



From Your ANA President

In God we trust. All others—show me the data.

DURING MY PRESIDENCY, one thing has become very apparent: ANA has made a critical contribution to nursing quality. Its influential

work on nursing-sensitive indicators dates back to the early 1990s and has continued to this day with the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators™ (NDNQI®).

I'm excited about the 2nd annual NDNQI conference scheduled for January 30 to February 1, 2008, in Orlando, Florida. The 2007 conference was sold out. The 2008 conference will focus on workforce engagement in using data to improve outcomes. All nursing data are pivotal for improving outcomes. However, one indicator provides perspective on the work environment and has broader impact on all aspects of patient care: the RN Satisfaction Survey.

I would venture to say that today in the United States, there is no shortage of nurses, but there is a shortage of places where nurses want to work. To improve quality here, we need to make the workforce and practice environments a priority indicator. The RN Satisfaction Survey provides a rich source of data to find out what staff are saying about nurse-to-nurse relationships, nurse-physician collaboration, staffing and resource adequacy, nurse autonomy, decision making, professional status, and other facets of practice and care. Did you know that in 2006, ambulatory care areas had higher job enjoyment scores than any other area? If you were participating in the survey, you would have that information at your fingertips. You would also have the opportunity to compare areas and evaluate practices. You would know staff members' certification and education status and what percentage of RNs plan to stay in their areas or plan to leave.

If you are a nursing leader, regardless of your position, are you engaging staff to improve quality, supporting participation in NDNQI, sharing nursing-sensitive quality data, incorporating staff recommendations, and supporting evidence-based practice? If you are a staff nurse, are you improving quality by assessing your patients completely, incorporating evidence-based practices, intervening, anticipating, documenting everything you do, reviewing your unit's data, and identifying areas for improvement?

Coming from clinical operations, research and data are the only sure way to improve outcomes. NDNQI provides a reliable means to validate the resources necessary

to achieve outcomes. Enough money is available in hospital budgets to participate in this endeavor. There is no excuse for not participating in the only national database that provides staff and nursing leadership with the data to improve patient outcomes and work environments. There is no greater priority than the nursing workforce and its ability to improve patient care.

I feel sick to my stomach when I hear about some of the errors that occur. My heart aches for the patients and families. I'm tired of having to explain near misses, especially when I know some could have been avoided. Aren't you? Using NDNQI is a proven strategy to evaluate staffing, skill mix, nursing education, patient care processes, patient outcomes, work environments, and nursing satisfaction. There is no excuse for us to not commit to providing high-quality care and using the best tool available. I don't often use guilt as a motivator, but are you feeling guilty? Patient safety and patient outcomes improve when nurses make this commitment.

I *love* NDNQI. I *believe* in it. A famous saying from sports advertising fits this case perfectly: Just do it.

Join me in January at the national conference to hear how your contemporaries are doing it. The speakers, absolutely fabulous and leaders in their areas, will share their progress and learning. Speakers include:

- Mary Beth Farquhar from the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality, on nursing quality indicators and evidence-based practices
- Dr. Barry Straube, Medical Director for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, on use of data in multiple settings and nursing's role in quality
- Dr. Nancy Dunton, Principal Investigator for the NDNQI project, on the latest research from the database
- Dr. Mary Naylor from the University of Pennsylvania, on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiatives (INQRI).

I am especially proud that ANA had the vision to connect staffing, satisfaction, education, and other variables to quality and safety and, in the process, developed the NDNQI—the most powerful database for nursing.

See you at the conference.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Rebecca M Patton RN". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR
President
American Nurses Association