



2009 State Report

State: Florida

Date: April 2009

Contact: Carol Wright-Tanner,
Nursing Services Director

Email: Carol_Wright-Tanner@doh.state.fl.us

Phone: 850-245-4444, ext. 2058

Fax: 850-245-4747

The Florida Office of Public Health Nursing (OPHN) supports the mission of the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), "Promote, protect and improve the health of all people in Florida." The Office addresses public health nursing practice issues, provides technical assistance and consultation, and participates in disaster preparedness and response activities. The Office of Public Health Nursing supports education, collaboration, and research for more than 2,800 nursing staff and other clinicians in 67 county health departments, 21 Area Children's Medical Services offices, and one state hospital.

The Office of Public Health Nursing is responsible for **leadership, workforce development, and public health preparedness**. These core functions are designed to facilitate the delivery of essential public health services to meet the needs of the community and missions of the department and office. Each function is guided by the office's mission encompassing excellence in public health nursing **practice, education, research, and evaluation** to support and facilitate the delivery of high quality services to citizens and visitors to Florida.

The following issues have been identified as current priorities for the Office of Public Health Nursing: Leadership and Workforce Development; Public Health Preparedness; and Partnerships.

Leadership and Workforce Development - Representing, promoting, and supporting public health nursing statewide and nationwide, monitoring public health trends and needs, and implementing new initiatives. The Office leads in the development, implementation, and evaluation of public health nursing policy, standards, and professional development.

Public Health Preparedness- Coordinating public health nursing disaster response and developing public health preparedness initiatives to address the needs of our diverse population and nursing workforce.

Partnerships- Expanding and enhancing partnerships through internal and external collaborations. Committees and workgroups that include partners help to identify gaps, improve processes, and care capabilities.

Projects/Issues Addressed This Year:

Leadership and Workforce Development

- **Nursing Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee**- The State Surgeon General established the Nursing Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee in December 2007 to identify and develop a sustainable discussion encompassing the nursing professional shortage being experienced in the state and to identify potential strategies and solutions. This multidisciplinary group is comprised of representatives from state agencies, the legislature, hospitals, educational facilities, and partner associations. The Nursing Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee has generated a report with recommendations for the State Surgeon General to utilize in advising the Executive Office of the Governor on matters concerning current and future nursing workforce to address Florida's growing shortage of nurses. The Office of Public Health Nursing provided support and served as an advisory body to identify critical areas and possible actions to be taken and assisted with creation of policy recommendations and final committee report.

- **Consultation and Technical Assistance-** The Office of Public Health Nursing's Registered Nursing Consultant liaison network continues to provide a point of contact for technical assistance and consultation for each county health department, Children's Medical Services area office, and central office unit. Consultants provide assistance and information on practice issues, standard operating guidelines, training needs, and recruitment. In 2008, the office provided technical assistance and consultation on Florida's approach to preparedness and sheltering to Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, New York, Tennessee, and Texas.
- **Public Health Nursing Tips-** The office created a monthly informational flyer to enhance public health nursing practice. Eight issues have been published, and are available on the office Intranet site.
- **PHN Orientation Modules-** The training was revised and updated and is a self-directed online training. The program consists of five modules: History of Public Health, Florida Department of Health, A Day in the Life of Public Health (6 minute video), Philosophies of Public Health, and Public Health Nursing. Continue education contact hours are provided upon completion. The additions include the Introduction of the State Surgeon General, Quad Council PHN Competencies, and the Minnesota DOH PHN Intervention Wheel. The new version will be available online in the department's learning management system.
- **PHN Leader Orientations-** The quarterly orientation introduces new Public Health Nursing leaders to Florida Department of Health Central Office Divisions/Bureaus and their leaders. It also provides the opportunity for the new PHN leaders to meet OPHN staff and learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the office.
- **PHN Leaders' Nursing Conference-** The annual conference was held in Orlando, Florida in December 2008. The conference theme was "Preparing and Thriving in Uncertain Times" and the conference goal was to provide PHN leaders with resources to support public health excellence. Fifty of the sixty-seven Florida counties (75%) participated. One hundred and nine Florida PHN leaders attended and nineteen of the twenty-three speakers/presenters (83%) were PHN leaders.
- **Facilitative Leadership Trainings-** OPHN sponsored Facilitative Leadership Training throughout the state. Training was provided to over one hundred FDOH leaders and preparedness partners in 2008.
- **Mentoring the Next Generation of Public Health Workforce-** Mentoring and leadership opportunities were provided to undergraduate and graduate nursing students as well as MPH students from the three major state universities. A total of ten students were mentored in 2008.
- **Continuing Education –** The office facilitates use of its CE provider number, free of charge to all work units of the Florida Department of Health Central Office, county health departments, and other state agencies. During the 2008 calendar year, 7,738 Continuing Education contact hours were awarded for 120 courses to 2,186 participants.
- **Public Health Nursing Competencies-** The office has produced an on-line three-part professional development program based on the Quad Council Public Health Nursing Competencies. The program includes a competency overview presentation, a self-assessment tool to guide the evaluation of personal strengths and weaknesses, and the construction of an individual development plan to set goals for professional growth. From November 2008 to March 2009, almost two hundred nurses completed the on-line training.
- **Recruitment and Retention-** A PHN marketing campaign resource kit highlighting the advantages of being a public health nurse in Florida was created and distributed to assist counties with recruitment of licensed professional nurses from Florida and other states to the field of public health nursing. All materials were designed to allow for customization to meet local needs.
- **Nursing Student Loan Forgiveness Program-** Over \$1 million was distributed to assist 263 nurses working in priority healthcare settings repay nursing education student loans. The office received a Davis Productivity Award for their improved customer service process.

Public Health Preparedness

- **Florida Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Network-** The Network increased to 29 local sites, covering 56 of the 67 Florida counties. As of April 1, 2009, Florida has 4,360 MRC volunteers that include healthcare professionals and support volunteers that are trained and prepared for supporting all-hazard response as well as local public health initiatives. Florida MRC volunteers supplement existing local public health and preparedness resources. The Office of Public Health Nursing is responsible for developing the statewide system by establishing standardized guidelines, providing technical assistance, and creating streams of resources. Statewide MRC priorities include recruitment, retention, and training of volunteers. In regard to statewide capacity building, a resource modeling toolkit was established as an online compilation of materials and documents—such as charters, public service announcements, and spending plans—for use by local MRC sites.

Other capacity building activities include leadership development of local MRC site coordinators, established standardized training guidelines, and credentialing. Established partnerships with the Bureau of Radiation Control and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for MRC recruitment.

- **Florida Emergency Health Volunteer Registry @SERVFL.com**– The Registry is part of the national Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals and is designed to fill post-event disaster missions and other public health activities with willing and able healthcare volunteers. The web-based Registry is a volunteer management tool and database for Medical Reserve Corps and other private healthcare volunteers who can provide emergency surge manpower and assist with other community public health activities. As of April 9, 2009, of the 6,850 total volunteers in the Registry, 2,523 are Registered Nurses, 257 are Certified Nursing Assistants, 239 are Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners, and 158 are Licensed Practical Nurses. Enhancements to the Registry this year include: verification of medical privileges; alert notification; integration with medical specialty boards for verification; adding other health and medical teams; and report development. It links with state licensing boards resulting in volunteer recruitment and automatic license verification. The process eliminated the need for manual verifications by site administrators saving approximately 6,550 hours. The annual savings in time was at least \$163,750. The Registry received two Florida Davis Productivity Awards for innovation. The Registry is found at www.servfl.com.
- **Preparedness Coordination**- One of the OPHN preparedness coordination roles is to lead and support the Logistic Staffing Unit for the Florida's Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF 8). During the Iowa Floods, OPHN responsibilities included recruitment, mobilization, deployment, and demobilization of 25 personnel to impacted areas. The office supports the department's Division of Emergency Medical Operations (DEMO) by participating on cross agency strategic planning target capability teams and office nurses have assumed leadership roles on the Community Preparedness/Mass Care Capability and Responder Safety and Health Capability Teams.
- **Preparedness Education and Training for Professional**- The office coordinates and provides several courses in disaster preparedness and response for professionals. These courses include Public Health Nursing Preparedness Milestones, Disaster Refresher Skills Course, and Special Needs Shelter Operations and Management training.
- **Preparedness Education and Training for the Community- Home Care Series**- The goal of the Home Care Series is to provide our communities with the educational resources they may need to shelter at home, thereby keeping the "worried well" out of acute care facilities. The train-the-trainer design of the Home Care Series provides information that will enhance the skills and confidence of participants to handle illness and provide basic home care. The series consist of three trainings courses: **Home Care Training Course** for a general audience, **Home Care for Children: A Training Guide for Caregivers**, and **Home Care for Seniors Training** for an audience of older adults and caregivers. The Office of Public Health Nursing developed a standardized curriculum for each course including materials and resources to deliver the training. The courses are available in both English and Spanish formats. The Home Care Course Manuals have been distributed to multiple statewide community partners and county health departments.
- **Special Needs Shelter (SpNS) Program**– The program coordinates a standardized, comprehensive, county and regional approach to sheltering that ensures continuity in services and quality care to vulnerable persons, caregivers, and staff in Florida. The Florida Department of Health, in coordination with county health departments and other partners is responsible for the operation and staffing of SpNS. The office supports a network of 140 shelters assuring statewide coverage. An interagency committee in accordance with Section 381.0303(5), *Florida Statutes* resolves issues related to special needs shelters not addressed in the state comprehensive emergency medical plan and to consult on shelter planning and operations. The office supports the committee work and includes representation from 26 groups working in emergency management, health, medical, and social service organizations.

Partnerships

- **Vulnerable Population Committee**- Florida's Vulnerable Populations Workgroup was organized at the November 2008 Special Needs Shelter Interagency Committee Meeting. The short-term goal was to develop a template to provide to the local and regional entities the ability to enhance their planning efforts with vulnerable populations and distribute before hurricane season 2009. The expertise of representatives from several agencies has been utilized to create this template, which is currently in the final stages of development. Long-term goals include identifying strategies to ensure adequate and appropriate resources needed in the event of a disaster.

- **Special Needs Shelter (SpNS) Interagency Committee-** The committees bringing together partners from 26 agencies and interested groups. The committee addresses problems and it was established by Florida Statute to address and resolve problems related to special needs shelters not addressed in the state comprehensive emergency medical plan and to consult on shelter planning and operations.

Projects/Issues Pending:

- **Nursing Strike Team (NST) Pilot Project-** The Nursing Strike Teams are specialized assessment response teams that will be deployed to targeted areas following a disaster. The goal of the team is to provide community health assessments and response following a disaster. The NST will address the gap between existing strike force teams, using nursing knowledge to assess and respond to identified health needs. Members for three strike teams have been identified and are being trained.
- **Regional and Statewide Exercises for MRC, Nursing Strike Team (NST), SpNS Program Teams**
- **Nursing Shortage-** Florida faces a growing shortage of licensed nurses that impacts all aspects of healthcare. The Florida Center for Nursing projects a current state shortage of 11,000 registered nurses could increase to 52,000 by 2020. The present rate of new graduates will not meet this need. The field of Public Health Nursing faces additional barriers. Public health nursing faces competing demands from other practice settings with more favorable salaries in the private sector. Many public health nurses and nursing leaders are retiring. Currently 21% of Florida's public health nurses and 26% of senior nurse leaders are aged 60 or older. At the same time the workforce is aging, Florida's population is aging thereby increasing the need for healthcare and healthcare providers. In 2009, OPHN will continue to promote and advocate for public health nursing excellence in practice and will continue focusing on leadership and workforce development, preparedness initiatives, and partnerships.

For more information on the Office of Public Health Nursing or any of its initiatives visit, www.doh.state.fl.us/PHNursing/index.html