

# LIVE WELL NURSING

## NURSE'S NOTES

*By: Angela Mitchell, CNO*

Harvest: The Rewards of Public Health Nursing



Public health nursing offers many rewards for those who are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of communities. Public health nurses work to prevent disease and promote health through education, outreach, advocacy, and research (American Public Health Association, 2020). Some of the most meaningful rewards of public health nursing include:

### Making an Impact on the Health of Populations

Public health nurses focus on the health of entire populations, not just individual patients (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). By identifying health risks, developing active responses to those identified risk, educating communities, and helping implement health policies, public health nurses can have a significant impact on the health of large groups of people. We have recently seen this with our Hepatitis A FOOT team response effort. This population-level impact is a source of motivation and satisfaction for many public health nurses (Keane et al., 2021).

### Community Connection and Collaboration

Public health nurses interact with and serve entire communities (American Nurses Association, 2020). They work closely with community partners and organizations to identify and address health needs. This community-focused work allows public health nurses to forge strong connections and collaborate with diverse groups to improve public health (Grzybowski et al., 2021). An example of this would be our Rural Health Discharge Program (RHDP) that focuses on reducing avoidable hospital readmissions consisting of County Public Health Nurses, SHARP Grossmont hospital, CAL FIRE, and San Diego County Fire Department. Many public health nurses find this type of community engagement personally and professionally fulfilling.

### Autonomy and Flexibility

Public health nurses often work with more autonomy and flexibility compared to other nursing roles (Keane et al., 2021). Our nurses are supported in designing and implementing programs and processes based on community needs. The creativity and independent thinking that we are seeing from our SHARED Governance councils' has been phenomenal and the projects have been very relevant to the needs of our communities here in San Diego.

Public health nursing provides meaningful rewards through population health impact, community connection, and professional autonomy. The ability to improve health on a large scale, form relationships within communities, and work with flexibility are sources of motivation and satisfaction for nurses in this field. These rewards demonstrate the value of public health nursing in promoting health and wellbeing for all.

American Nurses Association. (2020). Public health nursing. <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/workforce/what-is-nursing/public-health-nursing/>

American Public Health Association. (2020). What is public health nursing? <https://www.apha.org/apha-communities/member-sections/public-health-nursing/what-is-phn>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). What is public health nursing? <https://www.cdc.gov/php/publications/topic/nursing.html>

Grzybowski, K., Svavarsdottir, M. H., Berntsen, G. R., & Goudie, A. (2021). Public health nursing in the community: A systematic review. *Public health nursing*, 38(1), 3-16.

Keane, A., Smith, A., Lincoln, M., & Fisher, K. R. (2021). Factors influencing job satisfaction and retention among the public health nursing workforce: A systematic review. *Public Health Nursing*, 38(1), 17-29.

Skodol Wilson, H., Callister, L. C., & Morrow, M. (2017). *Community health nursing promoting and preserving the public's health*. Elsevier Health Sciences.

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## SUBMISSIONS

Please e-mail submissions (ideas, photos, articles, trainings, dates, accolades, local or national news, etc.) to:  
**davina.trejo-valdez@sdcounty.ca.gov**

For consideration in the next issue, please submit entries by close of business on November 15, 2023. Submission limits: 125-275 words

## Harvest: The Rewards of Public Health Nursing

By Denise Dizon, Public Health Nurse, East Public Health Center

“A nation cannot fully thrive until everyone - no matter who they are, where they live, or how much money they make - can live their healthiest possible life, and helping people live their healthiest life is and has always been the essential role of nurses”. (Flaubert, J. L., Le Menestrel, S., Williams, D. R., & Wakefield, M. K. (Eds.). (2021). We, as Public Health Nurses, fulfill a unique and vital role that takes part in helping people reach their potential to live a healthy and thriving life.

From my experience, the rewards of Public Health Nursing have been challenging, yet impactful. It has been a privilege to get a true, first-hand experience as a Public Health Nurse through the Maternal Child Health Program. What I have found to be the most fulfilling is witnessing the growth and change that takes place within families.

Regardless of status, profession, or cultural background, each family is unique and faces different factors and barriers to their health. This role has allowed me to witness the beauty and importance of Public Health Nursing. We, as Public Health Nurses, get to intervene, promote, advocate, educate, and bridge the gap between disparities and inequities. For this purpose, we help create the true meaning of Public Health Nursing, which is the greatest reward.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; National Academy of Medicine; Committee on the Future of Nursing 2020–2030, Flaubert, J. L., Le Menestrel, S., Williams, D. R., & Wakefield, M. K. (Eds.). (2021). The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity. National Academies Press (US).

Website: [The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

## Harvest: The Rewards of Public Health Nursing

By Drew Berlin, QAS, MCS- Office of Nursing Excellence

When I think of rewarding professions, public health nursing immediately comes to mind. There are numerous gratifying aspects of public health nursing that we should remind ourselves of when considering this specialty. We all know how wonderful public health nursing can be, serving those who need help the most. But there are aspects of public health nursing that are not always top of mind. Since moving to Medical Care Services about a year ago, I have come across many compassionate public health nurses that put their client's first, helping to meet the needs of extremely at-risk individuals. This brings me to my first point. **People**. We have a very passionate workforce that is willing to go above and beyond to make sure client needs are met. If this means working after hours, driving across the 5th largest county in the US, jumping in to precept nursing students, or running a community event during times of disaster, our nurses do whatever it takes to get the job done while managing to continue normal day to day operations. To meet clients where they are and improving outcomes for an extremely vulnerable population is one of the most rewarding experiences that a nurse can have (Hassmiller, 2022.) Our public health nurses are persistent do whatever it takes to help and get the job done. Another rewarding aspect of public health nursing deals with **creativity**. As public health nurses, we are always in the forefront of new initiatives and changes that impact the lives of vulnerable individuals. Whether it be a newly created team, or infrastructure to improve services, public health nurses have the autonomy to change prospective while using creative messaging to enhance community-based solutions. Lastly, **career satisfaction**. Because public health is so different from many of the other nursing avenues, public health nurses are empowered to create and implement new solutions for clients. There are increased opportunities for public health nurses to find personal and professional satisfaction as well. I feel lucky and privileged to work in this exciting specialty and look forward to reaping its rewards alongside of our county team for years to come.

Hassmiller, S. B. (2022). Revitalizing Public Health Nursing for the Future. American Journal of Public Health, 112(S3), S262–S264.

## Harvest: The Rewards of Public Health Nursing *By Cassidy Mayer, PHN, North Coastal Public Health Center*

As we enter this harvest season it is important to reflect on the moments of joy in our working environments. As nurses we are always focusing on the next milestone, next item on the to do list, and the next way to improve. This leaves little room for celebrating success. Looking around at my coworkers I am in awe of the everyday wins that are glossed over. Uniquely, in public health we get the opportunity to stay with our clients long term and truly build relationships. We bring smiles to our clients, give them a listening ear, provide vital education, connect them with resources, and provide them a consistent force in their corner. Each day we continue to show up, we prove to the client that they are someone worthy of care. So today refill your cup by reminding yourself how big of an impact you are having. "Employees receiving recognition for work report higher qualities of life" (Weziak-Bialowolska & Bialowolski, 2022). So let me give you some recognition. I see how hard you are working. Celebrate yourself today. I guarantee you are more important than you give yourself credit for. Our community is lucky to have you.

Weziak-Bialowolska, D., & Bialowolski, P. (2022). Associations of recognition at work with subsequent health and quality of life among older working adults. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 95(4), 835–847. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00420-021-01804-w>



Caption: North Coastal nursing staff takes time to celebrate each other.  
Pictured (Left to Right): Veronica Figueroa, Kathryn Kerr, Mary Ho, Maria Josephina Wallace, and Cassidy Mayer

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using a universal link



<https://my.openathens.net/>

# Building Rewarding Partnerships Through Preparedness Activities Public Health Preparedness and Response Branch; Epidemiology/Bioterrorism Nursing Unit

*By: Julie Gates, Quality Assurance Specialist*

The primary role of the Epidemiology/Bioterrorism (Epi/BT) nursing unit is to improve public health and health care system capabilities by building and maintaining partnerships and systems to prevent or reduce morbidity and mortality from unplanned events. Our nursing unit fosters preparedness within communities and the County by hosting readiness activities and community outreach, building rewarding relationships along the way.

One outreach program our team is involved with is spreading public awareness about the Stop the Bleed (STB) campaign. We provide STB training to our hospital preparedness program partners, who are then empowered to go back to their clinical sites and teach others how to prepare to assist with lifesaving bleeding control techniques in emergencies. As word continues to spread about our STB program, we are receiving more requests for trainings, giving us opportunities to go out to our community and teach life-saving skills. Our team feels truly rewarded when we see that our efforts are promoting positive changes in public health.

Another way we foster preparedness is by partnering with the County's Public Health Centers (PHC) to plan and execute 6 Flu Points of Dispensing (POD) events annually. The Flu PODs allow the Epi/BT and PHC public health nurses to build and maintain skills that would be utilized in an event requiring mass prophylaxis. The Flu POD planning team prioritizes placing the events in areas that are easily accessible to our community members. Historically, the months of planning that the team puts into the events results in hundreds of free doses of the flu vaccine being administered to community members, which is another rewarding experience to the public health nurses on our team.



Morgan Smith, Sr. PHN with Epi/BT, oversees hands-on Stop the Bleed Training with community partners



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