**CONFERENCE SPEECH**

**FOR**

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C.S. Lewis said, “Hardships often prepare people for an extraordinary destiny.” So do the factors of time, evolution, and the progression of fundamental needs and evolving responses to global conditions and and their applications. While traditional nursing began as a call to action to perform duties as caregivers and wet nurses, among others, the profession became more formalized in the mid-nineteenth century as wars in both the United States and Europe were fought. With the aggregation of casualties, the need grew for the establishment of the US Sanitary Commission, which has been called the forerunner of the Red Cross. You can see that in the first one hundred years of existence, the role of nurse adapted to the needs of the times.

Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, professional nursing expanded as education became more accessible and willing practitioners became more prevalent. Here we are, now, well into the twenty-first century and the “game” has shifted even more exponentially. There is an expression, “Adapt or die.” Fortunately for all of us, our profession has chosen the former... we might say that the words of Florence Nightingale ring true today. “I attribute my success to this: I never gave nor took any excuse.” ... Neither does today’s modern nurse.

With “boots on the ground and a literal “finger on the pulse” of conditions and challenges plaguing society and the global community, today’s nurse plays an increasingly invaluable role in administering to patients... the nurse’s impact is now compounded to blend one’s intuition, observation, and compassion for humanity with advanced education and responsiveness. The unique vantage point of the nurse provides a window heretofore overlooked. And while doctors, to some extent, may have more education and perceived responsibility, it is through the irreplaceable and consistent human touch and keen intuitive gifts that the nursing profession is evolving into an even more pervasive role that increasingly includes research, and therefore Prime’s the profession as a greater positive force for change.

In an article written for the Fogerty International Center of the NIH, Dr. Patricia A. Grady, president of the NIH’s National Institute of Nursing Research, had this to say on the subject of the expanded role of nurses in the field of research at the global level:

* In September 2000, the United Nations identified the “Millennium Development Goals” to be applied to the global community. Among those goals were reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB, and addressing other means of prevention and management of chronic illnesses. It was noted that nurses and nurse scientists can fulfill essential needs in combatting and resolving these conditions, particularly in low and middle income countries, known as LMIC’s. The report stated that almost one billion people have absolutely no access to trained, intelligent health care. It was also discovered that simple solutions can have lasting impact. Something as seemingly elementary as using sari cloth to filter water delivery systems in Bangladesh can have greater benefits than remotely or barely available high tech solutions. It took teams made of nurses and nurse/scientists to work on issues like this at literal ground zero levels.
* The NINR also supported research in discovering and treating the alarming rates of depression found in HIV patients in Southern India. Studies showed that of the 34 million people living with AIDS, 2.5 million are in India. We are reminded that by treating depression, quality of life improves. The NINR also cofounded a study focused on reducing postpartum hemorrhage, a leading cause of death and disability in LMIC’s.
* In addition, the NINR funded studies to support community based outreach to diminish or eventually eradicate incidents of childhood intestinal crises, and as mentioned earlier, the simple act of using sari cloth as a filter on water sources has been shown to decrease the incidence of waterborne cholera.
* The NINR also leads studies in end of life bereavement management as well as counseling for adolescents in South Africa who have lost critical family members to AIDS.
* When discussing the future plans of the NINR, Dr. Grady mentions the importance of international research initiatives and the WHO has designated Nursing Collaboration Centers, which focus on “team based research collaborations at regional and global levels.” While the unique and dedicated, intuitive point of view from the perspective of the nurse will be irreplaceable, their effectiveness in designating and determining evolving courses of action will be buttressed by the continued inclusion of “big data...” electronic health records, wearable devices, point-of-care diagnostics, and even “non-health specific support from GPS, Google Maps, and even social media.

Dr. Grady’s Leadership has also seen doubling of the research budget, major increases in the number of research and training grants awarded, and of the approximate 150 million dollar annual budget of the NINR, 80% is dedicated to the funding of the work of nurse scientists within the organization and throughout the country.

In an article on Elsevier entitled, “Yes, Nurses Do Research, and it’s Improving Patient Care, Dr. Nancy Blake, herself and RN and PhD, is currently Nursing Director at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. From this leader in nursing, we learn that the research that nurses undertake has a positive effect in combination with “evidence based practice.” Dr. Blake reminds us, “...And with their knowledge and hands on experience, nurses can theorize, hypothesize, structure stipulations, and collect evidence that leads to **better care**.”

At Children’s Hospital, at the time this article was written, there were twenty two nurses with PhD’s with several more working towards their advanced degrees. What that tells us is that along with the care, compassion, and common sense, the nurse of today ... and of course tomorrow, will have unprecedented access to research and data in order to mine positive outcomes in patient care. Working in healthcare for children poses its own unique set of challenges to be resolved. With something as seemingly simple as equipment used, it’s been realized that these machines have been calibrated based on average hospital population.... or adults. Different settings and criteria must be applied to the pediatric patient in order to maintain a positive and healing environment... **especially** for children, and when unnecessary alarms are tripped, extra, unwanted stress is the by-product. Nurse scientists are working on ways to study their evidence based data to relieve some of that unwanted, unneeded, counterproductive stress.

Dr. Blake goes on to explain that since she became a nurse in 1980, things have changed. “Some people are still practicing the old way because they haven’t heard about the research and how important it is.... It’s vital for nurses to not only carry out the research, but also to disseminate it... As more nurses get involved in research, the balance is shifting... many more nurses now present their research at conferences.” Dr. Blake goes on to explain, “Since working on my PhD, which I completed in 2012, I look at things completely differently. When I read articles, I don’t take findings for granted, but I look at the research and methodology.”

Dr. Blake is correct in stating that doing research has changed the way she thinks. She believes in building strong inter-professional teams made up of nurse scientists as well as doctors. Everyone has insight and experience to contribute with the intention of solving constantly changing medical puzzles. It has also changed her approach to and interaction with, her patients. All of this data and these revelations work to support nurse scientists in doing their jobs both in this country and around the world.

In January of 2014, Dr. Leslie Mancuso spoke at Duke University during the Dorothy L. Powell Seventh Annual Global Health Lecture and Symposium. She said, “Nurses are in communities and they understand cultural norms, they know the problems and they know the solutions. Nurses in remote parts of the world may not have all the tools, but they have the knowledge for making a better world.” She went on to advise that **EIGHTY SEVEN PERCENT** of healthcare around the world is provided by nurses and nurse-midwives working in “low-resource settings.” Dr. Mancuso is confident that through proper training, many issues and crises can be handled and possibly averted or diminished. She believes that well trained nurses can perform cervical cancer screenings, handle sickle cell disease, HIV/AIDS treatment in rural communities, as well as working on dementia issues, oral health, and the effects of various forms of traumatic exposure in women.

So what is in store for the future of nursing research on a global level? Kimberly Baltzell and others, in a paper entitled, “Impacts on Global Health from Nursing Research, written for the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, informs us, “Often referred to as the ‘backbone of healthcare systems,’ nurses are the key for detection, treatment, and prevention of infectious diseases in many settings..... Florence Nightingale recognized both the need for formal training for nurses as well as the power of the nurse to improve patient outcomes.... In the 21st century, nurses deliver 80% of all babies worldwide and their meticulous attention to infection control during delivery prevents countless neonatal infections....nurses are frontline healthcare providers in community settings...” All of this... combined with the expansive commitment of the NINR to support the advancement of nurse scientists combine to form an exciting, impactful, future for the nursing professions. The way to make inroads in research, discovery and effective treatment is to support and encourage one of our great sectors of human equity... the nursing profession. When we combine compassion, intelligence, intuition, and practical common sense, even the most limited, most basic of situations, becomes an opportunity for breakthrough, discovery, revolution, and advancement. Thanks to the dedication of nurses around the world, we just might find ourselves in the midst of a positive revolution... one that promotes and educates and advocates health and well being for all, thanks to the ceaseless thirst of the nursing profession to educate, discover, and heal... all simultaneously.

Thank you all!!