

Salute to Nurses



Take Time to Thank a Nurse

Any day is a good day to celebrate America's nurses. After all, every day patients enter medical offices and facilities and spend more time with nurses than any other health care provider.

But since 1993, the American Nurses Association has set aside a week to celebrate and elevate the nursing profession. This year, National Nursing Week is set for May 6-12 and features a host of events to honor the four million nurses across the country for the work they do.

A special day set aside to honor nurses began in 1965 with Nurse's Day, with the intent of raising public awareness of the important role and contributions nurses make to society, according to Nurses.com. An unofficial Nurses Week stretches back a decade earlier in 1954 to mark the 100th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's mission to Crimea.

Then, as now, nurses are on the front lines of a caring profession. On-duty around the clock 24/7, nurses are the caregivers we most rely on in almost any health care environment.

"One of my favorite sayings



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about nursing is our ordinary is actually extraordinary. We provide an amazing service to the public, whether in hospitals, clinics, long-term care or in the community," said Jennifer Mensik, a nurse who wrote about how she celebrates her calling in an article on Nurse.com.

"Being a nurse is not something we turn off completely at any time. It doesn't stop at the

end of our shift like many other professions," Mensik wrote. "We are there to help at a moment's notice because we care. That perspective of caring is always with us and we believe we are doing what any other person might do in the same situation — that it was our job."

Unfortunately, there's a nursing shortage. According to a report in the American Journal

of Medical Quality, a shortage of registered nurses is projected to spread across the nation through 2030, with the South and West begin most affected.

On the upside, registered nursing is listed among the top occupations for growth opportunity into the next decade, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In other words, there's never been a better time to enter this chal-

lenging and rewarding career field.

Nurses are truly the unsung heroes of the health care profession. They are dedicated to healing, compassionate care and touch the lives of millions with their devotion and skills. So if you encounter a special event in your community during National Nursing Week, don't hesitate to attend and thank them.

Role of School Nurses

Many will remember the school nurse's office as a place where you went to lay down if you felt ill and to wait for a parent to pick you up. The nurse might also have checked your temperature and dispensed an aspirin. But today's school nurses do so much more.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, modern school nurses:

- Assess health complaints, administer medication and care for students with special health care needs.

- Develop contingencies for managing emergencies and urgent situations.

- Manage health screening, immunizations and infectious disease reporting.

- Identify and manage chronic healthcare needs.

In fact, school nurses are the primary caregiver to a large portion of students living in rural areas that lack other health care access. They perform a critical role in the community to identify unmet health needs and foster the relationship between health and education, resulting in



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increased academic achievement, improved attendance and better graduation rates.

According to the Academy's position paper, school nurses and pediatricians, both community- and school-based,

working together can be a great example of team-based care, providing comprehensive health services to students, families and their communities.

As more children with spe-

cial health care needs enter schools, the school nurse becomes a vital link helping both students and families to reinforce treatment during and after the school day. Many children enter the school sys-

tem with such issues as attention-deficit or hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, life-threatening allergies and seizures. School nurses, often working with a school pediatrician, develop medical recommendations and administration in the school environment and often beyond.

School nurses are also the first-responders to students suffering injuries incurred during sports or extracurricular activities. In the event of an emergency, such as a school shooting, school nurses may be among the first to treat any wounded students. They also play a critical role identifying parental noncompliance with medical home goals, the Academy reports, or if neglect or abuse is suspected.

It's clear that times have changed dramatically since the first school nurse was appointed in New York City in 1902. That nurse, Lina Rogers, tended to the health care needs of more than 8,000 students in four schools. Because of her success in reducing absenteeism, the system added 12 more nurses and all but eradicated absences due to medical conditions.

Although their duties and mandates have expanded since that time, the core role of the school nurse hasn't changed: Attendance is key to academic achievement. Keeping students healthy helps ensure they achieve success and develop healthy practices during the school years and well into their adult lives.

Critical Care in the Air

When accidents and life-threatening injuries occur, time is of the essence between the scene and medical care. That's when air transport staffed by trained medical professionals arrive and their care in the air makes a critical difference.

Flight nurses fulfill that crucial role, making sure patients reach the hospital safely and stabilized on board. In-flight medical care is essentially trauma care in the air and these highly trained professionals handle these emergencies in high-stress environments with limited resources.

Many flight nurses come from a military background, where their experience caring for the injured in war-torn battlefield prepares them for the situations they may face treating people in critical situations. Others take to the air from traditional nursing schools or after time spent in hospitals. But like their counterparts in the ER, they perform the routine functions of preparing medical charts and background for the physicians who will treat them.

In the often jarring environment of in-flight care, most often in helicopters, flight nurses perform triage, emergency medical care and act as a calming influence to what can be a terrifying experience for their patients. Their primary objective is to keep patients alive to arrive while also keeping a team on the ground aware of what to expect when the air ambulance arrives.

"I started as a clinical tech at the



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hospital straight out of college," said Karen Thurmond, a chief flight nurse for Orlando Health in Florida in a 2012 interview for Orlando Magazine. "And I saw the flight team and the critical care nurses, and I enjoyed the high adrenaline and the medical services aspect of what the flight team did. So I went to nursing school and made that

my goal."

Thurmond spent the majority of her nursing career providing in-flight care and said her time was almost evenly divided between responding to trauma situations, such as car accidents, and caring for patients transferring from hospital to hospital.

"We have equipment to deal with

any emergencies," she told the magazine. "We have lifesaving interventions to get somebody breathing again, to get their heart started. We have an arsenal of medications for pain. Oftentimes, it's just putting a pillow under their knees. We try to work with patients to find out what's best for them."

Modern Military Nurses

Since the dawn of the republic, military nurses have played an important role in treating and caring for our nation's wounded returning from battle. From the Revolutionary War to America's global war on terrorism, military nurses are on the front lines and true heroes in their own right.

Here are brief profiles of just two modern military nurse legends.

ARMY LT. GEN. PATRICIA HOROHO

Born in 1960 on Fort Bragg, N.C., the daughter of an Army officer, Horoho is the first woman and the first nurse to become Army surgeon general and commanding general of the Army Medical Command.

Horoho grew up in North Carolina. She received her nursing degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1982 and earned her master's degree in as a clinical trauma nurse from the University of Pittsburgh 10 years later. She earned a second master's degree from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

In her long, distinguished career, from 1982 to 2016, Horoho treated the injured in the 1994 "Green Ramp" disaster at Fort Bragg, in which an F-16 fighter clipped the wing of a C-130 transport plane while on a training exercise. While the pilots ejected safely, the fighter crashed into an area known as the "Green Ramp," where paratroopers were waiting to board



Horoho

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aircraft. The explosion killed 23 and injured more than 100. At the time, Horoho was head nurse of the fort's emergency room and led the care of the injured.

Horoho went on to serve in Afghanistan, and was honored by the Red Cross for her actions at the Pentagon on the fateful date of Sept. 11, 2001. In 2008, Horoho led the 9,000-strong Army Nurse Corps and the Walter Reed Health Care System in Maryland.

Nominated by President Barack Obama to become commanding general of the Army Medical Command in 2011, Horoho led a health care system rivaled only the Veterans Administration, serving more than 3.5 million patients.

Horoho retired in 2016 and was succeeded by her contemporary in her command by another "first woman," Maj. Gen. Nadja West, the first black



Trent-Adams

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woman — and first active-duty black major general — to lead the Army Medical Command.

REAR ADM. SYLVIA TRENT-ADAMS

While her tenure was brief, Rear Arm. Sylvia Trent-Adams was the first female nurse to serve as United States Surgeon General. Trent-Adams led the public health agency as acting surgeon general from April to September 2017, following the dismissal of Vice Adm. Vivek Murthy, who was relieved of his post by the Trump administration.

But the role as the first practicing registered nurse to lead U.S. Public Health Service was just another achievement for Trent-Adams.

Born in 1965 in Concord, Virginia, Trent-Adams heard the calling of being a nurse early in life, serving as a so-called "candy striper" at a local hospital at the tender age of 12. She fol-

lowed her dream to Hampton University in Virginia, earning her nursing degree with the aid of an ROTC scholarship. Following college, Trent-Adams served in the Army Nurse Corps from 1987-1992.

Drawn to public service, Trent-Adams followed her military career by joining the USPHS, where she managed the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. She later became deputy administrator for the Department of Health and Human Service's HIV/AIDS Bureau. Along the way, Trent-Adams earned her master's degree in nursing and doctorate degree in public policy.

While she did not serve long as the country's top medical officer, she elevated the profile of nursing and continues to champion the role of nurses.

"There is so much out there for us as a profession," she told nursing graduates at a University of Maryland commencement ceremony.

Men Battle Stereotypes in Nursing

Only 9 percent of the estimated 4 million nurses in America today are men, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. But those numbers are growing, with the number of active male RNs enrolled in graduate or doctoral programs increasing three-fold since the turn of the century.

So why aren't more men becoming nurses? Studies point to both stereotypes and barriers to gender diversity. In fact, in one recent study attempting to identify the few numbers of men in nursing, 70 percent of respondents cited stereotypes as a major challenge.

But in this new era, those challenges are beginning to change.

"Patients are much more receptive to health care providers of similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and that may well translate to gender as well," said Vernell DeWitty, deputy director of New Careers in Nursing, a program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in an article on the foundation's website.

"The shortage of the future will likely not be solved unless men are part of the equation," added male nurse William T. Lecher, president of the American Assembly for Men in Nursing, in the same article. "We really have to figure out how to provide more gender inclusion and balance in the nursing workforce."

Similar studies show men who are drawn to a career in

Demand for nurses has never been higher. It's a career, and a calling, that is enduring an ongoing shortage into the next decade, if estimates are correct. That's why more men are being encouraged to enter a field traditionally dominated by women.

nursing typically pursue advanced degrees and often out-earn their female counterparts. That has contributed to the 11 percent rise in male nurses in the past few years, according to statistics collected by Montana State University.

That data also shows that

overall men are more inclined to pursue careers as nurses in hospitals. Nearly 70 percent of male RNs worked in hospitals, as opposed to 61 percent of female RNs in 2015. The study said male nurses may be more drawn to the types of care — emergency departments and critical care units — than

women.

All the data and statistics point toward a challenging and lucrative career for men in nursing, where average salaries top \$60,000. Now is an excellent time for men to consider careers in nursing — and to get over the stigma.

"Forget about the stigma,"

Jorge Gitler, an oncology nurse manager, told *The New York Times* in an article focused on men who had left other careers to pursue nursing. "The pay is great, the opportunities are endless and you end up going home every day knowing that you did something very positive for someone else."



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Nurse Stereotypes Change

What we see on TV and in movies shapes our impressions about the occupations actors portray in film and on television. No less is true than the representation of nurses in popular media.

Perhaps among the most famous portrayals is that of Loretta Switt as Maj. Margaret Houlihan in the hit 1970s and '80s TV show "M*A*S*H." Another is Louise Fletcher's performance as Nurse Ratched in the 1975 film, "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest."

Both these portrayals underscore extreme stereotypes — "Hot Lips" Houlihan is a romantic/sexual interest of several characters at a surgical hospital during the Korean War and Ratched is presented as a cold-hearted tyrant at state mental hospital — but neither is representative of the real-life world of nurses.

Of course, these characters are presented for entertainment purposes but those images have real impact on viewers. In "Celluloid Angels: A Research Study of Nurses in Feature Films, 1900-2007," author David Stanley, a nurse and lecturer at Australia's Curtin University of



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Technology, reviewed more than a century of nurses as predominant characters in

movies. He found that "Nurses and the nursing profession are frequently portrayed negatively or stereotypically in the media, with nurses often being portrayed as feminine and caring but not as leaders or professionals capable of autonomous practice."

To combat these portrayals, the Baltimore-based group the Truth About Nursing seeks to challenge stereotypes and to educate the world about

the value of nursing. Its mission is to foster a better understanding that nurses are autonomous, college-educated science professionals to strengthen nursing care, education and research, allowing nurses to save more lives.

Of course, the "truth about nursing" is that nurses save lives and work long, hard hours and make many sacrifices to provide healing and care at hospitals, clinics and in a variety of environments

where nurses serve patients who may not otherwise come in contact with a healthcare provider.

Nurses have a long history of pioneering heroes, from Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, to Clara Barton and Mary Breckinridge. Fortunately, the image of the nurse in TV, movies and in the media is improving.

More recently, movie nurses are "intelligent, strong, and passionate characters," Stanley says.

An example is "Nurse Jackie." At first condemned by nursing organizations for her drug abuse, the Truth About Nursing says, "Jackie turned out to be arguably the strongest and the most skilled nurse ever depicted on serial U.S. television." As it developed, "Nurse Jackie" was commended for standing up to organizations that threatened safe and equitable care, recalls Canadian nurse Lori Campbell.

Jada Pinkett Smith's portrayal of Christina Hawthorne in "Hawthorne" featured a nurse as its main character. As the chief nursing officer at Richmond Trinity Hospital, Hawthorne presented a positive portrayal of nursing, advocating for her patients and staff.

"These are vital messages to increase public understanding of nursing and funding for nursing practice, education, research and residencies," the Truth About Nursing reports.

The Evolution of Scrubs

Scrubs have long since entered lexicon and moved from uniforms for nurses, doctors and medical staff, to being embraced as a true mode of fashion.

Because they allow freedom of movement and comfort to hard-working medical professionals, the garments have become as popular as warm-up suits for those in and out of the field.

Scrubs were born of necessity and at first were worn by physicians which provided ease of movement and sanitary dress in operating rooms that could be quickly disposed of. According to an article on dressamed.com, nurses once wore long, bulky gowns for protection but were prone to transmutation diseases.

Modern scrubs were pioneered by Dr. William Hasted, who also developed the first pair of latex gloves. But it took decades before what we now recognize as scrubs spread from operating-room wear to the de facto uniform of almost every hospital medical staffer.

While most medical facilities provide the drab green or blue scrubs most are familiar with, those in the medical field have sought out an even-more comfortable and fashion-forward look and uniform companies have responded.



plier that has been in business since 1929. The company claims to have created “the world’s first fashion scrubs” in 1965, and also makes uniforms for such fast-food chains as McDonald’s and Taco Bell, according to an article in *The New York Times*. But Barco also has a close connection to the entertainment world, supplying scrubs for a range of television and movies for decades, the article notes.

It’s biggest hit is a line in partnership with the popular, long-running medical drama, “*Grey’s Anatomy*.” The show — and the scrubs — proved so successful that Barco turned from making scrubs for fictional TV shows to a line based on that show for real-world medical wear, the *Times* article reported.

On their website, Barco features no fewer than five signature “*Grey’s Anatomy*” lines of scrubs for women and men made from soft, stretchable fabric that “drapes elegantly and conveys a polished professional image.”

But Barco is not alone in producing fashion-forward scrubs. Several companies, including Med Couture, Jaanuu and Cherokee are changing the look of medical uniforms, introducing bold colors, patterns and prints.

As an article on WorkingNurse.com pointed out, “looking good makes you feel good, and feeling good makes you perform your job even better. And that’s never out of style.”

It’s no mistake that people who wear any sort of uniform want to invest in a look that

feels good, wears well and expresses some individuality. And manufacturers have

responded.

Among them is Barco, a California-based uniform sup-