



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: PREVENTIVE CARDIOVASCULAR NURSES ASSOCIATION

CELEBRATING NURSES AND THEIR LEADERSHIP DURING THE YEAR OF THE NURSE

Million Hearts® in Action

[Strategies for Achieving Million Hearts® Goals]



During the 2020 International Year of the Nurse and MidWife, we celebrate the Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA), the leading nursing organization focused on preventing and managing cardiovascular disease. PCNA has been a vital member of the Million Hearts® Collaboration since 2015 and is a founding member of the CDC's National Hypertension Control Roundtable, which commenced in late 2019. In this partner spotlight, we showcase key roles nurses play in public health and two nurse-led programs in research and the clinical setting.

Nurses are often at the center of coordinating care and empowering patients to monitor their blood pressure at home. Nurses and nurse practitioners work with patients in all aspects of their care from detection and patient education to medication management and coordination of care. In addition to these clinical roles, nurses spearhead public health programs and lead important community-based research programs, frequently addressing social determinants of health and racial and ethnic disparities.

Among its goals, PCNA strives to increase public and political awareness of the critical role nurses play in reducing cardiovascular disease and lowering blood pressure as well as to disseminate information on innovative, evidence-based research and practices in cardiovascular care. For years, nurses have topped polls for the public trust they instill, placing their individual relationships with patients in a unique position to be able to influence change. In a recent Gallup poll that ranks the honesty and ethics of various professions, “82 percent of Americans ranked nurses as very high or high” and nurses have been at the top of this list since 20021.

PCNA and its nurse leaders have been at the forefront of major hypertension control initiatives in health systems across the country and have served as prime investigators in several key research studies for decades. “As nurses, we are, according to these Gallup findings, in an exquisite position to teach patients and persuade them to change behavior”, states Jo-Ann Eastwood, PhD, RN, CNS, ACNP-BC, FAHA, FPCNA, an associate professor at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Nursing and past president of PCNA.

PCNA leaders served on the writing teams for the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology revised guidelines for elevated blood pressure and hypertension. Additionally, Chief Executive Officer, Sue Koob, was the 2015 recipient of the National Forum on Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention's Heart Healthy and Stroke Free Award.



[Nurse-led research shaping community health and addressing disparities]

Nurses are not only shaping community health and hypertension management as a partner of integrated care programs, but they are also leading research efforts across the United States and internationally to improve hypertension quality of care and address health disparities.

Twenty years ago, Erin Ferranti noticed that very few of the research papers she was studying in pursuit of her nursing degree and master's in public health were authored by nurses. This motivated her to pursue a PhD, and she is now an inspiration for the next generation of nursing students. As a distinguished researcher, assistant professor, and director of the Farmworker Family Health Program (FWFHP), Dr. Ferranti brings the voice of nursing and patients to key research. "I feel that nurses bring a unique perspective to clinical research. I know what it means for the patient and can share that knowledge with bench scientists who have not had the same clinical experiences of a nurse," shared Ferranti.

Dr. Ferranti explained that a decade ago she was often asked, "why would a nurse pursue a Phd?" Now as she teaches and leads the FWFHP, her colleagues and new students are studying programs and papers that are nurse-led much more often and there is a greater understanding of the importance of a nurse's perspective. Ferranti's leadership of the immersive FWFHP helps to prepare the next set of leaders with an integrated learning competency, allowing more than 100 students across five disciplines to focus on and address health disparities. During the 2019 program more than 470 farmworkers and their children were assessed by students from nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy, APRN and dental hygiene with a variety of health screens for hypertension, diabetes, and more. "This immersive experience is preparing these students not only for the screening practices, but also to address health disparities throughout their career and to work with and learn from other professionals - that interpersonal, interdisciplinary competency is a unique experience that will prepare great leaders," stated Ferranti.

The work of Dr. Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, a 2020 recipient of the World Heart Federation's Salic Yusuf Emerging Leader award, is another example of important research being led by nurses. As a cardiovascular nurse epidemiologist, her research seeks to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease and risk factors among African-descent populations locally (United States) and globally (sub-Saharan Africa) through epidemiological methods and with a nursing lens.

Dr. Commodore-Mensah, who is also a PCNA board member, is currently leading an innovative program in Ghana, Africa. This project is a partnership between Johns Hopkins University and Kwame Nkrumah University. It is designed to address the gaps in management and treatment of hypertension in residents of Ghana through a multi-level, nurse-led intervention. It utilizes evidence-based chronic disease management interventions and mobile health technology in a low-resource setting. Participating patients will receive Bluetooth-enabled blood pressure monitors as well as training from community health nurses on how to use the monitors. Motivational messages will also be transmitted to participants through an app, along with reminders regarding medication and appointments.



Nurses and advanced practice nurses play a leading role in hypertension care and control with Million Hearts Collaboration partner, PCNA supporting and championing their efforts every day.

¹ <https://www.elitecme.com/resource-center/nursing/nurses-top-gallups-most-trusted-poll-for-16th-consecutive-year/>

² Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, PhD, MHS, RN, FAAN, FAHA, FPCNA biographical profile

*"A Look at the Moultrie Farmworker Family Health Program at 26, Emory News Center, https://news.emory.edu/stories/2019/06/2019_moultrie_clinic/campus.html. Accessed June 2020.

**ADHINCRA Study: Addressing Hypertension in Africa, Johns Hopkins Alliance for a Healthier World. <https://www.ahealthierworld.jhu.edu/adhincra-hypertension-in-africa> . Accessed 2/2020

The Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association is the leading nursing organization dedicated to preventing and managing cardiovascular disease. Our members are nurses and nurse practitioners that assess risk, facilitate lifestyle changes, and guide individuals to achieve treatment goals at clinics, hospitals and universities across the country.