

21st-Century Nightingales and Global Health

"We must create a public opinion, which must drive the government instead of the government having to drive us...an enlightened public opinion, wise in principle, wise in detail."

– Florence Nightingale, 1892

What a thrilling and challenging time to be a dean, chair, or director of a school or department of nursing. It is crucial to the future of nursing and a healthy world that expanding student nurses understand their Florence Nightingale legacy and their important role as 21st-Century Nightingales (see Sidebar 1). Nightingale's work is clearly an epic example of global nursing. Actively engaged in one geographic area, she was simultaneously gathering and analyzing data from other areas of world conflict, and always envisioned what an entire healthy world might be (Dossey, Beck, & Rushton, 2008; Dossey, Selanders, Beck, & Attewell, 2005).

Nightingale's work was social action that demonstrated and clearly articulated the science and art of an integral worldview for nursing, health care, and humankind. Her social action was also sacred activism (Harvey, 2007), the fusion of the deepest spiritual knowledge with radical action in the world. In the 1880s, Nightingale began to write that it would take 100 to 150 years before educated and experienced nurses would arrive to change the health care system. We are that generation of 21st-Century Nightingales who have arrived to transform health care and carry forth her vision of social action and sacred activism to create a healthy world. Using terms coined by Patricia Hinton Walker, PhD, RN, FAAN, 21st-Century Nightingales are "health diplomats" and "integral health coaches" who are "coaching for integral health" (personal communication, May 15, 2007).

When overwhelmed as a dean, chair, or director of nursing, with all the requirements of your university or school to meet education requirements, it is useful to reflect on what Nightingale did without so many bright, innovative colleagues, professional nursing organizations, and the Internet. If she could achieve what she did with her handwritten letters, publications, and networking men in power, can you imagine what she could do with a laptop computer, portable phone, fax, messenger recorder, E-mail, Medline, Internet, CD ROM, and the information superhighway?

According to the International Council of Nurses (ICN), there are currently 13 million nurses and midwives engaged in nursing and health care around the world (American Holistic Nurses Association [AHNA] & the American Nurses

Sidebar 1. Florence Nightingale: Overview

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), the philosophical founder of modern secular nursing and the first recognized nurse theorist, was an integralist (Dossey & Keegan, 2008). An integralist is a person who focuses on the individual and the collective, the inner and outer, and human and non-human concerns. Nightingale was concerned with the most basic needs of human beings and all aspects of the environment (clean air, water, food, houses, etc.), both locally and globally. She also experienced and recorded her personal understanding of the connection with the Divine – an awareness of something greater than herself and a major connecting link woven into her work and life (Dossey, Beck, & Rushton, 2008; Dossey & Keegan, 2008; Dossey, Selanders, Beck, & Attewell, 2005).

Nightingale was a nurse, educator, administrator, communicator, statistician, and environmental activist. Her specific accomplishments also included establishing the model for nursing schools throughout the world and creating a prototype model of care for sick and wounded soldiers during the Crimean War (1854-1856). She was an innovator for British Army medical reform that included reorganizing the British Army Medical Department, creating an Army Statistical Department, and collaborating on the first British Army Medical School, curriculum, and professor selection. She invented a statistical wedge diagram equivalent to today's circular histograms or circular statistical representation, and in 1858, was the first woman admitted to the Royal Statistical Society. She developed and wrote workhouses and midwifery protocols and papers leading to successful legislation reform, revolutionized hospital data collection, and was a recognized expert on the health of the British Army and soldiers in India for over 40 years. She never went to India but collected and analyzed data directly from Army stations, and she wrote and published documents, articles, and books on the topic. She received numerous other recognitions, including the Order of Merit in 1902, the first woman to receive this honor. She wrote over 100 combined books and official Army reports. Her 10,000 letters now comprise the largest private collection of letters at the British Library, with 4,000 family letters at the Wellcome, London. She called all of this "nursing."

Association [ANA], 2007). Together, we are collectively addressing human health – of individuals, of communities, of environments (interior and exterior) and the world – as our first priority. We are educated and prepared physically, emotionally, socially, mentally, and spiritually to effectively accomplish

the activities required to create a healthy world. Nurses are key in mobilizing new holistic approaches in health education and health care delivery in all areas of nursing (AHNA & ANA, 2007; Dossey & Keegan, 2008). Solutions and evidence-based practice protocols can be shared and implemented around the world through dialogues, the Internet, and publications.

Outside of nursing, there continues to be minimal understanding and recognition related to the depth of nurses' knowledge, expertise, and critical-thinking capacities and skills for assisting others in achieving and maintaining health and well being. We are faced with a changing picture of global health due to globalization that knows no natural or political boundaries. Increasing our understanding of global health through the exploration of values and new partnerships and relationships with other nurses globally, we see that health becomes an essential component and expression of global citizenship and sustainable development. Health is a basic human right and a global good that needs to be promoted and protected by the global community.

Severe health needs exist in almost every community and nation throughout the world. Thus, all nurses are involved in some aspect of global health and healing endeavors to assist individuals and nations to become healthier. To have a healthy world, we must have healthy people and healthy environments. Nursing shortages are now critical and epidemic worldwide (International Council of Nurses [ICN], 2004). This problem is serious and complex, and is impacting health and well being across the globe. Nurses are the heart and soul of health care, and more support is needed. Overcoming this nursing shortage crisis will require exceptional advocacy and leadership. Like Nightingale, we believe that partnerships are key to improving health around the globe. Partnerships can ensure that we transcend national borders, unify health care disciplines, and create healthy communities.

Each year, nurses gratefully celebrate International Nurses Week around May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale. At this time in human history, however, the world needs much more than just cake, ice cream, and a one-day recognition. To increase awareness of nurses' value to society, we invite you to sign the Nightingale Declaration for a Healthy World by 2020 and also encourage your students to sign (see Sidebar 2). The Nightingale Declaration, the first global nurs-

Sidebar 2. Nightingale Declaration for a Healthy World by 2020

We, the nurses and concerned citizens of the global community, hereby dedicate ourselves to achieve a healthy world by 2020.

We declare our willingness to unite in a program of action, to share information and solutions, and to improve health conditions for all humanity – locally, nationally, and globally.

We further resolve to adopt personal practices and to implement public policies in our communities and nations – making this goal achievable and inevitable by the year 2020, beginning today in our own lives, in the life of our nations, and in the world at large.

Source: Used with permission of the Nightingale Initiative for Global Health, 2004.

ing Internet signature campaign, is creating a grassroots-to-global network that has emerged as one step toward improving global health by 2020, the Bicentennial of Nightingale's birth. To that end, the Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH) (2007) is engaging in interdisciplinary dialogues for partnership. NIGH is collaborating with nurses, midwives, related professionals and allied health care providers, and other concerned citizens throughout the world. With focus on connection rather than specialization, NIGH is building a diverse and committed global network for addressing this challenge and implementing our objectives for education, empowerment, and support during the upcoming decade.

Sidebar 3. Traveling the World

In 2007, the NIGH team traveled around the world and shared NIGH's story. In February, NIGH's International Co-Director, Dr. Cynda Rushton, an Associate Professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, was honored as the only nurse on the faculty of the International Conference, Recent Advances in Clinical Oncology, held in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Bin Marbarak Al-Nahayan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Chancellor of the United Arab Emirates University. This conference was hosted in collaboration with Tawam Hospital, General Authority for Health Services for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, in affiliation with Johns Hopkins Medicine.



Dr. Cynda Rushton (right) shakes hands with H.H. Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Chancellor of UAE University and President of Zayed University

Other members of the NIGH Team also journeyed to Europe, South America, and Asia. In June, NIGH International Co-Directors Dr. Barbara Dossey and Dr. Deva-Marie Beck joined Wayne Kines, NIGH's Global Communications Director, as featured panelists speaking to 1,400 students and faculty at the 6th National [Turkish] Student Nursing Congress at the University of Istanbul. Beck also was featured in the opening keynote address to the II Congreso Venezolano "Florence Nightingale" in Caracas in August.

In October, Kines and Beck visited Beijing, China, to meet with nursing, media, and government leaders about future collaborations on the Nightingale Declaration Campaign. While there, they met with nursing staff of the prestigious Beijing Tiantan Puhua Hospital, the latest institution to sign the Declaration. In addition, based on meetings with staff of the Beijing Nightingale Community of Culture (BNCC), NIGH is currently collaborating with the BNCC to make the Mandarin version of the Nightingale Declaration available online.

Sidebar 3. Traveling the World (continued)



Nursing students from across Turkey on the campus of Istanbul University, including NIGH team members Deva-Marie Beck (2nd from left), Fusun Oren, Barbara Dossey, and Wayne Kines (6th, 7th, and 8th from left). Photo credit: Tuncer Oren of the Canadian and Turkish Women's Association of Ottawa [CATWAO].



Deva-Marie Beck and Wayne Kines with the North Ward Day Nursing Staff of the Beijing Tiantan Puhua Hospital. Photo credit: Linda Liu.

Universal Love for Florence Nightingale

To date, the NIGH team is heartened to find a universal love for Florence Nightingale the world over. In China, they call her “Nan Ten Ger.” Every nursing student in China reads a short essay in English about her as they begin their nursing lessons. In Japan, all school children learn about Nightingale in their primary classes. Because of what Nightingale did for the Turkish soldiers during the Crimean War, she is loved across the Islamic world. She is remembered wherever English is studied and spoken, across the Commonwealth and in the United States. Further, in Latin America, she is loved and revered, and NIGH is still discovering the depth of this Spanish Nightingale connection. As reported previously and now known from our own travels, the spirit of Florence Nightingale remains compelling. She acts as a unifying icon for this grassroots-to-global nursing movement. She inspires individuals. She is loved in every region of the world.

For more than 150 years, Nightingale’s life has set a standard to which nurses measure their work – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Now, we can set an even higher standard in her name. The work she called “nursing” included holistic, integrative global work encompassing the social, cultural, and environmental issues related to the health of all of humanity. In her name, the Nightingale Declaration Campaign (NDC) is being developed in cooperation with a growing list of collaborators and many more to establish worldwide commitment to the Nightingale Declaration for a Healthy World.

Please visit www.nightingaledclaration.net. By clicking on the box on the right side of the screen and signing the Nightingale Declaration for Our Healthy World, you will join over 15,500 citizens from 86 countries. These include leaders from over 1,000 associations and related organizations throughout the world, already representing millions of nurses and health care colleagues.

In our travels, we have discovered that Florence Nightingale is loved around the world (see Sidebar 3). Why this Declaration? Signature commitments representing all 193 Member States of the United Nations will lay the foundation for accomplishing the adoption of two proposed United Nations Resolutions by the 2008-2009 United Nations General Assemblies, declaring 2010 as International Year of the Nurse and 2011-2020 as United Nations Decade for a Healthy World.

With these proposed UN Resolutions bringing visibility, recognition, and value to nurses and allied health care providers, this action not only empowers them, but raises public awareness as to the crucial connection between empowered nurses and allied health care workers, as well as the

health of people everywhere. In 1893, Florence Nightingale wrote, “Health is not only to be well, but to use well every power we have.”

Standing alongside Nightingale, each of us has an opportunity – right now – to use our power to make a difference. For the sake of our own health, our children’s health, and the world’s health, please join us by taking this first crucial step and signing the Nightingale Declaration for Our Healthy World!

We are challenged to capture our essence and to emerge as true health diplomats in the 21st century. As we explore our roots, we are reminded of how we can assert ourselves and draw strength from Nightingale, whose message moves us toward the integration of moral, political, spiritual, and metaphysical action, and returns us to a sense of calling to the profession.

A part of Nightingale’s wisdom resides within each of us. She would be at home in our world. She would ask us to identify our “must,” as she referred to her work, and fight for the causes we believe necessary to achieve a health care system driven by the needs of patients and to take steps to create a healthy world.

Once you have finished with this newsletter, please pass it along to share with a colleague or friend.

DEAN'S Notes™

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DEAN'S Notes is indexed in Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature.

DEAN'S Notes is published five times a year (September, November, January, March and May) by Anthony J. Jannetti Inc., East Holly Avenue Box 56, Pitman, New Jersey 08071-0056. Telephone 856.256.2300. FAX 856.589.7463. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the express written permission of the publisher. Address changes should include mailing label and be forwarded to the publisher.

As we increase our understanding and further value our unique heritage, we deepen our personal commitment to our work in the world. Our role in today's events will be part of tomorrow's future.

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Note: Please contact Barbara Dossey via e-mail: barbara@dosseydossey.com about how you may be involved in the Nightingale Declaration as a Sponsor or your school feature in the Campaign News section <http://www.nightingaledclaration.net>

Initial Sponsors of the Nightingale Declaration Campaign include the American Nurses Association, Sigma Theta Tau International, American Association of Critical Care Nurses, Registered Nurses of Ontario, The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, University of Maryland School of Nursing, University of Indiana School of Nursing, University of Minnesota School of Nursing, York University School of Nursing (Toronto), Baylor University Louise Herrington School of Nursing, Florida Atlantic University Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, Dr. Jean Watson, and Johnson & Johnson's *Campaign for Nursing's Future*.

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Mark Your Calendar!
March 26-30, 2008
NSNA 56th Annual Convention
Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, Grapevine, TX