



A New Generation of Nurse Leaders

Rose O. Sherman, EdD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN

This issue includes interviews with 4 new executive leaders of some of nursing's key professional organizations and the military. These leadership shifts are not surprising as 10,000 baby boomers retire each day, including many seasoned nurse executives. The baton is being passed from one generation of nursing leaders to another. This change was evident at this year's AONL meeting where 40% of attendees were attending for the first time; many are just beginning their nursing leadership careers.

These new leaders are working in environments that are both complex and rapidly changing. Keeping nurses engaged has never been more challenging. Designing strategy and managing finances are vital parts of leadership roles. Every organization, regardless of mission or size, is now driven by a complex and growing set of metrics. Leaders are expected to make decisions quickly with more significant risks to their organizations and their careers.

I recently had a conversation with a seasoned CNO about the challenges faced by new leaders moving into executive roles. She pointed out that she had assumed responsibility for initiatives and performance indicators incrementally over her 26-plus years with her health system. Transitioning into an executive role today is like drinking from a firehose, she observed, there is just so much to learn in these roles with high visibility and accountability. Deciding what matters most can be challenging as are decisions about what you can delegate and where to focus your time and energy. Adaptability is another important quality needed in leadership today with the shifting health care landscape. What worked even 5 years ago may no longer be relevant.

The leaders interviewed for this issue speak to these challenges. Lieutenant General Dorothy Hogg, the first nonphysician Surgeon General of the US Air Force, has made her leadership platform one of disruptive innovation. Thinking outside the box is not enough. She advocates for "think without a box," even if this might mean failure. Policies, General Hogg believes, should not stifle creativity. She is pushing her team to become more innovative and empowering her airmen to be problem solvers every day.

Dr. Suzanne Miyamoto, the new CEO of the American Academy of Nursing, sees her skill as a boundary spanner to be critical in her work. She

believes that as health care continues to change, the collective "us" must be expanded beyond the nursing profession for maximum impact. Thinking strategically and continually evolving the mission of her organization will be an essential part of her role. She wants to encourage nurses to be their best self. She believes there is no limit to what nurses can do if the profession becomes more influential.

Dr. Elizabeth Madigan, the new CEO of Sigma Theta Tau, believes all nursing is global today. Her experience as the leader of a World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Home Health will be invaluable in helping nurses in the United States begin to think about their care as global health nursing. As a global organization, she believes Sigma could play a key role in emerging nursing needs around data mining, natural language procession, and artificial intelligence.

Dr. Loressa Cole, the new CEO of the ANA Enterprise, thinks that nurse leaders today must be ready for the unthinkable. She speaks from personal experience. Dr. Cole was the CNO of LewisGale Hospital at the time of the Virginia Tech University tragic shooting in 2007. This experience taught her the importance of quiet presence and support for staff, and patients and their families during traumatic events. Strong leadership support is needed to provide staff with the caring they need to promote recovery and resilience. These personal connections matter to develop a sense of community. Dr. Cole wants every nurse to engage with the work of the American Nurses Association at both the local and national level to ensure higher quality health care in America.

This new generation of nurse leaders is taking the leadership helm of their organizations in a health care environment that is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity. Classic models of leadership may not work as well in a rapidly changing world. Today's leaders need to be willing to stretch themselves outside their comfort zones and be open-minded to embracing new ways of doing things. They need high-level influencing skills and the ability to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders. Developing and articulating a clear vision to drive the actions of their organizations is essential.

The future of nursing is in good hands. When you read these interviews with 4 remarkable leaders, you will find that they are well prepared for the challenges ahead.

Editor-in-Chief Rose O. Sherman, EdD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, is Professor Emeritus at Florida Atlantic University on Mast, and can be reached at rose.sherman@gmail.com.

1541-4612/2019/ \$ See front matter
Copyright 2019 by Elsevier Inc.
All rights reserved.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2019.04.004>