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Medical Professionals: Nurses

Everyone knows the story of Florence Nightingale, she was one of the most famous pioneers of nursing and, without her, nursing probably would not exist, at least not nearly to the extent of where it is today. Now, almost one hundred years after Nightingale's death, our nation's nurses are still flourishing, probably more than she ever dreamed of, and the American Nurses Association is helping that. On the American Nurses Association (ANA) website, Nursingworld.org, the definition of nursing was stated as "the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations" (4). That alone seems to be the best explanation for the nurses themselves and why they would stand behind the healthcare reform.

In 2004, the United States of America had 2.9 million registered nurses, with about 83 percent of them being employed as such. The website "NursingAdvocacy.org" says that in 2005, Nurses employed in nursing made up 0.76% and 0.74% of the population in the US and Canada respectively. Nurses in fact outnumber physicians 4 to 1. There are less than 6 million people in Washington, if nurses wanted to, they could all go and take over a small state and just have the healthiest living in the world. What would we do then? Nothing. Those nurses are important. They have read the health care bill and stand fully behind it. ANA had a fair and democratic vote where they decided they would adopt a stance to support a "guaranteed, affordable, high-quality health care for all" (3).

The ANA, or the American Nurses Association, believes that better healthcare would help and benefit the American people, and because of that have been advocating for more than twenty years for better healthcare. The nurses believe strongly in that if a public plan option were available towards the public it would strongly benefit in many ways, such as providing competition to the insurance and private insurance markets, coverage would be more affordable, as well as general healthcare overall. The department of labor predicts that even as soon as 2012, the number of nurses needed in the U.S. will continue to grow; this creates a problem when not enough people are becoming nurses because of the health care system and lack of funds. It is said that 236,000 new nurses will be needed per year to keep up with demand for health care.

There were over 65,000 people in 2006 who became registered nurses and each of them got there after following different courses of education. Once they obtained their licenses, each one “increased his or her expertise as a direct health care provider in work settings ranging from acute care hospitals to home and community centers to corporate work sites” (4). They now, because of that extended expertise, have the knowledge needed to meet the healthcare needs of the population; the breadth and depth of this profession is expanding greatly every year because they are gaining more and more experience.

In 2004, 34.2% of RNs had a Bachelors degree (after four years), 33.7% had an Associate degree (after only two years), 12.5% had a diploma (usually from a hospital after three years), and only 13% had a Masters or PhD (4). If this healthcare plan were to go through, more nurses would be needed and those percentages would grow; more people would be able to be helped because there would be more nurses to help them.

Nurses are an essential component to the healthcare system and they understand how deeply healthcare needs a change. The President assured 'his people' "those who like their healthcare can keep it, reform will save you money by bringing down costs providing more choices, and keep insurance companies honest." Nurses would like it if the government invested in prevention. Then they would not have to treat diseases or complications that could have been avoided had there been more substantial preventative measures in place. Also, if the government modernized health records, obtaining them would be a lot easier and more efficient than current practices thus allowing for faster and higher quality patient care.

The purpose of the healthcare reform: If the individual has health insurance, the proposal would end discrimination against people with pre-existing conditions, prevent insurance companies from dropping coverage when people are sick and need it most, cap out-of-pocket expenses so people do not go broke when they get sick, eliminate extra charges for preventative care like mammograms, flu shots and diabetes tests to improve health and save money.

If the individual does not have insurance, the proposal would create a new insurance marketplace-the Exchange-that allows people without insurance and small businesses to compare plans and buy insurance at competitive prices, provides new tax credits to help buy insurance and to help small businesses cover their employees, offer a public health insurance option to provide the uninsured who cannot find affordable coverage with a real choice.

It seems that in large part, Nurses are for the bill. Not because they like the bill but because "Something has to change". "The way to lead is not to raise taxes and put more money and power in hands of Washington politicians," Bobby Jindal (Louisiana's Governor) said while addressing the GOP. "Who among us would ask our children for a loan, so we could spend

money we do not have, on things we do not need?"(1) Is it possible that maybe the true nature of this bill is that it is preparing America for the rebirth of a demon? During an interview, Registered Nurse Katherine Whitt, age 52, stated "although it may be very true that the drug/Insurance companies are a plague on our health care system, would it not be worse if our government became the new owner of that terrible and corrupt power. The laws designed to keep businesses from monopolizing don't apply to the U.S.A. government and things are already bad enough as is for our patients and us[nurses]!"(2) Well maybe not a demon, but for a nurse just as scary.

Several medical professionals that are registered with the ANA have offered the reminder of the phrase "Good enough for Government work" in relation to healthcare reform. If a study were done to find out the public's response to this concept, it is certain that although the concept is a bit ironic, still no one would ever want to hear it, even for its comedic value.

Nurses' focus is more on the individual or family and their needs, rather than the country or society as a whole; once the individual is healthy they, in turn, can help make the country healthy. Because nurses are concerned more with the individual, they believe that the new healthcare plan would be quite profitable, as it would benefit the individual and therefore benefit the nurses themselves in the process. When there are more individuals who need help, more nurses are required and more jobs can be filled; it works out for everyone. After all, why would the nurses not want something to be passed that would potentially really help them and give them more work in the long run?

Works Cited

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