



The Advocate

NURSE PRACTITIONERS OF NEW YORK

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From the President's Desk...

As Nurse Practitioners, we promote education and prevention. Research shows reducing stress can lead to a healthy lifestyle. Easier said than done.

RESEARCH SHOWS. Laura Berman Fortgang, author of *Now What? 90 Days to a New Life Direction*, recommends getting your priorities clear as the first and most essential step toward achieving a well-balanced life. Make a list—from children and spouse to watching a game. Dropping any commitments and pursuits that don't make your top five will be good for you.

EAT HEALTHY. Fresh fruits and berries are great for you and will satisfy a craving for sweets. Vegetables have lots of vitamins and minerals; eat more green, orange and yellow ones. Steam fruits and vegetables to retain the most nutritional value. Choose pasta and baked goods made from whole grains. Eat lean meats and fish. Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids found in ocean fish are often deficient in our diets, so serve seafood two or three times a week. Lean meats, like bison or venison, are healthier than higher fat beef.

NO JUNK FOOD AT HOME. Keep fruits and other healthy snacks handy. If you absolutely have to satisfy a sweet craving, purchase a small piece of high-quality chocolate or your favorite treat and enjoy it—just don't bring any home. The same for TV snacking: if you don't want to give up nibbling, keep low calorie foods close by. It's too easy to eat too much when you're entranced by your favorite drama.

FITNESS: Incorporate some type of exercise routine into your life. Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease; most Americans are not physically active enough. Swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing, aerobic dancing, walking and many other activities can help your heart. Whether included in a structured exercise program or part of a daily routine, all physical activity adds up to a healthier heart. Almost everyone is able to walk, and research shows that walking is key to losing weight — and keeping it off.

DEVELOP A DAILY ROUTINE: Research suggests that a regular routine and sleep schedule can stave off depression and stress.

—*Otuodichima Christy Nwankpa,*
MS, FNP-BC

NPNY Supports Opt Out of Consent for HIV Testing

If you've ever had to conduct an HIV test, you are already familiar with the quantity of paperwork necessary to meet this antiquated requirement. During Lobby Day 2009, NPNY and students from Hunter College School of Nursing had the opportunity to speak with lawmakers about making HIV testing a routine part of medical care. New York State is one of only a few states still requiring written consent for HIV testing. Most states have adopted the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) 2006 recommendations to offer HIV testing routinely to all our patients, ages 13 to 64.

IN RESPONSE TO LOBBYING

With the evolution of effective treatments, HIV testing can now be a gateway to lifesaving therapies and is a proven prevention strategy. Effort and time should be expended on counseling after a positive result and on linking the person to care—not to mandating lengthy risk-reduction counseling at the onset. Research has been unclear about whether this type of pre-test counseling can cause behavior change; what does cause behavior change is knowing your HIV status.

In response to our lobbying, NPNY was asked by the sponsor to comment specifically on Assembly Bill 4016. This bill seeks to remove the requirement for written consent. NPNY's policy committee supported the Bill but raised concerns and provided some suggested language. One main area of concern is that the Bill, as it is written, does not explicitly define opt-out HIV testing and what the provider is responsible for. We suggested language about obtaining informed consent and requested that the Bill use a broad scope term like "health care provider" when describing who could conduct HIV testing, as opposed to "doctor." As we all know, small changes in language can mean all the difference in the world when it comes to our scope of practice. In addition, we recommended more changes that we hope will be amenable to our colleagues working in HIV/AIDS advocacy groups.

OUR PROGRESS

We will keep you posted on the progress in Albany.

—**Rebecca S. Fry, FNP**, Board Member, NPNY (rebeccafry@hotmail.com)



Lobby Day: NPs and NP students took a break to pose with State Senator Velmanette Montgomery. A great supporter of NPs, the Senator introduced a bill to eliminate the requirement for mandatory collaboration with a physician—A765 Gottfried/Montgomery S2948.

Join the Board of Nurse Practitioners of New York (NPNY)

In May, NPNY will hold elections for board positions. We need new ideas. If you are interested in advocacy, legislation that affects NPs, planning CE topics, reaching out to NP groups—now is the time to join the board.

Call Christy Nwankpa at 914/636.7262 or e-mail her at chinwaus@yahoo.com. Or contact Susan Moscou at 914/966.7184 (smoscou@earthlink.net) or Helen Ruddy at 718/204.6879 (hruddy@nyc.rr.com).

FACEBOOK: See a photo gallery of Lobby Day in Albany on our NPNY page.

Perspectives

from and on Washington, DC

“Now is the time. The stars are aligned,” said Max Baucus, Democrat (ND), Chair of the Senate Finance Committee. “Baucus has put his foot on the accelerator for health care reform by August”—from *Time* (April 6, 2009).

I feel the same way. It is time to move on health care reform. There is hope but also confusion and many vested interests are competing for their piece of the pie. This may be the “tipping point”—a real opportunity for meaningful reform, which would be a boon to the economy and many aspects of our future health as a nation. In February, I attended the ACNP Public Policy Institute in Washington, DC, at which Ellen Marie Whelan, NP, PhD, (Policy Center for American Progress) stated: “Health care is the economy.” My question is where will Nurse Practitioners fit in?

Also in February at the annual ACNP Policy Summit in DC, Cheryl Jones, NP (IA), was presented with the Margie Koehler Advocacy Award. It was Koehler, a Nurse Practitioner, who launched a massive grass roots campaign that helped pass the provision in the 1988 Federal Balanced Budget Act recognizing NPs nationwide and in all settings as providers for Medicare. Cheryl Jones—a strong advocate for NPs, especially those working in rural locations—has worked in Iowa as a primary care NP for more than 30 years. She sits on a Nurse Advisory Board for her US Senator, Tom Harkin.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Nurse Practitioners have and can make a difference. Is it possible that we could have real health care, not the illness model, in this country? Nurse Practitioners are positioned to fill the need for primary care services that provide lower cost and better outcomes. I have written before about having a place at the table. **Now** is the time for us to step up and offer our expertise.

WILL YOU HAVE A VOICE?

There is an opportunity to have a nursing perspective shape the future of our health care system. Join NPNY's Legislative Committee. —**Helen Ruddy, NP**

Apply for a Scholarship

I'm offering to cover the registration fee for one NPNY member to attend the February 2010 ACNP Policy Summit in Washington, DC. I believe it is important for NPs to know about and get involved in policy. So I'm putting my money where my mouth is and offering a 2010 scholarship. To apply, send an essay explaining why you want to attend to hruddy@nyc.rr.com by December 31, 2009. —**Helen Ruddy, NP**

NPNY CALENDAR: Earn CEs for Each Program

◆ THURS., APRIL 16, 2009

Program: Controversies and Best Practices in Contraception (Earn 1.5 CEs) Our speaker has just returned from the Contraceptive Technology Conference in DC! Talk will focus on the latest recommendations for contraception counseling and management; how best to match contraceptive options based on patient factors; most current recommendations for quick-starting of methods, continuous use of methods and managing side effects, such as breakthrough bleeding.

Speaker: Anne Miller, MS, NP, Certificates in Colposcopy and Vulvar Dermatology. Currently Director of Student Health Services, Fashion Institute of Technology, she has 6 years of private practice OB/GYN experience.

◆ THURS., MAY 21, 2009

Program: Adult Scoliosis, Staying Ahead of the Curve (Earn 1.5 CEs) Talk will focus on assessment, diagnosis and treatment of various spinal pathology, including herniated disk, spinal stenosis and scoliosis,

Being the Change We Want to See

This past March, we journeyed to Albany to lobby our State Senators and Assemblymen and gain support for pending legislation, backed by the Nurse Practitioners of New York. I made the trip as one of 22 nurse practitioner students from Hunter College. This was a great experience—and I hope a tradition that will continue as we must, as Gandhi said, “be the change we want to see in the world.”

THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER

The first and most important bill that we lobbied for was to eliminate the mandatory Nurse Practitioner - Physician Collaborative Agreement. Two other important bills we supported would allow Nurse Practitioners to sign DNR papers as well as death certificates. Current laws—mandating collaboration with a physician, allowing only physicians to obtain a DNR and permitting only physician signatures on death certificates—are outdated and in need of reform. We also lobbied for oral consent for HIV screening to end the mandated written consent; evidence suggests that written informed consent is a barrier to testing and identifying infected individuals.

I believe our enthusiasm, knowledge and concern for the health of New Yorkers had an influence on the legislators we spoke with, but the fight is not over.

— **Sara Marano, RN**

as well as also patient education with regard to both operative and non-operative approaches to care.

Speaker: Nicola V. Hawkinson, MA, RNFA, ANP. Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner. Nicola Hawkinson works in collaboration with Dr. Frank Schwab in the care of patients with spinal deformity. She is actively involved in multiple multi-center research projects on spinal deformity.

◆ Time:

6 - 6:30 pm Networking & light dinner
6:30 - 7 pm News and announcements
7 - 8:30 pm Program

◆ **Location:** Board Room, 18th floor, Pace University. Approach security at Spruce St. entrance of Pace (Schimmel Center).

◆ **Subway:** 2, 3, 4, 5, J, M, Z, A, C to Fulton/Broadway/Nassau or 6 to Brooklyn Bridge.

◆ **Details:** More information: check NPNY web site. This continuing nursing education activity is approved by NYS Nurses Association's Council on Continuing Education which is accredited as an Approver of continuing education in Nursing by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.



Cheryl Jones, NP of Iowa (left), received the Margie Koehler Advocacy Award. She stands with Margie Koehler (center) and Irene Van Slyke at the ACNP Policy Summit in Washington, DC.

NPNY-The Advocate

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