

School Nursing: An Essential Piece of the Healthcare Puzzle

The 2014 Summer Nurse Institute kicked off on Monday, August 11th at Gallaudet University. This year's theme, "School Nursing: An Essential Piece of the Healthcare Puzzle," focused on helping nurses think differently and connect creatively. Pamela Hinds, PhD, RN, FAAN, delivered the keynote address and shared how nurses could create a career legacy map to help assure meaningful work in nursing. Luis A. Morales, LICSW, and his team presented "Management of Mental Health Issues," which is so timely given the increase in mental health-related incidents in schools. Charlena D. Patterson, MSA, a consultant from Lejm HR Training and Consulting, presented on the impact of workplace bullying and made suggestions for those working in environments where they feel bullied, pressured, and stressed. Nurses were given an opportunity to share personal experiences with workplace bullying in their health suites and schools. Patterson was then able to offer tailored insight and suggestions.

Highlights from the second day of the conference includes presentations on concussions in children, insect infestation, and an update on tracheostomy care. The day ended with the moving and expressive "American Nurse" documentary by Carolyn Jones. The film premiered during American Nurses Week 2014 and captures the work of nurses across the nation who come from all walks of life.

The conference ended with a skills fair that tested the nurses competency in the following areas: use of asthma medication devices, urinary catheterization, use of the epi-pen, g-tube feedings, glucose monitoring, interpretation of tuberculin skin, and tracheostomy care. Some of the nurses served as skills validation trainers and facilitators while skills competencies were verified, validated, and documented by the nurse managers. While waiting for testing, nurses were able to view a video explaining proper procedures for the skills tested. Consistent with this year's theme, each nurse was given a blank puzzle badge. A piece of the puzzle was given to each nurse as they completed each skills station. Upon completion of all skills, a nurse was presented with the last puzzle piece identifying them as "An Essential Piece of the Healthcare Puzzle." The nurses shared with their managers how much they enjoyed the skills fair and especially appreciated the puzzle badges as a token of their hard work.

A total of 137 nurses successfully demonstrated their knowledge and skills and were deemed competent to provide these services to students enrolled in DC Public and Public Charter Schools.



Sue Hall, RN, ADN, Roseline Alia, RN, BSN, and Rose Moore, RN, BSN



Chrystal Young-Johnson, BS, RN, Nurse Manager, (at head of table), Cynthia Tollini, MS, RN, Staff Development Specialist, and Shawn Hickey-Higgins, MSN, RN, NCSN, CHES, Staff Development Specialist, assembling and laminating the puzzle badges for the nurses to take home.



Dolores Crowder, RN, BA, watching a video while waiting to complete her competency during the skills fair



Manasses Yumnbam, PhD, RN, (left) performing a catheterization during the skills fair as Selinda Boyd-Graham, RN, BSN, observes



One of the puzzle badges given to nurses upon completion of all of the competencies at the skills fair.

Power of One Award: An Advocate for Inner-City Teens

When Courtney Jones, RN, BSN, began her nursing career in labor and delivery, she found herself drawn to teenage mothers. "I would always take those patients," she says. "I felt like I could really connect with them and talk to them easily." Once she made the transition to school nursing, she knew that a high school would be the perfect fit. Jones, a Senior Community Health Nurse in Ward 5, was the school nurse at Dunbar High School from 2007 to 2014. Dunbar is an inner-city high school with a predominately African-American population. Many of the students come from impoverished or troubled homes. Jones shared many of the students miss out on things at home and often do not have anyone to talk to when they have problems or need information. With the help of two colleagues during her time at Dunbar High School, Jones started "The Ladies of Dunbar," a group to offer support and mentoring to the female students at Dunbar High School. "We really saw a need to offer them formal guidance," Jones added.

To join the group, the teens had to maintain good grades. Meetings took place a few times per week with girls learning helpful life skills such as how to dress appropriately for a job interview and how to converse and present themselves in public. Jones and her colleagues also taught the girls proper table place settings and how to prepare for college.

Creating this mentoring group was only one of the ways that Jones went up above and beyond in her practice. While managing her duties as a school nurse, she trained and mentored newly hired school nurses in her ward. She also took on the role of "super user" to master the use of an electronic nursing documentation system and train and assist her colleagues with the program.

Though Jones has moved on to a new area high school, she still stays in touch with the "ladies" she mentored during her time at Dunbar. "Most of the girls went on to college, and they usually visit Dunbar when they come back to DC," says Jones. She added, "We fill so many roles as school nurses, and the ladies of Dunbar was just a little piece. This was just something I wanted to do for the kids. I wasn't expecting any recognition for it. We are here for the kids, and you get attached to them. It is very rewarding to give them advice and help them out."



Courtney Jones, RN, BSN,
School Nurse, Phelps SHS Ward 5

Nurses Advocate on Capitol Hill

I attended the American Nurses Association (ANA) Annual Lobby Day on Capitol Hill on June 12, 2014. Over 150 nurses gathered from across the nation to attend various congressional meetings. The Lobby Day briefing outlined ANA's legislative priorities and recognized advocates for their tireless efforts on behalf of patients and nurses. I had the opportunity to sit across the table from Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) to discuss the importance of Title VIII funding. Maryland nurses and other Lobby Day participants met with Sen. Mikulski and presented her with an ANA Congressional Nurse Advocate Award.

As an ANA member, I wanted to not only advocate for all Americans and make a difference in my community but also ensure quality care is being given, especially with the ongoing changes in healthcare.



Maryland nurses presenting Sen. Mikulski with an ANA
Congressional Nurse Advocate Award

Alicia Littlejohn, BSN, RN-BC
Case Manager II

August 2014 Health Observances

- National Immunization Awareness Month
- Cataract Awareness Month
- Children's Eye and Health Safety Month
- Psoriasis Awareness Month

Caffeine: How Does it Really Affect Our Health?

Many Americans start the day with a cup of coffee. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) states that the average amount of caffeine consumed in the US is approximately 300 mg per person—which is equivalent to about two to four cups of coffee. While some studies suggest that a moderate amount of caffeine is healthy, others claim that long-term daily consumption is harmful. What are we to believe?

The main ingredient in coffee is caffeine, a compound that naturally derives from over 60 different plant sources, including coffee beans, tea leaves, cacao seeds, and cola nut seeds. Caffeine acts as a stimulant by activating the central nervous system. It can combat tiredness and improve concentration and focus. According to the University of Michigan Health Service, the stimulating effects of caffeine can start as early as 15 minutes after consumption and last up to six hours. In addition to its stimulating effects, caffeine has a number of health benefits. *Medical News Today* reported on a study suggesting that consuming three cups of coffee a day may reduce the risk of liver cancer by 50 percent, while another study suggests that drinking four cups a day could halve the risk of mouth and throat cancer. Other studies have also suggested that caffeine intake may protect against type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, cardiovascular disease, and stroke.

However, Steven E. Meredith, postdoctoral research fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, told *Medical News Today* that due to widespread consumption, many people forget that caffeine is actually a psychoactive substance, meaning that it crosses the blood-brain barrier to stimulate the central nervous system. According to the Mayo Clinic, consuming more than 500-600 mg of caffeine a day may lead to insomnia, nervousness, restlessness, irritability, an upset stomach, a fast heartbeat, and even muscle tremors.

Meredith shared that the effects of caffeine can vary in each individual, which may explain why there are mixed messages surrounding whether caffeine is good or bad for us. For example, he said that individuals with anxiety disorders are more susceptible to the anxiogenic effects of the compound. "Caffeine can also metabolize at different rates among individuals for various reasons, such as whether or not the person is a smoker. Given the positive effects caffeine can have as a stimulant, some people may become addicted, with absence or reduction of coffee consumption resulting in caffeine withdrawal. This can cause headaches, fatigue, drowsiness, depression, irritability, concentration difficulties, nausea, and vomiting. Based on the negative side effects, people should share their amount of caffeine consumption with their doctors to ensure they are ingesting a safe amount. This is particularly important for children and adolescents as caffeine (also found in soft drinks) interferes with sleep, and sleep, or a lack thereof, plays a critical role in learning.

In closing, the majority of American adults consume caffeine in moderation without any harmful side effects, so healthy adults should not be too concerned. However, we should be aware that when we consume caffeine, we are consuming a psychoactive substance that can cause or worsen some health problems.

Healthy Recipe of the Month— Berry Good Muffins

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Utensils: Muffin tin, measuring spoons, measuring cups, oven

Ingredients:

- 1-1/3 c all purpose flour
- 1 c rolled oats
- 1/4 c brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 c skim milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 3/4 c blueberries
- 3/4 c raspberries

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit (218 Celsius)
2. Spray muffin cups with nonstick cooking spray
3. Combine flour, oats, brown sugar, baking powder, and cinnamon in a mixing bowl.
4. Fold in berries
5. Spoon the mixture into the muffin cups, approximately 2/3 full
6. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until light golden brown

Serves: 12

This newsletter is published monthly by the Children's School Services School Health Nursing Program.

Barbara S. Scott, MSN, NE-BC, RN-BC
Vice President

Natalie Peart, MA
Program Coordinator, Editor
npeart@childrensnational.org