

# AONE president addresses national forum on the future role of nursing



## The American Organization of Nurse Executives

American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) President Donna Herrin-Griffith highlighted the executive competencies required of the professional nurse in testimony last week at the first of three national forums to be convened by the Initiative on the Future of Nursing. The initiative is an Institute of Medicine and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) project to address nursing challenges and solutions to improving health care.

Hosted by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, the forum focused on nursing in acute-care settings. AONE is an AHA subsidiary.

Herrin-Griffith said the

“demanding role of the future nurse requires a mastery of competencies that can deliver highly complex patient care management in collaboration and partnership with an interdisciplinary team.” She told the forum that it is “clear that the nurse of the future performing this redefined role will be educated at the baccalaureate level.”

While nursing will change in the future, its “core values of caring and knowledge will remain,” she added.

Herrin-Griffith described AONE’s view of future patient care delivery; the role the practice environment plays in patient outcomes and professionalism;

and the value of nursing to achieving quality, safe, patient-centered, accessible and affordable care.

She noted that AONE has been leading the dissemination of lessons learned from the Transforming Care at the Bedside (TCAB) program, launched by the RWJF and Institute for Healthcare Improvement in 2003. “Through TCAB acute-care nurses at the unit level are able to institute changes at the point of care that then have resulted in improved patient care and nursing practice outcomes,” she said.

She also said AONE supports efforts to “understand the economic value of nursing ... because in a health care reality dominated by efforts to improve access, quality and control costs, a better understanding of the economic value of nursing’s contribution to health is sorely needed.”

# OK hospitals help students learn about health care field

Students at two Oklahoma public schools are exploring health care careers with the financial support of their local hospitals. Duncan (OK) Regional Hospital and Lawton’s Comanche County Memorial Hospital have partnered with the Oklahoma Health Care Workforce Center to sponsor “HealthExplore” at the two schools. The program allows students to explore health care topics and talk to health care professionals.

The hospitals cover the bulk of the program’s costs and donate scrub tops for the students to wear as they participate in activities. HealthExplore operates through a partnership between the workforce center and Mad Science of Central Oklahoma, a provider of science-based activities for children. For more information, visit [www.ohcwc.com](http://www.ohcwc.com).

In a HealthExplore class earlier this month, MacArthur Middle School students in Lawton studied the harmful use of smoking on the respiratory and circulatory system and simulated the effects of smoking on the respiratory system (see photos below).



**STUDENTS EXPLORE HEALTH CARE CAREERS.** Comanche County Memorial Hospital in Lawton, OK, and Duncan (OK) Regional Hospital are sponsoring a program that helps middle school students learn more about careers in health care.

# Solutions to health care disparities

Seven organizations, including hospitals, will receive up to \$258,500 each to develop and test interventions to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in cardiovascular disease, depression and diabetes, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) announced last week.

Awarded by the RWJF’s “Finding Answers” program, the grants went to Boston Medical Center, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston; Denver Health and Hospitals Foundation; Aaron E. Henry Community

Health Services; CIGNA HealthCare Mid-Atlantic; and the Fund for Public Health in New York.

RWJF believes the disparity programs can be replicated elsewhere.

For more, visit [www.solvingdisparities.org/interventions](http://www.solvingdisparities.org/interventions).



# Adventist HealthCare finds a way to bust cultural barriers to better care

BY CURT MCCORMICK

With 35% of its community speaking a language other than English, Rockville, MD-based Adventist HealthCare realized that bridging gaps in medical care meant being more culturally sensitive to the diverse traditions and cultural norms of patients hailing from Ghana to Korea.

The result: the Center for Health Disparities, created by Adventist two years ago to bust those barriers.

The Center combines training, education and research to eliminate disparities in care, with a large part of the work being the training of bilingual staff in prop-

er medical interpreting skills. The Center has trained 275 Adventist staff members to assist with medical interpretation services.

“We really ask our staff to walk a mile in others’ shoes,” says Marcos Pesquera, the Center’s executive director. “We know that both patients and providers bring assumptions into every encounter, but as caregivers it is incumbent on us to bridge the gaps.”

In addition, more than 5,700 Adventist staffers, area caregivers and county health department



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employees have participated in cultural competency training courses sponsored by the Center. Participants learn new tools to eliminate disparities, build trust with patients and understand how unintentional biases and pre-established stereotypes can affect quality of care.

“By implementing programs at the local level, hospitals can best achieve health equity,” Pesquera says. “National numbers identify broad issues, but local data informs the agenda and determines which specific programs and services are needed to break down barriers to health.”

The Center reaches out to local government agencies, allied health service organizations and

other area hospitals, “to improve the health of our entire community... it is important that we extend this training beyond our facilities,” Pesquera says. “Eliminating health disparities is as much a societal issue as it is a health care-related issue.”

The Center annually convenes a statewide conference of hospital leaders, academic experts, providers and government health officials to seek better methods of collaboration among agencies, community organizations and academic institutions.

Last month, Pesquera spoke about the Center’s work at a congressional briefing on disparities.

He noted that eliminating health disparities is a quality issue that should be part of every hospital’s quality agenda.

The briefing was organized by a “National Working Group on Health Disparities and Health Reform” and led by the American Psychological Association. “The importance of removing barriers to care needs to be clearly articulated by top leaders in every organization,” Pesquera told lawmakers and congressional staff who attended the briefing. “When that happens, and you hire the right people with a passion for improving health care in all communities, great strides can be made.”