



HAPPENINGS

SPECIAL EDITION: COVID-19

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Issue 2

COVID-19 AND YEAR OF THE NURSE

By Near North's Chief Operating Officer Tanya L. Ford, MBA, MJ



Chief Executive Officer Ms. Berneice Mills-Thomas receiving the Legendary Nurse Award at the 32nd National Black Nurses Day Celebration.

The year 2020 is truly turning out to be the year of the nurse.

Early last year, the World Health Organization (WHO), a specialized agency of the United Nations (an intergovernmental organization charged with maintaining international peace and security) that holds the responsibility for international public health, chose the year 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse," (including midwives) as way to celebrate and support the nursing profession.

There are six reasons the WHO identified as to why 2020 was chosen to be the "Year of Nurse." The first reason for the 2020 celebration recognizes the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, who established the concept of community health nursing, was the first woman to receive the order of Merit (military honor for service), founded the first scientifically based nursing school, and helped institute training for midwives and nurses working in workhouse infirmaries.

Secondly, 2020 is slated to see the release of the WHO's first State of the World's Nursing Report and the first State of the World's Midwifery report, both geared toward describing the current and future state of the nursing and midwifery workforce.

This year is also the final year of the 3-year Nursing Now global campaign, a collaboration between the WHO and the International Council of Nurses that focuses on five core areas: ensuring that nurses and midwives have a more prominent voice in health policy-making; encouraging greater investment in the nursing workforce; recruiting more nurses into leadership positions; conducting research that helps determine where nurses can have the greatest impact; and sharing of best nursing practices.

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LIVING A HEALTHY QUARANTINE LIFESTYLE

Near North's Cooking Program Coordinator Jaqueline Stutsman provides her recommendations for nutritious snacks to enjoy while quarantined



- Enjoy 1-2 tablespoons peanut butter or another nut butter with apple slices or celery sticks.
- Eat 2 tablespoons of hummus with snap peas or carrot sticks. If you like spicy foods, add a sprinkle of cayenne pepper to the hummus!
- Make a cabbage slaw using vinegar or citrus, like lemon, lime or olive oil, instead of mayonnaise. You can eat this alone, add it as a side dish to your dinner or place on top of a mixed greens salad for flavor.



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The fourth and fifth reasons are related to the current nursing workforce. Currently nurses make up a majority of the worldwide health care workforce, making up more than 50 percent in many countries; and as a huge part of the health care worker shortfall, nurses are expected to account for more than 50 percent of the shortfall in the global health workforce through 2030.

The final reason given for choosing 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse," is that the support given to nurses boosts economic growth and gender equality. Providing nurses with what they need lends to better health outcomes, stronger economies, and greater gender equality.

In February of this year, I had the pleasure of attending the 32nd National Black Nurses Day Celebration in which Near North Health Service Corporation's Chief Executive Officer Ms. Berneice Mills-Thomas, RN, received an award honoring her as a Legendary Nurse. Nurses attended from all around, young and old, newly minted and well-seasoned, as well as student nurses, teaching nurses, and administrative nurses, dressed in business attire, white nurse uniforms, nursing school uniforms, and others dressed to impress in celebration of Black History Month.

In her acceptance speech Ms. Mills-Thomas passionately spoke of the nursing profession in relation to community health. Drawing from a movement that began well over 60 years ago and contemplating the current state of community health, her theme, "The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same," could not have been more befitting. She spoke of the impact that access to health care has on a person's physical, social, and mental health, and their quality of life. She discussed the barriers that keep people from being able to access health care services (i.e. cost, inadequate or no health insurance, lack of available services, etc.) that unfortunately still exists despite the changes such as the Medicaid Managed Care, Medicaid expansion, care management and care coordination services, in addition to technology improvements (i.e. telehealth), and many, many others. When Ms. Mills-Thomas explained that even now being able to access health care services varies based one's race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, as well as residential locations, gasps could be heard coming from around the room. It is a proven fact that the lack of access to health care leads to poor health and health outcomes.

Ms. Mills-Thomas went on to discuss the social determinants of health (SDoH), such as issues with food insecurities, housing, transportation, literacy, income, employment, that are also linked to poor health and health outcomes. She asserted that SDoH were not a new concept among health care leaders, and added that community health centers have always worked to help individuals address social issues while working to eliminate health disparities and inequities within the African American, Hispanic, poor, and other vulnerable populations and communities.

With powerful affirmation, Ms. Mills-Thomas articulated that the fight for social justice reaches as far back as Harriet Tubman, and since then black nurses have combined their nursing duties with the fight to end social injustices. Their goal has always been to improve health equity in disenfranchised populations so that every person can attain their full health potential.

Not only did Ms. Mills-Thomas provide information on current challenges that exist in attaining better health outcomes, she also provided her audience with insightful knowledge for the future. She spoke of workforce development, technological advancement, expanding educational content, research and policy-making improvements, and community outreach and partnerships as pathways toward attaining health equity.

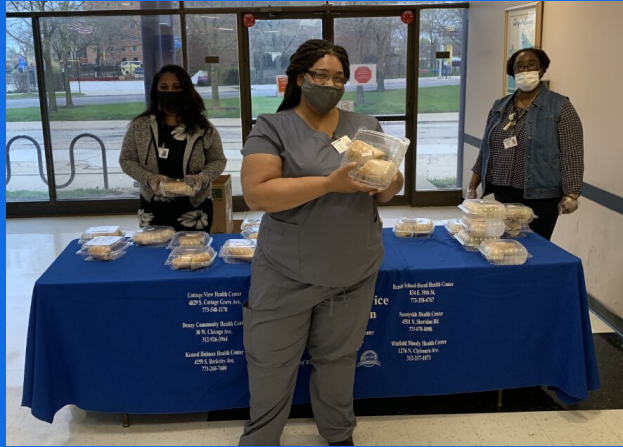
On March 11, 2020, less than two weeks after the celebration, news began to surface that the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19 had reached pandemic proportions. The numbers of cases and deaths had begun to rapidly increase. Nurses answered the call to action and took their place along with other direct care providers on the front line providing compassionate care at the risk of their own health and well-being.

According to the WHO's first State of the World's Nursing report, which launched amid the pandemic, "nurses from around the world are demonstrating their compassion, bravery, and courage as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and never before has their value been more clearly demonstrated."

Worldwide celebrations will be had throughout the year. Please continue to acknowledge and recognize our nursing and midwifery heroes, and be reminded that National Nurses Week is May 6-May 12, 2020.

The WHO could not have identified more deserving reasons or a better year to celebrate the nursing profession. The year 2020 has truly turned out to be the YEAR OF THE NURSE!

FEEDING NEAR NORTH'S FRONTLINE



Feed The Front Line Chicago provided lunch for Near North Health Service Corporation staff at Komed Holman and Cottage View health centers on Thursday, April 30, 2020.

Feed the Front Line Chicago is a group of nonprofit organizations with a mission to feed the health care professionals on the front lines fighting COVID-19 while also supporting local restaurants and their employees.

For more information on Feed the Front Line, please visit www.ftfl.org.

NEAR NORTH TAKES COVID-19 TESTING TO COMMUNITY

Near North Health Service Corporation has partnered with Living Word Christian Center and R.I.S.E. Reentry Program, Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health to bring free COVID-19 screening and testing to Chicago's communities.

Near North will travel by van to R.I.S.E. at 6266 W. North Avenue in Chicago on Thursdays to provide screening and testing services from 12-4 p.m. to previously scheduled patients. A medical provider will conduct a brief exam and if the patient meets the requirements a COVID-19 test will be administered. Near North will then call in 2-4 days with the results.

Off-site screening and testing services will allow Near North patients to receive the services they need while maintaining social distancing practices.

For more information or to make an appointment, please call (773) 622-5701.



Near North will be traveling by van to R.I.S.E. at 6266 W. North Avenue in Chicago to begin offsite screening and testing of COVID-19.

NEAR NORTH HEALTH CENTERS

Cottage View Health Center
4829 S. Cottage Grove Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60615
(773) 548-1170

Komed Holman Health Center
4259 S. Berkeley Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60653
(773) 268-7600

North Kostner Health Center
1520 N. Kostner Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60651
(312) 216-8020

Sunnyside Health Center
4501 N. Sheridan Rd.,
Chicago, IL 60640
(773) 878-8098

Denny Health Center
30 W. Chicago Ave.,
Chicago, IL, 60610
(312) 741-8554

Louise Landau Health Center
800 N. Kedzie Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60651
(773) 826-3450

Reavis School-Based Health Center
834 E. 50th St.,
Chicago, IL 60615
(773) 358-6767

Winfield Moody Health Center
1276 N. Clybourn Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 337-1073