Nursing's Agenda for Health Care Reform Guides Nursing Center Research Agenda

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intensive eight day program in
the summer, followed by an op­
tional one year fellowship in
parish nursing. Last summer,
twenty-nine nurses from five
states attended the program. A
directory of available programs
for parish nursing is available
from Health Ministries Associa­
tion, 1-800-852-5613.

Footnotes
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Focus On Research

NURSING’S AGENDA FOR HEALTH
CARE REFORM GUIDES
Nursing Center Research Agenda
by Marilyn Frenn RN, PhD
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Fifty nine nursing organiza­
tions boldly launched Nursing’s
Agenda for Health Care Reform
early last year. Components of
the reform include a restruc­
tured health care system which
enhances consumer access to
primary health care through an
expanded nursing role, thereby
reducing the need for costly
in-patient care.

A research base will be need­
ed for further exploration and
evaluation of effectiveness of
the reform. This research base
will require the efforts of
many nursing scholars. Howev­
er, the reform closely paral­
lels the purposes of nursing
centers.

What are Nursing Centers?
Nursing centers are organiza­
tions where clients have direct
access to care guided by nurs­
ing models of health (ANA
1987a). Nursing centers have
provided health promotion and
other community-based services
largely for groups who have
been underserved in traditional
health care systems. (Barger,
1986).

Academic nursing centers of­
fer a variety of services as
well as provide students with
innovative learning opportuni­
ties. Academic nursing centers
in Wisconsin are located at
University of Wisconsin campus­
es at Eau Claire, Madison, Mil­
waukee, and Oshkosh as well as
at Marquette University College
of Nursing.

The Marquette University
Nursing Center began in 1982
with a church based Wellness
Resource Center and several
outreach programs in low income
congregate living housing.
Natural Family Planning servic­
es were offered in 1985 and
continue to provided care to
over 340 couples on campus and
at St. Joseph’s Hospital
through a faculty practice mod­
el.

(continued on page 5)
Practitioners in this program are certified by the American Academy of Natural Family Planning and provide wholistic, non-pharmacologic approaches to couples seeking natural family planning.

A recent initiative of the Marquette Nursing Center is Urban Partners for Healthy Children. Director Jeanne Browning described the goal of this program as promoting health of children, families and the entire school system by expanding school nursing services. This program includes health education, health services, and system/environmental in the Central City Catholic School System.

On campus, the Marquette Nursing Center is a member of the Campus Wellness Committee through which programming occurs such as a wellness fair, and educational sessions on smoking cessations, long-term care initiatives for aging parents, shopping for good nutrition, and caring for persons with Alzheimer’s disease. Nursing Center programs also have been offered on preventing job-related injuries for Physical Environment employees.

Both the UW-Milwaukee and Marquette Nursing Centers have been contracted by the Milwaukee City Health Department to develop primary health services for underserved groups. The Marquette program is at Metcalfe Park Health Center and is coordinated by Pat McManus. The Metcalfe Park center is targeted to provide services to mothers and children in the central city. Funding for these programs was provided by state, city and Marquette monies to address critical and unmet health care needs.

The community outreach component of the Nursing Center provides a vehicle for participation in community health fairs, providing Federally mandated screening for Head Start, and working with the Marquette Day Care Center. The Nursing Center thereby provides a rich grounding for research reflecting crucial health care needs.

What Research Has Been Done in Nursing Centers?

A number of published studies have been conducted in nursing centers throughout the country including several in the Marquette University Nursing Center (Fehring, 1990; Fehring & Frenn, 1986; Fehring, Lawrence, & Sauvage, 1989; Frenn, 1989; Frenn, Jacobs, Lee, Sanger, & Strong, 1987).

Additionally, the Nursing Center Research Section in the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) began in 1982. That also was the year of the first biennial national conference on nursing centers. In 1989 the national efforts were organized within the National League for Nursing Council on Nursing Centers. In 1991 the MNRS Nursing Center Research Section became a sub-group within the Public Health/Community Health Research Section in order to promote further collaboration among researchers with similar interests.

In the 1991 meeting, members of the MNRS Nursing Center Sub-group developed a preliminary research agenda based on Riesch’s (in press) review of nursing center related research. The research agenda also was guided by Nursing’s Agenda for Health Care Reform, Sub-group is as follows:

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Healthy People 2000, and the National Center for Nursing Research (NCNR) priorities.

The research agenda proposed by the MNRS Nursing Centers
1. Studies focused on outcomes:
   (a) Comparison of nursing centers with other models of primary health care.
   (b) Evaluation of data bases, cost effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of care.
   (c) Evaluation of strategies to maintain or improve client wellness/health status indicators, prevent illness, injury, hospitalization, or days lost from work or school.
   (d) Evaluation of accomplishment of the objectives specified in Healthy People 2000.
2. Studies reflective of changing population demographics as prioritized by NCNR.
   (a) Studies focused on development and utilization of common health status indicators.
   (b) Studies focused on client experience.

According to Riesch (in press) previous studies in nursing centers have generally lacked a strong conceptual framework, well defined research variables, large random samples, and longitudinal designs. These study characteristics therefore are needed in future nursing center research. In addition, replication of previous research is needed along with multi-site, multi-method studies.

In recent years a number of nurses have organized innovative care delivery systems similar to academic nursing centers, through hospitals, home care and long-term care agencies. Through collaborative efforts Nursing’s Agenda for Health Care Reform may guide the research needed to promote our nation’s health in the year 2000 and beyond.

References:

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