Introducing the International Services Workgroup of the NNC

The International Services Workgroup of the American Red Cross National Nursing Committee (NNC) has been charged with implementing the Chief Nurse’s initiative to develop a collaborative plan that engages nurses with American Red Cross International Services’ (IS) goals. The workgroup is focusing on the IS Measles & Rubella eradication campaign, the “Measles & Rubella Initiative”. IS is collaborating with other agencies to achieve a global Measles & Rubella immunization rate of 95% by 2020 to wipe out those diseases. The workgroup has plans to support that effort.

The American Red Cross is a founding partner of the Measles & Rubella Initiative, an international alliance committed to ensuring that no child dies from measles or is born with congenital rubella syndrome. Founded in 2001 as the Measles Initiative, this global partnership is led by the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), UNICEF and the World Health Organization. The initiative, which aims for a 95 percent reduction in measles mortality by 2020, has already supported the vaccination of 1.1 billion children, helping reduce global measles deaths by 78 percent.

The NNC’s International Services Workgroup goals are:

1) Offer an educational program for nurses in collaboration with the CDC and the American Nurses Association (ANA) to raise awareness about the Measles and Rubella Initiative and to engage nurses and volunteers in educating the community about it via presentations.

2) Develop a presentation to educate the public about the Measles & Rubella Initiative.


The workgroup plans to use the Biomedical Services nursing program Nurses Educating to Help Save Lives as a model to create a presentation tailored to IS and the Measles & Rubella Initiative. It will be developed in collaboration with IS, the NNC workgroup and other Red Cross nursing and health leaders. The program will give volunteers the opportunity to participate in advancing the goals of the Measles and Rubella Initiative by actively educating and promoting support for immunization and awareness of the public health risks posed by under-immunization globally and within their communities. The target audience will be the general public, schools, nurses, nursing students, Red Cross nurse leaders, and other health professionals. It is hoped that raising measles and rubella immunization awareness will also expand the potential donor base for funds to provide Measles & Rubella vaccinations globally via the international Measles & Rubella Initiative.

Members of the NNC’s International Services Workgroup’s include: Harold W. Brooks (Senior Advisor), Senior Vice President of International Operations of the American Red Cross; Marie O. Etienne, DNP, ARNP, PLNC, (Chair); Mary Kellam,
BA, Nursing and Health Associate, Volunteer Services; Carmen Kynard, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, MBA, MEd, NNC Chair; Nancy S. McKelvey, RN, MSN, Former Chief Nurse; Barbara Nichols, DHL, MS, RN, FAAN, NNC Vice-Chair; and Kate Spence, BA, NNC Nursing Student Representative.

For more information and resources, explore the following links:
- Measles & Rubella Initiative Exchange Page
- Measles & Rubella Initiative Fact Sheet
- Measles Elimination Fact Sheet
- Stop Rubella – Infographic
- Measles & Rubella Initiative Web Page

Happy Nurses’ Week!

It is with great gratitude that I extend my thanks to each nurse and health leader for their time and dedication to the American Red Cross mission. Together you are serving individuals, families, and working with partners to promote wellness and resilience in our communities. There are also many individuals who support nurses and health leaders in their work and their contribution is vital.

The work you do - direct client service in Disaster Cycle Services, Service to the Armed Forces or International Services; teaching community classes, giving life-saving blood and educating about the need for diverse blood donors; or providing leadership and subject matter expertise - all help further the mission. While not all serve in leadership roles, nurses and other health professionals can lead by modeling the seven Fundamental Principles in their work and maintaining a focus on the mission in the midst of challenge and change. You have supported clients, each other and worked creatively to solve problems and overcome obstacles.

As many of you know, the annual Chief Nurse Initiatives, developed in collaboration with Red Cross business line leaders and input from nursing and health leaders, support organizational goals. We have focused on engaging volunteers and preparing, responding and recovering across the business lines of service. As the fiscal year draws to a close, there are many accomplishments that we can celebrate. Some highlights include how you:

- Supported the Home Fire Preparedness Campaign that has already resulted in saving at least 13 lives
- Mentored health professional students to present the Pillowcase Project to educate third to fifth graders on fire and disaster safety

Linda MacIntyre, PhD, RN

- Donated life-saving blood and presented information to communities about the need for diverse blood donors through the Nurses Educating to Help Save Lives program
- Promoted awareness that HIPAA guidance allows release of information to the Red Cross for emergency communication for members of the military and their families and for individuals impacted by disasters,
- Taught community health and safety classes
- Increased awareness about the global work of the Red Cross and partners in the Measles and Rubella Initiative

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with Red Cross nurses and other health professionals from across the nation. I am impressed with your dedication, creativity and excitement and it is an honor to serve with you. Nurses are trusted, in part because they are advocates for the individuals, families and communities they serve. Your work demonstrates a commitment to alleviate suffering and promote wellness.

While many value the specialized tasks that nurses provide, what I value most is the nurse’s ability to assess, plan and respond. Nurses assess physical and emotional health as well as environmental safety. When a nurse walks into a room, he or she immediately assesses safety and may ask, “Are the cords taped down to prevent falls?; Is there a place to wash one’s hands?; Are the fire exits clearly marked?; Is there an immediate threat?” A nurse quickly assesses an individual’s general appearance and changes in breathing patterns, ambulation or mood. If action is needed, the nurse determines how best to respond, may seek assistance and then evaluates the outcomes. All of this takes place very quickly and prevention might occur before anyone has noted a problem. The nurse leader then takes it to the next level to ensure that systems are in place to promote wellness and prevent harm. The nurse
works as part of team and values the contributions of each person.

Most of the work of Red Cross nurses and other health professionals involves preparing, responding and recovering and this work takes place across all business lines. Julia Catherine Stimson (1881-1948) as quoted by editors Betton and Moriarty in Nursing Illuminations: A Book of Days (2004) said:

“Preparedness for all kinds of emergencies and disasters is a sign of the highest type of intelligence. As people learn the lessons of history and experience they become more conscious of the need of preventing calamities and of being ready to meet them. The American Red Cross has long led the way in teaching how to prevent emergencies and also in readiness to deal with them...One of its basic duties is to have qualified nurses ready...It is certain that they [nurses] can always be counted on when the country needs them...Experience has shown that the medical and nursing professions may be counted on to work together not only in attempting to prevent catastrophes but also in relieving the suffering caused by them.” (1936)

Thank you for your service and have a wonderful Nurses Week.

Nurses’ Week Message from NBNA President, Rev. Dr. Deidre Walton

The American Nurses Association’s theme for National Nurses Week 2015 is "Ethical Practice, Quality Care." The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) embraces the recognition that nurses continue to play a critical role in ensuring equitable access to quality health care for our communities. NBNA has a rich history and legacy for making a difference in the nursing profession. During the 2015 National Nurses Week, NBNA will continue to salute the architects and pioneers in the struggle for equality in nursing care and for their exceptional service, advocacy and determination that ensures access to the highest quality of healthcare for persons of color.

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) has continued its collaboration with private and public agencies/organizations that share common concerns for improving the health status of all people, particularly African Americans and other minority consumers.

The American Red Cross and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Help in Nepal after Earthquake Disaster

Click to read the web article “Red Cross Commits $4 Million More to Help People of Nepal” from May 8, 2015, about the American Red Cross’ response to the earthquake.

In 2011, under the leadership of NBNA’s Immediate Past President, Dr. Debra A. Toney, NBNA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Red Cross to help provide nursing services in times of natural and manmade disasters. The partnership agreement with the Red Cross was to provide services and assistance to communities prior to and after disaster events in the United States. Community nurse leaders are extraordinary and creative nurses – they are advocates for the constituents they serve. As advocates for quality care and their commitment to service, they make a difference in their communities and globally.

NBNA continues its commitment and will continue its legacy in making an impact in communities across the nation. As an organization, our focus will remain on influencing diversity through education, policy, practice, research, practice, and leadership. NBNA has been guided by the principle that African American nurses have the understanding, knowledge, interest, and expertise to make a significant difference in the health care status of African American communities across the nation throughout history. Together, we are making a difference.

Click to read the web article “Nepal: Red Cross stresses urgent need to deliver aid to remote communities as monsoon season approaches”, from May 7, 2015, about the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ response.
In early fall of 2014 I decided that I wanted to go to West Africa to help out with the Ebola crisis that was dominating the news. There were people there that needed nursing care without enough nurses. This is what we do all the time. Nurses step up. We do it every day for years at a time. Personally I felt that I was in a good place in my life; going would be less of a hardship for me than for someone younger with children still at home or someone still working. Before I applied I talked with my family because this was a decision that could potentially affect their lives in a big way. After the silent stare that I got from both my children and my husband they all gave me their blessings and told me not to get Ebola. Thank you, I hadn’t thought of that.

I have experience with disaster deployments from being part of the American Red Cross since my retirement in 2012. Heart to Heart International is a humanitarian organization headquartered in Kansas City. After being interviewed by them and accepted, I left for Liberia on November 5, 2014. Liberia was the primary focus of the response effort from the US. I trained along with my Heart to Heart teammates at the base set up by our Department of Defense. The young soldiers did a great job teaching us about changing medical protocols and, most importantly, proper donning and doffing of the personal protective equipment (PPE). A more aggressive approach to patient care was being implemented. IV hydration was going be the standard treatment in order to give the patients’ bodies a chance to combat this awful disease that profoundly dehydrates.

A group of two doctors and three nurses including myself were assigned to relieve staff at an Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) about four hours from the capital city. The ETU is very isolated and self-contained. Once we arrived we began rounding, giving meds, IVs, baths, changing beds. We tried our best to provide emotional care to our patients but were impaired by our cumbersome equipment.

The Liberian people were the most resilient people that I have ever met. I am hoping that some of that strength rubbed off on me. A whole generation there has lived through a prolonged brutal civil war and now a dehumanizing disease that has wiped out families. The children have seen things best left to horror movies. Yet they always thanked me after I finished my shift in the ETU. They expect and give a “good morning” on the streets. They cared for each other within the ward, even caring for children without parents.

This was a very difficult deployment, harder than I expected. The heat was oppressive. The physical environment for the patients was austere. Supplies and medications were extremely limited. Above all, the PPE compromised contact and stamina. Despite that, this was the most rewarding experience of my life, short of motherhood. It was a decision that I am glad I made. I encourage all nurses to venture out of their comfort zones. You may surprise yourself with some self-discovery.

I joined the American Red Cross after my retirement from working in various positions in a community hospital. I have had seven national deployments. Locally I stay active as a Disaster Action Team leader and Disaster Health Services consultant, assisting when a client has disaster related health needs. I am currently Northeast Division Disaster Health Services Advisor, a role that is new to me. I am growing into serving as a resource. I hold a monthly divisional Health Services conference call to discuss continuing education and promote mutual aid. Within my region I am planning a Disaster Health Services re-engagement event.

As nurses, we interact with people at the worst times of their lives. They trust us to care and do our best. That trust is a privilege none of us takes lightly. I am proud to be part of this profession. We need to continue nurturing our new and future nurses. We need to stay current with continuing education. And most of all we need to continue stepping up.
There Were Giants in Those Days

The American Journal of Nursing wrote of Helen Scott Hay in 1932, “There were giants in those days.” Although the words were written in honor of Miss Hay, they apply to Alice L. Fitzgerald and Charlotte M. Heilman as well. They were three of the outstanding American Red Cross nurse leaders following World War I. They worked closely together and provided important postwar health and relief programs in Europe. Miss Hay wrote, “Approximately 600 nurses have labored since the Armistice in the various countries of Europe... they have been the backbone of all that the Red Cross has accomplished in helping to put Europe on its feet... The work that the American Red Cross nurse has so faithfully performed will live on long after her departure.” Most of the Florence Nightingale Medals awarded between the two world wars went to American Red Cross nurses serving abroad.

Helen Scott Hay was born in Lanark, Illinois in 1869. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Northwestern University in 1893 and Illinois Training School in 1895. Her education included postgraduate studies at University of Chicago. Her language skills included French, German and a command of Bulgarian. Miss Hay became director of the Illinois Training School in 1906. She enrolled in the Red Cross in 1911 and received Badge #2708. Queen Eleanora of Bulgaria requested Miss Hay’s help in establishing a funded nursing school at Sofia but World War I intervened in 1914. “Sister Helen” became the chief nurse of the Red Cross Mercy Ship and led Unit C to Kiev, Russia. In June 1915, she finally arrived in Sofia and by September the nursing school opened in the Alexander Hospital. Miss Hay stayed on to provide district nursing with another Red Cross nurse, Rachel Torrence.

Jane Delano requested Miss Hay’s services as director of the Bureau of Instruction at national headquarters as the United States entered the war. Her role included supervision of the classes in Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick. In early 1918, Miss Hay resigned to assist with the development of the Army School of Nursing for the War Department. She returned to the Red Cross as chief nurse for the Balkan Commission in December 1918. She selected 98 nurses for work in Albania, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania. They opened baby clinics, cared for refugees and orphans, staffed hospitals and proved the importance of public health nursing for all countries. A Red Cross colonel called Miss Hay “the biggest man in the Balkans,” for her accomplishments under extremely difficult circumstances.

Miss Hay followed Alice Fitzgerald as chief nurse of the Red Cross Commission in Europe in December 1919. From Paris, she continued Red Cross assistance with the development of nursing schools in Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, and continued to support the school in Bulgaria. Clara Noyes and Miss Hay toured all American Red Cross relief sites in 1920 and recommended that the organization continue all child welfare and public health programs.

Helen Scott Hay received the Florence Nightingale Medal in 1922 for her exceptional service and devotion to Red Cross nursing. She also received an honorary degree of doctorate of humane letters from Northwestern. She died in Savanna, Illinois in 1932 after several years of ill health related to her war service.

Alice Louise Fitzgerald’s Red Cross executive career began in 1918 with the Service de Sante in France. A group of Boston donors sent her to England in February 1916 as the Edith Cavell Memorial Nurse for service with the British Expeditionary Forces. After the United States entered the war, she transferred to the Red Cross Nursing Service. She established a refugee hospital in Rimini, Italy, and supervised work in the south of France until asked to place American nurses and aides in French hospitals. Her role insured the best of care for American soldiers and all wounded patients. She crossed France on inspection tours and wrote descriptive reports. Over 3,000 American soldiers in 151 French hospitals received care from American nurses. Miss Fitzgerald’s next appointment as Chief Nurse of the American Red Cross Commission for Europe came in May 1919.
Born in Florence, Italy in 1875 to American parents from Baltimore, Maryland, Miss Fitzgerald received her education in Europe. She became fluent in French, Italian and German. Her parents did not approve of her career choice but Miss Fitzgerald graduated from Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing, in the class of 1906. When an earthquake struck Messina, Italy in 1908, she responded with the Italian Red Cross. She enrolled in the American Red Cross Nursing Service in 1913, receiving Badge #3748. She served as supervisor of the operating room under Clara Noyes at Bellevue, and became superintendent of Robert Long Hospital, University of Indiana.

Miss Fitzgerald helped establish nursing schools in Poland and Czechoslovakia. In November 1919, she became Director of Nursing Service, League of Red Cross Societies. Throughout her career, she carried on extensive correspondence with Clara Noyes that covered every aspect of her work in Europe. She also toured with Miss Hay. Traveling together on an inspection trip in the Balkans, the two women sat up all night in a third class carriage. They arrived at a Serbian village midday, very hot and weary. As soon as they alighted from the train and assembled their baggage, Miss Hay said briskly, “Now we must drop this somewhere and hunt up the director of the hospital.” To this Miss Fitzgerald replied firmly, “Helen, you may call the director if you like. I am going to have a bath.” Miss Fitzgerald expected from life a modicum of comfort. In the 1920’s, she served with the Rockefeller Commission in the Philippines and Siam.

She retired in 1948 with 16 awards and medals from European countries and the Florence Nightingale Medal that she had received in 1929. She believed that all nurses deserved these tributes, not individual nurses.

Miss Fitzgerald died in 1962 at the Peabody Home in New York. In a final interview she said, “I have had a lovely life. I was so happy with my work in all those countries that I never took a vacation. Work was recreation when countries asked me to come... I saw many kinds of disease but I never was sick, not once in all my life, even in China when we were surrounded by cholera.”

Charlotte M. Heilman was born in 1880 in West Virginia. She graduated from Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1908. As a young widow in 1912, she entered the new field of public health nursing and enrolled in the Red Cross Nursing Service with Badge #14217.

In April 1918 she left for Paris and assignment to Milan, Italy. She served with the American Red Cross Commission to Italy in several cities. After the Armistice, she nursed soldiers with influenza and received an assignment to the Commission for Tuberculosis. For the next six years, she served in Italy, Serbia, Greece and the Dominican Republic. In Serbia and Greece, she provided child welfare work. She became the Director of Nursing for the American Red Cross Commission to Greece. After the Smyrna fire in the Greek-Turkish War, she provided relief to refugees with a hospital for treatment of typhus and smallpox patients. She organized and taught Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick classes for the Dominicans and became Director of Nursing for the chapter in Santo Domingo.

Her service in the United States matched her work in Europe. She worked at national headquarters in Public Health, Home Nursing and Disaster and spent years with Field Nursing in Florida, Georgia, New York, New Jersey and Delaware. She organized Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick institutes. Even in retirement, she remained active with her chapter and served as chair of the Nursing Committee. She received the Florence Nightingale Medal in 1933.

Her memories included “reminiscences of crowned heads, royal infants and a pageant of Italians, Serbian, Greek and Russian soldiers and refugees.” American soldiers and notables included one of her first patients in Milan, Ernest Hemingway. Her colleagues included Queen Sofia and Queen Elizabeth.

In letters to national headquarters in 1952, she
addressed her memories of Italy after the release of Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*. “Shortly after the book received recognition, I had a talk with Agnes von Kurowsky, #17500, a member of our staff in Milan. We recognized incidents and most of the personnel. Miss Van Campen was Miss Katherine DeLong, #6697, a small, dignified, capable Johns Hopkins graduate. We were quite sure that Miss Gage was none other than myself, as we recalled the thermometer incident, the making of the bed which he mentions and my talking to him as a big sister when he was naughty. Miss Barkley seems to be fictitious.” “Hemingway was young, impulsive, rude and uncooperative. Agnes had outings with Hemingway but Miss Delong insisted upon a chaperone because of Italian customs. Agnes had correspondence with him for a while after she returned to the U.S. but destroyed his letters before he published his first book.”

Mrs. Heilman died in 1956 at her home in New Jersey.

**Support Red Cross Giving Day and Make Help Available When Needed Most**

Molly Dalton

The American Red Cross is launching its first Giving Day on June 2, asking everyone to make a donation to the Red Cross to help ensure that help is available wherever and whenever people need it.

Red Cross Giving Day is a 24-hour national fundraising campaign supporting the work of the Red Cross in communities across the country each and every day. The theme of Giving Day is “All In One Day” because the Red Cross is “all in” every day, helping people to get back on their feet.

Each day in communities across the country and around the world, the Red Cross comforts disaster victims, supplies blood to patients in need, supports members of the military and teaches people lifesaving skills. Nationally, the Red Cross:

- Responds nearly 200 times a day to help a family affected by a home fire or other disaster.
- Provides nearly 5,600 blood transfusions a day to patients in need.
- Gives 15,500 people a day lifesaving health and safety training.
- Provides nearly 1,000 services a day to military members, their families and veterans.
- With the help of partners, gives 308,000 children a day measles or rubella vaccinations.

Right now you can help build the #allin1day movement by signing up to be a Giving Day Social Ambassador. Ambassadors have an important mission – to help spread the word about Giving Day to your neighbors, friends and families. There are lots of tools available to help you at the Social Ambassador link, including click and paste posts and images to use on your social media sites, photos, content and badges.

Giving Day is a 24-hour chance to turn compassion into action. To take part in Giving Day and support the work of the American Red Cross, please visit redcross.org/givingday. All in one day, working together, we can bring help and hope to people when they need it most.

AMERICAN RED CROSS National Nursing Committee Heritage Committee Members: Vivian Littlefield, Chair; Elizabeth Kazmier, Editor; Donna Jensen, Associate Editor; Committee Members/Contributors: Molly Dalton; Donna Dorsey; Marie Etienne; Candace Roosevelt; Cheryl Schmidt; Jean Shulman; Jean Van Voorhis