



INNOVATION

National Organization of Veterans Affairs, Chapter 129, VA Palo Alto Health Care System, P.O. Box V-39, Palo Alto, CA 94304-0039

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

NOVA Chapter 129 Up- coming Events

Board Meetings
12.4.08
1.8.09

January 31, 2009
Advances in Wound Care
Crowne Plaza
Milpitas, CA.

April 24, 2009
NOVA National Meeting
New Orleans

Regional NOVA Meetings
TBA

Nurses Week
May, 2009

Link to July 31, 2008
Lecture By Karen Larsen
MD:
Psychotropic Medication
Management for Inpa-
tients

President's Message Palo Alto Chapter 129

Fall, 2008



Hello Chapter 129,

In a recent national survey, members identified recruitment and retention as important issues for NOVA's legislative focus (see survey results at www.vanurse.org). An innovative effort to deal with recruitment and retention has been underway at VAPAHCS since April 2007. The VERSANT RN Residency Program has produced 3 graduating classes, each composed of 15-20 new nurse graduates. Participants receive an 18 week orientation program with a preceptor in the candidate's clinical area of interest and mentoring by senior nursing staff. Nationally, turnover rates in the first 2 years of employment for nurses completing RN residency programs is less <10%. For VERSANT graduates at VAPAHCS, turnover has been 9.1% compared to 28% at California hospitals that don't offer these programs to new graduates. A fourth cohort began in September.

For its success in recruiting and retaining new nurses, Chapter 129 plans to nominate the VERSANT Program and its leadership for NOVA's Distinguished Service Award.

A description of the NOVA awards program is included in this edition of INNOVATIONS. There are many excellent candidates among VAPAHCS who would qualify for recognition. I urge you to look around and consider nominating a colleague(s) who personify the qualities the award program seeks to recognize. There is no specific format for the awards submission. Contact one of the NOVA board members if you have questions or suggestions. Deadline for submission is December 15, 2008.

We are delighted to have one of the new VERSANT graduates, Rosalie Shinsato, running for a position on the Chapter 129 Board of Directors. Rosalie and Noel Botardo are 2 new NOVA members profiled in this edition of INNOVATIONS by their co-workers, Christine Camp BSN and Susan Dunn RNP.

President's message (cont'd).

In future editions we hope to profile NOVA members who work in diverse settings throughout VAPAHCS to learn from them how new ways of delivering care impact their roles.

Ballots for NOVA board positions have been mailed and are due by December 15. I encourage new and long-term members of Chapter 129 to think about increasing your involvement in NOVA by running for the board. NOVA retirees are eligible to hold board positions. Write in candidates are encouraged and welcomed. New members and experienced voices have always been a source of energy and creativity for the organization.

Chapter 129 recently had the privilege of participating in the interview process held as part of the search for a nurse executive. At this writing a final decision has not been announced. There are 3 candidates participated in the interviews: Patricia Mathis RN MS, ACOS Nursing Service/Cincinnati OH, Gloria Martinez MS RN, ACOS San Francisco VAMC and Sandra Parkes RN MS, ACOS Ambulatory Care/VAPAHCS. All are experienced, dynamic leaders who discussed at length their visions for Nursing Service. Decisions on the selections for New ACOS for Nursing, Nursing Education and Extended Care are underway and selections are expected soon.

Several Upcoming events on the current calendar or will be on the website as soon as dates are finalized:

- A legislative round table is planned for early 2009 in Washington DC. The date has not been finalized, but likely will be after the presidential inauguration. NOVA members and chapters can submit resolutions to the National NOVA board in support of legislation as Chapter 129 did last year in regard to annuitant compensation. Contact a Chapter 129 board member if you'd like more information or have an issue that you want to bring before the national legislative round table.
- A NOVA regional meeting was held in Baltimore, Maryland on November 8, 2008. A western regional meeting scheduled for the same date in Los Angeles was postponed till 2009.
- January 31, 2009 is the date for the annual educational conference and membership meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza, Milpitas. The topic of this year's event is *Advances in Wound Care*. Don't miss the latest on a very dynamic topic from VA and community experts!

The Chapter 129 board is experimenting with different ways to disseminate information quickly especially to members who are retirees. If you have an e-mail address or have recently moved, please forward the information to Mary.Montufar@va.gov and we'll add it to the NOVA mail group so you don't miss any news from NOVA.

Have a wonderful holiday season. I hope to see everyone at the January meeting!

Mary Montufar RN
President,
NOVA Chapter 129

Profile of a New NOVA Member

By Christine Camp RN BSN, Palo Alto Division

VERSANT is an 18-week residency program for new nurses that provides with one on one preceptors in addition to classroom instruction and mentoring. Participants have the opportunity to select the area on interest to them and may also learn more about other specialties such as IICU, dialysis, ambulatory care nursing etc.

Outcome data indicate that RN Residency programs can have profound financial and clinical quality benefits by significantly reducing the turnover rates of new nurse graduates in the first and second year of employment. Palo Alto was the first VA to initiate a VERSANT program.

Rosalie Shinsato RN , a recent graduate of the Versant Program, is now a staff nurse on Unit 4C, Extended Care Service. Rosalie decided to become a nurse after becoming a Christian. She felt that God had guided her to a career where she was able to help people. She graduated from De Anza College in Cupertino in December, 2007.

Her initial contact with VA nursing came during a student clinical rotation on Ward 4C. The nurse manager talked with her about a VA career and encouraged her to apply for the Versant Residency Program. She did very well in the 18-week program and was hired immediately on graduation as a staff nurse. Rosalie enjoys Extended Care because the patients have longer stays giving her the opportunity to learn more about them and their families well. While in orientation, Rosalie reports that many experienced nurses told her they've stayed at the VA because of the veterans. They feel privileged to care for this patient population, and truly do "walk the walk and talk the talk".

Rosalie plans to further her education by obtaining her Master's degree and has dreams of becoming an Extended Care Nurse Manager. She became a NOVA member during her Residency program and is now a candidate for the NOVA board where her perspective as a new staff nurse will be a valuable contribution to Chapter 129 and a new opportunity for her to impact the care of veterans.



Profile of a New NOVA Member

By Susan Dunn RNP, Menlo Park

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce a NOVA member to you. His name is Noel Bortardo and he and I work together. He is Assistant Unit Manager at Menlo Park Geropsychiatry facility 324 B and C units. I interviewed Noel at the request of our Board to interview new or longstanding NOVA members. It was an assignment I benefited from because I got to know Noel, my co-worker, in a more personal way and have great admiration for him and all he has achieved.

Noel was born on the Island of Luzon, Philippines. He has three brothers and three sisters though one sister died in 2004. His parents are still living and his family is now mostly with him here in US. Noel completed his BSN program at Lyceum Northwest University in 1990. He married Emily, his wife, in 1991 and moved to the US in 1993. His wife preceded him and after moving here got a petition for him to come here and live. They have two children, Dillon, 13, and Dean, 10.

Noel worked multiple jobs in US to support his family. He spent time as a Home Health Nurse. He worked at Crestwood Neuropsychiatry facility and also Westwood L facility Both of which specialize in behavioral problems. He has also been a pharmacy nurse consultant for Pharmamerica and has worked part time in several nursing homes. He started working on the evening shift as a medication nurse in 2004. He passed his RN boards in US and was promoted to Assistant Unit Manager at Menlo Park 324 on units specializing in complex psychiatric and behavioral issues. Noel has been a change agent and strong leader since in the ANM position at Menlo Park, combining a strong sense of humor with a serious approach to patient care. As such, he inspires others and demonstrates an unusual commitment to patient care. We love him and wish him well. He has been a member of National NOVA and succumbed to my recruitment efforts by joining Chapter 129. We are delighted to welcome him and know he has a bright future at VAPAHCS.



2009 NOVA Awards – Call for Nominations

**It's time to nominate a colleague for one of the NOVA awards!
The deadline for submission is December 15, 2008.**

NOVA awards honor individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs, the nursing profession, the health care of veterans, or in service to our country.

Send nomination submissions to Sharon Johnson, Awards Chair, at SJDST120@gmail.com or to Susan Dove, NOVA Deputy Director, at sdove@vanurse.org.

NOVA will be awarding the following at the 2009 Annual Meeting to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, April 22-24.

Veterans Award

This award is presented to a veteran or group of veterans in recognition of dedication, accomplishment, and sacrifice to our country through one of the following: personal sacrifice in the service of country; improving the quality of national or veterans' health care; or the enhancement of the nursing profession. The nominee does not have to be a member of NOVA but must be nominated by a NOVA member or chapter.

Distinguished Service Award

This award is presented to an individual or group for distinguished service to the nursing profession of the Veterans Health Care System through one or more of the following: enhancement of the image of nursing; improvement of the health care of the veteran; impact on nursing recruitment or retention. The nominee does not have to be a member of NOVA, but must be nominated by a NOVA member or chapter.

Professional Nurse Award for Clinical Excellence

This award is presented to a professional nurse who has made an outstanding contribution to the nursing profession or the Veterans Health Care System through excellence in clinical practice. Some examples might include serving as a role model and mentor for other nurses; initiating innovative health care practices; participating in lifelong learning to expand professional knowledge. The nominee must be a member of NOVA, and must be nominated by a NOVA member.

Professional Nurse Award for Leadership

This award is presented to a professional nurse who has made an outstanding contribution to the nursing profession or the Veterans Health Care System through leadership ability. Some examples might include serving as a role model or mentor for newer nurses; impacting nursing retention and recruitment; advancing nursing research and scholarship. The nominee must be a NOVA member and does not need to hold a managerial position, but must be nominated by a NOVA member.

Barbara Chambers Award

This award is presented to an individual NOVA member or group of NOVA members for outstanding contributions to NOVA through active leadership roles in the organization; significant contributions to the objectives of NOVA. The nominee must be a current or former member of NOVA.

Vernice Ferguson Award

This award is presented to an individual or group for significant contributions to the NOVA Foundation in order to further the mission of the Foundation by devoting volunteer time to a specific educational/research program and/or fundraising activity; contributing monetarily to the scholarship, education, or research programs; demonstrating a passion for VA nurses and veterans, which results in a third-party contribution. The nominee does not have to be a member of NOVA, but must be nominated by a member of NOVA or the NOVA Foundation Board.

Silver Star Chapter Award

This award is presented to an outstanding local NOVA chapter. NOVA chapters are the backbone of the organization. Local chapters are "where the action is." Members meet, share ideas, have fun, learn from educational speakers, share nursing stories and innovative ideas, enjoy food, plan legislative activities and carry on the work of NOVA. This award recognizes "grassroots" efforts by chapters. The chapter needs to be recognized by the NOVA National Office as an active chapter (bylaws on file, at least 10 members, etc.). For this award, the chapter needs to fill out the application which is available on NOVA's web site and send it to the National Office, 1726 M Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036, by December 15.