

Charting Nursing's Future

News in Brief

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Nurses Work to Build a Culture of Health

By Rachel Brand, Nicole Fauteux, Jennifer L.W. Fink, and Debra Werrlein

Charting Nursing's Future has reported on public health and primary care initiatives throughout the nation and found nurses helping to lead the effort to create vibrant and healthy communities through high-quality care, education, and leadership.

Helping Truckers Keep on Trucking

When the U.S. Department of Transportation tightened its rules to make sure truckers were healthy and the roads were safe, large numbers of nurse practitioners stepped in to perform truck driver physicals. Now they are also helping truckers improve their all-around health. Truckers' itinerant lifestyle means they have diabetes at twice the rate of the general population, and often suffer from sleep apnea, hypertension, and high cholesterol.

Says one nurse practitioner leading the way: "If they don't have a primary care provider, we look to get them a primary medical home. If they can't get to their medical home, we look to fill the gap. If they have a chronic illness, we can help them with managing it."

Nurse practitioners are reaching this mobile population at truck stops and other convenient locations to make it easier for them to receive care. They're also conducting research into ways those on the road for long stretches in big-rigs can improve their health. Read more on how nurses are improving trucker health and public safety at [Nurse Practitioners Help Truckers Keep on Trucking](#).



Photo: Catie McMeekin

Patricia Smith, NP, performs DOT physicals and provides primary care services to truckers at the Pilot Flying J UrgentCare Travel clinic in Knoxville, Tenn.

Racing Toward A Healthier Community

When the Louisville School of Nursing partnered with a Kentucky nonprofit to better serve the Kentucky horse racing community, the Kentucky Racing Health Services Center was born. The clinic is staffed by nurse practitioners and provides comprehensive primary health care for workers who labor behind the scenes at the Kentucky Derby's Churchill Downs racetrack. "Our goal has been to fill a need and offer continuity of care," says Founding Director Whitney A. Nash, PhD, APRN. By the end of the center's second five years of operation, provision of continuous care had improved community health enough to reduce costs to the Kentucky Racing Health and Welfare Fund by 24 percent.

Read more about the center at [Nurses Support the Health of Horse Racing's Invisible Workers](#). To learn how clinical rotations at the center expose nursing students to a unique and vulnerable population, see [Kentucky Clinic Opens Students' Eyes](#).



Photo: Tom Fougereusse, University of Louisville

Kentucky Racing Health Services Center Director Dedra Hayden, MSN, CDE, APRN-C, at center, demonstrates to nursing student Jasmina Disdarevic how to take a patient's blood pressure.

Nurse Turns Legislator

Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, RN, BSN, MAS, was caring for an uninsured patient with a fractured rib when she accidentally discovered that the woman's breast was "as hard as stone." After watching the woman lose both breasts and die, Nathan-Pulliam vowed to run for political office to help people get health care. She spent 20 years in the Maryland House of Delegates and today represents Baltimore in the state Senate. One of the first things she did after taking office: sponsor a bill that put \$2.6 million into breast cancer diagnosis and treatment for low-income women.

Today she continues to advocate for health equity and leads a cross-sector workgroup on health policies. "If you're in housing, I want a policy that speaks to lead, mold, asbestos, rodents and all of the things that make somebody sick, okay?" she says. Learn more about Nathan-Pulliam's journey to public service and how she is improving health in her community at **Shirley Nathan-Pulliam: A Nurse Turned Maryland Legislator**.



Photo courtesy of Maryland State Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam

Big Easy Goes Smoke-Free

When New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu expressed interest in exploring a citywide smoking ban in the Big Easy, Charlotte Parent, RN, MHCM, then the city's director of health, was on board. She led the New Orleans Health Department in the creation of a Smoke-Free Ordinance Business Toolkit, which includes a checklist for implementing the ban, a sample "no smoking or vaping" sign, and messaging to help businesses talk to patrons about the ban in positive ways. "If you give communities and citizens information in an open and transparent way, they will respond to it," Parent says.

New Orleans became a smoke-free city in 2015. Six months later, city residents could already see the payoff as air quality improved dramatically inside bars and casinos and calls to the Louisiana Tobacco Quitline increased 20 percent. Learn more about Parent and her role in this community health initiative at **Nurse Helped Coax the Big Easy to Go Smoke-Free**.



Photo: iStock

Residents of New Orleans are breathing easier thanks to the passage of a smoking ordinance, championed by a nurse.

Vote for Community Health

Many people are unaware of the connection between voter registration and community health, but this isn't news to nurse manager Wendy Nading, RN, ND, and population health epidemiologist Callie Preheim, MSPH, from the Denver area's Tri-County Health Department.

"Voting directly impacts health," says Preheim. "Not only can you vote on things that affect your health...but voting improves civic engagement, which can reduce social isolation."

Nading and Preheim observed that efforts by public assistance programs to help enrollees with voter registration often amounted to asking the yes-or-no question, "Are you registered to vote?" To encourage more meaningful assistance, the pair developed a simple voter guide intended to educate their clients about voter eligibility and the process of voting. You'll find the guide and more about Nading and Preheim's initiative at **Nurse Encourages Voting to Build Community Health**.



Photo: Rachel Brand

Nurse Manager Wendy Nading, RN, ND, and Population Health Epidemiologist Callie Preheim, MSPH, review a voter registration guide they created for use by the Tri-County Health Department.

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