THE VALUE OF NURSING

The valuable roles and impact nurses have on providing health care have been showcased in the media during the COVID-19 pandemic to a greater degree than ever before. It has provided nurses the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the work they do every day. This value can be seen in examples from the roles nurses play from the boardroom to the bedside and throughout the continuum of care. Now more than ever, the value of nursing should be clear; yet, nurses often remain being celebrated for being selfless, instead of being celebrated for the value we bring. As nurse leaders and executives, our call to action is to clearly articulate the value of nursing.

This Nursing Administration Quarterly issue has a variety of articles where the value of nursing is conveyed. For example, there is an interview with Mike Singer, CEO of Careismatic, Inc. He added a nurse to the board of his company and began to learn firsthand about the REAL value of nurses serving on boards. He went on to create an advisory group of executive nursing leaders and shares how the input and ideas have impacted his business.

Dr Joanne Disch shares the progress we have made with getting 10 000 nurses on boards. Dr Disch’s call to action for what comes next is compelling. The next level of impact might be to create a new metric where there is a nurse on EVERY board of EVERY hospital and health care system across the country. Many companies are benefitting from the value of nurses who have been serving on boards, but it is clear that our work is not done.

Chief nurses need to be the strong and clear voices of identifying and articulating the value of nursing. One example is the article that is written by Dr Susan Grant. She reveals how she and her team met the challenges of surging volumes of COVID-19 patients who needed care in her community. The value is described by the innovative ideas that she and her team implemented. Dr Grant’s effort is the work that was done to continue and expand their patient/family-centered care in a most challenging care environment.

The perspective from frontline nurses who were involved in the initial surge of COVID-19 patients in New York City at NYU Langone Health hospital is very impactful. There were several innovations that came from the nursing staff that
demonstrate value. The nurses came up with the idea of proning patients instead of intubating and putting patients on ventilators. The impact of this positioning was shared and implemented widely with other health care centers. The rapid pace of emerging evidence was brought forward by nurses and greatly improved oxygenation and reduced use of ventilators.

Finally, the article by Dr Cynthia Sweeney highlights the evidence that recognition of staff is very powerful. The Daisy Foundation and the Daisy Awards continue to make a difference in many nurses’ lives. Recognition of the value and difference nurses make throughout their careers in many different roles is described in this article.

Without nursing services, there cannot be quality, safety, or improved patient satisfaction. The role of the nurse executive and leader is to raise awareness, provide the evidence, and step up to articulate the value of nursing care in all settings. Nurse leaders should seek out opportunities to share value-driven stories in the communities they serve. Nurse leaders need to step up and take an active role in boards and on committees, illustrating the difference nurses make. Nurse leaders should create a media strategy in their organization to ensure that nurse experts serve as voices on health care-related issues in the news. The image of nursing needs to be expressed as an evidence-based, science-driven practice profession, and nurse executives need to broadcast that image widely. Nurses impact outcomes and create the patient experience. Nurses ARE the value provided throughout the continuum of care.

—Joyce Batcheller, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAONL, FAAN
RWJ Executive Nurse Fellow Alumna
Adjunct Professor
Texas Tech University
Health Sciences Center School of Nursing
Lubbock, Texas
Nurse Executive Advisor, Leadership
AMN Healthcare
Dallas, Texas
Founder CNO Space

—Karen Drenkard, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN
Associate Dean
Clinical Practice & Community Engagement
School of Nursing
The George Washington University
Washington, District of Columbia