

Northern L'Attitudes

Newsletter of the Alaska Emergency Nurses Association

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Winter 2006

President's Message

My term as Alaska ENA president is coming to an end. As I look back over the past 2 years, several things stand out. We developed a website that is very informative and up-to-date. Jeanne Molitor and Walter have done a great job on it. Check it out at alaskaena.org.

Our bank account has grown substantially; partially from all the TNCC and ENPC classes that have been taught, and partially from 2 grants from National ENA. We were able to help 3 different facilities provide TNCC/ENPC classes.

Lastly, our membership has grown by about 20 members which puts our numbers at about 145 members. I'm very excited about that!! When we get 150 members, we can have another delegate at the national conference!

Speaking of delegates, new and different members are applying to represent our state and I

hope that continues. We also have had new and different members express an interest in being on the state council as board members and officers.

It makes me proud to have been involved with AK ENA for the past 10 years and to have served as your president these past 2 years. As I transition over to immediate past president, I encourage all of you to keep involved and support our new president, Shelly Deering, and the other council members. Let's keep the momentum going!!

Lois Johnson

Alaska ENA Opportunities

Anyone interested in chairing the ENPC or TNCC committees please notify Shelly Deering by email.

There is one board position vacant. If interested in serving, please contact **Shelly Deering**.

President-Elect's Message

I attended the ENA Leadership Orientation in Chicago which was a great educational opportunity and allowed me to network with colleagues on ideas and issues that all are facing. I found this beneficial for my role as your incoming president and also for my job that pays the bills! The ENA provided me with the tools to help me be successful. They offered a variety of topics that allowed me to choose what I needed and also oriented me to the multiple resources available.

As always I am impressed with the efficiency and functionality of the board and the national headquarters. Their goal is to be representing the Emergency Nurses across the nation in all aspects. The ENA has membership of over 30,000 nurses and is being heard across the nation regarding issues that directly affect each of you. Overcrowding in EDs, violence in the workplace, the nursing shortage, domestic violence, and injury prevention are some examples. We are being heard at our state capital and also collaborating with organizations (ACEP and other nursing organizations) to address health care issues. To be successful they need our input and support. We are the strongest we have ever been and this allows us the opportunity to affect change. As you can see, you also come back energized from Leadership.

What do Alaska Emergency Nurses need? What are our issues? To address these I will need your input and help. I look forward to being your president and representing Alaska. - **Shelly Deering**

As the new year starts it is my job to appoint the 2007 Chairs for TNCC and ENPC. Please notify me by email if you are interested in these positions.

Emergency Nurses Day Celebrations Around the State – October 2006

In Soldotna

It's so hard to get everyone together so we decided on pizza and small gifts. We got pizza for day shift and another batch of pizzas for night shift. One of the gals from Day Surgery, Laurie, who is a cake maker made our cake and decorated it with the ENA ED nurse's day logo. And, we had punch to go with it. Cardinal Health donated utility scissors and hemostats for all the staff. For door prizes, we gave away an emergency preparedness bucket (a large bucket, can opener, flashlight, portable radio, emergency blankets, whistle, batteries, compass, etc.) donated by Lois Johnson and something quilted that was to be determined between the quilter and the winner, donated by Anderson Fannon.

In Fairbanks

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital celebrated Emergency Nurse's Day by celebrating ourselves all week long with homemade treats brought in by all the ED staff. Our ED director Carol Meyer also showered the staff with wicker baskets full of more food treats and small gifts. Our physicians sent flowers to us and we enjoyed those all week long. The patients

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on the other hand...well, life goes on.

In Anchorage

From Alaska Regional Hospital
We are celebrating with Moose's Tooth Pizza today! The ED MDs purchased gifts for all of the staff!

Hilliard Pettus RN, MICN
Director of ED/LifeFlight

A message from Providence Alaska Medical Center Emergency Department's Dr. John Hall to the ED nurses there:

About twenty eight years ago, when I first started to work at Providence, I was interviewed on TV by the local news channel on the subject of Emergency Medicine. I was asked by the reporter, "As an Emergency Physician, what is the most important tool that you have at your disposal?" After apologizing for the "tool" analogy I answered quite emphatically, "That would be the nurses!" I felt that way then and feel that way even more so today and I can assure you that all AEMA partners feel the same. I tried to say this last week before I knew it was 'Emergency Nurse Week' I am including here an article about Emergency Nurses which I think all of you need and deserve to read. I doubt the article would have come your way otherwise. I would have left out the 'wheelbarrow' reference and would have spent much more time emphasizing how much I value your clinical skills and how many times you have saved my butt and that of the patient. I suspect you realize that I really don't care a

whole lot what you see when you look in a patient's ear and whether you think a patient has rales, crackles, rhonchi or some other rude noise in his/her lungs. I hope you realize how much I value your input when you say "John, I need you to see this patient now!" or "John, it sure seems to me that you should consider admitting this patient." That said, I did not write the (following) article and I agree 100% with the sentiment of the author. You all are truly the heroes of Emergency Medicine. Dr. David Baehren wrote this for the ACEP News:

"Who's Your Hero? For a generation or two, we have lamented the loss of role models in society. As parents and individuals, we naturally seek out others we would like to emulate. Sadly, a serious search through the popular culture leaves us empty-handed and empty-hearted. Thanks to a long list of legal and moral shenanigans, many entertainers, politicians, and athletes long since abdicated this momentous position of responsibility. We usually look afar for heroes and role models, and in doing so overlook a group of professionals who live and work in our midst: nurses. And not just any nurse: the emergency nurse. There are plenty of people involved in emergency care, and no emergency department could function without all of these people working as a team. But it is the emergency nurse who shoulders the weight of patient care. Without these modern-day heroes, individually and collectively we would be in quite a pinch. This unique breed of men and women are the lock stitch in the fabric of our health care safety net. Their job is a physical, emotional, and intellectual challenge. Who helped the paramedics lift the last 300-pound patient who came in? Who took the

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verbal lashing from the curmudgeon giving admitting orders over the phone? Who came to tell you that the guy you ordered the nitro drip for is taking Viagra? The emergency nurse has the thankless job of sitting in triage while both the long and the short buses unload at once. With limited information, they usually send the patient in the right direction while having to fend off some narcissistic clown with a zit on his butt. They absorb the penetrating stares from the lobby dwellers and channel all that negative energy to some secret place they only tell you about when you go to triage school. Other kinds of nurses serve key roles in health care and attend to their patients admirably. However, few function under the gun like emergency nurses do. It is the emergency nurse who cares for the critical heart failure patient until the intensive care unit is "ready" to accept the patient. The productivity of the emergency nurse expands gracefully to accommodate the endless flow of patients while the rest of the hospital "can't take report." Many of our patients arrive "unwashed." It is the emergency nurse who delivers them "washed and folded." To prepare for admission a patient with a hip fracture who lay in stool for a day requires an immense amount of care- and caring. Few nurses outside of the emergency department deal with patients who are as cantankerous, uncooperative, and violent. These nurses must deal with patients who are in their worst physical and emotional state. We all know it is a stressful time for patients and family, and we all know who the wheelbarrow is that the shovel dumps into. For the most part, the nurses expect some of this and carry on in good humor. There are times, however, when the patience of a saint is required. In fact, I believe that when emergency nurses go to heaven, they get in the fast lane, flash their hospital ID, and get the thumbs up at the gate. They earn this privilege after being

sworn at, demeaned, spit on, threatened, and sometimes kicked, choked, grabbed, or slugged. After this, they go onto the next patient as if they had just stopped to smell a gardenia for a moment. Great strength of character is stressful environment. To hold up under these conditions is no small feat. To care for the deathly ill, comfort suffering children, and give solace to those who grieve their dead takes discipline, stamina, and tenderness. To sit with and console the family of a teenager who just died in an accident takes the strength of 10 men. Every day emergency nurses do what we are called to do and find so arduous in practice. That is: to love our neighbor as ourselves. They care for those whom society renders invisible. Emergency nurses do what the man who changed the world 2,000 years ago did. They look squarely in the eye and hold the hand of those most couldn't bear to touch. They wash stinky feet, clean excrement, and smell breath that would give most people nightmares. And they do it with grace. So, here's to the emergency nurse. Shake the hand of a hero before your next shift."

Thank you all ...

Love, John E. Hall M.D., F.A.C.E.P.

2007 Alaska ENA Leadership

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Congratulations to all the members of the 2007 board.

I have updated the website with the new board and would like to include pictures of each of you. Please send me a digital picture of yourselves, for those who are not already on there, and I will put them on the website. If you want your phone number on there, get me that as well. I have all of your emails. Go to Alaskaena.org to view the website. – Jeannie Molitor

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Leadership Bios

Patty Williams – Fairbanks

Hi to all the ED nurses in Alaska. My name is Patty Williams, a new Alaska ENA Board member from Fairbanks. I have lived and worked in Fairbanks since moving here from Michigan in 1981, with all but the first three years in the ED. I am always busy at FMH between working as staff, PCC, and administrative coordinator. I am also involved on the magnet committee steering board for shared decision making, choosing a nurse theorist for our facility, ED education committee, working on my MSN and lots more. I have been an ENA member since the mid 1980's (wish I would have paid the lifetime membership dues then!) and have attended many of the national conferences. I look towards getting Fairbanks ED nurses involved in ENA, just not sure if we will conference call in or try to change the bylaws to allow another Alaskan chapter. I look forward to working with all of you in the near future.

Karen Lenihan – Juneau

I am Canadian (if you ever saw the beer commercial you would chuckle), originally from Vancouver BC. I have been nursing for about 20 years doing a little bit of everything from OB to critical care but the majority of my career has been in Emergency nursing. Currently I'm employed as a flight nurse with Airlift Northwest in beautiful Juneau where I live

with my large black fluffy dog named Bear. I became involved as a board member for AK after attending an annual conference as a delegate and found the whole process interesting.

Michelle Arnold – Anchorage

I have worked in a variety of nursing roles over the past 30 years. Clinically, I started out in the mid '70s as an ICU nurse (when ICUs were first being developed) and transitioned to ER about 25 years ago. I have been a staff nurse for the majority of my clinical nursing career but managed an Emergency Department and air ambulance service for about five years.

My current position is in Quality Support Services at Providence Alaska Medical Center where I manage data abstraction and submission for Core Measures and the NDNQI as well as other quality projects.

I have served the Alaska ENA in the past as Board Member, Secretary/Treasurer and President. I am delighted to again have the opportunity to serve our membership.

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