

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

The nursing profession worldwide is poised for a sea change – one which will make nurses ‘poster girls’ for healthy lifestyles.

I personally think that this could not have come at a better time. International Nurses’ Day 2010 – marked in Malaysia on April 10 – is themed ‘Delivering Quality, Serving Communities: Nurses Leading Chronic Care’. It addresses an issue of growing severity and urgency, whilst calling on nurses everywhere to be walking role models of healthy living.

Indeed, the statistics are truly sobering. Although humans are living longer today, 60% of all deaths worldwide are caused by chronic disease. This highlights a problem which will have unprecedented repercussions for modern society if left unchecked.

Diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and cancer – along with depression and respiratory disease – are, simply, the world’s biggest killers, and causes of disability. However, the majority of these diseases are preventable, by correcting poor habits like smoking, unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, and alcohol abuse.

Significantly, this year, the International Council of Nurses has emphasised nurses’ unique positions which enable them to act visibly and proactively for an informed, healthy society that is empowered to make better lifestyle choices. To the 13 million nurses worldwide, this year’s Nurses’ Day begins with a call for them to make a personal commitment to eat healthily and exercise appropriately.

For sure, the trade-offs would put us closer to the ideal: healthy nurses, advocating healthy diet and lifestyle options to curb chronic disease. So, as educators and agents of change themselves, nurses now have an added impetus to perform with more dedication and integrity than ever.

I also strongly believe that nurses should be at the frontier of advocating for timely changes in civil society’s healthcare. Armed with education and personal experience, nurses can lobby for enforcement that supports healthy choices and decisions for consumers and businesses. Nurses are well-positioned to spearhead regulation in the manufacture, labeling and pricing of food; and in promoting healthy practices in schools and work environments.

With a mandate as pivotal and wide-ranging as this, we need every nurse – regardless of expertise – to redouble her commitment and effort. After all, a healthy, happy and empowered community has to be a nurse’s most satisfying accomplishment.

In celebration of International Nurses’ Day 2010, the Malaysian Journal of Nursing pays tribute to the crucial work of nurses in Malaysia and around the world. We salute you, and hope that your life-changing work will be an inspiration for the future of the profession, and the betterment of the society you serve.

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