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LEADERSHIP COLUMN

The Backbone

Dean Prentice, DHA, MA, BSN

In nursing, especially in leadership roles, the responsibilities can be a balancing act between professional duties and personal care for patients, team members, and self. For nurse leaders, professional responsibilities mean overseeing patient care quality, managing teams, and ensuring compliance with healthcare regulations. They are expected to stay on top of clinical best practices, guide their teams to follow policies, and set a high standard of care.

Nurse leaders are also the point of contact for troubleshooting issues, whether it is handling staffing challenges, mediating conflicts, or making sure there's enough support for both patients and staff.

In terms of professional development, nurse leaders need to stay informed about healthcare changes, whether it is a new policy, technology, or treatment method. They often attend training sessions or workshops and encourage their team to do the same, fostering a culture of continuous learning. Their accountability is not just about their own actions; they're also accountable for the entire team's quality of care and ethical standards.

Part of this includes building strong relationships with other departments, ensuring smooth communication across different areas of the hospital or clinic, which is essential for patient safety and care coordination.

Personal care responsibilities for nurse leaders extend beyond their direct interactions with patients to encompass the well-being of their staff. Nurse leaders need to create a positive work environment, supporting nurses in managing stress, ensuring fair workloads, and fostering open communication. When a team feels valued and supported, they are more likely to provide compassionate care, which reflects positively on patient outcomes.

Nurse leaders are also involved in advocating for patients by empowering their team to uphold patient-centered care, focusing on individual needs and preferences. They model empathy and integrity, setting a tone of respect for every patient interaction. By understanding the

challenges their team faces in personal caregiving, leaders can adjust routines and policies that prioritize patient dignity while making day-to-day tasks manageable for the team.

Nurse leaders play a big role in both the clinical and emotional sides of patient

care. Their professional responsibilities are about structure, safety, and standards, while their personal responsibilities center on support, empathy, and team cohesion. Balancing these responsibilities is what makes nurse leaders the backbone of effective, compassionate healthcare. ■

OINA 2024 Activities

Sonya Frazier, RN, BSN, President, Oklahoma Indigenous Nurses Association

Overview

The Oklahoma Indigenous Nurses Association (OINA) has made remarkable strides in 2024, showcasing a year filled with advocacy, education, and community engagement focused on Indigenous healthcare and representation. This report summarizes the key events and accomplishments that have defined OINA's activities throughout the year.

Key Activities and Milestones

Advocacy Initiatives

- **Murdered and Missing Indigenous Peoples Meeting:** OINA began the year with a significant participation in this meeting in Norman, OK, highlighting the urgency of advocacy for Indigenous issues.
- **Nurses Day at the Capitol:** Engaging directly with lawmakers enabled the exchange of ideas and solutions that can positively impact the nursing profession and patient care outcomes.

Documentary Premiere

- **Everybody's Work:** The documentary premiered in Washington, DC, capturing OINA's mission to elevate Indigenous representation in nursing and showcase the stories of Indigenous nurses.

Conferences and Presentations

- **2024 NANAINA Conference:** Taloa delivered a presentation on the vital role of board participation, emphasizing the importance of Indigenous leadership within the nursing community.
- **Oklahoma Hospital Association Nurs-**

ing Leadership Summit: OINA actively participated, continuing their advocacy efforts through various platforms and gatherings.

Collaborations and Partnerships

- **Interdisciplinary Collaborations:** OINA worked alongside Dr. Tina Loarte-Rodriguez and the DNs of Color to enhance initiatives that support Indigenous nurses and healthcare equity.
- **Northeastern Oklahoma A & M University:** Partnerships were established to promote enrollment of Indigenous nursing students and improve health equity.

Recognition and Influence

- **Media Features:** In September, OINA members received recognition for their healthcare credentials and contributions, including participation in discussions at the White House at the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ).
- **Screening of Everybody's Work at ONA Convention:** The film was screened, followed by a panel discussion that enriched an open and honest dialog of personal experiences dealing with racism in nursing and the discourse around nursing practices.

Continued Support for Indigenous Issues

- **Department of Interior's Report:** OINA supported the release of part two of the official report on American Indian Boarding Schools, advocating for further investigation and healing recommendations.

Conclusion

The activities of OINA in 2024 reflect a year of impactful advocacy, education, and dedication to Indigenous healthcare representation. Through strategic initiatives and partnerships, OINA has not only highlighted critical issues facing Indigenous communities but has also laid a foundation for future progress and equity within the nursing field. Their continued efforts will undoubtedly influence the landscape of healthcare for Indigenous populations moving forward. ■

To learn more about the OINA Chapter, visit our website at: www.oklahomanurses.org/OINA