



Ring in a Safe and Quality New Year!

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I have always found the New Year to be a time for reflection and remembrance. Perhaps it is my Scottish ancestry reminding me that Hogamany is the traditional Scottish celebration of friendship and renewal every New Year's Eve. The Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote the traditional poem, *Auld Lang Syne* in 1788, which literally translates "old long since" and has become a major part of New Year's celebrations around the world (Burns, 2001). This is the season for acknowledging accomplishments and contemplating things left undone. This year is no different. So in that tradition it seems appropriate to review the goals and strategic direction for the future of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) as we make our old-fashioned New Year's resolutions.

Foremost in NAPNAP's strategic direction is **improving the quality of children's health by enhancing access to information through leadership, practice, advocacy, education, and research.** This goal is achieved by disseminating standards of care, clinical guidelines, the latest research, and national safety standards; by promoting professional and public education; and through networking. The year 2009 saw an unprecedented flurry of health care issues pertaining to this goal, many of which I have written about in earlier messages. Health care reform is not just legislation to be passed but also a mantra for changing a health care system that is flawed. Although you read this message in January, I write in early September when the future of health care reform is uncertain. Perhaps it is still uncertain. However, what is certain is that we need a health

care system that promotes safe and quality health care for all citizens. All health care providers must collaborate, regardless of political affiliations, to achieve this goal.

Two recent national initiatives with the goals of safety and quality in health care deserve closer examination. The first project, "Quality and Safety Education for Nurses" (QSEN), led by Linda Cronenewett, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Gwen Sherwood, PhD, RN, FAAN, and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is designed to meet the challenge of preparing future nurses who will have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continuously improve the quality and safety of the health care systems within which they work. QSEN (2009) builds upon the Institute of Medicine (2003) health care competencies of patient-centered care, teamwork and collaboration, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, safety, and informatics to define quality and safety competencies for nursing (see the Web site at www.qsen.org).

In the initial stages of this project, QSEN focused on the identification of strategies to build and develop effective teaching approaches to ensure that future pre-licensure nursing graduates develop these competencies. More recently, in consultation with the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty, QSEN is focusing on determining advanced practice nursing competencies that promote safe and quality care.

As I write about safe practice, my visits to the Nightingale Museum in London come to mind, consistent with the theme of looking into the past as we plan for the future. If you ever have the opportunity to visit this small but impressive museum, you will discover an entire section devoted to Nightingale's efforts to "Do No Harm." In her *Notes on Hospitals* (1863), Nightingale was compelled to observe, "It may seem a strange principle to enunciate as the very first requirement in a Hospital that it should do the sick no harm." This statement reminds us that safe care has always been an underlying goal of nursing but also a challenge.

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In addition to focusing on safety, quality health care is the emphasis of the second initiative, the National Quality Forum (NQF), a nonprofit organization of which NAPNAP is a member. The NQF (2009) aims to improve the quality of health care for all Americans through the fulfillment of its three-part mission: (a) setting national priorities and goals for performance improvement; (b) endorsing national consensus standards for measuring and publicly reporting on performance; and (c) promoting the attainment of national goals through education and outreach programs (www.qualityforum.org).

NAPNAP and the nursing community supports NQF's vision and is actively participating in the process of establishing national priorities and goals to achieve health care that is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.

NAPNAP continues to be in a pivotal position to contribute to the safety and quality of health care for all children. Our strategic direction prioritizes advocacy. Ann Sheehan, our Health Policy Chair, works closely with our Washington representative Allison Shuren and her colleagues on our behalf to support legislation that facilitates our goal to provide safe, quality health care for all children and their families. You can read more about these efforts on our Web site: www.napnap.org. We need to ensure that any health care system integrates nurse practitioners as legitimate key players in the provision of safe, quality care. I enter 2010 with optimism and hope that this will be the year we see such a health care system.

I started this message acknowledging my Scottish ancestry. I will end by drawing upon my New England roots, sharing the sentiment of a New England poet, Robert Frost (1979, p. 224) as he goes "walking through the woods on a snowy evening" and ponders the beauty of winter and challenges of life:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

In other words, we cannot be complacent and simply bask in our many accomplishments; rather, we need to keep the momentum of 2009 going strong and continue to strive every day to achieve our goal of safe, quality care for all children, in all settings, in all parts of the United States. So in keeping with the New Year tradition, think of the past but look to the future and have a safe and quality New Year!

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