CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

ANA is offering activities to help RNs make that goal a reality

With the start of the new year, the American Nurses Association (ANA) has ramped up its efforts to assist nurses in achieving a culture of safety in 2016 — no matter where they work or what role they hold. The theme of this yearlong campaign is Safety 360 Taking Responsibility Together.

As part of the campaign, ANA is highlighting its range of existing resources through articles and other communication vehicles and offering new educational opportunities, including webinars, to nurses every month on a specific aspect of a culture of safety.

The kickoff activity is a Jan. 20 webinar in which ANA President Pamela F. Cipriano, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, defines and identifies key elements of what a culture of safety looks like in health care. She also addresses the evolution of the national patient safety dialogue and action steps RNs can take to contribute to a culture of safety in their practice environments, including summoning the courage to give feedback on workplace issues that can negatively impact patients or themselves. All educational webinars can be accessed by clicking the SHOP ANA Nursing Knowledge Center button on www.nursingworld.org or by going directly to the catalogue at https://learn.ana-nursingknowledge.org.

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ANA defines a culture of safety as one in which core values and behaviors — resulting from a collective and sustained commitment by organizational leadership, managers and workers — emphasize safety over competing goals. Attributes of a positive safety culture include:

- openness and mutual trust when discussing safety concerns and solutions without individual blame;
- marshaling of appropriate resources, such as safe staffing- and skill-mix levels;
- a learning environment in which health care professionals learn from errors and proactively detect systemic weaknesses; and
- transparency and accountability.

ANA is asking all nurses to consider how they can individually and collectively work toward creating a culture of safety in their workplaces, which means ensuring not only the safety of their patients, but also their own safety. For example, safe patient handling and mobility strategies prevent injuries to patients and nurses. The same can be said for safe staffing and a host of other issues that ANA — and hopefully nurses nationwide — will explore over the course of the year.

An upcoming event, two new resources

One of the major events ANA has planned is a conference themed Connecting Quality, Safety and Staffing to Improve Outcomes, March 9-11 in Lake Buena Vista, FL. Attendees will learn from the latest evidence-based research and discover innovations they can start using immediately.

Speakers include bestselling author Josh Linkner presenting New Horizons for Health Care: Tapping Creative Thinking for Practical Innovation; Leah Curtin, ScD(h), MA, MS, RN, FAAN, executive editor, American Nurse Today, and senior advisor, Compass-Clinical Consulting, presenting Better Outcomes: A Conversation on the Ethics of Staffing; and Jane Englebright, PhD, RN, CENP, FAAN, senior vice president and chief nursing officer, Hospital Corporation of America, presenting Safety as the End Game: Connecting Quality of Care and Supportive Staffing to Safety. For more information, go to www.nursingworld.org/ANA-Conference.

A key resource that examines a different and critical aspect of patient safety is the ANA-published book, Errors of Omission: How Missed Nursing Care Imperils Patients. Written by renowned health policy and nursing issues expert Beatrice J. Kalisch, PhD, RN, FAAN, this book, in part, examines key areas of missed nursing care; consequences of not providing care; methods of studying missed care; and the role of leadership and management in addressing missed nursing care.

Yet another vehicle to help nurses promote a culture of safety in their workplaces is a recently published white paper, Optimal Nurse Staffing to Improve Quality of Care and Patient Outcomes.

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Commissioned by ANA and developed by Avalere Health LLC, in collaboration with nurse and policy experts, this resource can help nurses in all settings and at all levels advocate for and implement sound, evidence-based staffing plans. It is the first in a series of papers aimed at addressing the value of nursing care and services and is available at www.nursingworld.org/Avalere-White-Paper-on-Nurse-Staffing.

More topics to dive into

In February, ANA will focus on nurses’ work environments, and specifically on HealthyNurse™ issues. ANA also encourages nurses to take the Health Risk Appraisal (HRA) to assess their health at www.anahra.org. This HIPAA-compliant HRA gives nurses real-time data on their health, safety, and wellness — personally and professionally. Additionally, a Feb. 17 Navigate Nursing webinar will address innovative staffing solutions.

In March, ANA and nurse experts again will set their sights on helping nurses effectively address their health and wellness, this time focusing on fatigue. And the March 16 webinar will center on fatigue and shiftwork. Among available ANA resources is the position statement Addressing Nurse Fatigue to Promote Safety and Health: Joint Responsibility of Registered Nurses and Employers to Reduce Risk at www.nursingworld.org/fatigue.

In April, ANA will premiere a four-part series on effective strategies to make lasting changes that improve workplace culture, with webinars held every Thursday throughout the month. There also will be educational opportunities around the featured topic of mental health and a Navigate Nursing webinar April 20 on PTSD.

Watch for more information on upcoming educational activities, advocacy, and in-depth articles on critical topics regarding a culture of safety, including bullying, emerging infectious diseases and cultural congruence (how nurses’ cultural beliefs and knowledge gaps can impact patient care) in The American Nurse and on ANA’s website at www.nursingworld.org.