May 2016

IN THIS ISSUE:

#WhyNursing Week  1
EBP in the Field  2
Clinical Partner  3
By the Numbers  3
Generous Donation  4
Star Wars Actress  4
Courtroom Battle  5
Political Action Day  6
Health Fair (427)  7
Honors Poster Day  7
Staff/Faculty News  8-10

NOTES ON NORTHERN NURSING
Monthly newsletter of the NIU Nursing Program

#WHYNURSINGWEEK

The Nursing Student Advisory Committee declared April 25-29 as “Why Nursing? Week”. A large banner was hung in the hallway for students to answer that question and leave positive remarks for their peers. Students and faculty also wore their NIU spirit gear all week.

School of Nursing and Health Studies
College of Health and Human Sciences
Northern Illinois University
1240 Normal Road
Dekalb, IL 60115

(815) 753-1231
nursing@niu.edu
phhe@niu.edu

www.chhs.niu.edu/nuhs/
Evidence-Based Practice in the Field

This semester, the nursing students in NURS 312 (Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice), were fortunate enough to see what evidence-based practice (EBP) looks like in the field when Judi Bonomi from Rush-Copley Medical Center (RCMC) came to speak with them. Judi is the Director of the Cancer Care Center and Inpatient Nursing there and an expert in evidence-based practice. She shared with students several examples of how they translated research into practice at RCMC. We got a chance to ask Judi some questions about EBP:

Why did you agree to take the time to come speak with nursing students about EBP? I feel very passionate about ensuring the next generation of nurses is prepared to be engaged and participate in hospital practice that supports using evidence to make clinical decisions. It allows nurses to see what the science has shown us to be effective, and relies less on ritual or "the way we have always done it". Patients and communities deserve the best care, and nurses want to practice nursing using what is best for patients. I have a great deal of respect for Dr. Koren, as a colleague and teacher and admire her for thinking to bring the hospital practice expectations to the classroom.

From your experience, are newly pinned nurses familiar with EBP when they arrive at their first nursing job? We have done a study recently, and presented these concepts to our newly graduated nurses. We learned that most have heard the term, and know it is important, but may not know how to make sure it is evident in their practice. They are learning so many new things as they begin their first job as a nurse. The organization needs to build the EBP into policy and procedure and encourage the newly practicing nurse to participate in committees and unit activities to support best practice through a fresh pair of eyes.

Would you say that RCMC is more committed, less committed or committed about the same to EBP as other regional medical centers? In today's healthcare environment, all organizations are focused on ensuring the best outcomes for patients, as it impacts reimbursement and quality measures that are reported to various agencies and accrediting bodies. However, the nursing community must always encourage and support learning new ways to deliver the best care, researching nursing interventions and practices to support patient outcomes. Having a committed leadership team to drive the initiative is key to success!

How did you perceive the students’ reception to your presentation? Did their questions convey an understanding of EBP? I always enjoy seeing the students-I think when a guest speaker is present, the students may not know what to expect. And, early morning class is difficult. I always feel the students are listening, and that they can identify with what they have seen in their work or clinical experience, which helps them keep an interest. I enjoy speaking to the NIU students-always respectful and professional.

Thanks for speaking to our students, Judi!
Clinical Partner Highlight: Advocate Dreyer Clinic

This month’s clinical partner highlight is Advocate Dreyer Clinic in Aurora, IL.

Advocate Dreyer is an affiliate of Advocate Health Care with more than 170 physicians covering over 30 specialties at 13 sites across the northern Illinois region. The clinic was founded in 1922 and is named after Dr. John Dreyer, who was known for making house calls on his bicycle. They have nearly 800,000 patient visits a year. The Dreyer Clinic serves as a clinical site for NURS 433 students from NIU.

http://www.advocatedreyer.com/about-us

BY THE NUMBERS

Selfless care for others....political awareness and concern....is there no end to nurse awesomeness?

36

....the number of NIU nursing students and instructors that made the trip to Springfield in support of Student Nurse Political Action Day on April 12th , thanks to our donors!
Nursing Program Receives Generous Donation

Now more than ever, private donations play an important role in advancing academic programs, even at public universities. Most programs rely heavily on successful alumni and corporate partners to contribute to program improvements and student scholarships. The School of Nursing and Health Studies is no different and has been blessed by the generosity of donors, many of them former students and faculty. This year the School has awarded over $160,000 to students through endowed and expendable scholarships established by donors.

Recently, a donor who asked to remain anonymous made a significant contribution to the School. Her gift was inspired by her love of the health studies field and her belief in the importance of education. She also is thankful on behalf of family members who have benefited from Northern’s nursing program. She hopes her gift will provide students and instructors more opportunities to make a difference in health care.

The fund will not only provide student scholarships but will provide scholarships for current NIU instructors to pursue doctorates, in exchange for teaching in the nursing program upon graduation. This fund directly addresses the nationwide shortage of qualified nursing faculty and is critical to sustaining NIU’s excellent nursing program.

The School of Nursing and Health Studies is grateful to this special donor for caring and making a difference. While this gift will be spent down over time, the impact it will make continues through the lives of NIU nursing students and instructors who are transforming the lives of their patients.

May the 4th Be With You!

NIU posted a video on YouTube on May 4th to celebrate the unofficial Star Wars holiday “May the 4th Be With You.” One of our own nursing students, Rachel Shapland, makes an appearance, checking Darth Vader’s heartbeat.

Rachel is a first track nursing student and plans to continue with her nursing studies, just in case the acting career doesn’t take off.

See the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SONpCP8hxRs
Nursing students in NURS 431 (Transition to Professional Nursing) got to experience the pressure of legal scrutiny that can occur in healthcare when they participated in a mock trial this month. Students played all roles from witnesses, jurors, lawyers, to defendant. David Taylor, Distinguished Teaching Professor from the NIU College of Law, presided as judge.

The case was based on the circumstances surrounding an actual trial involving a regional hospital. The complainant was suing the hospital for poor care which led to bedsores and a significant degradation in his quality of life. Students who were not directly involved were formed into three juries and asked to deliberate on their own after the case.

NURS 431 instructor, Anne-Marie Kuchinski, said the purpose of this learning experience is to introduce students to the legal concerns surrounding healthcare and how important their role is in providing proper care to patients. “We can tell our students that basic nursing care is important, and that their documentation is an important way of recording what they have done so allows some protection, but at the end of the day, the lesson is often lost in the myriad of other information they have to absorb while they are here. It becomes much more real to them when they see their peers have to defend their practice under the scrutiny of someone outside of the nursing profession. Most often, the feedback from students is about how they didn’t fully understand how important thorough documentation really was, but we cannot forget the more important lesson of how provision of good basic nursing care protects them from being in this situation in the first place. Unfortunately, we don’t know if the nurses provided that care because the documentation wasn’t there, but the fact that the patient deteriorated so dramatically suggests that they did not. We also looked at the patient’s responsibility in his care (whether or not he refused the interventions that the nurses wanted to provide), so we needed to also discuss the importance of making sure the patient understands the importance of prevention and what we can do if they refuse to comply.”

In this case, the designated jury decided the healthcare workers were responsible, resulting in a $200,000 payout to the complainant. However, the three “independent” juries came to a different conclusion, stating that healthcare providers did all they could and that it was the complainant’s inability to take direction and help himself that ultimately led to his condition.

Students who participated in this learning experience will graduate two weeks later.
In what has become a tradition, the NIU nursing program provided students with an opportunity to participate in Student Nursing Political Action Day in Springfield, IL. Students loaded buses early (I mean...EARLY) the morning of April 12th and made the trek.

The event is sponsored by the American Nurses Association – Illinois (ANA-Illinois) and this was the 18th annual gathering. It serves as an opportunity for student nurses to meet with their elected representatives and voice their opinions about issues relevant to them and their future career field. Participants got to meet exhibitors and explore career and educational opportunities as well. They also learned how recently passed and currently considered bills affect their future. This trip was sponsored by the NIU’s Student Nursing Organization (SNO), but was open to all students and the transportation was funded by our generous donors.
Students from NURS 443, Population-Focused Nursing, attended the DeKalb School District 427 Health Fair. They created and manned their own health information booths and interacted with students and teachers of the school district. One group’s display was titled “Poison Purse” and the other was “Caffeinated Kids”.

Honors Poster Day
And the votes are in! Each semester, Honors students prepare posters as part of their coursework and judges from the staff and faculty put them through their paces. This semester’s winners are listed below and shown with their final product.

1st PLACE (tie):
Melanie Lund (above)
Sedinam Gbeku (right)

2nd PLACE (tie):
Megan Squimux (above)
Amanda Puls (above, right)

3rd PLACE:
Courtney Fleming (left)
Chantal Hielkema (right)
Several Retirements Announced

As the academic year wraps up, several nursing program faculty and instructors have announced their retirement. With a heavy heart, we wish them the best as they end successful careers with NIU as nurse educators, researchers and mentors. They will be missed, but will always be a part of the NIU Nursing Family.

Dr. Donna Plonczynski, APN, RN is retiring after 20 years at NIU. Donna started working as an instructor while working as a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) at NIU's TriCounty Community Health Clinic in Malta. During her years at NIU, Donna completed her PhD and progressed to the rank of a Full Professor. She has rigorously taught the implementation of ethical, evidence-based practice to over 2,000 Advanced Practice Nursing students - who in turn have gone on to have a positive impact on healthcare in the northern Illinois area and beyond. Donna has strong bonds with NIU, having met her husband here nearly 40 years ago while both were students. Many family members earned degrees at NIU, including their daughter, who earned her law degree here. She leaves NIU to pursue working with nurses to implement evidence-based practice while she maintains her active practice as an FNP. She has many wonderful memories of her colleagues and students over the two decades and welcomes emails at djiplonz@niu.edu

Dr. Nancy Oldenburg, EdD, PNP, MSN, RN is retiring after 15 years at NIU. Prior to starting at NIU in 2001, she spend most of her career in pediatrics and pediatric critical care, as a staff nurse and then as a pediatric nurse practitioner in those areas. Over those years, she had the opportunity to work with many wonderful colleagues, children, and families. “I expected that the transition from pediatric critical care to nursing education would be challenging; however, the NIU nursing faculty provided a welcoming and supportive environment for an experienced nurse but a novice educator. I have enjoyed working with students as they progress through the program and into professional practice. I have also enjoyed working on committees and projects that were geared to making the nursing program even stronger.”

Future plans - Spending as much time as possible with her grandchildren. She would also like to get involved in volunteer efforts, perhaps as a CASA volunteer. She is looking forward to seeing what the future brings!
Retirements (continued)

Diane Eadler, MS, RN, is retiring after 19 years at NIU. Originally a diploma grad, Diane went on to earn her BSN and MSN. She always worked bedside and had a lot of hands-on experience – much of it in the ER. But, then she found herself in nurse education and it became the highlight of her career. “I can truly say I have loved being a nurse and an instructor. People say you learn, you earn, and then you teach, and I feel very fortunate to have done so.” Diane is fairly sure she will miss nursing because she has enjoyed so many experiences, touched so many lives, and worked with so many wonderful nurses and faculty.

By the way, Diane kept track of her student count – she taught 956 students during her career as an educator!

Lynn Mitchell, MS, RN is retiring after 19 years. She began with teaching Fundamentals when she had four groups of eight students and each group met once a week for both didactic and skills lab time for the first half of the semester. The second half was the clinical portion. She then moved through Med-Surg clinicals and some summer internships and completed her career working the senior Capstone Course.

Future Plans: No more 5:00 am alarms on Monday and Tuesday! She plans to spend more time with her aging parents and to increase her time in the saddle (cycling). She also plans to travel with her husband – they have a trailer and enjoy camping, sightseeing and hiking.

Cynthia Vobornik, MS, RN is also retiring after 19 years. Did you notice that? Diane, Lynn and Cindy all started teaching at NIU the same semester 19 years ago. After earning her first bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the University of Illinois, she came to NIU to earn another one, this time in nursing, graduating cum laude in 1984. Later she completed a Master’s of Science in Nurse Education at Governor’s State. She served others as a rehab nurse, public health nurse, Director of Nursing, and medical consultant – but her passion was patient education. She feels that nurses are the ones with the education and practice to provide truly holistic care to patients. She looks forward to spending more time with her family in retirement.
Rudnicki Recognized

The nursing program’s Student Success Coordinator, Mary Rudnicki, was recognized by the Supportive Professional Staff (SPS) Council as one of this year’s outstanding SPS performers. She was recognized with a Certificate of Recognition at a ceremony on April 14th and was one of only 20 SPS employees campus-wide to earn this distinction. Mary’s efforts in helping students succeed has made a significant impact in the School’s success. She is pictured here with NIU President Douglas Baker.

Dosier Finishes 100 Miler

Acting Associate Director, David Dosier, completed a life-long goal of finishing a 100-mile foot race on April 10th. The race took place at McNaughton Park in Pekin, IL and took him almost 32 hours to finish. Of the 65 runners who started the race, 18 finished under the 34 hour time limit. He is seen here with the “Potawatomi Trail Run Finisher” belt buckle (and his wife and son) as his prize.