Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

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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 membersstrong, 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 communications materials, including the print and broadcast advertising campaign.

"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.

How to get the most out of your mentor

By Marlene Ruiz

The value mentoring holds for the next generation of health care employees is tremendous. Nurses who serve as mentors not only pass on knowledge and skill, they impart confidence, provide inspiration and encourage their protégés to be the best nurses they can be.

Many educational programs and publications are dedicated to creating exceptional mentors and protégés. For example, Floyd Wickman and Terri Sjedon, authors of Mentoring: The Most Obvious Yet Overlooked Key to Achieving More in Life Than You Ever Dreamed Possible, describe mentoring's influence on professional mentoring.

Why deliver health care with spirituality?

By Inez Tuck and Beverly Baiko

Although nurses recognize that holistic care requires attention to the spiritual dimension of individuals, many of us are not sure how to integrate spiritual care into our practice. Research has indicated that, generally, nurses seldom attempt to provide spiritual care beyond making referrals to clergy. There are several reasons that this may be true. Many nurses feel unqualified or educationally unprepared to do so or that spiritual care is not an appropriate nursing role. Others may hesitate to broach this topic because of fear that their secular work environment would not support their actions. Nurses who are already feeling overwhelmed with the demands of a burdensome workload may simply believe that their time is too limited to meet yet another expectation.

Finding spirituality in nursing

However, exceptions are found in several areas of nursing practice. Parish nursing, open to nurses with varying academic preparation, is the fastest growing specialty area in nursing. There is an international association of spiritual care nurses.
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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
6. American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
7. American College of Nurse Practitioners
8. American Hospital Association
9. American Nurses Association
10. American Organization of Nurse Executives
11. American Psychiatric Nurses Association
12. American Public Health Association
13. American Red Cross
14. Arthritis Foundation
15. Association of American Medical Colleges
16. Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
17. Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
18. Emergency Nurses Association
19. Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International
20. Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
21. International Society for Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
22. National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
23. National Association of Neonatal Nurses
24. National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses
25. National Association of School Nurses
26. National League for Nursing
27. National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
28. National Student Nurses’ Association
29. Oncology Nursing Society
30. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Campaign features seven nurses

As a silver sponsor of Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow, JWT Specialized Communications donated $250,000 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 with encouraging young people to enter the field.

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 Brignez, 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 Jeffries, R.N., Staff Nurse, Emergency Department, Laurel Regional Hospital in Laurel, Md.
• Sandra Lea, RN, CNOR—Clinical Staff Anesthetist, R.A. Cowley Community Hospital in San Dimas, Calif.
• Janice Phillips, PhD, FAAN—Program Director, National Institute of Nursing Research in Bethesda, Md.
• John Wesolowski, 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 biographies are featured on the Nurses for Healthier Tomorrow Web site, www.nursesource.org.

“It’s an honor to have been selected to work on this campaign. It’s a campaign that’s really needed to boost awareness of our image among the public, specifically our youth,” says Sharon Brignez, 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 a real springboard to these different avenues.”

Janice Phillips, PhD, FAAN, also an Honor Society of Nursing member and the first African-American to receive the American Cancer Society professorship in oncology nursing, strongly believes that nurses need to be a part of the nursing shortage solution. “We need to raise awareness and energize those who are in the profession to help recruitment,” 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 real reasons 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 in usage rights, the ads must be placed as public service announcements and not as paid advertisements.

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. The kit is 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 ads, and more content will be added, including career profiles of nurses, career resources and links to educational programs.

The site is included in an interactive health-care jobs job-database network, 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 career options based on personal and professional needs,” says Maurice Saltor, chairman of VitalCareers.com.

Other sponsors join the cause

Joining major sponsors 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 our 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 at 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 a newsletter 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 brochures, as well as efforts to reach diverse groups. To make your pledge, please contact Kathy Bennison at bennison@stti.iupui.edu or 1.888.634.7575 toll free. You may also pledge online at www.nursesource.org.
How you can affect the future of nursing

Members at the 1999 convention in San Diego proudly display their T-shirts after a walk/run to support nursing research. The 2001 Biennial Convention, to be held in Indianapolis, will feature opportunities to learn and network, including the popular walk/run, educational sessions, awards programs, poster presentations and more.

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 their vision of nursing and facilitate the growth and experiences of others. If this sounds like too large a task for one nurse to undertake, consider this.

Leaders are nurses who in their own way, whether large or small, are working to impact the future of nursing. Sigma Theta Tau provides many opportunities for its members to become leaders at local levels through chapter involvement— and at an international level. I encourage you to join us this year and reap the benefits of nursing leadership.

2001 Biennial Convention

"I chose to become a nurse because I wanted to deliver care in a way that was different from medicine," says Lynne Royer, RN, MSN, FNP, clinical director at Community Hospital in Indianapolis. "When I attended Sigma Theta Tau's biennial convention, I am surrounded by a community of bright nurse leaders who not only share my passion for nursing, but are also setting the direction nursing takes in the future."

"It's exciting to discuss ideas and solutions with such well-known figures in nursing," Royer adds.

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.

"The biennial convention offers an opportunity to collaborate on research and literature and hear new ideas from 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 Christman as he shared his perspective on nursing. Listening to him reinforced my own philosophy of our 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 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 corporation 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 specific information about opportunities available, visit www.nursingsociety.org.

Sigma Theta Tau International offers members the opportunity to work with mentors and develop leadership skills in a formalized fellowship through Chiron: The Mentor-Fellow Forum. During a 12-month program, nurses who desire skill development in specific leadership areas are guided by experienced mentors as they implement individualized plans and participate in group activities. Potential mentors and fellows are encouraged to seek out partners and apply as a pair to the Chiron Mentor-Fellow 2002 program. The application deadline is August 31, 2001. For more information, visit the Web site at www.nursingsociety.org, call 1.888.634.7575 or e-mail: leadership@stti.iupui.edu.

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Dr. May Wykle

Sigma Theta Tau provides many opportunities for its members to become leaders at local levels through chapter involvement—and at an international level. I encourage you to join us this year and reap the benefits of an extensive credit card program, with the opportunity to collaborate on research and literature and hear new ideas from nursing leaders throughout the world. You can do it all—support the learning and professional development of nurses. This card was selected because it provides competitive rates and benefits to 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.

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 and promote the learning and professional development of nurses. This card was selected because it provides competitive rates and benefits to our members.

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pish nurses that has developed a standard curriculum. The ANA, with the Health Ministries Association, has published the scope and standards of specialty certification is pending. Several universities are now offering master's degrees in faith communities or health ministries. Nurses often choose to become parish nurses because they are seeking greater professional and personal fulfillment, and some view it as a return to the essence of nursing. Parish nurses have the opportunity to provide spiritual care in faith communities and settings that are supportive of that role. Although parish nurses provide health promotion and disease prevention activities, there is also an emphasis on spiritual caregiving. In a recent national study of parish nurses, prayer was the most frequently reported spiritual intervention.

Religion vs. spirituality

Confusion about the distinctions between religion and spirituality may contribute to the uncertainty about appropriate nursing roles and how to assess and respond to the spiritual needs of patients and families. Such settings may be more likely to support these nursing actions. It is important to note that attention to spirituality should not be limited to times of trauma or crisis. In addition to responding to spiritual distress, nurses can support spiritual wellness and growth.

Using spirituality in practice

We suggest that the role of nurses as holistic practitioners must include attention to the spiritual dimension of those in their care. This inclusion need not require more time or even any particular educational preparation. Rather, most of us already embrace attitudes and beliefs that are consistent with the support of spirituality in practice. Some of the values and actions that become second nature are not necessarily labeled as “spiritual,” but have the ability to comfort the spirit. Examples include the concept of presence or “being with” others, active listening and touch. These can be intentionally implemented in practice as a conscious desire to heal and support and not just complete the task at hand.

Most of us recognize the importance of respecting the spiritual expressions of others. This requires an adequate spiritual assessment beyond simply asking a patient’s religious preference. The assessment should include questions about spiritual beliefs, usual practices and what patients perceive to be important to their care. Patients will feel that their spirituality is supported when nurses acknowledge it and promote their right to spiritual expression. These opportunities can arise in any practice setting.

Promoting spiritual wellness does not require knowledge of specific practices or rituals, and the nurse need not share the patient’s spiritual philosophy. Adequate assessment and open communication help nurses decide when it is appropriate to provide spiritual care, and we do not believe that sharing a prayer or meditative reading violates professional boundaries.

Incorporating spiritual care into nursing’s holistic approach benefits both the health care practitioner and consumer.

Effect on patient health

How do we know that spiritual wellness has a beneficial effect on our patients’ health? Some outcomes are measurable as evidenced by research. Though the majority of research has focused on religious faith, findings tend to support that both religious faith and spiritual practices positively impact not only emotional and psychological health, but also physical health. Herbert Benson, a Harvard physician, studied the impact of meditation and faith on stress and supported the placebo effects of beliefs. His findings indicate that hypotension, infertility, allergies, insomnia, depression, headaches and chemotherapy-related nausea are relieved by practices that induce relaxation responses. Numerous studies have indicated a positive relationship between religious participation and lifespan, healthy self-care habits and mental health. Faith and prayer have been found to be coping mechanisms for patients with heart disease, cancer and other critical illnesses. Though the findings are controversial, several studies have indicated that intercessory prayer may have therapeutic value for patient outcomes. In a recent study of individuals with HIV disease, Tuck, McCain and Elswick (2001) found that spirituality was positively related to quality of life, social support and effective coping and negatively related to perceived stress, uncertainty and psychological distress.

Other outcomes are felt and experienced but cannot be directly measured. The intuitive knowing that characteristics every expert nurse enhances our awareness of patients’ needs and helps us choose how best to meet these needs. In daily caring interactions, nurses provide a presence that empowers, comforts and heals. Such a genuine human connection nurtures the spirits of both the patient and the nurse. Tuck, L., McCain, N.L., & Elswick, R.K. (2001). Spirituality and psychosocial factors in persons living with HIV. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 33(6), 776-783.

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Here are three easy ways to keep your Sigma Theta Tau membership active:

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