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HEALTH *beat*

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Fraser Health

AUTHORITY



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Editorial: by Jennifer (Jay) Sherwood BScN, MEd.

"Building the Future: An Integrated Strategy for Nursing Human Resources in Canada"

"Where have all the nurses gone?" and "How do we replenish the supply to make for a sustainable nursing workforce into the future?" Are questions such as these answerable? In October 2001 representatives of Canada's nursing sector joined the Hon. Jane Stewart, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) to announce the launch of a human resources sector study to develop a long-term labour market strategy for the three regulated nursing groups in Canada (registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses and licensed practical nurses). The initiation of the study is a result of ongoing discussions between national and provincial nursing organizations and federal government ministries. \$1.8 million in funding comes from HRDC with an additional \$2.2 million from the nursing sector both in cash and "in kind" contributions.

The overall goal of the two year study "Building the Future: an integrated strategy for nursing human resources in Canada" is to produce an integrated labour market strategy for Canada's three regulated nursing groups. The study is being overseen by representatives of the three nursing groups, unions, employers, researchers, students, provincial and territorial governments as well as Health Canada and Human Resource Development Canada.

This is the first national human resources analysis of the Canadian nursing labour market. And is the first time that the three regulated nursing professions have been studied together! These three kinds of nurses are a critical component of the health care system, collectively comprising over one half of the health workforce. Every aspect of patient care and every health care environment includes nursing involvement. That these three professions are in crisis is not arguable. For example, The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), the organization representative of the largest contingent of the three has been sounding the alarm since

the late 1990s about current and impending shortages of registered nurses. In early 2002, the CNA was projecting a national shortfall of 113,000 registered nurses by the year 2016. The issues common to the three nursing groups are not unfamiliar to most of us involved in health care. They are: aging workforce; retention and recruitment issues; stress and work overload; safe and healthy work environments; and high attrition rates.

Compounding the problems in getting the right fix is the lack of data on health human resources and nursing in particular. Questions posed at the beginning of the study (these are not the research questions) reflect the following. Little consistent and systematically collected country wide information about where nurses are working; how many are in schools of nursing; how many are planning to move and how many are retiring in the next 5-10 years makes it difficult to know how to fix the problems. While data is collected it is not done nationally or consistently with most coming from acute care centres, leaving such settings like home and community care only dimly represented. As well, provinces and territories have virtually no information about health professionals as a group. Most data about nurses focuses on the registered nurse group leaving the registered psychiatric nurse and the licensed practical nurse groups unaccounted for in the big nursing picture.

The study is being conducted in two phases. The first, already underway, included a comprehensive analysis of the nursing labour market based on the most accurate data available. Some of this data is being collected through special surveys of nurses, their employers and nursing students. 28,000 nurses are being randomly selected (one of the largest samples ever surveyed in Canada) to provide uniform data for all nursing groups in all work settings. This phase will also include the

development of nursing requirements using various delivery option models. Phase one of the study is expected to take 20 months.

The second phase of the two year study will be the development of a systematic strategy development process. The process will be based on the information collected in phase one. A critical component of the process is providing for effective input from stakeholders in the nursing sector, including provincial and territorial governments.

Earlier this year, I received an e-mail from Annie Boucher, the communications consultant to the study requesting stories from nurses about their experiences in working in today's health care system. She suggests that there are a number of angles that might be of interest to those of you who would like to submit such a story. Some of the questions that she suggested that you might like to explore are:

- 1) Why has there never been a study involving the three groups of nurses collectively?
- 2) Nurses, unions, employers, nursing associations and regulatory organizations are working together to address the issues. Are we finally seeing an end to the "siloeed" approach to dealing with issues? What did it take to get us there?
- 3) How will the systematically collected information help us to plan better and can this collaborative approach be a model for other health sectors? and
- 4) How will the information collected help our communities in the long run?

Boucher says that there are a number of nurses from across the country who have already written to share their stories. Help in this form from nurses will aid in understanding the full picture and provides an opportunity for nurses to offer suggestions on how to resolve the issues.

See Editorial page 5

Careers in the NWT

Photo by Terry Parker
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HEALTHbeat Stress Relief

Dr. David Rainham, M.D.
Author, Speaker, Stress Management Consultant

Super Human Working Mothers

Psychologist to client: "You spend 50% of your energy on your job, 50% on your husband, and 50% on your children. I think I see your problem".

For most of history, human life has been short and harsh – too much illness, violence and backbreaking work, too little comfort or pleasure, and terrible food. Only relatively recently has the average person had the chance to enjoy regular leisure time.

Although modern life is physically easier, it often seems like a tough balancing act, and the way we use our time has a huge impact on stress, health and happiness. Although many men want to spend more time at home, the largest group stressed by 'time crunch' are working mothers, especially if they're single – and poor.

Why do women seem to have more concerns about balancing time? First, when the average wife goes out to work her weekly work load increases by 18 hours, and graciously, the average husband increases his housework contribution by a whole 8 minutes. Second, girls tend to be

raised to feel responsible for others, which means putting their families and household first. Thirdly, workplaces are demanding more work for the same or less money. In these uncertain times who can risk refusing to stay that extra hour, or turn down that additional project?

Stresses for the working parent include: finding child (or elder) care; children's activities – music and sports; household tasks and how to share them; unpredictables – sick children, car breakdowns and so on. Some people add stress with unrealistically high expectations of themselves and others, the need to do and have it all – or stressful habits like procrastination, being unorganized, or neglecting personal fitness.

What can be Done? First, understanding exactly why you work outside the house not only helps to reduce guilt and negative feelings but and be more able to find solutions. For example, if you only work for the money, can you reduce expenses so that a full time second income is less

important? Is it a career that won't wait, or just that you can't stand 'being stuck in the house'?

There's a ton of advice in books, magazines, and seminars, but no simple solutions. For women, the only sure way to successfully balance work and family/home life is to choose the right partner – one who will share the house work fairly – or even stay home.

Many enlightened employers, assist their employees in handling the load by having on-site daycare or providing job share/part-time options with full benefits.

If you're feeling time crunch, first write out a 'mission statement' for yourself and your family. What are your key values and long range goals?

What specific steps are you taking now to achieve them? You probably can't 'have it all' so set achievable goals for career, money, household tidiness, personal hobbies and kids activities. Use a diary to find out exactly where your time is going now. Then plan your days using a large wall calendar – blocking out your personal time first! Use a file card system to organize daily, weekly and monthly jobs, birthdays, Xmas and so on. Set priorities, make daily lists and delegate wherever you can. Have regular family meetings to set goals and assess progress and cooperation. Above all, learn to say NO without guilt. Slow down, enjoy your family, and remember:

Life is frittered away by detail. Simplify. Simplify.
(Thoreau)



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An opportunity to have an impact on a new health care organization

by Jennifer (Jay) Sherwood, BScN, MEd.

"We are creating a new organization. It's an opportunity to build on our collective strengths and implement health reform" Marvin Moore, Board Chair, Health Region 8.

Alberta's Health Region 8 is one of the nine regions in the province that were created through an Alberta health restructuring strategy that changed the boundaries of the regional health authorities, reducing the number from seventeen to nine. Although the new regions are a result of mergers of

former regions, it is important for staff, the region's residents, patients and regional programs to view the strategy as a "new beginning". The new region takes in three former health authorities: Mistahia, Peace and Keeweenok Lakes.

Health Region 8 is located in the North West area of Alberta. The region covers over 100,000 square kilometers, has a staff of about 3400 people and provides services to a population of 130,000 who reside in the region. The number of people served by the region is greater than 130,000 because many others from beyond its boundaries are referred to its

facilities and programs. There are 16 communities in the region and the funding is expected to be close to \$160 million in the current fiscal year. The full range of services offered by the region encompass all those formerly offered by the former health authorities as well as mental health services, a new addition to all the new regions.

I talked to Jim Sanderson, Vice President, Human Resources Health Region 8 to ask him about recruitment and retention of health professionals in the new region. The Human Resources department is responsible for the recruitment of all health professionals, excluding physicians. Physicians are not employed by the region but since they are integral to providing health care the Vice President, Medical Affairs works closely with physicians practicing in the region to assess community needs and recruit new physicians. Communities themselves are also involved and the type of involvement varies according to the individual needs of the physicians being recruited.

When I asked Sanderson if there were any particular professions that the region has difficulty recruiting, he indicated that physiotherapists, occupational therapists and pharmacists each present their own unique set of challenges. As well, it is somewhat difficult to recruit laboratory and diagnostic imaging professionals in the smaller communities.

See Health Region 8 page 5



West Parry Sound Health Centre

The Health Centre is a community focussed health care facility that provides a range of services for both permanent and seasonal residents of the Parry Sound Area. With funding approved and plans well underway for a 'new' Health Centre, the next five years promises to be an exciting time for all staff.

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The Health Centre thanks all applicants for their interest however, only those selected for interviews will be contacted.



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We are also looking for RNs and RPNs to join our dynamic healthcare team. If you are self-directed, flexible and reliable with exemplary decision-making skills and current nursing registration, exciting opportunities await you in the Niagara Region.

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St. Catharines, ON L2R 7C6. Fax: (905) 684-7653. E-mail: hrrecruit@niagarahealth.on.ca

WWW.NIAGARAHEALTH.ON.CA



NIAGARA HEALTH SYSTEM
SYSTÈME DE SANTÉ DE NIAGARA

Education Opportunities

Health Region 8 from page 4

Even with widespread shortages in the supply of nurses Sanderson credits his department with the fact that nursing positions are easier to fill than they were in the recent past.

Sanderson and his staff use print and online advertising and job and career fairs as vehicles to promote positions in the region for recruitment purposes. What has changed in recent years is the content of the message that is distributed through these vehicles. In the past, positions were advertised according to the profession to which they were related. Now, while recognizing that the targets of recruitment strategies are particular professionals with appropriate qualifications, the focal point of promoting positions is the unique qualities of living in the region itself and the lifestyle it provides. Health Region 8 encompasses some of the most beautiful scenery (and the recreational activities that go with it) in Alberta. People coming to the area, particularly from urban areas find that there are all kinds of advantages of living close to where they work. They also will find that the organizational culture in Health Region 8: is one of respect and sensitivity to staff needs; reflects a commitment to staff development through education; is open to staff suggestions and recommendations for change; and reflects staff involvement, particularly in the transition stages from old to new.

There is a nursing program leading to registered nurses qualifications in Grande Prairie and a program leading to licensed practical nurse qualifications in Grouard. The region provides

clinical experience for both of these types of nursing students. As well, summer employment is offered to third year students from registered nurse programs. Summer employment is good for both the student and the region. The region benefits by attracting those students back once they graduate and achieve registration.

Sanderson like others believes that recruitment and retention are ideas that are closely linked and that once recruited, the region has a big interest in keeping staff. Sometimes the retention strategy is as simple an idea as providing as much summer vacation as possible. But even simple ideas require planning and work to implement. Recognizing "summer vacation" as a staff need, the region works closely with physicians and others to coordinate and schedule patient treatment to free up as much staff as possible during the summer months.

As I mentioned earlier, the health region has a serious commitment to staff development and education. There is an education fund that supports nurses and managers in pursuing continuing education. The pool of allocated dollars is administered by committees of the professional's peers. The fund supports staff to participate in anything from short term courses/conferences to degree programming. Staff members supported by the fund agree to a service commitment. As well, the health region has worked closely with the college in Grande Prairie to develop and implement a certificate based management development program. The program, launched in 2001 after fewer than three months of development, is built around mandatory core courses. Optional courses are

chosen by the participant based on their particular needs and interests. Because of the success of this program and other professional development initiatives, other education opportunities for allied health professionals are currently being examined.

Professionals who would like to have an opportunity to have an impact on a new organization would do well to look seriously at Health Region 8 for employment opportunities. The region is large enough to provide a wide variety of professional

experiences while small enough to prevent the individual from getting lost in a bureaucratic maze.

For more information: Mailing address: 2101, 10320 - 99 Street, Grande Prairie, AB, T8V 6J4, Phone: 1-800-732-8981, Fax: (780) 538-5455

Editor's note: The above are the address, phone and fax numbers for the region's corporate office. The region also has a temporary website (www.mhr.ab.ca)



Editorial from page 2

The issues being addressed in this study have been with us for a long time. Nurses care about them and they touch every working nurse in Canada. But Boucher also suggests that Canadians care as well. Nursing human resource problems are a national issue – they affect all communities in Canada. Across the country there are countless stories about how nurses are overworked and worried about their stress on patient care. Nursing is the cornerstone of the health care sector and it is gratifying to note that

the alarm bells sounded by professional organizations have been heard and action has been taken!

For more complete information about the study, its participants and process please visit the website www.buildingthefuture.ca. There is also a section on the site that allows you to be kept up to date on its progress by adding your e-mail address to a list of people receiving electronic bulletins.



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College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences

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The University of Northern British Columbia invites applications to fill a number of tenure-track faculty positions in the Nursing Program within the College of Arts, Social & Health Sciences. The ideal start date for these positions is Fall 2003, subject to budgetary approval. The College is one of two at UNBC and includes a set of programs concerned with the development of human resources and quality of life, with particular focus on people, health, culture, and values. The College enjoys close working relationships with the various communities of Northern British Columbia, including First Nations in the North. The Nursing Program provides practice-based nursing education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, with special focus in the areas of Rural and Northern Nursing, Community Health, and Aboriginal Health. The Program offers a 4-year BSN, a nursing stream within an interdisciplinary MSc in Community Health, and will be offering the Masters in Nursing in Family Nurse Practitioner in 2005.

Applicants should possess a strong clinical background and have some nursing expertise in Gerontological Nursing, Continuing Care and/or Community Health. Ideally, applicants should have a doctoral degree or equivalent with at least one degree in Nursing; however, applicants without a doctoral degree who are willing to work towards obtaining such a qualification will be considered. Applicants should also be eligible for registration with the RNABC and have teaching experience. Evidence of scholarship would be considered an asset. Successful candidates will be expected to teach at the undergraduate and graduate levels, practice and pursue a program of research with the support of senior faculty.

Please forward your résumé and the names and addresses of three references (including telephone, fax and e-mail information), quoting competition number 03-0255(HB), in addition to directing all inquiries about this position to: **Dr. Deborah Poff, Vice President & Provost, University of Northern British Columbia, 3333 University Way, Prince George, British Columbia, V2N 4Z9. Fax: (250) 960-7300. Please direct inquiries to Dr. John Cutcliffe, Chair of Nursing. Phone: (250) 960-6509 Fax: (250) 960-5744 Email: cutcliff@unbc.ca. Applications will be accepted before 4:30 pm on: Friday, May 30, 2003.**

We thank all applicants for their interest in UNBC. However, only those applicants selected for further consideration will be contacted.

For more information, visit our Web site: www.unbc.ca

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. The University of Northern British Columbia is committed to employment equity and encourages applications from women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

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How to choose and then work with your employment recruiter

by Nadia Gruz, President – Unlimited Nurse Search, Inc.

Several hospitals across the USA are looking for Canadian trained nurses to fill their vacancies. If you're a Canadian Registered Nurse, DON or Nurse Manager who is interested in relocating to the United States, you are most likely being bombarded with job related calls on a daily basis. But how do you select the position that is the best career move for YOU?

There are many advantages to working with a recruiter. But these days, the task of finding a recruiter can be very daunting – the sheer number of choices can keep you from making any decision at all.

There are several recruiters to choose from, so try to find one who specializes in your field. Ask for a referral from someone in your industry/area of specialization. Ask friends and co-workers if they can recommend a recruiter who's worked for them.

Your recruiter should work for you. There is an abundance of job opportunities, so work with someone who will find out about YOUR needs and do a search for YOU based on what you are looking for.

Work with someone who has placed other people

with your background, or a similar background. You wouldn't use a recruiter for sales if you were a software engineer. Professional societies or publications from these societies, or trade magazines, are a good source of potential recruitment firms. Remember, those firms that have been doing recruitment and placement in your field are more than likely to have the greatest number of contacts and industry resources/access to help you.

Talk to someone who you feel comfortable talking to. Even if a recruiter cannot help place you today, if they give you advice about your resume or career options, this is someone you might want to talk to in the future.

One of the main benefits of working with a recruiter is the time it can save you. Recruiters such as Unlimited Nurse Search, Inc. have several good contacts and know where to locate the right job for you because it is their area of expertise. If you're currently employed and aren't able to conduct a thorough job search, a recruiter can act as your eyes and ears. Many will even interview you at night so you can go about your business during the day.

Unlimited Nurse Search, Inc. recruiters can connect you with facilities you may not otherwise have access to as well as to the ones that try to contact you on their own. We can sell your skills and abilities to employers, and when you accept the job we will guide you through all the licensure and immigration processes. Please note: we will not release your name without your prior approval.

Here are a few tips to maximize the effectiveness of your personal recruiter.

Resume Your resume must be well written and accurate, indicating your career summary clearly.

It is your responsibility to keep your resume up to date. If your address, phone number, job status or career objectives change, please resubmit your resume.

Patience As recruiters, we get paid for finding qualified candidates for healthcare facilities (mostly hospitals). Our focus is on searching for the right job for each nurse that submits their resume. We find out about your needs and then do a search for you based upon what you are looking for. We are always on the lookout, and will contact you as soon as a job comes up that meets your needs.

Communication Be sure to check your messages frequently and return phone calls from your recruiter promptly. Give your recruiter a daytime phone number (if possible), a personal email address and work-week availability.

Employer Contact Always use the recruiter to contact the employer, rather than contacting them directly. This indicates that you respect the employer's desire for confidentiality and a streamlined hiring process. It also ensures that you will not interfere with any negotiations in process.

Interviews Once you have completed an interview, follow up with your recruiter to determine what the next step(s) should be. For example, when you can expect an answer, setting up additional interviews (with the same facility or other facilities), feedback, receipt of initial offer, negotiations, etc.

Develop a strong relationship Your relationship with a recruiter is much like the relationship you might have with a realtor who represents a home seller, but wants to help you, a buyer, find something that you would like to buy. In order for

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Saskatchewan, Yukon and Nova Scotia Career Opportunities

Unlimited from page 6

this to work, a good recruiter will be interested in where you want to live geographically, what you like to do professionally, your long term goals and how much money you want to earn.

As with any relationship, honesty is important in this relationship, as well. Let the recruiter know those things that are important to you, and those of lesser importance. Different factors have more or less weight with different candidates. Factors to consider include: job content/ responsibilities, growth prospects, compensation, travel, location, facility size, benefits, mentorship, etc. Letting the recruiter know what is really important to you and what matters less will help the process.

The Referral Process Once a recruiter has referred your resume to an organization, and interest is expressed by that organization, the recruiter will introduce the firm and the opportunity to you and then you can decide if you are interested or not.

At the offer stage, the recruiter will probably have some insight as to what you can expect. Some hospitals offer their "best and final" offer up front; others might have room for some negotiation. If you prefer to do your own negotiating because you have established a good rapport with your prospective supervisor, great. If you need some help, the recruiter can help you. Remember, the recruiter is trying to help the parties "to the altar", so he or she will work to satisfy your needs as well as his or her client's

needs. It won't work any other way.

Helping the Process Telling the recruiter where you have already sent your resume will help avoid duplication and wasting their time. If you have interviews already scheduled, let the recruiter know where you are in terms of timing, especially if you are expecting an offer in the near future. Remember that if you treat someone the way you would like to be treated, then the experience should be a positive one for all parties – you, the recruiter, and the facility.

For this to work, a recruiter must introduce you, the candidate, to an opportunity that satisfies your needs, while at the same time satisfying the needs that his or her client facility has for the individual(s) they wish to employ. It is not an exact science and there is always some amount of give and take on both sides. No one gets married without making some compromises – the same is true in this relationship between you, the candidate, and the prospective employer. But if everyone works as a team towards the same common goal then it will be a win-win situation all round: You will make a good career choice and the facility will hire a great employee that meets their needs.

For further information, please contact us at 1-800-903-8532 or relocating@unlimitednursesearch.com, or view our website at www.unlimitednursesearch.com




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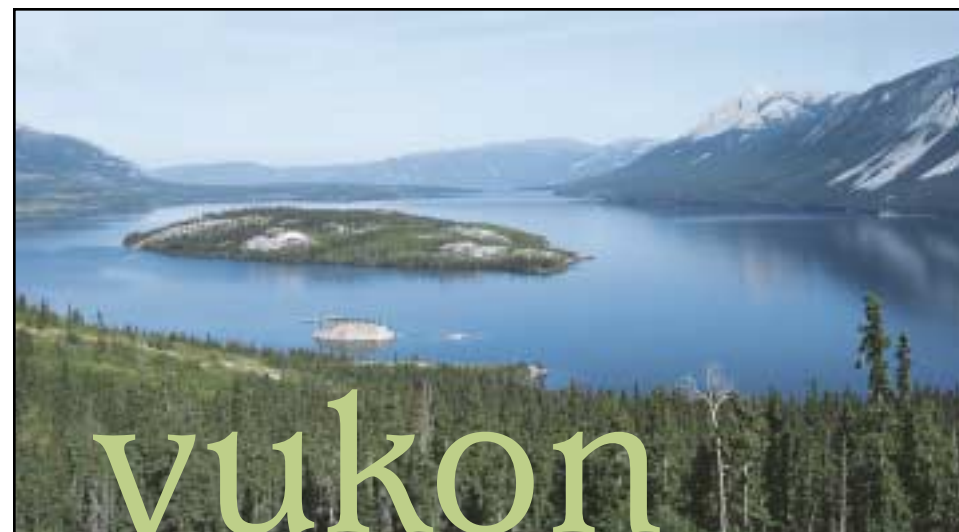
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Nursing: At the heart of health care

Each year the week in May that includes Florence Nightingale's birthday (May 12) is celebrated by nurses around the world. This year, the theme selected by the Canadian Nurses Association for National Nursing Week is Nursing: At the heart of health care. This particular theme highlights the important role that nurses in Canada play in our country's health care system. Nurses' contributions are valued in all parts of the system and they play varied roles, each having an impact on the health of Canadians. The important role played by each nurse be it in patient/client care, education, administration or research is a result of education, depth of knowledge, individual

skills and abilities and a commitment to improving health for all of us.

In 1971, the International Council of Nurses designated the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's May 12 birthday as International Nurses Day. Later, in 1985, fulfilling the terms of a resolution passed at its annual meeting, the Canadian Nurses Association began negotiations with the Federal Government to explore the feasibility of having a week including Nightingale's birthday proclaimed as National Nurses Week. A few months later the Federal Minister of Health proclaimed the second week of May as National Nurses Week and recognized May 12 as Canada Health Day.

The name of the special week was changed to National Nursing Week in 1993. This change was made to recognize the profession as a whole and the major contributions it has made to health care.

The purpose of National Nursing Week is to increase awareness among members of the Canadian public, policy-makers and governments of the value of the nursing profession and the contributions that it makes to the health of Canadians. It is an opportunity to inform Canadians about health issues, provide information to people that they need to make decisions about their health and to promote the role of the nurse. This year, the

Canadian Nurses Association entered into a partnership with a major national newspaper to produce a supplement to be published on May 12 as part of that day's national edition. The supplement aims to inform readers about the scope and diversity of nursing in Canada.

Patients and clients of nurses of all ages in acute or long term care and home and community settings know and have experienced the dedication and commitment that put professional nurses "at the heart of health care". We at HEALTHbeat add our congratulatory sentiments and appreciation to all nurses and to the nursing profession collectively!



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