

NATIONAL NURSES

WEEK **MAY** 20
6-12 20



Honoring our Dedicated Nurses

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Frank Franklin II/Associated Press

Linda Silva, a nurse's assistant, poses April 30 for a portrait in Queens. Silva, who tested positive for COVID-19, returned to work after recovering. It's been more than a month since she has hugged her two sons or her husband.

Unheralded often at front-lines during pandemic



Julio Cortez/Associated Press

Jane St. Louis, a grocery store employee, poses April 30 in her home's garage in Damascus, Md. St. Louis has a routine when she gets home to prevent her from bringing the new coronavirus to her husband or their daughter and granddaughter.

By MAE ANDERSON, ALEXANDRA OLSON and ANGELIKI KASTANIS
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As America tentatively emerges from weeks of lockdowns, it is becoming clear that the pandemic has taken its toll on workers who have been on the front lines all along.

They have been packing and delivering supplies, caring for the sick and elderly, and keeping streets and buildings clean.

They have also watched their co-workers fall ill. Thousands have gotten sick themselves. Many have died.

The burden has been borne unevenly across gender, racial and socioeconomic lines, according to an Associated Press analysis of census data in the country's 100 largest cities. They are mostly women, people of color and more likely to be immigrants.

Workers deemed "essential" are also more likely to live below the federal poverty line or hover just above it. They are more likely to have children at home, and many live with others who also have front-line jobs.

"What is important about this pandemic is that it has shined a spotlight on workers who have always been essential but before this were invisible," said David Michaels, professor of environmental and occupational health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University.

A look at these workers:

THE HEALTH CARE WORKER

Linda Silva knew something was wrong when she started coughing on a Saturday in late March. The next day, the nurse's assistant woke up with chest pain, a fever, a headache and a backache so bad it reminded her of labor pain. She tested positive for COVID-19 a week later.

"That was before we realized we actually had COVID cases in our nursing home," said Silva, who works at the Queens Nassau Nursing Center and the Beacon Rehab and Nursing Center in New York. "We didn't have the right personal protective equipment at first."

About 75% of health care workers in most cities are women. They are among the front-line workers most likely to have access to health insurance, although 7% lack it. And more than 8% live below the federal poverty line.

In New York City, more than 76% of health care workers are people of color.

At least 54 nurses have died of the coronavirus, according to the American Nurses Association.

Silva returned to work after recovering. It's been more than a month since she has hugged her two sons or her husband, who is a building fire safety director.

"We say we love each other daily and put our arms around our own selves in front of each other," she said.

THE GROCERY STORE WORKER

Jane St. Louis knows many of her customers

after 27 years at a Safeway in Damascus, Maryland. Some have brought her cookies. Others have taken out their own fears of the virus on her, including one woman who yelled at her for not wearing gloves.

Grocery employees have been among the most visible of America's front-line workers as people rush to stock up on essentials. Nationwide, they are among the more diverse of front-line workers, split evenly between men and women. In most cities, more than 40% are white, 15% are black and 14% are Hispanic. At least 16% live below the federal poverty line and 15% lack health insurance.

The virus has killed at least 30 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. Another 3,000 have either fallen ill or been quarantined for exposure, according to the union, which represents 900,000 people.

When St. Louis gets home, her routine takes about an hour and starts in the garage, where she removes her shoes and changes into a bathrobe. She sprays the shoes with Lysol. The clothes go in the washing machine, as does her bathrobe after her shower.

She doesn't want to risk infecting her husband, a construction worker, and 15-year-old granddaughter, who lives with them.

"I didn't know I had anxiety until this started," St. Louis said.

THE WAREHOUSE WORKER

Born homeless in New York City, Courtenay Brown is no stranger to hardship.

She and her youngest sister both work at an Amazon Fresh warehouse in New Jersey and share an apartment in Newark with six cats and a turtle. The sisters fought for their stable life, at one point living in Brown's car for weeks until they saved enough for a security deposit and first month's rent.

When the pandemic took hold, Brown plunged into her job as a supervisor in the loading dock to get the \$2 hourly pay bump and double overtime. Soon, several of her co-workers became infected. Others, she said, didn't show up.

More than 60% of warehouse and delivery workers in most cities are people of color, a figure that rises to more than 95% in Newark.

One tough day, Brown pleaded with a co-worker to come back to work for a day. The next day, exhausted and limping because of tendinitis, Brown couldn't bear to come in herself. Her phone rang repeatedly that morning. She threw it across the room.

"I thought, 'this just isn't worth it,'" she said.

THE TRUCK DRIVER

Juan Giraldo and his wife nearly lost their home after he was laid off in the 2008 financial crisis. A refinancing deal saved him from foreclosure but left him tens of thousands of dollars deeper in debt.

Now he feels he is sinking back into a familiar

See UNHERALDED, page 4

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Americans rate nurses high on honesty


Nurses champion and promote the health of Americans coast to coast. As health-care specialists, they are ideally positioned to be the best role models, educators and advocates of healthy living, safety and wellness in America. Trust, therefore, plays an important role in the relationship between nurses and the communities they serve; and according to statistics, these caring professionals are doing a stellar job!

According to a Gallup poll released in December 2016, nursing is the number-one most trusted profession in America for the fifteenth year in a row, with 84 percent of Americans rating nurses' honesty and ethical standards as either "very high" or "high." What better way to thank them for their trusted service than by paying them homage this National Nurses Week? Celebrated annually from May 6 to 12, this weeklong observance honors nurses for their dedication to advancing the quality of care in America.

Whether they are at the bedside of an ailing patient, in the ER or in the boardroom, nurses play a vital role in the health-care system. Some of their responsibilities include:

- ◆ Physical exams and preliminary diagnoses
- ◆ Health promotion, counseling and education
- ◆ Prevention of illness and injury
- ◆ Direct and supervised care of wounds and other personalized interventions
- ◆ Research toward improved practices and patient outcomes

This National Nurses Week, join the country in thanking these caregivers (all 3.6 million of them) for the role they play in meeting the health-care needs of Americans in hospitals, nursing homes, community health centers, schools and even correctional facilities.




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 to all the front line and first responders, thank you to all the doctors and technicians, but most of all **THANK YOU** to all of our **NURSES**. Every day the unsung heroes go to work to save and protect us all. Now more than ever we would like to thank you.

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UNHERALDED

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nightmare. A contract port truck driver in Los Angeles, Giraldo has seen work dry up as imports slow. He gets fewer than four hauls a week, compared with at least 12 in normal times. He used to make up to \$3,500 a month but now earns about \$1,500.

More than 85% of warehouse and delivery workers in the Los Angeles area are people of color and 53% are foreign-born.

Giraldo was raised in Colombia by his grandparents after his father left the war-torn country to work in the fruit groves of California. Giraldo followed in his early 20s, grateful to his father for paving the way but determined to be the kind of parent he never had.

"I'm trying to change our history," he said.

As a contract worker, the father of four gets no paid sick leave and relies on California's state health insurance program.

"They are calling us heroes but it's like they are sending us to World War II with wooden pistols," Giraldo said.

THE JANITOR

Annette Brown's job had been source of stability in a difficult life.

For six years, the single mother of two has worked the overnight shift cleaning the second floor of a hospital in Halethorpe, Maryland.

The outbreak has made her routine even tougher. She leaves her Baltimore apartment three hours before her shift starts and takes two buses to get to work. In the morning, she gets her 8-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son ready for remote schooling, cooks dinner and gets a few hours of sleep before starting over.

The unionized job offers her paid sick days, a yearly raise and health insurance — a luxury in an industry where nearly 30% of workers lack it.

She just never banked on finding herself working in a pandemic battleground. The hospital now treats COVID-19 patients, and Brown is terrified of going to her \$14.70-an-hour job that barely keeps her family above the poverty line.

"People are dropping like flies, and I don't want it to happen to my family," she said.

Janitors are the most financially vulnerable front-line workers. In most cities, more than a quarter live below the poverty line. More than 40% are foreign-born and 74% are people of color.

In Baltimore, nearly 75% of them are black. At least 90 members of Brown's union, 32BJ SEIU, have died of the coronavirus. Another 20,000 have been laid off.

Brown's son tells her not to be afraid, saying: "Fear is nothing but the devil."

THE TRAIN CONDUCTOR

Desmond Hill is a music writer who plays the flugelhorn, but he makes his living as a New York City subway conductor.

His partner and five others he knows were among the more than 3,000 bus and subway workers who tested positive. Another 3,500, including Hill, were put on 14-day quarantine for exposure. Nearly 6,000 have returned to work.

At least 83 New York City transit workers have died of the virus, according to the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

In New York City, more than 45% of transit workers are black, 20% are white and 24% are Hispanic.

"Sometimes you're looking out on a train and think, 'who am I moving right now? I'm moving homeless people back and forth, why am I out here doing this?'" said Hill, who is back at work.

Other times, he feels a sense of purpose.

"There are also days you can see essential workers, people going to work at grocery stores, Target, hospitals. Those people get off the train and thank you," Hill said. "It's a back-and-forth struggle."



Frank Franklin II/Associated Press

It's been more than a month since Linda Silva has hugged her two sons or her husband.



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Discounts that nurses can enjoy

The year 2020 has been dubbed “the year of the nurse and midwife” by The World Health Organization and World Health Assembly.

There are millions of professional nurses across the globe, and the demand for skilled nurses is on the rise. Aspiring nurses may have to pay a steep financial price as they finance their educations en route to earning their credentials and licenses. Tuition is a considerable expense for aspiring nurses, and how much they can expect to pay depends on a host of factors. Enrollment in a bachelor’s degree program can range anywhere from \$3,000 to \$100,000 per year depending on the institution. A less expensive and less time-consuming course involves the pursuit of an associate degree, which full-time students can earn in two years.

To help recuperate some costs, as well as to show nurses how much their dedication means to the public, various organizations offer discounts. These unofficial tokens of gratitude to nurses can add up to considerable savings.

◆ **Affiliate discounts:** Enrollment in NursesUSA, which assists in the growth and advancement of nurses, may provide nurses with access to affiliated discounts. These can include everything from discounts in various cities, money off major movie cinemas and percentages off major theme parks.

◆ **Savings on insurance:** Depending on age and other factors, automotive insurance providers may offer discounts to professional nurses.

◆ **Warehouse membership:** Registered nurses are urged to join the warehouse retailer Costco as a new member and receive exclusive coupons valued at more than \$60.

◆ **Home protection plan:** TrustedPlace offers nurses a 20 percent discount on a home protection plan with coverage up to \$25,000. You can visit www.trustedplace.com/AARN to learn more.

◆ **Enroll in a trade group:** Memberships for nurses are free to the American Association of Registered Nurses and include a PerksCard for discounts

on shopping deals and more. They also offer a pharmacy discount card that can save nurses between 20 and 80 percent on prescription medications.

◆ **Discount clubs:** Hometown Heroes offers free membership to registered nurses and discounts to businesses across the nation.

◆ **Education discounts:** The American Red Cross offers affordable first aid and CPR recertification as well as continuing education credits to registered nurses. Mead-Johnson Nutrition also offers special programs to registered pediatric nurses.

Dedicated nurses work tirelessly on behalf of their patients to provide the highest quality of care. Various organizations recognize these unsung heroes and offer them discounts on products and services that can save nurses substantial amounts of money.

Note: These discounts were valid at the time of press. Nurses should confirm availability at the time of purchase or application to confirm validity.



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Nine essential workers describe what their lives are like during the coronavirus outbreak.

Los Angeles Times/TNS

Essential workers describe their lives

By **KENT NISHIMURA, DANIA MAXWELL, JASON ARMOND** and **GABRIELLA ANGOTTI-JONES** Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Lines snake through parking lots at grocery stores. Buses carry people to essential jobs. Packages wait outside doorsteps. And doctors and nurses gear up for long shifts in packed hospitals.

While many people work from home and await the end of stay-at-home guidelines, some workers continue to brave the COVID-19 pandemic to go to work to keep essential parts of society running.

"I just want to thank everybody who's out here working because at the end of the day, people are laying their lives on the line," said Alonzo Wells, a security guard in Alhambra, Calif. "So just thanking everyone. Thank you for taking the time just to talk to us."

Mary Gay Daquell, administrative nurse

Mary Gay Daquell, administrative nurse in the medical surgical department at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, holds a sign that says "Give US Safe PPE Now!!!" Daquell has worked at the medical center for 21 years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Daquell is concerned that first responders are being viewed as sacrificial workers and not as valuable healthcare workers. "We need to support our healthcare workers and our essential workers. We need to stay home and save lives."

Alex Alvarez, Lyft driver

Alex Alvarez, 42, is a driver for Lyft who recently lost his second job as a security guard and booking agent for a local bar in Highland Park, Los Angeles. He has a daughter who lives in another city with her mom, but he has not seen her since the coronavirus outbreak because the risk is too high with his work. He says that he is able to make the same amount of money with Lyft but must work longer hours. He is grateful for a care package that Lyft sent with hand sanitizer, wipes and face masks. "I live paycheck to paycheck. I don't have the financial security of some people. I don't qualify for unemployment. If I don't pay child support, they could take my license. I'm basically working to pay child support and rent." He lives with his mom, who is 72. He hopes that this all blows over and that he can see his daughter

by June. "It's my birthday and then Father's Day."

Karla Barrera, deli manager

Karla Barrera, 28, is a deli manager at a grocery store in Sun Valley, Los Angeles, and the mother of two. She likes her work but has not felt safe since the coronavirus outbreak. She said the company started providing employees with protective masks when it became a city ordinance but still doesn't provide gloves to all employees. There was some crowd control at first, but then it stopped, and she was told it's not up to her to control how many customers enter the store. "If the company preps us and gives us the right equipment, we wouldn't be so scared." She said that one of her co-workers was diagnosed with COVID-19 but that the store stayed open. She is waiting for the results of her COVID-19 test. "My boss said we all probably already got it. How is it that management can say don't worry about it, because we all have it? How am I going to feel about that? I'm so scared for my babies. I'm praying that I don't have it."

Ruben Rios, maintenance and construction worker

Ruben Rios is a senior maintenance and construction worker at the Puente Hills Landfill in Los Angeles County. He helps maintain the gas system, where the gas is trapped, sent to an energy plant and used to create electricity, servicing some 30,000 homes a day. At work, social distancing is strictly enforced: Workers do not change in the locker room at the same time, and their schedules, including start times, break times and lunch times, have been staggered. Rios says that his employer has been great during this time. "They've been really good at responding to what we need."

Esbeida Refugio, disinfectant specialist

Esbeida Refugio, 39, disinfects hospital rooms at LAC + USC in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles. She's been on the job for eight years and loves what she does. She takes pride in knowing that her work is giving the patient who takes over one of her disinfected rooms the opportunity for a clean slate. "That's what I'm here for. I'm trying to avoid other people getting infected with the virus." On any given day she cleans up to five rooms that were spaces for COVID-19

patients. Even when the patient is negative for the coronavirus, she still disinfects the room in the same way. She wants everyone who is admitted to go home healthy and be safe. "I'm here for patient care" but also "to protect the doctors and nurses too." They all have families, just like her. She has four children that range in age from 21 to 1, and they are aware of what she does. "I know if I get the virus and have to quarantine, I can depend on my family to take care of the kids." She's found herself cooking more these days because she does not want to go out anymore than she has to. "If I'm exposed at work, I don't want to be exposed on the street."

Simboa Wright, wastewater collection worker

Simboa Wright has been a wastewater collection worker since 2001 with the city of Los Angeles. "First off, as union members, we are proud to serve Los Angeles and protect the environment. We are fearful, of course, of catching a virus. We are here to maintain 6,700 miles of sewer system. We have the largest municipal sewer system in the nation. And we have a lot of catch basins that we have to maintain also. My wife is a nurse. We're really concerned with her being on the front line. And also, she does have to deal with patients with the virus, unfortunately. Every day union members are putting ourselves out there on the front line, to not only protect sewers from overflowing and debris going into the ocean, but we are out to continue to maintain the streets. We're out to continue to maintain the parks. We're out to continue to maintain all these essential services that many Angelenos take for granted."

Evelyn Jarillo, cashier

Evelyn Jarillo has worked as a cashier at a grocery store in South L.A. for six years. She tested positive for COVID-19 in early April and has been self-isolating with her husband and daughter ever since. The city sent an e-document for her to sign stating that she would shelter-in-place for two weeks. Her husband has diabetes and works at a pawn shop but also came down with the virus, although her daughter's test came out negative. "This isn't a joke," she said. Customers should "do what authorities tell (them). If you need groceries, get what

you need for your family. We all have to go through this as a community." Deep down, she thinks that people will not truly listen until the pandemic touches their life. She does not know what can be done to change the social fabric at her store to protect people from spreading the virus but feels that her managers can do more.

Alonzo Wells and Dante Mitchell, security guards

Alonzo Wells, left, and Dante Mitchell are security guards at Home Depot in Alhambra. Before the pandemic, Mitchell worked as a P.E. teacher, coach, writer and performer. Wells was a barber, teacher assistant, poet and writer. Mitchell said, "We started working here because of the recent events, unfortunately. And since we got here, you can definitely see it's like half and half _ people who you can tell they're being super supportive and sensitive to other people's feelings. And then you have people that are fearful, and that fear is making them ostracize other humans. So that's what I've observed so far. The workers here have treated us so good. They've been buying us little things, like always giving us drinks, food, telling us that they appreciate us. And we've only been here for what, two and a half weeks now?

So we definitely feel appreciated. It's just our workload, which is kind of heavy, dealing with all these people." Wells added: "I definitely have to talk to myself more, give myself that pep talk, to just remember that people are stressed out and you're fearful. What comes with that comes anger; it becomes a defense. And I just feel like everybody's trying to protect themselves, to protect their physical well-being and, like mentally, some people are slipping away. ... But then you do see the good. I do see some people coming together and just being kind. I just want to thank everybody who's out here working because at the end of the day, people are laying their lives on the line. So just thanking everyone. Thank you for taking the time just to talk to us."

Jazz Hager, delivery driver

Jazz Hager, 33, of Hollywood, has been a delivery driver for Yummy Foods for almost two years and has been getting more hours due to the Safer at Home orders. The company has provided her with gloves and disinfectant wipes as well as instructions on how to clean the company cars at the start and end of every shift. Hager said that the job was already physically demanding and that, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it's added a lot more mental stress. "It's made me think harder about who I interact with, and how I interact with them," she said. She's noticed that customers have been generous in tipping when getting their groceries delivered, to the point that her tips have almost doubled.



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How communities can recognize nurses

Nurses play essential roles in their communities. Nurses interact with and assist their patients in many different ways.

Nurses are the foundation of most successful social healthcare programs, and they are often the powerful force behind implementing private- or government-funded universal health plans. In addition, a 2015 report in the International Journal of Community Based Nurs-

ing and Midwifery found nurses are key players in community health awareness and promoting preventative health measures.

People who recognize the impact a great nurse can have may wonder how they can honor this special person. While nursing organizations offer prestigious awards for nursing excellence, a community-based or individual recognition may be just as meaningful.

SCHOOL NURSES DAY

School administration can set aside a special day each year, whether it's in May on National School Nurses Day or another time of year, to pay homage to the school nurse. Children can be urged to draw thank-you cards, and parents can chip in for a special luncheon or gift.

OFFER GIFTS

People who want to thank a nurse who has provided exemplary service may want to offer a gift to the nurse directly or provide something for the entire medical office or hospital floor. Catered food, flowers, gift cards, candy, or similar gifts may be appreciated.

DONATE IN TRIBUTE

Honor a special nurse by making a donation in his or her name to a charitable healthcare organization. Honorees may receive a listing on a website, notification of the tribute, official certificates of honor, or a letter of honor sent to his or her place of employment.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Pitching in may be a big help to a dedicated yet overworked nurse. Volunteering at a hospital or health center can show a nurse how much he or she is appreciated.

OFFER A PUBLIC THANKS

In an era of social media posts, someone can share with the community (and the world) how a nurse impacted his or her life for the better. Thanking a nurse online can be a way to start a positive pay-it-forward movement. Nurses work long hours for the benefit of their patients. Offering a word or gesture of thanks can mean the world to these dedicated individuals.

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Nursing students ready to take on COVID-19

By **BIANCA MOORMAN**
The Meridian Star

MERIDIAN, Miss. (AP) — Even at a young age, Parker Rigby knew that working in the medical field was for him.

Now, as a young adult, the spread of the coronavirus isn't deterring Rigby from entering the nursing field.

"I think that any student that signs up to be a nurse, we kind of know what we're getting into, regardless of what disease the patient might have," said Rigby, 21. "This is what we signed up to do — we signed up to help people. That's the risk I'm willing to take."

Rigby, who will soon graduate from Meridian Community College, is one of many students across the country stepping into the field at a challenging time for healthcare workers.

Some may be scared, but Rigby is ready to get to work.

"We've been waiting on this since we started," he said.

Jacob Whitney, who started the nursing program at MCC in August 2018, said applying the skills he's learned in the classroom will be challenging, as he shifts from theory to real world medical care.

"When you make the transition during the middle of the pandemic, it can be daunting, but exciting at the same time," said Whitney, who described nursing as a calling, and not just a job.

"You are placing yourself in a high-risk situation, while other people or other careers don't take on that responsibility," he said.

"To me, it's an honor to enter my nursing career during this, because this is a very challenging time," Whitney said. "If you can make it in the challenging

moments, you can make it in the moments that are not so challenging."

Whitney said he is ready to help, but getting to work may take a while, as he'll have to get certified with the Mississippi Board of Nursing.

The testing process might take longer because of restrictions on the number of people who can take the test at one time, he said.

Whitney's classmate Braxton Beech has been in the nursing program for three years, fulfilling a passion he's had since high school.

"I'm definitely anxious to see how my career will start, being that it will start during the middle of the pandemic," he said. "I do feel like my teachers at MCC have definitely prepared me for this."

"I'm ready to step up to the plate and serve my community whenever I can," Beech emphasized. "You can't ever be scared. If it's something that you've signed up for, you just have to do it, and be as safe as you can."

East Mississippi Community College student Jaquilia Lawrence, who works as a licensed practical nurse, said the virus is not keeping her from finishing her courses to become a registered nurse.

Lawrence said she's already working with COVID-19 patients.

"I wouldn't say that it really shocked me, but I think so many people who don't work in the medical field don't realize the severity and the seriousness of the things we have to deal with every day besides COVID-19," she said.

Julia Young, a freshman in the nursing program at EMCC, has no plans to change her major.

"It's concerning," she said of the pandemic. "But it has not deterred me."



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To our brave, talented, and selfless women and men on the front lines of this fight, we give our unending gratitude. In the face of all of the chaos and fear that the past few months have wrought not only on our health care system but on our communities, families, and futures, you have stood tall, worked hard, and carried on for the good of those around you. Your caring hands have not shaken. Your passionate hearts have not wavered. Your committed and brilliant minds have not rested. To say we are proud of the work that you have done and will do would be true, but it would not be enough. You make us proud, yes. But you also make us better, safer, tougher, and stronger. Thank you for your care, your time, your sacrifice, yourselves. You are more than our heroes. You are our hope.

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Awards and recognitions for nurses



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Nurses' efforts are not always recognized, but there are instances when their patients or the families of their patients offer their gratitude to these widely unsung heroes of the medical profession. In recognition of the integral role nurses play within the health care industry, organizations such as the American Nursing Association and various national and regional groups award official honors to reward nurses for their undying efforts on behalf of their patients.

◆ **Distinguished Direct Patient Care Award:** This award recognizes a registered nurse who provides exemplary direct patient care. He or she must also contribute to the advancement of the nursing practice by demonstrating a commitment to personal leadership.

◆ **The DAISY Award:** The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses recognizes the work nurses do every day. The award was established by the DAISY Foundation, which focuses on eliminating diseases that attack the immune system (DAISY). A DAISY Award is presented monthly to nurses in hospitals across America.

◆ **The Grace Award:** This award recognizes outstanding achievements and dedication in caring for expectant mothers and children.

◆ **Public Health Service Award:** This award honors nurses who are outstanding professionals and contribute to public health nursing.

◆ **Jeanne Mance Award:** This award is the highest recognition for nursing achievement that the Canadian Nurses Association offers. It is named after one of the country's most inspirational nurses, and has been issued at the CNA biennial convention since 1971.

◆ **Diversity Award:** This award recognizes registered nurses who have a long-standing commitment and have made significant contributions to the advancement of diversity in the nursing profession.

◆ **The Beacon Award for Excellence:** This award honors nursing units that distinguish themselves by improving multiple facets of patient care. Recipients set the standard for excellence in patient care and use evidence-based information to provide positive patient outcomes.

◆ **Excellence in Leadership Award:** Established to honor a person whose primary responsibility is to manage people or projects, this award is given to those who excel in leadership, teamwork, communication, accountability, and more.

◆ **The Award of Excellence in Nursing:** Presented each year during National Nursing Week, this award is given to nurses who were nominated by their peers. This award celebrates the dedication, initiative and excellence of nurses employed by Canadian First Nations communities and Indigenous Services Canada and Inuit communities.

These are a few of the awards and recognitions bestowed on the hard-working nurses who make a difference in the lives of their patients across Canada and the United States.



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Nursing observances through the year

Nurses put in long hours as they work tirelessly to advocate for their patients. While any time of year is an opportunity to thank the nurses in our lives, there are various events throughout the year that pay special homage to these hardworking professionals.

JANUARY

National Blood Donor Month arrives in January, and while it's not a nursing-specific event, nurses may be on call to help manage patients, take health histories and assist with the collection of blood. Donors can use their trips to donation centers as opportunities to thank nurses for all they do to help others.

MARCH

The week of March 8-14, 2020, is Patient Safety Awareness Week. This week can spark important discussions that can inspire action to improve the safety of the healthcare system for patients and the workforce.

March also is home to Certified Nurses Day, which takes place on the 19th. This is a day when nurses celebrate their nursing certification and organizations around the world join to honor the dedication and service of certified nurses.

APRIL

April 16, 2020 marks National Healthcare Decisions Day. Nurses and other providers may be instrumental in empowering patients to talk about the importance of advanced care planning and being an advocate for one's own health.

MAY

May is a big month for nursing observances. The entire month is Oncology Nursing Month, when the efforts of nurses who work in cancer care are celebrated.

May 6 marks National School Nurse Day, which highlights the hardworking nurses who work in our nation's schools.

May 6-12, 2020 is National Nurses Week, annually celebrated on or near the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. This week is also when we celebrate International Nurses Day, which falls on May 12.

May 10-16 is National Nursing Home Week, where nurses who work in nursing homes are honored as the public learns more about nursing home care and planning.

JUNE

National Nursing Assistant Week begins on June 18 and continues until June 25. This week provides an opportunity to showcase the incredible men and women who devote their lives to being nursing assistants. National Career Nursing Assistants' Day also takes place on June 14.

AUGUST

Teamwork is essential in healthcare facilities and health unit coordinators are vital and indispensable professionals who support doctors and nurses in various ways. During Health Unit Coordinators Week, which runs from August 23-29, and on Health Unit Coordinators Day on August 23, these special workers get the attention they deserve.

OCTOBER

Emergency Nurses Day on October 9 recognizes emergency nurses for their dedication, service and commitment to their patients and communities.

NOVEMBER

Home Health Care Aide Week takes place the second full week of November each year and honors the millions of nurses, home care aides, therapists, and social workers who make differences in the lives of the patients and families they serve.

Promoting nursing and other healthcare observances helps the community learn about these invaluable medical personnel and show appreciation for all that they contribute.



Mike Mirko/Hartford Courant/TNS

Nurses from the Bristol-Burlington Health District in Connecticut collect a patient's nasal swab at Bristol Hospital's drive-through coronavirus specimen collection station.

How to help essential workers avoid burnout

By ELIZABETH WELLINGTON
The Philadelphia Inquirer (TNS)

We are weeks into the COVID-19 pandemic life and our front line workers are growing weary.

Not only are our essential personnel — doctors, nurses, grocery store cashiers, and transportation workers — working under intense pressure to keep the world running and save lives, they have the extra-added stress of trying not to contract the coronavirus. Or worse, bringing the virus home to their loved ones.

The impact of living under such professional and emotional strain is starting to become evident. On Monday, a top emergency room surgeon at New York-Presbyterian Allen Hospital died by suicide. Dr. Lorna M. Breen, the medical director in the hospital's emergency room department, didn't have a history of mental illness, according to her father. But Breen recently described to her family how taxing it was to witness the toll the coronavirus took on her patients. "She tried to do her job, and it killed her," said Breen's father, Dr. Phillip C. Breen.

"It's a different kind of work pressure, one that maybe hard for others to understand," said Dr. Rochelle Teachy, a pediatrician at Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania Primary care in Delaware County. You are fearful for your health, your household's health and your contact's health. Everyday. That's a lot to handle," Teachy said.

A big stress factor lies in the unknowns, said Dr. Lynette Charity, an Arizona-based physician who lectures on the effect of mental stress and burnout on physicians. We don't fully understand how the virus is transmitted. Symptoms vary from person to person. It's not clear how long it will take to develop a vaccine. With the number of confirmed U.S. cases at more than one million and the death toll nationwide topping 56,000, we're still in the middle of this crisis even as states make plans to reopen. "Our essential workers are at the end of their rope," Charity said.

There are, however, things we can do to help the front line workers in our lives. Here are some ideas to help you help them cope.

Have you noticed your friend or loved one, who is on the front lines every day, is becoming more forgetful? Has his hygiene changed or slipped? Is she spending too much time alone? These are all signs that

his or her mental health may be comprised, Charity said. "Burnout is a mental exhaustion and when people lose interest in taking care of themselves, it's time to pay attention." Don't, however, launch into a series of 20 questions, because that will only make them shut down more, Charity cautions. Instead, let them know you are there for them. Simply ask: "Are you okay?" If they do open up, do more listening than talking. "It's important that people who are on these front lines have their concerns heard."

If you fear a true mental health crisis is underway, call the city's 24-hour crisis hotline at 215-685-6440. You can also call the 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Hot Line 800-273-8255.

When Kayleigh Lawrence gets home from work as registered nurse at Virtua Willingboro Hospital, she often times just wants to take a shower, eat and retreat to her room. "Sometimes I just need to be silent," said Lawrence. The coronavirus' intensified every aspect of her job. Each day she must put on layers of protective gear to help her patients and if she's not careful in the removal, she is at risk of exposing herself. "We are so overwhelmed that we need a delicate balance of care that includes hearing us out, but also letting us be quiet," Lawrence said.

The essential worker in your life should not be the one to do the grocery shopping, replacing the toilet paper or filling up the car up with gas, or picking up the prescriptions, Charity said. "This is not the time to add responsibility to their loads," Charity said.

Karen Driben and her husband, Ian Driben, both veterinarians who live in Vorhees, have been working the full six weeks. They've arranged their schedules so someone is home with their two kids while the other one works. The one who stays home, Karen Driben said, usually runs the errands and cooks so the other can get ample rest. Balance is important to maintaining sanity in their household, Driben said. "We are on high alert all of the time," Driben said. "One minute people are seemingly healthy and then they are real sick and since we are dealing with these stresses day in and day out we have to make sure that each of us has time to compress."

It seems like a small thing, said DuJuan Scott, a conductor on SEPTA regional rail, but when

I get home, it would be nice to have a hot meal ready. If you live with an essential worker — whether you're their spouse, sibling, parent or child — you should have their lounge wear ready for them so they can slip into it as soon as they get out of the shower. "Have something they like ready for them: a desert something they really love when they come through that door to make them smile," Charity said. "When they are out there working, people just see a body working for the them. No one sees who they are really are. So you — their family and friends have to appreciate them." And probably the most important thing you can do is leave a mask and gloves by their keys so they can grab it and go.

If you don't live with them, but still want to support, send them a pizza, or a lasagne, or cookies: something to make them feel like they're getting the hug you can't give them in person right now.

Schedule a game night. Go for a walk in the park (away from others). Work on a puzzle together. Make a fun meal together. "When people are dis-

traught, it helps to bring them back to a pleasant moment," Charity says. And by working in downtime you are effectively telling them not to sweat the small stuff, because play in this moment is more important than finishing the basement or any other 'honey do' chores on the list. "You want to keep that person in your life healthy, not just physically but mentally."

"Some of the nicest notes of encouragement I got were short texts from friends," said Rebecca Jacobs, a nurse at Jefferson Health in Vorhees. Scott said that phone calls from friends and family have brightened his day because it shows that people care. "We feel like no one cares about us." For friends that don't live with you, you might want to send a thank you card with a gift card to a favorite local restaurant, Charity said. Or maybe put together a care package of the things they need: like the ingredients of an easy to make dinner, Clorox wipes and toilet paper. "Heroes need help too," Charity said. "It's the very least we can do to thank them for keeping our new normal running steady."



Jos M. Osorio / Chicago Tribune/TNS

Sharon Sullivan, a nurse at Community First Medical Center, poses for a portrait in front of her home in Chicago before leaving for a 12-hour shift.

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