When talking with nurses recently at University of South Alabama Health Hospital in Mobile, AL, it is evident that while the pandemic may be over, the issue of nurse burnout is ongoing. “Over the years I have witnessed the loss of good nurses to burnout. It is difficult enough to deal with day-to-day personal issues, along with a multitude of ongoing global dilemmas, then come to work and face a whole different level of demands and stresses,” said Christina Clark, CNF, MSN, RN.

Clark is one of 24 Nurse Champions at four pilot sites trained in Stress First Aid, as part of the Foundation’s Stress & Burnout Prevention Program. The pilot, made possible by generous support from the United Health Foundation, is a three-year, $3.1 million grant to address well-being and burnout among nurses.

The pilot aims to increase nurses’ ability, both individually and in teams, to confront the reality of sustained and excessive stress in the work environment. A special focus of the program is on younger nurses and nurses of color who, according to the 2022 Pulse on the Nation’s Nurses Survey, have been the most negatively impacted by stress and burnout.

Four sites of various sizes and care settings are piloting the materials, adapted by and for nurses. Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Winston-Salem, NC BayCare Health Tampa Bay, FL Indiana University Health locations throughout Indiana University of South Alabama Health Hospital Mobile, AL

Trained Stress First Aid Nurse Champions in these sites are delivering the program in two units per year, ensuring not only that it serves nurses overall, but that it will also apply to a variety of unit needs in emergency, critical care, surgical, pediatric, and other circumstances.

While changes will not happen overnight, Stress First Aid Nurse Champions have begun to see positive shifts. Ashley Melendez, BSN, RN, at BayCare Health, a 16-hospital health care system in West Central Florida, already has helped train 120 nurses in Stress First Aid.

“As nurses, we suppress our own emotions and focus more on caring for others. Therefore, many nurses do not reach out for help and the impact is significant, at work and in our personal lives. The Stress & Burnout Prevention Program teaches us how to cope with what we face daily to take better care of our patients and ourselves.”

BayCare Nurse Champion Carly Elber, BSN, RN, trains other nurses in her unit on Stress First Aid.
Nurses Month Fundraisers Continue to Thrive

For the third consecutive year the Foundation engaged with several outstanding corporate partners to raise funds during National Nurses Month 2023. The five corporate partners for 2023 were: Chipotle, Skechers, Beekman 1802, Amomoma Eyewear and Care+Wear Scrubs. Thanks to the collective efforts of their staff and customers, these corporate campaigns raised over $550,000 in May 2023!

Returning partners Chipotle and Skechers both conducted their respective versions of ‘retail-round-ups’. These month-long fundraisers enabled customers of those two businesses to donate to the Foundation at their point of purchase by rounding up their sale to the nearest dollar amount. In addition to the large donations that resulted from those campaigns, Skechers provided a 10% discount to nurses on all their products and Chipotle ran a sweepstakes to give away free food to healthcare workers.

“At Skechers, we are forever grateful for the nurses and healthcare providers that continuously put themselves between the front lines of healthcare—well beyond the COVID-19 pandemic—and the care they consistently provide to millions of Americans every day. For a second straight year the actions of Skecher’s customers have reflected the gratitude we all feel for this group of professionals” — Michael Greenberg, President of Skechers.

We were also humbled by the gestures and creativity of newer partners. Amomoma Eyewear is an online store operating from Amazon.com. They reached out with a desire to support American nurses and have agreed to donate a percentage of revenue from the sale of their eyeglasses. This opportunity is still ongoing and interested shoppers can view their products at www.nursingworld.org/foundation/programs/nurses-month-promotions. Beekman1802 also raised money via sales proceeds of a ‘nurse branded’ product, the ‘Nurses First Lend a Helping Hand Cream’. Beekman generously donated the bespoke hand cream to Foundation supporters at the annual donor luncheon this past June in Washington, DC.

Raising over half a million dollars in one month is an incredible accomplishment and the Foundation is grateful to the Nurses Month corporate partners that so generously offered these campaigns. It is especially meaningful to know that all the dollars were raised either directly or indirectly by retail customers. The American consumer is still appreciative of brands that support reputable causes, such as helping nurses during National Nurses Month. And they will demonstrate that appreciation with their business, it is a trend we hope to see continue for many nurses months to come!

A central Stress First Aid component is a color-coded continuum that provides nurses with a shared language to use regarding stress reactions, which in turn reduces stigma. It utilizes a universal color system that most people can easily recognize—green, yellow, orange, and red. Stress responses lie along a spectrum of severity and type, with a green response representing optimal function and wellness and a red response indicating severe distress.

Clark, who has now helped train over 60 nurses at University of South Alabama Health Hospital, said, “Stress First Aid gives us a common language to talk about stress with each other. It makes it okay for nurses to say, ’I am in the orange zone today and need some extra support.’”

The concept of a nurse-focused version of this set of stress management and communication tools is also having an impact beyond the pilot sites, as other organizations are taking notice and talking about the problem of burnout and the potential of this new way of mitigating the unrelenting stresses that nurses face daily.

In December, a new round of Nurse Champions from the pilot sites will travel to the ANA Enterprise headquarters in Silver Spring, MD to attend the two-day Stress First Aid training for their units. By the end of the pilot, the materials and resources will be accessible for free through the program webpage, www.nursingworld.org/foundation/programs/stress-first-aid-for-nurses.
The American Nurses Foundation was recognized with the 2023 Dolphin Award, presented by Ilene Sussman, president of Nurses House, during the Foundation’s annual leadership donor luncheon on June 16. Nurses House is the only national organization for RNs in need due to illness or injury. For nearly a century this one-of-a-kind organization has been helping nurses who are struggling with basic living expenses, such as rent or mortgage payments, while they’re out of work and recovering from a major health-related crisis.

Each year, Nurses House presents the Dolphin Award to a group or individual who has made sustained contributions to the nursing profession and who’ve made a significant impact on the mission of Nurses House and the population it serves.

Foundation Executive Director Kate Judge recalled the intensity of the early days of the pandemic when nurses on the frontlines risked their lives to save others. “We realized that our Foundation could and must play a leading role as the aggregator of philanthropy focused on nurses,” she recalled. “In April 2020, the Foundation launched the Coronavirus Response Fund for Nurses to support the mental health, financial, educational, and advocacy needs of nurses during and after the pandemic.”

The Foundation partnered with Nurses House in the first months of the pandemic to quickly get financial aid to nurses. The Foundation provided $2.35 million and Nurses House raised an additional $400,000 in a matter of months. Together, the Foundation and Nurses House provided direct aid to 2,417 RNs in 45 states and the District of Columbia to assist them with household expenses as they were struggling at the height of the pandemic. Many nurses who received assistance either were furloughed due to service closures or contracted COVID-19 and faced extended leave; often they reported being the main providers for their families.

After Foundation surveys identified a disproportionate impact on nurses of color, at the Foundation’s request Nurses House created a way to prioritize support to nurses of color with Foundation funding. Grant recipients offered effusive thank yous for the support. Lorena Alvarez, BSN, RN, wrote “My family and I were trying to get back on our feet after a devastating month during which my husband fought his own battle with COVID-19 alone in isolation;” she said. “I was his sole support, from emotional stress to alimentary provisioning and everything in between. When I opened the envelope containing the COVID-19 Emergency Grant from the American Nurses Foundation, I was stunned and overcome with emotion. I simply couldn’t believe what I was holding in my hands. I was able to pay several bills and provide for our family. It also allowed me to continue my calling. You helped me help others. These funds are a gift that keeps on giving.”

“You really touched my heart and I was able to find peace in the midst of [the] COVID storm,” wrote another nurse. “Thank you so much for all you do. Thank you for touching lives and making a difference like you did to me. I will forever be grateful.”

Irene Sussman, president of Nurses House, presents the Dolphin Award to American Nurses Foundation Executive Director Kate Judge and board member Karen Daley.

Health Equity Advocate Receives Jeannine Rivet Award

Currently celebrating its fifth year, the Jeannine Rivet National Leadership Award enhances community health and healthcare delivery by supporting emerging nurse leaders who integrate their health expertise with new civic leadership. Created in honor of Jeannine Rivet, MPH, RN, FAAN for her career as a leader at UnitedHealth Group, and made possible through the generous contributions of the United Health Foundation in partnership with the American Nurses Foundation, the award was established to encourage and inspire the next generation of nurse leaders and innovators to explore new professional opportunities and development.

Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC was selected as the 2023 winner of the annual Rivet Award for her passion and commitment to nursing and dedication to the professional and civic communities in which she serves. Alita-Geri is a seasoned nurse practitioner with more than a decade of experience in health care advocacy and leadership spanning health care, business, and within her community.

During her work with the Health Resources and Services Administration, Alita-Geri has directed key programmatic work and managed millions of dollars in federal funds. As the Founder and CEO of The Commission for Health, LLC, she empowers both healthcare providers and healthcare consumers through training and educational services. Alita-Geri is also the founder of the nonprofit On the MOVE Academy, Inc., an educational program designed to provide leadership development for middle and high school students to prepare them for a future career in health care.

In addition to recognizing Alita-Geri’s work, the Foundation announced the endowment to permanently fund the Jeannine Rivet National Leadership Award through a generous contribution by Jeannine Rivet herself. Jeannine’s decision to endow this prestigious award marks a pivotal step in ensuring funds remain available for the leadership development of our nation’s nurses. “I was surprised and honored when UnitedHealth Group coordinated 5 years ago with the American Nurses Foundation to create a 10-year Jeannine Rivet Leadership Award,” she said. “Having the privilege of being on the selection committee, I’ve reviewed talented, up-and-coming nursing professionals and met with all the award recipients. Seeing the impact of these awards and the dedication by and development of these wonderful nurses, I’ve decided to endow the Jeannine Rivet National Leadership Award to continue well into the future—to support the next generations of nursing leaders.”
Rita K. Chow, EdD, RN, FAAN, FGSA, AHN-BC (ret.), HSGAHN, is now 97. She has had a long and fascinating career—and even more excitement in her nearly three decades of “retirement.”

Rita began her nursing career as a summer camp nurse, then went on to serve as a health consultant; a nurse educator in California, Michigan, Texas, and a Sioux reservation; and U.S. Army Nurse Corps, rising to the rank of Major. Her 27 years with the U.S. Public Health Service included academic appointments and a variety of novel assignments that called upon her ingenuity and demonstrated her dedication to marginalized populations and the aging.

She was director of patient education at the National Hansen’s Disease Center in Carville, Louisiana, the nation’s first and last dedicated care facility for the disease more commonly known as leprosy. As Deputy Director, Office of Long-Term Care, Department of Health and Human Services, she built a program to investigate, evaluate, and then improve conditions in the nation’s nursing homes. As Director of Nursing for the Federal Bureau of Prisons Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas, Rita assisted in the establishment of a new long-term care facility for the inmate population, including an inmate-run hospice program.

A prolific author, Rita is also an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences Academy of Medicine, and recipient of many awards and honors, most recently the 2021 Rhoda Jennings Distinguished Older Advocate Award by the American Gerontological Association “in recognition of outstanding advocacy and leadership for older adults—and for modeling successful aging through [her] innovative contributions to society.”

Rita has done notable work in the development of a certification program for holistic nursing. In an article she wrote for Beginnings, the journal of the American Holistic Nurses Association, she observed, “If we truly believe in the importance of achieving the public health goal of healthy lives and well-being for all, we will embrace it as a personal goal. In fact, in searching for a goal-oriented meaningful life, we may reflect on and treasure cultural traditions and values, becoming lifelong learners and seeking educational opportunities—so as to be influencers in the pursuit of health equity.”

A Century of Nursing Leadership and a Legacy to Last a Century More

Between them, Rita and Irene have given more than a century of service as nurses. As nurses of color, and as women in the male-dominated military, both have faced more than their share of challenges in the profession, and yet each has thrived and become a model of nursing leadership. The legacy of their service is truly legendary—as is their decades of philanthropy.

In 1993, Rita and her late friend Yaye Togasaki-Breitenbach co-founded the Chow-Togasaki-Breitenbach Endowment to provide unrestricted funding for graduate and postdoctoral nursing research studies, and scores of nurse scientists have benefited ever since. Beyond the initial contribution, Rita has continued to expand the fund by transferring her Roth IRA to the endowment. Rita says, “The dimensions of the nursing profession are gratifying—affording myriad ways to be innovative and empower colleagues.”

In 2013, Irene established the Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris Endowed Leadership Fund to support leadership development of nurses—especially those with military experience and in non-traditional roles. Ever since, the Trowell-Harris Endowment has supported initiatives that give nurses a greater voice in influencing health care delivery and policy, including the ANA Advocacy Institute which provides an intensive lobbying boot-camp for members from ANA state associations.

You, too, can provide support to nursing programs that are most meaningful to you. Whether large or small, now or in the future, giving to American Nurses Foundation is a powerful way to leave a legacy and support the life-saving work that we do.

Endowment funds offer support for the long term. The total amount of the gift is invested, and each year a portion of the income earned is used for crucial programs while the remainder is added to the principal for growth. In this respect, an endowment is a perpetual gift.

If you are over age 70 1/2, a contribution from your IRA can satisfy your required minimum distribution without increasing your income taxes. The Qualified Charitable Distribution is a tax-reducing and tax-free way to support the nursing profession.

A charitable gift in your will—a bequest—is an easy and flexible way to support American Nurses Foundation. You can give a dollar amount, specific items, or designate a percentage of your estate. If you already have a will, you can add American Nurses Foundation to it with a simple amendment.

We can help you shape a charitable gift plan that suits your needs and allows you to keep helping with our important work. To learn more about the benefits of making a charitable gift, visit our website at giftplanning.nursingworld.org or call 301-628-5167.

Rita has written many articles for Nursing World and other nursing periodicals about the importance of helping nurses become influential in the health care arena. She has a personal philosophy about making positive contributions: “Making a Difference is a Part of the Solution.”

Irene Trowell-Harris, EdD, RN, FAAN, Major General, USAF, Ret. grew up on an Aiken, South Carolina cotton farm. Admitted to a segregated nursing school, she paid her first tuition installment with $61.25 in coins donated by her church congregation.

In 38 years of military service, she was a flight nurse examiner, chief nurse executive, commander, advisor to the Chief, Air Force Nurse Corps for Readiness and Nursing Services, and Assistant to the Director, Air National Guard for Human Resources Readiness. Her civilian career included roles as nurse manager, supervisor, chief nurse executive, university professor, senior policy specialist, director of the Office of Healthcare Inspections for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and as a White House political appointee under two presidents as Director, Center for Women Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs. Altogether, that’s 54 years of nursing practice to patients and nurses.

Irene worked in ANA’s health policy area, initiating a business plan for health care entrepreneurs. Through her leadership at civilian, federal, and military medical facilities she championed individual innovative thinking, creativeness and resourcefulness, and improved practices and procedures in nursing, medical readiness, and education.

Irene’s barrier-breaking list of “firsts” includes the first nurse and first woman in National Guard history to command a military clinic, the first African American woman two-star Major General in the Air National Guard, and the first female and first nurse to have a chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen named in her honor. For her decades of leadership, she has been granted honorary degrees, a list of awards that fills pages, inducted into Teachers College, Columbia University Nursing Hall of Fame, and Yale School of Public Health named its new Executive Online Master’s Degree in Public Health scholarship after her.

Her life goal is to educate nurses nationally about advocacy, policy, and legislation to improve the quality of patient care—and Irene’s greatest joy in life is mentoring and helping others to become successful and achieve their potential.

“I really enjoy working and making a difference in society. My wish to make positive social changes requires vigilance and persistence. There is so much work to be done in society and I wish to be a part of the solution.”

We can help you shape a charitable gift plan that suits your needs and allows you to keep helping with our important work. To learn more about the benefits of making a charitable gift, visit our website at giftplanning.nursingworld.org or call 301-628-5167.
The Science of Appreciation: 
The Benefits of Gratitude

Gratitude
A 9-PART PODCAST MINI-SERIES

The Foundation launched a podcast on gratitude that builds upon the previous success of the Gratitude Practice for Nurses. This 9-part mini-series discusses what decades of research has shown – that practicing gratitude is highly effective in promoting physical and psychological health, both at the individual and organizational levels. The series features nurses who have innovatively put into action the practices described in the gratitude toolkit and implementation guide featured on the Well-Being Initiative webpage and developed by the Greater Good Science Center at U.C. Berkeley.

The podcast guests are all nurses who had previously spent extensive time working closely with the gratitude concepts and content. The Foundation engaged with well-being professional Derek Bell, and his existing podcast series, Highway to Well, to produce this series. Nurse guests share real-life examples of how they adopted and utilized the toolkit and share a resource from the implementation guide that listeners can use in their own gratitude practices individually or in their organizations. Some topics include “Creating a culture of self-compassion and gratitude,” “Creating an organizational plan for gratitude,” “Why gratitude is a struggle,” and more. The podcast can be found on the Foundation’s Well-Being Initiative page under Gratitude Resources and is also available on most streaming services.

Beth Miller, MAOM-L, BSN, RN, CPXP, from CommonSpirit Health in California, reflected “The Gratitude Program helped me personally during a time when it was very difficult to be a nurse leader (during the pandemic). The tools and practices helped me to remember my own dependence upon others and appreciate the value each team member brings to daily work operations. The resources helped me to pause and think deeply about my own personal gratitude for my family but also for my team and organization. The Gratitude Program is the most special of gifts which both humbles and encourages anyone who chooses to participate.”

And the work is having an institutional impact as well. Patricia O’Malley, PhD, APRN-CNS from Premier Health in Ohio learned about gratitude work with the Foundation and participated in the Community of Practice group to do a deeper dive into gratitude practices. “I heard about the impact of gratitude during my graduate work at Ohio State University studying cardiovascular reactivity and disease expression, so I was interested in learning more. After a six-month immersion in Gratitude Science, I became curious about how I might be able to integrate gratitude into our research program in nursing and our wellness programs for health care providers. After the years of COVID practice, the timing of this opportunity from the Foundation was perfect!”

“...The science and skills I learned are invaluable. We have provided multiple seminars sharing gratitude science and practices locally, regionally, and statewide. We just completed a research project examining quality of life in healthcare workers who practice gratitude (data currently under analysis) and are integrating gratitude science and practices into our organizational wellness programs and student curriculums. We believe that teaching gratitude to students early in their career can make a huge difference in how stress, anxiety, and burnout may affect them in the future. I’m so grateful I was able to participate so intensely in this gratitude work with the Foundation.”

Resources can be found on the Foundation’s website to help nurses begin and continue their gratitude practices, including a toolkit, implementation guide, podcasts, and an infographic. This work was made possible in part from generous donors like the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, who were critical in helping nurses navigate this unprecedented disaster.

www.nursingworld.org/TheWellBeingInitiative
www.nursingworld.org/TheWellBeingInitiative#Gratitude
The Key to Supporting Nurses

The Hillman Group, drawing upon their history of meaningful support of a variety of causes, presented a compelling plan to assist frontline registered nurses: they would donate a portion of sales proceeds for a specific product – their Superhero Keys – to the American Nurses Foundation. The keys featured designs of popular superheroes like Spiderman and Black Panther, and for this instance, Hillman also produced a Nurse Superhero Key to honor their efforts. Hillman customers responded with a profound show of support and appreciation. From June 2020 to July 2023 over $460,500 has been donated to the American Nurses Foundation through this partnership. And it continues while supplies last – you can purchase your own special nurse keys at your local hardware store.

The value of Hillman’s generosity cannot be overstated. Some of the highlights that coincide with Hillman’s campaign include providing direct financial assistance grants to thousands of nurses in 2020 and 2021. Hundreds of thousands of additional nurses continue to access vital and complimentary mental health and well-being resources today thanks to the proceeds from the Superhero Key donation campaign.

“The American Nurses Foundation is grateful for the ongoing partnership and support of the Hillman Group,” acknowledged Foundation Executive Director Kate Judge. “I want to thank Hillman Group CEO Doug Cahill and his staff, on behalf of the nation’s more than 5 million registered nurses, for the extremely generous contributions they have provided over the past three years. Thank you for not only supporting nurses during a time of need, but also for lifting them up as heroes.”

Cahill acknowledged his staff for coming up with the idea of a Nurse Hero key and supporting nurses, saying it was the least Hillman could do to support these real-life healthcare heroes. “At Hillman, we are committed to making a long-lasting impact in the communities in which we do business, and giving back is a key component of that. We created this nurse key out of a deep appreciation for the nurses providing lifesaving care during an unprecedented time and are thrilled to see the success of our three-year partnership with the American Nurses Foundation. Thank you to all who contributed to this outstanding cause by purchasing our nurse key. Contributions like this are how we build a better, brighter future for us all.”

While the Superhero Key campaign is in its final stages, we acknowledge the outstanding level of support provided by Hillman Group since 2020. We are grateful for their altruism and recognition of the important role that registered nurses play in our society.

The Hillman Group, founded in 1964 and based in Cincinnati, contacted the American Nurses Foundation at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic with a desire to help registered nurses.

Collaborative Care Grant for Nurses and Pharmacists

RFP Now Open, Applications Due December 10

The American Nurses Foundation advances the nursing profession by serving as a thought-leader, catalyst for action, convener, and funding conduit. These efforts encompass funding research that explores key issues of importance to nurses and the nursing profession.

The Collaborative Care Grant for Nurses and Pharmacists, offered in partnership with the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Foundation, awards $75,000 over 18 months. This joint endeavor supports innovative projects co-led by nurses and pharmacists to stimulate and demonstrate how team-based care enhances safe and effective use of medications.

- Innovating or evaluating new services or technologies to minimize barriers to care for populations such as at-risk or complex patients from underserved communities, or individuals who are elderly, have comorbidities or require chronic care.
- Focusing on complex systems and processes (e.g., emergency departments), transitions of care, continuums of care, preventative care.
- Priority to be given to research that measures teamwork and meaningful outcomes, such as decreased patient harm, increased patient involvement in care, reduced hospital admissions/readmissions, and improved quality of life.

Interested applicants can find the RFP at www.ashpfoundation.org/grants-and-awards/research-grants/collaborative-care-grant-for-nurses-and-pharmacists

Improving Health Care Delivery to Be More Practical, Comfortable, and Patient-Centered

The 2024 ANA Innovation Awards are looking for GUTSY nurses with NEW solutions for improving health care!

The ANA Innovation Awards offer a $25,000 individual award and a $50,000 team award for nurse-led innovation that improves health, health care, and patient safety. Submission categories include:

- Care Delivery Models
- Educational Interventions
- Medical Devices/Products
- New Business, Program, or Service
- Research
- Technology

Applications are now being accepted for the 2024 awards. We make the submission process seamless! Learn more at www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/innovation/events/awards/.
The Foundation is pleased to welcome Novavax to our Corporate Advisory Board. “Nurses are among the most respected professions in our nation, and we know that the ANA Enterprise continues to be a leading voice on the frontlines of the fight against COVID. The enduring strength and commitment of nurses who to continue to be a trusted voice in sound science is exemplary.”

– John C. Jacobs, President & CEO, Novavax

The company joins the board as a bronze level member, and will be primarily represented by Carolyn TenEyck, RN, VP of Advocacy. Novavax, Inc. is a biotechnology company that promotes improved health globally through the discovery, development, and commercialization of innovative vaccines to prevent serious infectious diseases. The company collaborates with leading organizations across the global vaccines landscape, including research institutions, government agencies, foundations, and industry, to help ensure access and increase uptake of vaccines worldwide.

“The Foundation is excited to have Novavax join our Corporate Advisory Board. Vaccine development is a field that continues to have a profound impact on the nursing profession. We are grateful to have their participation in helping ensure nurses and those they care for have the tools and resources they need.”

– Kate Judge, Executive Director

Novavax

American Nurses Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with a vision of a healthy world through the power of nursing.