

1-1-1992

Nursing's Agenda for Health Care Reform Guides Nursing Center Research Agenda

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intensive eight day program in the summer, followed by an optional one year fellowship in parish nursing. Last summer, twenty-nine nurses from five states attended the program. A directory of available programs for parish nursing is available from Health Ministries Association, 1-800-852-5613.

Footnotes

- 1) Dossey, Larry. (1984). Beyond Illness, Shambhala Publisher, Boulder London, p. 175.
- 2) Lane, Julia. (1987). "The care of the human spirit." Journal of Professional Nursing, p. 332.
- 3) Martin, Marty. (1990). "The theology and tradition of the church and healing." Second Opinion, p. 33.
- 4) Westberg, Granger and J. W. McNamara. (1987). The parish nurse; how to start a parish nurse program in your church. Augsburg Press, Philadelphia, p. 15.
- 5) Mason, James, editor, (1990). Healthy People 2000, US Government Printing Office, Washington, p. 29.
- 6) Daehling, Edythe. (1973). Ministries of Healing. Philadelphia; Parish Life Press, p. 102.

Focus On Research

NURSING'S AGENDA FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM GUIDES

Nursing Center Research Agenda by Marilyn Frenn RN, PhD

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Fifty nine nursing organizations boldly launched Nursing's Agenda for Health Care Reform

early last year. Components of the reform include a restructured health care system which enhances consumer access to primary health care through an expanded nursing role, thereby reducing the need for costly in-patient care.

A research base will be needed for further exploration and evaluation of effectiveness of the reform. This research base will require the efforts of many nursing scholars. However, the reform closely parallels the purposes of nursing centers.

What are Nursing Centers?

Nursing centers are organizations where clients have direct access to care guided by nursing models of health (ANA 1987a). Nursing centers have provided health promotion and other community-based services largely for groups who have been underserved in traditional health care systems. (Barger, 1986).

Academic nursing centers offer a variety of services as well as provide students with innovative learning opportunities. Academic nursing centers in Wisconsin are located at University of Wisconsin campuses at Eau Claire, Madison, Milwaukee, and Oshkosh as well as at Marquette University College of Nursing.

The Marquette University Nursing Center began in 1982 with a church based Wellness Resource Center and several outreach programs in low income congregate living housing. Natural Family Planning services were offered in 1985 and continue to provide care to over 340 couples on campus and at St. Joseph's Hospital through a faculty practice model.

(continued on page 5)

Practitioners in this program are certified by the American Academy of Natural Family Planning and provide wholistic, non-pharmacologic approaches to couples seeking natural family planning.

A recent initiative of the Marquette Nursing Center is Urban Partners for Healthy Children. Director Jeanne Browning described the goal of this program as promoting health of children, families and the entire school system by expanding school nursing services. This program includes health education, health services, and system/environmental in the Central City Catholic School System.

On campus, the Marquette Nursing Center is a member of the Campus Wellness Committee through which programming occurs such as a wellness fair, and educational sessions on smoking cessations, long-term care initiatives for aging parents, shopping for good nutrition, and caring for persons with Alzheimer's disease. Nursing Center programs also have been offered on preventing job-related injuries for Physical Environment employees.

Both the UW-Milwaukee and Marquette Nursing Centers have been contracted by the Milwaukee City Health Department to develop primary health services for underserved groups. The Marquette program is at Metcalfe Park Health Center and is coordinated by Pat McManus. The Metcalfe Park center is targeted to provide services to mothers and children in the central city. Funding for these programs was provided by state, city and Marquette monies to address critical and unmet health care needs.

The community outreach component of the Nursing Center provides a vehicle for participation in community health fairs, providing Federally mandated screening for Head Start, and working with the Marquette Day Care Center. The Nursing Center thereby provides a rich grounding for research reflecting crucial health care needs.

What Research Has Been Done in Nursing Centers?

A number of published studies have been conducted in nursing centers throughout the country including several in the Marquette University Nursing Center (Fehring, 1990; Fehring & Frenn, 1986; Fehring, Lawrence, & Sauvage, 1989; Frenn, 1989; Frenn, Jacobs, Lee, Sanger, & Strong, 1987).

Additionally, the Nursing Center Research Section in the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) began in 1982. That also was the year of the first biennial national conference on nursing centers. In 1989 the national efforts were organized within the National League for Nursing Council on Nursing Centers. In 1991 the MNRS Nursing Center Research Section became a sub-group within the Public Health/Community Health Research Section in order to promote further collaboration among researchers with similar interests.

In the 1991 meeting, members of the MNRS Nursing Center Sub-group developed a preliminary research agenda based on Riesch's (in press) review of nursing center related research. The research agenda also was guided by Nursing's Agenda for Health Care Reform, Sub-group is as follows:

(continued on page 6)

Healthy People 2000, and the National Center for Nursing Research (NCNR) priorities.

The research agenda proposed by the MNRS Nursing Centers

1. Studies focussed on outcomes:

(a) Comparison of nursing centers with other models of primary health care.

(b) Evaluation of data bases, cost effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of care.

(c) Evaluation of strategies to maintain or improve client wellness/health status indicators, prevent illness, injury, hospitalization, or days lost from work or school.

(d) Evaluation of accomplishment of the objectives specified in Healthy People 2000.

2. Studies reflective of changing population demographics as prioritized by NCNR.

(a) Studies focused on development and utilization of common health status indicators.

(b) Studies focused on client experience.

According to Riesch (in press) previous studies in nursing centers have generally lacked a strong conceptual framework, well defined research variables, large random samples, and longitudinal designs. These study characteristics therefore are needed in future nursing center research. In addition, replication of previous research is needed along with multi-site, multi-method studies.

In recent years a number of nurses have organized innovative care delivery systems similar to academic nursing centers, through hospitals, home care and long-term care agencies. Through collaborative

efforts Nursing's Agenda for Health Care Reform may guide the research needed to promote our nation's health in the year 2000 and beyond.

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(continued on page 7)