

Celebrate National Nurses Week!

May 6-12

Each year, National Nurses Week begins May 6 and ends on May 12, Florence Nightingale's birthday.

Ten things you can do to celebrate Nurses Week

From Madonna Walters, RN and Sandy Merkel, RN



1. Show pride in your profession.

Say something nice about nursing.

It shouldn't be hard to think of good things to say about our diverse profession: America's 2.6 million registered nurses work to save lives and to maintain the health of millions of individuals. From bedside nursing in hospitals and long-term care facilities to the halls of research institutions, state legislatures, and

Congress, the depth and breadth of the nursing profession is meeting the expanding health care needs of American society.

- 2. Take another nurse to a meeting.** Identify someone who hasn't been involved in the professional nursing organization or their clinical specialty organization--and invite her/him to go to a meeting with you.
- 3. Offer deserved praise.** Identify a nurse whom you admire and send her/him a card or gift during Nurse Week.
- 4. Volunteer.** Opportunities for volunteering have never been greater—from health screening to homeless shelters to career day at a local school. Find a volunteer niche that you enjoy and identify yourself as a registered nurse when you volunteer.
- 5. Contact a legislator.** Your elected representatives are confronting decisions that have an impact on you as an individual, on the nursing profession, and on the health of this nation. Make your voice heard in Washington and Lansing by sending them an email or a letter.



For more information about contacting your legislators, visit the government affairs section of the MNA website: www.minurses.org/gov/commleg.shtml. For details about specific legislation or individual legislators, check out www.congress.org (for U.S. Congress) or visit www.michiganlegislature.org for the Michigan legislature.

- 6. Be a mentor.** A mentorship opportunity can occur at any level—look around for those who may need your help—a nursing student on your unit, a colleague who has just gone back to school, a high-school student exploring career options, or a young child who needs help with a science fair project.
- 7. Celebrate.** Hold a special reception or potluck for Nurse Week on your nursing unit or in your department or office—or meet your colleagues at a local restaurant for a celebratory meal. Don't wait for your hospital or your boss to organize a celebration for you. Make your own fun!
- 8. Stressed out? Take a deep breath.** Reflect on the big picture.
- 9. Treat yourself.** Think about the things you enjoy but haven't made time for lately. Give yourself permission to relax. Go to the movies during Nurse Week. Buy yourself flowers. Read that murder mystery that's been sitting on your bookshelf. Go for a walk. Soak your feet while you're watching Late Night.
- 10. Never say: "I'm just a nurse."** You make a difference!

