

Week 3 of Nurses Month

Community Engagement

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“Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.” We saw this carry us through the worst of the pandemic through to Covid vaccine development and, to this day, as the world begins to open up again. Choices to mask, get vaccinated, socially distance, test, and stay home when feeling ill have helped to abate the spread of Covid-19. Nursing was at the forefront of these efforts to educate our community about the coronavirus, care for those who contracted it, and to vaccinate them against this disease.

Where we learn, live, work, pray, and play impacts our health. According to research funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 30% of our health status is determined by where we live. So that individuals living in one zip code vs. living in another 10 miles away can be significantly impacted in terms of incidence of community mortality and morbidity. Nursing in the community is evidence-based and focuses on promotion of the health of entire populations and prevention of disease, injury, and premature death. Interventions are not limited to those who seek services, are poor, or are otherwise vulnerable. Community nursing practice encompasses all and is delivered in diverse settings (public, private, and nongovernmental) that serve populations of interest. Community nurses partner with others to promote, maintain, and restore health, and reduce health risks when needed healthcare services are limited or are just not available. These nurses advocate for systems-level changes to improve health and develop services and programs that are directed towards individuals, and families, groups, communities, or systems. They make a difference!

Focus on engaging with your community this week, whether virtually or in-person. Educate and help promote nurses' invaluable contributions to our nation's health by telling them what nurses do. The vital role of nurses as leaders in their organizations, on boards of directors, and as elected officials at the local, state and federal levels is making a difference. Encourage them to support current and future nurses as we seek to improve those health systems that have led to over one million lives lost in this pandemic.

Thank you for what you have done to make this a better world! YOUR nursing leadership in the community ultimately enhances the ability of public health systems to address the issues facing all people and creates conditions so that where we learn, live, work, pray, and play can be a healthier place for all!