NURSES Care

CHECK OUT OUR NURSING JOB OPENINGS INSIDE!

RECOGNIZING OUR NURSES | NATIONAL NURSES WEEK, MAY 6-12, 2017

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National Nurses Week is an annual event running from May 6-12. It’s a designated opportunity to recognize the men and women who dedicate their efforts to the wellbeing of others. The first day of the week—May 6—is also known as National Nurses Day. The final day—May 12—is the birthday of Florence Nightingale (May 12, 1820 – August 13, 1910).

According to the American Nurses Association (ANA) website, Nightingale is often considered the “founder of modern nursing.” She gained recognition while taking care of wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. She was nicknamed “The Lady with the Lamp” because of her habit of making rounds at night.

National Nurses Week has its beginnings in 1953, when Dorothy Sutherland of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare sent a proposal to President Eisenhower to proclaim a “Nurse Day.” Unfortunately, the proclamation was never made. Other unsuccessful efforts followed until 1974, when President Nixon issued a proclamation designating National Nurse Week.

In 1982, President Reagan signed a proclamation designating May 6 as “National Recognition Day for Nurses.”

Today, while National Nurses Week may be the most popular, there are several other days set aside to recognize nurses and the nursing profession. These include National Student Nurses Day (May 8) and National School Nurse Day (on the Wednesday of National Nurses Week). While none of these are public holidays, according to timeanddate.com, they are excellent opportunities to observe this important profession.
HOW TO SHOW A NURSE YOU CARE

Nurses are often the first people patients see when visiting hospitals. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources Services Administration, there were 2.8 million registered nurses, including advanced practice RNs, and 690,000 licensed practical nurses, or LPNs, in the United States between the years of 2008 and 2010.

Nurses fill many roles in the medical community, assisting doctors and helping to make in-patient stays more comfortable for men and women who are ill or injured. Specialized nurses, such as nurse practitioners, may even serve as the primary healthcare provider, offering diagnoses and writing prescriptions.

While there is a specific week set aside to show appreciation to nurses, many people agree that they deserve recognition throughout the year. Any instance is a good time to give back to nurses, and the following are a few ways to honor the nurses in your life.

- Play caretaker to him or her. Nurses tend to the needs of others all the time, but some nurses do not get the respite they deserve. Those who want to show appreciation to a nurse who has helped them in their lives can present the nurse with a gift card for a massage and soothing spa treatment.

- Cater a meal. Offer to cater a meal at the hospital or medical office so that all nurses on staff can benefit. If there is one nurse in particular you want to treat, give that nurse a gift card to a nearby restaurant.

- Provide foot relief. Nurses spend hours on their feet, and that can cause pain or stiffness throughout the body. Present a gift card to a store that specializes in comfort shoes or custom orthotics. A certificate for a pedicure or foot massage would no doubt be appreciated as well.

- Create a charmed existence. Charm bracelets are the rage right now, and nurses may appreciate a bracelet that highlights their career path with specific charms. For something they can wear on the job, treat nurses to a Steth-o-Charm®, which is a charm that slides securely onto stethoscopes. These charms come in many designs and can make for a memorable gift.

- Give a decorative badge reel. Nurses must wear identification or have swipe cards on their person to gain access to areas of hospitals. Many badges are standard items without any flare or style. A colorful or decorative badge reel can be a nice way to brighten up a nurse’s day.

Sharon McDermott (from left), Becky Taber, Tammy Black and Holley Grenert, registered nurses at Pen Bay Medical Center. Photo courtesy Pen Bay Medical Center.
By Jodi Hersey

Nursing is one of the few careers where the job opportunities are endless, according to Nilda Craven, a professor of nursing at the University of Maine in Orono. Craven worked as a nurse before joining UMaine full time in 2005 to prepare the next generation of nurses for the medical field.

“As far as human connection and caring, it’s a very rewarding career,” Craven said. “You get to enter into their private lives and share their pain and human suffering, and then also share in some of [your patient’s] joys when they’ve been able to have a child or overcome a health condition.”

Cindy Sarjeant started working as a nurse over 40 years ago and is still using her skills today as a part-time nurse at EMMC Walk-In Care in Bangor.

“It comes down to wanting to take care of someone and making their life better,” Sarjeant said. “You also have to enjoy medical things and be interested in the medical side of how things work.”

Besides caring for others, Sarjeant became a licensed practical nurse (or LPN) for the numerous job opportunities available.

“There are jobs out there in nursing,” Sarjeant said. “You might not always get to work where you want, but there are always job opportunities out there. A lot of people go to college and then they’re scrambling because they can’t find a job when they’re done. At least [with nursing] you have the opportunity to make back any money you put into college.”

Jennifer Jefferson, a registered nurse (RN) at St. Joseph Hospital, knew from a young age nursing was the right field for her.

“Nursing is unique in that caring is at the center of what we do every day,” Jefferson said. “I have worked alongside nurses who have chosen this as a second career because they wanted to do ‘meaningful’ work. People who used to be accountants, writers and businessmen, to name a few.”

For Jefferson, the flexibility in hours has allowed her to remain in the field while also raising a young family.

“It is a nice profession for those who have families. I have been able to work various shifts in my current job to allow me to be home with my children. When my children are older, I can move on within my career in so many different directions,” Jefferson said.

Craven tells all her students that the possibilities in nursing are never-ending.

“You can start out caring for patients in a hospital and move to maybe outpatient clinics or move out into the community, into home health or become a school nurse. You can do so much with it,” she said. “We’re seeing people who live longer and the longer you live, the more chances you are going to have a chronic disease or health condition.”

Jefferson feels helping patients in need can be just as beneficial to them as the nurse by their side.

“I have been through blood, sweat and tears with some of my patients and I have learned so much through their courage, strength and stories,” Jefferson said. “Nursing is not always easy. In fact, it is hard with lots of learning, hard work, long hours and difficult situations. However, it is through nursing that I have learned valuable life skills such as prioritizing, multitasking, communication and flexibility. I can’t think of anything else that would challenge me in so many ways.”

Caring for others, job opportunities, and flexible hours and shifts are all reasons so many nurses do what they do for others. Yet many admit they walk away at the end of the day a better person because of the patients they’ve met.

“The best part for me is that patient that you will never forget” said Jefferson. “The one you have connected with in a way that is indescribable. You have learned something from each other and you both walk away from it a different person, a better person somehow because you cared.”
WHAT IS... HOLISTIC NURSING?

Nurses wear many hats. In addition to tending to patients and helping families of patients, nurses incorporate the latest technologies into patients’ treatments. Some even work outside of hospitals and doctor’s offices to train the next generation of nurses.

Nursing has also branched out to include holistic nursing, which employs alternative medicine to care for patients. Alternative medicine is sometimes combined with traditional western medicine, requiring holistic nurses, who are sometimes referred to as “complementary health nurses,” to understand both holistic and traditional nursing methods.

According to the Campaign for Nursing’s Future, sponsored by Johnson & Johnson, holistic nursing is rooted in the idea that nurses cannot treat a patient’s physical health without addressing the whole person. In addition to addressing their patients’ physical problems, holistic nurses will also try to address their patients’ mental, spiritual and emotional well-being.

Holistic nursing is a growing field, and it’s entirely possible that the role of holistic nurses will expand in the years to come. Some of the things today’s holistic nurses do include:

- acupuncture
- assisting patients with managing stress
- aromatherapy
- massage
- hypnosis, hydrotherapy and balneotherapy
- Chinese and Eastern healing practices
- wellness coaching

According to the American Holistic Nurses Association, holistic nursing is not intended to negate the validity of conventional medical therapies, such as traditional nursing. Holistic nursing serves to complement, broaden and enrich the scope of nursing practices while aiming to help patients access their greatest healing potential.

The AHNA notes that holistic nurses must be registered and/or licensed. Such nurses may be found working at hospitals, universities and private practices.

Men and women interested in pursuing a career in nursing can learn more about holistic nursing at ahna.org.
BANGOR AREA NURSING: Then & Now

By Richard Shaw

Current and historic photos courtesy of Eastern Maine Medical Center, St. Joseph Hospital, Penobscot Valley Hospital, Pen Bay Medical Center, Waldo County General Hospital, Richard Shaw postcard collection, Bangor Public Library Thompson collection, and University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections.

If ever a group deserved to have their own week, it is nurses. With quiet determination, nurses have helped bring us into the world, healed us when we were sick, and held our hands when we were dying.

So again, in 2017, the American Nurses Association celebrates National Nurses Week (May 6-12) with the theme “Nursing: the Balance of Mind, Body, and Spirit.”

For generations, families in greater Bangor have enjoyed unparalleled care in hospitals, doctor’s offices, nursing facilities, psychiatric centers, and in private homes. Female and male RNs, LPNs and CNAs have a long tradition of making life better.

“Nurses at Eastern Maine Medical Center have met many challenges over the years,” said Deborah Sanford, RN, MSN, the hospital’s vice president and chief nursing officer, “from a World War II nursing shortage that almost resulted in the hospital’s closure, to overcrowding in the 1950s.”

Sanford said today’s challenge is to keep up with changing technology and educational requirements to stay at the forefront of the profession. Today, she continued, nurses use skill and experience to assess patients’ needs, solve problems, communicate with team members, and find new ways to provide the highest quality care possible.

Historic photos displayed in hospital lobbies depict a time when nurses wore crisp white uniforms and caps. Beginning in 1892, Eastern Maine General Hospital trained nursing students who adhered to strict dormitory rules that included a dress code (no slacks) and a mandatory absence during the third trimester of pregnancy. The earliest students were even forbidden to marry.

After the EMMC School of Nursing graduated its last class in 1985, such regional institutions as Husson University, Eastern Maine Community College and the University of Maine began offering two-year associate and four-year baccalaureate degrees.

Many graduates find work at EMMC, nursing and rehabilitation centers, Acadia Hospital, Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center, Penobscot Community Health Care, and St. Joseph Hospital, another institution that started small and grew big. Ever since the Felician Sisters purchased the Paine Hospital in 1947, the hospital’s mission has been to grow and improve.

“Nursing is definitely a calling,” said Darci Lane, RN, St. Joseph’s Critical Care Unit director. “You have to think like a doctor, love like a mother, and act like a saint.”

Andrea Shirley, RN, staff nurse at St. Joseph’s Ambulatory Surgery Unit, said it is important for nurses to keep current on the latest techniques, medicines, and approaches to surgery. She said St. Joseph provides the education she needs to stay up to date in all these areas.

Also serving the region are hospitals in Pittsfield, Dover-Foxcroft, Blue Hill, Ellsworth, Belfast, Rockport, and Lincoln, where Penobscot Valley Hospital has grown from a small community facility to a first-rate medical center.
“In a setting like this, the relationship between nurse and patient is often able to grow strong,” said PVH’s Chief Nursing Officer Monica Vanadestine, RN. “Our nurses fulfill the organizational culture of compassion, quality, and safety. Every patient is treated with the utmost respect and high-quality care.”

Paula Delahanty, regional vice president of nursing services at Pen Bay Medical Center and Waldo County General Hospital, said, “Our nurses share experiences of being stopped by a recent patient in the grocery store, their child’s school or at church. Patients are anxious to share how they are progressing after leaving the hospital. It is so rewarding to staff members to know they have individually and collectively made a difference in someone’s life.”

At Bangor Public Health and Community Services, located at 103 Texas Ave., Program Manager Elaine Beaulieu, RN, knows the challenges of supervising and finding funding for a myriad of services.

“Over time, as community needs have changed, so has the focus of services,” she said. “Currently, three distinct programs are funded by federal and state grants and municipal funds. The two oldest programs are immunization/infectious disease and maternal/child health. Maine in-home asthma education is the most recently-added program.”

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The city’s public health facility is located on the former Dow Field, which has its share of World War II nursing stories to tell. According to David Bergquist, author of a book about the installation’s war years, doctors and base hospital nurses (known as “gray ladies” because of their dark uniforms) worked in four wards, with 25 beds, two operating rooms, a dental clinic, and doctors, nurses, and nurse’s aides quarters.

“Before Pearl Harbor,” he said, “the hospital conducted all the physicals for flight cadets and gave inoculations to officers and servicemen. It treated various ailments and injuries and served as a morgue for killed flyers due to area crashes.”

The story of Bangor area nursing, with its many challenges and triumphs, reads like fiction, but it is an everyday reality. Stay tuned for the next inspiring chapter.
NATASHA GREENE, CNA (FROM LEFT); JANET QUINT, RN; KIM BLANCHARD, RN; JOHN EASTHAM, RN; AND JESSIE HOWARD, CNA, AT WALDO COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL. PHOTO COURTESY WALDO COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL

A FEMALE AND MALE NURSING GROUP TODAY. COURTESY EASTERN MAINE MEDICAL CENTER

ALICE MCMULLEN, A WWI NURSE FROM BANGOR. COURTESY BANGOR PUBLIC LIBRARY

NATASHA GREENE, CNA (FROM LEFT); JANET QUINT, RN; KIM BLANCHARD, RN; JOHN EASTHAM, RN; AND JESSIE HOWARD, CNA, AT WALDO COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL. PHOTO COURTESY WALDO COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL

A NURSE’S AID ATTENDS TO A PATIENT, DOW FIELD, 1944. COURTESY THOMPSON COLLECTION, BANGOR PUBLIC LIBRARY
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