursing programs indicates a faculty vacancy rate of 7.4 percent.

Our colleagues practicing in schools of nursing don't have to tell us how critical it is to fill a faculty shortage. Troy Carlson, to become a faculty member at Brigham Young University in Utah, left his position as a hospital nurse manager nine months ago, and says he immediately noticed the difficulty the university is having recruiting qualified nurses to teach. Dr. Dorothy Detlor, dean of the Washington State University and Intercollegiate College of Nursing agrees. "Our biggest problem is finding PhDs," she says, "but recruiting MSN graduates who want to teach is a growing problem as well.

Dr. Mary Blegen, professor and nurse researcher at the University of Colorado Hospital School of Nursing, doesn't feel the faculty shortage is universal yet. "It depends on what type of professor you need," she states. "In the Denver area we have an adequate number right now, but many are in their 50s, so replacing them as they retire will be a challenge. There seem to be fewer doctorally prepared nurses ready to do academic research than there were just a short while ago. We used to be able to find plenty of nurses with MSNs for doing BSN clinical instruction, especially when the hospitals cut back on middle managers, but that's no longer true.

Dr. Detlor can explain the reasons behind the faculty shortage. "Our average professor is 51 and will be retiring in 10 years. But, it's our inability to match salaries that's the biggest issue." She's recently lost faculty to the lure of higher pay in hospitals.

With health care providers scrambling to recruit from a limited pool of qualified nurses, the salary issue is likely to loom even larger. Universities have limited funds and don't have the budgets to compete on a strictly wage basis. Yet some nurses are choosing to accept less pay in order to teach. "There are so many rewards you just don't recognize before entering academia," Carlson explains. "It is rewarding, challenging and involves research as well as teaching. I didn't know how fun it

Renew your membership today! Here are three easy ways to keep your Sigma Theta Tau membership active:
1) Log on to www.nursingsociety.org
2) Call, using the toll free number
3) Send renewal form by mail or fax
U.S. and Canada toll free: 888.634.7575 International toll free: + 800.634.7575.1 Phone: 317.634.8171 Fax: 317.634.8179 E-mail: memserv@sttlnps.org

VISA/MASTERCARD ACCEPTED

Create a dynamic and professional educational environment that will attract new students to choose nursing as a career.

Creating Responsive Solutions to Healthcare Change presents real-life examples of change and features institutions that have moved forward with new and exciting environments.

Order your copy by calling 1.888.634.7575.
www.nursingsociety.org

EXCELLENCE IN NURSING EDUCATION • July 2001

Published at www.signtau.org

 Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
550 West North Street Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

Toll free: 1.888.634.7575 (U.S. and Canada) • +800.634.7575.1 (International)
Fax: 317.634.8188
nursingsociety.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Kathleen Sanford, RN, DBA, PACHE, is vice president for nursing at Harrison Memorial Hospital in Bremerton, Wash.