

As Depressing as It Seems?

I have been increasingly troubled lately by a number of situations that have emerged in health care, and it is time to kick up some dust. Nursing has a long history of effective protest and problem solving, beginning with Florence Nightingale. Many nurses have followed in her footsteps, speaking eloquently of issues important to effective patient care for all and not just the privileged.

Diana Mason, PhD, RN, FAAN, the editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Nursing* (AJN), is a perfect example of such eloquence. She has turned AJN on its ear and created one of the most important journals in health care. Since Diana became editor, I eagerly anticipate reading AJN as soon as it arrives in my mailbox, which it did as a benefit of my membership in the American Nurses Association (ANA). Recently, however, ANA has decided to drop AJN as its official journal, purportedly for financial reasons. How disheartened I was to learn of the decision. Please read the associated letter to the editor on p. 447 that expresses the opinion of many nurse editors on the subject.

Then there is the American Medical Association (AMA), which has formed a coalition to try to give physicians more control over the practices of nurses, speech pathologists, physical therapists, and other healthcare professionals. Those of us who have been in nursing for more than a week

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have all been down this garden path before, and it is absurd to have to do it again. If you visit the ONS Web site at www.ons.org/media/pdf/general/joint.pdf, you can read a response from a number of healthcare organizations to this divisive behavior on the part of AMA.

If this isn't discouraging enough for you, yesterday I received a letter from the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) stating that the former chief financial officer of the organization had been arrested and is accused of stealing more than \$1 million from NYSNA and its members—one of whom is me!

Then, a light appeared in the clouds. Earlier this week, I spent the day talking with the new nursing students admitted into the school where I teach. How excited each and every one of them was, and so proud that their hard work had led to their admission to the program. They were even excited about ordering the uniform—hardly a stylish ensemble—because they are eager to be seen as nursing students. Men and women of all ages, eth-

nicities, and life experiences, they asked me questions about the types of career choices I made, how they should manage their stress, and what they can say to a patient who is dying—thoughtful, insightful, empathic questions. I finished the day feeling exhilarated—here is the next generation of nurses, and they are wonderful! Things will be okay. I am not going to be discouraged by the foolish and thoughtless actions of a few.

So I woke up this morning and wrote a check to subscribe to AJN. I would have subscribed for 10 years, if the option had been available. It was one small step for my nursing mental health. Tomorrow, I will write letters to the perpetrators of the absurdities described earlier, and I will feel as if I have accomplished something. Florence, you did good!

Editorials represent the opinions of the author and not necessarily those of the Oncology Nursing Society.

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