

From the Editor

Veronica Feeg

Veronica D. Feeg, PhD, RN, FAAN

Planning Today for Leadership Tomorrow in Pediatric Nursing

According to Tim Porter O'Grady, "the leader lives in the space between action and potential, anticipating the next step and translating the process for others" (Porter O'Grady & Malloch, 2007, p. 67). Anticipating the next step requires us to understand what is, and contemplate what is yet to be. Translating that into action requires us to construct the bridges that take us from today to tomorrow. These are the ideas that have shaped the new *Pediatric Nursing* Leadership Institute and Fellowship Program. This program is designed to help develop future leaders in nursing to serve children and families through active participation in national activities with members of the *Pediatric Nursing* Editorial Board. Our understanding of "what is" the extent of the nursing leadership shortage has prompted us to take steps in shaping "what is yet to be" – a cohort of pediatric leaders for tomorrow.

Cultivating a Future Crop of Leaders

Much has been written about the nursing shortage and the concomitant vacancies of nursing faculty that are perpetuating the cycle of the limited supply of professionals who reach the bedside. Coupled with the limited supply of nursing teachers is the potential scarcity of nurses who aspire to lead others in the changing health care environments that have evolved. As hospitals all around the country are trying different strategies to transform the care delivered in their institutions, nurses who care for patients will need to play a significant central role in ensuring safety and quality at the bedside by taking on tasks within the system that can advance change.

In hospitals that provide care for children, pediatric nurses, with the power of their expertise, will need to take the reigns of leadership toward marshaling the change necessary in this period of transformation to assure that children and their families stay at the center of the services that are redesigned. Nurses working in teams aimed at improving care at the bedside have played a pivotal role in changing the organizational culture and improving outcomes (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Institute for Healthcare Improvement, 2006). "Taking charge" is not only associated with being "in charge"—pediatric nurses need to learn the knowledge and skills that form the roots of leadership to supplement their clinical expertise and empower them beyond the bedside.

The seeds of the new leadership must be planted. The need is now, time is short, and the growth cycle must be accelerated so that youth and leadership can combine to bring their synergy to these emerging roles – roles that will be open in all aspects of practice, management, systems, education and research. The cornerstone of leadership is the abil-



ity to read and discern what is important efficiently, to speak to groups of all sizes effectively, and to write with influence. Members of the Editorial Board of *Pediatric Nursing* have offered their time and wisdom to mentor a cohort of aspiring nurses in the building blocks of leading, focusing on reviewing manuscripts, speaking at professional meetings and writing for publication. *Pediatric Nursing Leadership TMORROW: Training and Mentoring in Reading, Reviewing, Oral and Writing Skills* will provide a selected group of nurses with the opportunity to work with members of the editorial board who are leaders from around the country in pediatric nursing today.

Leadership Skills in Speaking and Writing

The clinical nurse holds special expertise that is valued by patients and families. In today's health care environments that promote evidence-based practice, the nurse's expertise underlies the expert power that can be tapped as latent leadership waiting for the opportunity to bloom. As experts in clinical care – and advocates for family centeredness – the clinical nurse holds the key to unleashing clinical evidence that ensures quality. Tapping that evidence and communicating it effectively are the keys to leading others to follow.

The pediatric nursing leaders of *TMORROW* will develop a repertoire of abilities in information technology, scientific writing and public speaking through collaboration with their leadership mentors. Given opportunity to hone the skills of accessing information, reviewing and evaluating evidence, and writing or speaking with knowledge, these pediatric nurses will be able to serve a larger constituency beyond their units or institutions. It is with that goal that we at *Pediatric Nursing* hope to contribute to developing the next generation of leaders – who will be poised and ready to lead when called upon. With confidence in speaking and writing, these participants will be ready to anticipate the next steps to improve outcomes and translate the process for others. They may lead from the bedside – but they will know they have had an impact beyond.

For additional information on the *Pediatric Nursing* Leadership Institute and Fellowship Program, see page 96 in this issue of *Pediatric Nursing*.

References

- Porter O'Grady, T., & Malloch, K. (2007). *Quantum leadership: A resource for health care innovation*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Publishers.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, & Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (2006). *Transforming care at the bedside (TCAB): A new era for nursing*. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.ihl.org/IHI/Programs/TransformingCareAtTheBedside/>