

FLORENCE WOULD BE PROUD OF HER LEGACY

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When searching the internet for the definition of a great leader the same qualities kept appearing. A person who is non-partial, honest, responsible, self-aware, self-confident, assertive, able to delegate, a self-starter, empathetic, reliable, has excellent communication skills, has knowledge and expertise; with a willingness to learn and teach, possesses organization and planning skills; and is innovative and creative; with visionary abilities. This describes the Nurses who have led our profession to where it is today. I would like to take some time to tell you about 4 Nurses who have shaped Home Health Care & Hospice.



Florence Nightingale aka the Founder of Modern Nursing was born May 12th, 1820 in Florence, Italy. She learned mathematics, language, philosophy and religion from her father. At the age of 17, while walking in a garden, she heard the voice of God, which was her call to a specific mission. She wrote, “if I could give you information of my life it would be to show how a woman of very ordinary ability has been led by God in strange and unaccustomed paths to do in His service what He has done in her. If I could tell you all, you would see how God has done all, and I nothing. I have worked hard, very hard, that is all; and I have never refused God anything.” In 1844 she went to work at a hospital; to which her parents were opposed, as nursing was not considered to be a decent job. In 1854 while serving as a nurse in the Crimean War she was appalled at the deplorable conditions. She used her math skills to record mortality rates. As a well-known statistician she was able to prove the soldiers were dying due to communicable and infectious disease.

In 1860 she established the 1st Nursing School in the world; Nightingale Nursing School. She changed nursing to a respectful profession. Also in 1860 she wrote, “Notes on Nursing,” which was the 1st nursing education book. Sections of the book included: confidentiality, building trust, observation, communication skills, varied teaching methodologies and fresh air and a bright environment.

“The ultimate destination of all nursing is the nursing of the sick in their own homes.” ~ Nightingale 1867

Lillian D. Wald aka the Mother of Home Care was born in 1867; and was a New York Hospital nursing graduate. In 1893 while teaching a course to immigrant women on home care and hygiene she was led to the home of a student where she found her mother lying in a dirty bed soaked in blood from hemorrhaging since giving birth 2 days earlier. Wald ministered to the woman, cleaned the bed and room and comforted the family. The family was so grateful that as she was leaving, they kissed her hands. This event led Wald to found the 1st Home Health Care Agency in the U.S.; Henry Street Settlement, which became the Visiting Nurse Service of New York/VNSNY. She founded VNSNY to ensure the poor and disabled could receive the same care in their homes; as their wealthy counterparts.



“Reform can be accomplished only when attitudes are changed.” ~ L. Wald



Dame Cicely Saunders aka the Godmother of the Modern Hospice Movement was born in 1918 in London. Her father disapproved of her desire to be a nurse and wanted her to study at Oxford. In 1944 she defied her parents by enrolling at St. Thomas Hospital. In 1947 she was advised to quit nursing and returned to Oxford where she received a “war degree”; qualifying as a social worker; or as it was then called a Lady Almoner. She began life as an agnostic; but she discovered she believed in god; and stated, “it was as if a switch had flipped.” In 1948 she knew God had called her to build a home for dying people where scientific knowledge could be combined with care and love. In 1951 Saunders was accepted as a med student at St. Thomas Hospital; after she was advised people wouldn’t listen to her as a nurse. In 1967 she founded the 1st Modern Hospice; St. Christopher’s Hospice. She established the culture of palliative care; introducing effective pain management and insisting dying people needed dignity, compassion and respect. She introduced the idea of total pain; which included physical, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of distress.

Saunders and her husband spent their final days at St. Christopher’s Hospice.

“You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.” ~ Dame Cicely Saunders

Florence Wald aka the Mother of the American Hospice Movement was born in 1917 in the Bronx. She earned her Bachelor’s degree from Mount Holyoke College and 3 degrees from Yale: Master of Nursing, Master of Science and an honorary degree of Doctorate of Medical Science. She began her career at VNSNY. In 1958 she became the Dean of Yale School of Nursing; and in 1965 she left the position to work with Saunders in the U.K. In 1971 Wald founded the 1st Hospice in the U.S. in Branford, Connecticut; which later became the 1st to be reimbursed by Medicare in 1983. Her vision was built on an unwavering commitment to social justice and reverence for life. She invited an interdisciplinary team which included the patient, family and the hospice team; truly listening to their input. She designed the hospice to be a warm, peaceful setting where patients could die with dignity, respect and compassion; with the patient and family at the center of care. Her emphasis was on symptom management and creating a caring community around the patient. In her final years she concentrated on extending the hospice care model to dying prisoners.



In 1998 Wald stated, “people on the outside don’t understand this world at all. Most people in prison have had a rough time in life and haven’t had any kind of education in how to take care of their health. There is the shame factor, the feeling that dying in prison is the ultimate failure.” Her solution was to train inmate volunteers to care for the dying. Besides comforting the terminally ill, the program would save taxpayers money and “have rehabilitative qualities for these volunteers.”

I feel Florence Nightingale would be proud of her legacy; as it is in good hands, the hands of nurses who are today's leaders.

Today's Home Health Care & Hospice Nurses are a core part of the interdisciplinary team who cares for patients in their home. The Nurses are the eyes and ears for the Physician/Allowed Practitioners; who rely on what the Home Health Care & Hospice Nurses tell them in order to treat the patients we care for in their homes.

By performing assessments, we are able to work with the Physician/Allowed Practitioners toward one of our shared goals; which is to control the patient's symptoms so repeat hospitalizations are not required.

Today's Home Health Care & Hospice Nursing tasks include the following:

- 1. Assessment of the patient to initiate a plan of care; with the goal of preventing and shortening hospital or nursing facility stays through promotion of independent living and speeding the recovery process by allowing a person to recuperate at home; while receiving skilled care.**
- 2. Assessments may include: breath sounds of a patient with COPD, bowel sounds of a patient who has a new colostomy, heart sounds and other symptoms of a patient with CHF, such as shortness of breath, effectiveness of medications and ordered treatments for a patient with cancer, wounds for signs and symptoms of infection, mental status; and compliance with medications, treatments and diet.**
- 3. Teaching a patient and their caregiver to ensure the patient can continue their recuperation at home vs. returning to the hospital; such as wound care, infusion therapy, new medications and new diagnosis or exacerbation of illnesses such as cancer, COPD, heart disease and diabetes.**
- 4. Performance of hands on care such as dressing changes, removing stitches or staples, infusion therapy and other treatments and therapies in the home; as ordered by the patient's physician.**
- 5. Psychiatric trained RN's provide psychiatric evaluation and therapy in the home.**
- 6. Provide palliative care emphasizing pain and symptom control for those facing life-limiting illnesses. Patients may be pursuing curative treatment, have an extended prognosis, or otherwise be inappropriate for Hospice services.**
- 7. Support the patient and family through hospice as they face the last stages of life, by offering symptom management.**



If you have questions about Home Health Care or Hospice; or if you would like to refer someone to Hoosier Upland Home Health Care or Hoosier Uplands Hospice please feel free to contact one of our Hoosier Uplands Home Health Care & Hospice Professionals at 800-827-2219 or 812-849-4447.