



AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

**Nursing: The Balance of  
Mind, Body, and Spirit**

## OMH's Psychiatric Nurses: Caring for **Both** Mind and Body

Research has shown that the outlook for recovery from mental illness vastly improves when care involves both physical and mental health.

No one understands this vital link between mind and body better than a nurse. A basic tenet of nursing – and an important part of their training – is caring for the **whole** person and understanding that a patient's spirit, history, culture, and environment are all connected to their physical health.

Nurses practicing in the mental health field carry numerous responsibilities. True, they must be caregivers. But they must also be advocates, counselors, teachers, strategists, managers, and problem-solvers. Psychiatric nurses spend more time with patients than any other health care professional – constantly monitoring and evaluating progress and updating others who are involved in their care.

A mental illness cannot be seen or touched, and this can make it difficult for families of individuals under psychiatric care to understand. But a mental illness can certainly be felt, and psychiatric nurses can help make families aware of what patients are going through. They offer emotional support, alleviate fears, and provide valuable information. For patients, nurses conduct therapy groups and develop activities to give them the tools they need to make recovery possible.

The settings in which psychiatric nurses work are as varied as their duties – OMH psychiatric and correctional facilities, licensed community clinics, mobile intervention teams, addic-

tion and substance abuse programs, and psychiatric units in acute-care hospitals.

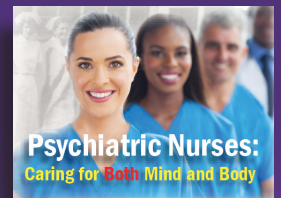
To be honest, psychiatric nursing can be challenging and physically demanding. But the field is also incredibly rewarding. Psychiatric nurses on the average spend much more time with their patients than acute-care nurses – many report that they get to know them so well, they become like family.

Psychiatric nurses, too, take pride in saving lives. It may not be as obvious as a procedure in an emergency room. But their work involves years of commitment, helping patients to overcome their fears, change life-threatening behaviors, and return to their homes and families to lead productive lives.

A proclamation designating May 6 to 12 as Nurses Week in New York State has been issued by Governor Cuomo. In addition, OMH Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan, in a message to OMH nurses said: "On a daily basis, OMH nurses play a pivotal role in a fast paced healthcare environment striving to meet the psychological and physical needs of an ever-challenging patient population while aiming to fulfill the goal of the Triple Aim: achieve better care, healthier people and communities, and lower cost."

Nurses deserve more than one week of recognition, and this edition of *OMH News* continues the celebration. We'll share some of their stories and provide news on programs that help them perform the incredible work they do. If you, too, have a story to share, please contact us at: [omhnews@omh.ny.gov](mailto:omhnews@omh.ny.gov).

# History: From 'Attendants' to Professionals



The role of the psychiatric nurse has grown as care for the mentally ill has become more specialized and recovery-focused. But the journey has been long because of long-held attitudes against giving women positions of responsibility, and a historical lack of resources to meet the needs of an increasing population.

## Origins in Caring and Compassion

In medieval Europe, physicians relied heavily on observations from their attendants to make decisions about treatment for patients with mental illness. Many early hospitals were closely connected with religious organizations, with the belief that spirituality could provide a cure. Attendants were assigned to be "soul friends" to patients, forming close, spiritual relationships and helping them reconnect with society.

As the understanding of the workings of the mind grew during the Renaissance, it became the duty of attendants to maintain an environment of caring and compassion for their patients. Although attendants were considered cheap labor, they provided a crucial link between physicians and patients. The best attendants were said to have the qualities of morality, intelligence, and charity. In the mid-1700s, English physician William Battie was one of the first key public figures to recognize their importance, calling for careful selection and special training for attendants who worked with the mentally ill.

## Formalizing Training and Education

Early American colonists often relied on community attendants to provide care to relatives who were mentally ill and kept isolated. As the colonial population grew, small institutions were established, such as the first "lunatics ward" at the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1752. Attendants from some of these institutions provided services to clients in community.



*Nurses supervising recreational activities.*



*Psychiatric nurses on duty.*

Reform movements in the 1800s brought about the development of secular asylums. Staffing was based on the hospital system, with designation of “nurses” for the first time to handle many attendant duties and formal training. William Charles Ellis, an English physician, advocated for better pay and training for “keepers of the insane” to attract more respectable and intelligent people to the profession. He specifically cited nursing care in his 1836 *Treatise on Insanity*, saying that it “calmed depressed patients and gave hope to the hopeless.”

One of the earliest facilities in New York was the Publick Workhouse and House of Corrections of the City of New York. Established in 1736, the mentally ill were confined with criminals, the sick, the destitute, and the aged. The New York Hospital, opened in January 1791, was the nation’s first general hospital to also provide for the care and treatment of the mentally ill. It opened a separate facility for the mentally ill, the Bloomingdale Asylum, in 1821. Asylums were opened in other locations throughout the state during the next several decades.

The first school in the United States established to train nurses in psychiatric care was Boston City College in 1882. Johns Hopkins University became the nation’s first college of nursing to offer psychiatric nursing as part of its general curriculum in 1913. The first textbook specifically for psychiatric nursing care, *Nursing Mental Diseases* by Harriet Bailey, was published seven years later. By 1950 when the National League for Nursing’s accreditation standards required schools of nursing to include a clinical rotation in psychiatry.

New York was the first state to assume responsibility for the care of the mentally ill from local governments with the 1890 State Care Act. Care was also provided to other social problems that were seen as manifestations of mental disorder.

## Reformers and Innovators

Nurses were among the reformers and innovators of the time. Dorothea L. Dix, who led reform efforts in Massachusetts, worked with state officials for the passage of an act in New York to investigate the condition of the insane throughout the state and the creation of the Willard Asylum for mentally ill poor.

Linda Richards, recognized as a pioneer in developing nursing documentation, training for nurses, and clarification of professional duties while working at New York’s Bellevue Hospital Training School, focused much of her attention on nursing in mental health care facilities.

Lillian Wald was founder of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, whose public health nurses addressed the emotional problems patients faced as a result of coping with illness.

Early in her career, Hildegard Peplau worked at Columbia University Teachers’ College to teach interviewing and group techniques. Peplau’s work came to the attention of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), when psychiatrists returning from World War II convinced Congress to dedicate funding toward understanding how stress was related to mental illness.<sup>OMH</sup>



*Psychiatric nurses during rounds.*



*Dorothea L. Dix*



*Linda Richards*



*Lillian Wald*

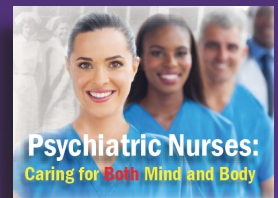


*Hildegard Peplau*

*Publications began recognizing the vital role of nurses in New York’s state psychiatric hospitals.*



# The Profession: What Does it Take to be a Psychiatric Nurse?



Psychiatric nursing is a specialized field and the responsibilities of a psychiatric nurse are much different than their counterparts in general health care practice.

The American Nurses' Association defines "nursing" as the "protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations."

"Psychiatric-mental health nursing" is defined as a specialized area of nursing practice committed to "promoting mental health through the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of human response to mental health problems and psychiatric disorders."

"In a general hospital, a nurse is most often treating human responses to physical illness," said Debbie Ultsch, Chief Nursing Officer at the Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center in Utica. "In a psychiatric hospital, a nurse is treating human **responses** to mental illness – as well as physical illness, as needed."

## The Nursing Process

A general hospital nurse might, for example, be responsible for seven or eight patients during a shift. The nurse would complete an assessment, then develop, implement, and adjust a nursing care plan as needed. The nurse would administer medications, implement any treatments ordered, monitor vital signs, intake, output, and coordinate care among therapists and physicians. The nurse would also provide health education and promotion to patients and their families.

A psychiatric nurse in a mental health facility, meanwhile, would generally be responsible for everything mentioned above, as well as the nursing management of the unit.

The science of nursing is based on a framework of critical thinking. Known as the "nursing process," it's made up of six steps – assessment, diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation. These steps provide a foundation for making clinical decisions and developing a base of evidence for practice.

Psychiatric nurses use this same process to treat people with actual or potential mental health problems or psychiatric disorders," Ultsch said. "Their goals are to foster health and safety, assess dysfunction, help persons to regain or improve their coping abilities, maximize their strengths, and prevent further disability."

## Extensive Training

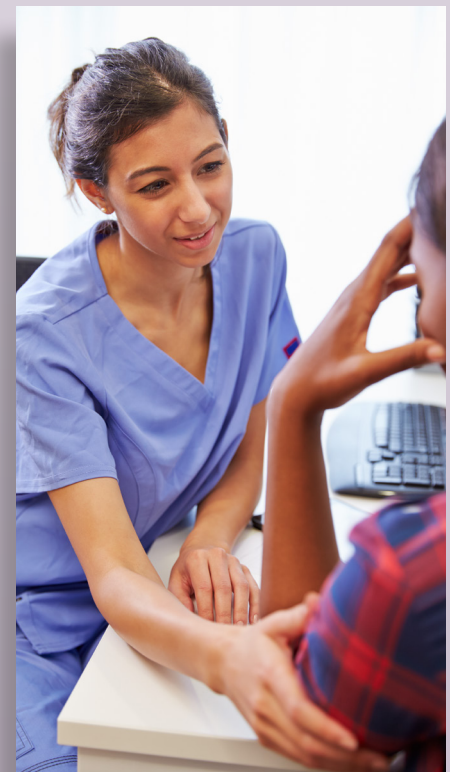
Several types of nurses work in a mental health facility. Besides RNs, there are licensed practical nurses (LPNs), advanced practice nurses (APRNs), and mental health therapy aides (MHTAs). Only the RNs and APRNs are trained to assess, treat, and counsel patients. APRNs can diagnose and prescribe medications.

To become a nurse, students typically attend college for two years to obtain an associate degree or four years to obtain a bachelor's degree. Training includes classroom lectures and hands-on work in various areas of nursing. Some schools offer a bridge program from an associate to a bachelor's degree. Other schools offer accelerated programs for students who hold a degree in another field.

Accredited nursing schools are required to have students complete a specific number of clinical training hours in various settings. RNs typically receive their initial exposure to psychiatric nursing as part of their clinical rotations. There is also a classroom requirement for lectures and testing. To get an RN license, the candidate must attend a state-approved school and pass the National Council Licensure Examination, or NCLEX.



*Debbie Ultsch, CNO, MS, RN*



Continued from the [previous page](#)

Newly licensed RNs may complete a one-year residency, if offered, to strengthen their skills. Nurses can practice only in the state they are licensed in.

Once hired, an RN can pursue additional education and training in psychiatric nursing and go on to pursue board certification status. The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) provides credentialing in several specialties, such as child and adolescent, geriatric, substance abuse, eating disorders, consultation and liaison, and forensic.

An experienced psychiatric nurse can also obtain certification as Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse (PMHN) through the ANCC. Again the candidate must pass an examination and demonstrate work experience as well as expertise in the field of mental health nursing.

## Learning to Overcome Stigma and Apprehension

Student nurses learn that they are important members of the treatment team and provide input into the development of treatment plans along with the other disciplines, so that patients can become well enough to return to communities and live as independent a life as possible.

Many student nurses come into their first behavioral health experience with some apprehension. “This reaction is in direct response to prevailing and persistent public stigma about mental health disorders, recipients, and treatment,” said Louisa Kelsey, Nurse Educator at Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

Students may share mainstream beliefs that psychiatric recipients are violent, impulsive, dangerous, and unpredictable. “In order to address these misperceptions, student nurses are first encouraged to evaluate their personal views, values, and attitudes,” she said. “This exercise assists students to gain personal insight into how stereotypes shape their misperceptions.”

Students are then educated on how public stigma reinforces stereotypes, prejudice and misperceptions about mental health recipients, and creates barriers that diminish opportunities for recipients to obtain a quality of life.

“Students are required to learn and develop therapeutic communication techniques necessary to initiate and maintain effective interpersonal skills,” Kelsey said. “As students engage with recipients, they soon recognize that their misconceptions are no longer valid. They begin to reject their initial beliefs and adopt an evidenced based recovery approach.”

## Psych Nurses Have to be Experts

A nurse is most often the first person a patient and their family come into contact with when they come to OMH hospitals. Requiring hospitalization is a stressful time for both patients and families and it is the nurse who is responsible for helping alleviate as much of that fear as possible during that initial encounter.

Besides mental health facilities and general hospitals, work settings for psych nurses can include correctional facilities, medical offices, home health organizations, community organizations, and schools.

Psych nurses have to be adept managers. “This requires excellent organizational skills,” Ultsch said. “In our system of care, psychiatric nurses provide care to our patients, supervision to our paraprofessional staff, and management of units.”

“Nursing is an art and a science,” Ultsch said. “Psychiatric nurses have to be compassionate, knowledgeable, intuitive, caring, and have a good understanding of how to provide person-centered care in the context of a team.”

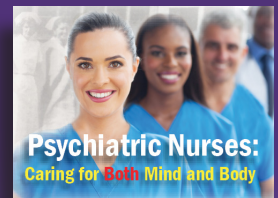
“Most important, to be a psych nurse, one must understand that a patient is a person – an individual with their own thoughts and fears,” Kelsey said. “They must understand that a mental illness is just as significant as a physical illness and that everyone deserves respect.”<sup>OMH</sup>



*Louisa F. Kelsey, RN-3*



# Caring: Helping Your Patients Means Sharing a Little Bit of Yourself



## Inpatient Care at Buffalo PC



From left, Buffalo Psychiatric Center Unit 66 staff: Nicole Wilson, MHTA; Cari Marx, RN2; and Bobbi Jo Morgan, MHTA.

“First and foremost, it’s important that an inpatient psych nurse have a strong medical background,” said Cari Marx, RN-2 at Buffalo Psychiatric Center’s Unit 66. “Not only do we need to assist the patients with their mental health ailments, but also with their physical complaints. These physical complaints could be psychosomatic in nature and it takes a keen, experienced eye to decipher between the two.”

An inpatient psych nurse has many different responsibilities. In addition to the typical nursing tasks that one may think of, such as administering medications and treatments, they are also responsible for running various groups, following specific treatment plans, and assuring that the patients’ goals are being met.

Whereas in an acute-care setting, patients frequently change, an inpatient psych nurse will work consistently with the same group of patients. “Working day-after-day with the same patients allows you to get to know them on a more intimate level,” Marx said. “This allows for the RN to notice any slight change in behavior easily. This is a positive thing, because possible situations could be de-escalated or diverted more quickly than if the patient was dealing with someone that they were unfamiliar with.”

“The most gratifying part of this job,” Marx added, “is to see a patient be discharged and successfully navigate the outpatient community, just like you or me.” OMH

## MHTAs at Bronx PC Turn Therapy Into Play

Mental health therapy aides (MHTAs) work side-by-side with nurses to provide direct services, treatment, rehabilitation, and support in both institutional and community settings. Their contribution is essential to the provision of care.

Sometimes, it’s the simplest gestures that are the most innovative

Two MHTAs on the evening shift at Bronx Psychiatric Center, Veronica Johnson and Maria Minaya, started, on their own, a group project in which they bring in jigsaw puzzles to the unit. Clients and staff talk and work on the puzzles together, at their own pace. After they’re finished, they mount the puzzles for display.

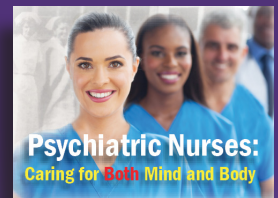
Not only is it a source of pride for the staff and clients, it’s an excellent therapeutic tool. Both were given shining stars for their initiative. OMH



Bronx PC MHTAs Veronica Johnson (left) and Minaya Aroyo, with a recent group project. Two others are left.



# Corrections: Caring in a High-Security Environment



*Central New York Psychiatric Center in Marcy.*

OMH provides nursing care in correctional environments at Central New York Psychiatric Center (CNYPC) in Marcy, Mid-Hudson Forensic Psychiatric Center in New Hampton, Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center in Manhattan, Rochester Regional Forensic Unit at Rochester Psychiatric Center, and in Corrections Based Operations (CBO) satellite units run by CNYPC at Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) facilities throughout the state.

Mental health nurses working in correctional facilities work hard every day to maintain a delicate balance — delivering quality care and maintaining patients’ privacy in an environment in which security is crucial.

“Much of our practice isn’t known to the general public,” said Berthilde Dufrene, Chief Nursing Officer for CBO at CNYPC. “Very few are aware of the amazing job our nurses do every day and of the incredible skills and knowledge they have.”

Therapists and psychiatrists may see patients on a monthly basis in CBO, while nurses see them every day and are able to provide valuable information to the treatment team. This daily contact enables them to develop and maintain therapeutic relationships with patients and to advocate on their behalf.

## **Obligation to Patients and Society**

Working in a maximum security facility as a mental health nurse has its challenges — just as working in a community based hospital has challenges. OMH Forensic Psychiatric Centers and CBO are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and are obligated to fulfill the same accreditation requirements consistent with community standards in mental health.

“We’re providing mental health care on par with any community-based mental health care facility,” said Rhonda Coventry, Nurse Administrator I, at the Central New York Psychiatric Center Five Points Correctional Facility in Romulus.

“We’re authorized to provide mental health care to patients in New York State prisons,” she said. “In a correctional facility, we have an obligation not only to our patients, but to society — to provide mental health care and treatment to incarcerated individuals to ensure their stability upon release to the community.”



*Berthilde Dufrene, RN,  
MSN, CARN, DNP(c)*

It is imperative that nurses not only treat the patient, but establish an environment of safety through collaboration with other health care and security professionals. “We listen, we educate, we foster respect,” Coventry said. “We have to be creative sometimes, and certainly open-minded.”

Nurses at CNYPC provide education, medication, group therapy, and crisis intervention. They’re involved in intensive treatment planning for difficult cases. They also work in the facility’s crisis-housing unit to provide treatment and support services to significantly mentally ill patients.

## Safety and Recovery are Key

Whenever nurses are in the buildings that house their patients, they’re accompanied by a correctional officer for safety. They also have personal devices that can send an alarm to correctional staff with the push of a button.

The goals in working with a correctional patient are different depending on their needs. They may be as simple as providing patients with an opportunity to be heard, or as complicated as preventing a suicide – which can be a major concern in the correctional system.

“It’s important to help the patient learn to recognize symptoms and the nature of their mental illness,” Coventry said. “It’s vital to their recovery to understand the importance of continuing to take medications – or to even begin taking them – so they can become and stay healthy.”

Some patients have difficulty understanding and abiding by facility rules because of their mental illness. Nurses help them to recognize their symptoms and to follow treatment recommendations, so they can fully participate in programming to help them prepare to return to the community.

## Non-Judgmental and Unbiased Care

Correctional mental health services are delivered in a unique setting, in which nurses must be constantly aware of what is happening in the environment, and understand the legal, ethical and regulatory issues not only for OMH but those pertaining to DOCCS. Nurses must be confident and skilled. Communication, collaboration, and teamwork are also essential.

“You are the other person’s keeper and are dependent on your peers to be your keeper,” Dufrene said. “Maintaining a safe environment that is conducive to optimal treatment and care requires that everyone is open, flexible, and in tune with the treatment team and treatment goals.”

Nurses must also have a high degree of inner strength and an acute sense of self-awareness. The environment can be incredibly stressful, which is why correctional nurses must make their own self-care a priority to avoid burnout.

“Nurses in this environment have to be able to maintain professionalism, sometimes under difficult circumstances,” Coventry said. “They need the ability to provide care to patients that are difficult to care for – in that they may have made some horrific mistakes in their lives.”

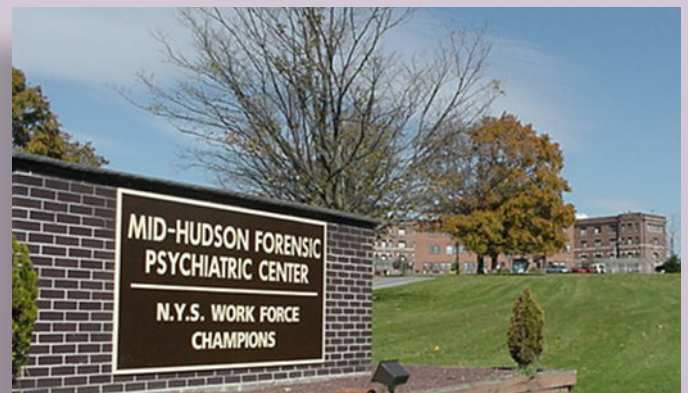
“This requires frequent reflection and commitment with the belief that what we do is meaningful,” she added. “We have to be able to provide non-judgmental and unbiased care to all patients believing that all people, by virtue of being human, deserve it.”<sup>OMH</sup>



*Rhonda Coventry, RN, BSN*



*Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center in Manhattan*



*Mid-Hudson Forensic Psychiatric Center in New Hampton*



# Certification: Expanding Your Scope of Practice



As the nursing profession continues to grow, it's becoming more important for nurses to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and experience.

The certification process provides this measure of recognition. It demonstrates that a nurse has gained additional expertise in a clinical area – beyond the requirements for licensure. It also provides credentials that a nurse's practice is at an advanced level.

"Gaining my certification was important to me because I want to provide the best care possible to my patients," said Renette Casseus-Dametas, a member of the Rockland Psychiatric Center Mobile Integration Team who earned certification as an Adult Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse in April. She is also a participant in the OMH Nurse Development Program (see page 13).

"Certification provides evidence of professional credibility and guarantees to the public that my clinical skills meet the highest standards of practice."

## Preparation Requires Discipline

Casseus-Dametas said that for her, the process started with evaluation of her personal situation. "It was going to be quite a challenge, so I first had to consider whether I was ready for this. I had to ask myself: 'Did I have enough time to dedicate to it?'"

To start the certification process, a nurse must have an RN license, earned a bachelor degree, completed 30 hours of continuing education within the last three years, and have worked 4,000 clinical hours.

"It was a big step. It was intimidating at first," Casseus-Dametas said, "but the process of preparation was a series of steps, similar to what I went through studying for the NCLEX. The note-taking, planning, and evaluation processes were similar to the processes that all nurses use in own daily practice. So I knew I could do this."

## Support and Mentoring

Casseus-Dametas said it was important to have support in place and credited RPC Chief Nursing Office Rachel Mathew and Clinical Nurse 3 Noreen Patrone for their mentoring and advice and for keeping her on track.

The final step in applying for the ANCC exam was to obtain a letter of approval from ANCC in order to schedule the exam at one of the Prometric test centers. Once approved, Casseus-Dametas, had a 90-day window in which to take the computerized test at the nearest center.

"The test ran for four hours and had 175 questions on all aspects of psych nursing care," she said "So it was very important to pace myself. And I passed!"

To retain her certification, Casseus-Dametas must complete 75 hours of continuing education every two years. Doing so helps ensure that she is keeping current on the latest developments in her profession.

To Casseus-Dametas, it also means something on a personal level. "My certification identifies my role in the care process. It gives me a sense of pride in my accomplishment and the confidence I need to provide the best evidence-based care to my clients."



Renette Casseus-Dametas, CMHN

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



BE IT KNOWN THAT

HAVING GIVEN SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE OF THE COMPLETION OF PROFESSIONAL  
OTHER REQUIREMENTS PRESCRIBED BY LAW IS QUALIFIED TO PRACTICE AS A

CERTIFICATION

IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

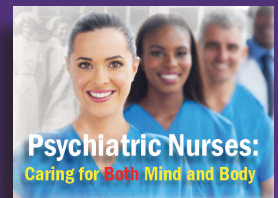
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GRANTS THE  
ALBANY, NEW YORK  
FEBRUARY, 2013

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY  
AND COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION  
LICENSE NUMBER



For information on certification, visit:  
<http://www.nursecredentialing.org/>

# Collaboration: Sharing Vital Knowledge Across Disciplines



An innovative example of interprofessional collaboration between nurses and physicians is taking place at Rockland Psychiatric Center. Since last year, the center has been offering a Pharmacology Lecture Series for nurses.

*Rockland Psychiatric Center physician Kenneth Ozdoba, MD, with his lecture class.*

The pharmacology lecture series for the nursing staff is designed to focus on recognizing the various effects that psychiatric medications can have on a patient, recognizing a problem as it occurs, and be able to understand why it is happening.

Lectures are conducted by Dr. Kenneth Ozdoba, Triage MD, Director of Medical Education at the center and Chairman of the its Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committee.

“Nurses are an essential part of the treatment team,” Ozdoba said. “They need to be able to recognize when the patients are suffering. A patient may be experiencing a side effect of a medication or a drug interaction and may not be able to report it or even recognize they are even having a side effect.”

The course covers relevant areas of psychopharmacology, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, benzodiazepines, sedatives, and antidepressants. Future lectures will be about dementia treatment, substance abuse treatment, and the importance of smoking cessation.

Attendance at the monthly lectures has been standing-room only. As word of the valuable content of the lectures spreads, nurses now not only come from inpatient units, but residential services, and outpatient clinics, as well.

Applications to OMH’s Nurse Development Program (see page 13 for more information) by nurses working to obtain certification has soared, with an uptick since the lectures began from five percent to 20 percent. Feedback from the nursing staff has been one of gratitude, smiles, and improved outcomes in patient care.

With this program, the center is raising the bar on several levels — transferring knowledge, developing greater expertise, and increasing the number of nurses pursuing board certification in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing.

“It’s my hope that, with this increased knowledge there will be better communication between doctors and nurses about what is happening with the patients, because the information taught in the course is what doctors would find very useful to hear from nurses” Ozdoba said. “This lecture series in psychopharmacology translates directly into improved care for our patients.” OMH



*Rockland Psychiatric Center in Orangeburg.*

# Conferences: Opportunities to Network and Continue Your Education



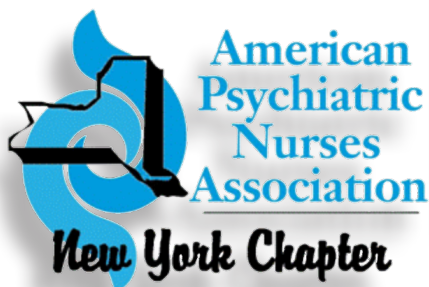
“Psychiatric Nurses Addressing the Complexity of Care Integration to Optimize Recovery,” OMH’s 2017 Chief Nursing Officer Conference, will feature presentations on topics of urgency for psychiatric nurses, such as suicide prevention, violence assessment, management of forensic clients, mental health transformation, and challenges and opportunities for psychiatric nursing under healthcare reform. Educational sessions are authorized to offer continuing education credits for social workers.

The conference also features exciting events intended to recognize and celebrate the hard work and achievements of psychiatric nurses employed throughout OMH facilities and programs: awards for Nurse of the Year, Nursing Excellence in Community and Ambulatory Care, and the Patient Advocacy and Recovery Promotion; spotlight on Graduates of the Nurse Development Program; and awards for poster presentations. The conference will be held **November 16 and 17** at the **Hilton Albany**. Check with your Chief Nursing Officer for details on registration.<sup>OMH</sup>

## APNA NEW YORK CHAPTER CONFERENCE

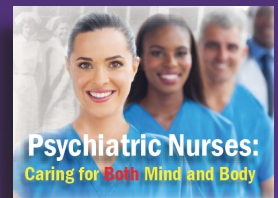
*The Value of Psychiatric Nursing:  
Innovation & Leadership*

JUNE 15-16, 2016 | MALTA, NY



The ninth-annual American Psychiatric Nurses Association-New York Chapter conference, June 15 and 16 in Malta, will focus on the value of psychiatric nursing, leadership, and innovation. For information, visit: <https://www.apna.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=5681>.<sup>OMH</sup>

# Opportunities: OMH is Looking for Psych Nurses and Nurse Practitioners



## OMH is Seeking Motivated Nurse Practitioners in Various Specialties

Provide comprehensive, quality psychiatric and medical services at facilities throughout New York.

As an OMH Nurse Practitioner (NP), you would provide patient-centered and recovery-focused professional mental health or primary health care services, built on evidence-based practices to individuals diagnosed with serious and persistent mental illness or emotional disturbances, while working in a collaborative and supportive environment.

For more information about NP positions in OMH, please visit: <https://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/Employment/nurse-practitioner.html>

Send your applications to: [omhnurse@omh.ny.gov](mailto:omhnurse@omh.ny.gov). Please include "Nurse Practitioners 2017" in the subject line.

### Or mail to:

Office of Mental Health  
Attn: Nurse Practitioners 2017  
Facility Personnel Services – 7th Floor  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12229

## Join the OMH Psychiatric Nursing Team

OMH is hiring Registered Nurses committed to public service and compassionate caring.

As an OMH nurse, you would provide individualized, comprehensive and recovery-oriented services, built on principles of effective, measurable, and accountable care. You would work in diverse settings – inpatient, outpatient, emergency, residential, community, family care, and research - and with varied populations – adults, children and adolescents, and forensically involved individuals diagnosed with serious and persistent mental illness.

Applications for entry level positions are accepted on a continuous basis. Qualifications for appointment vary by title, but generally include a license and current registration to practice nursing in New York State.

For information on open-competitive Nursing positions in OMH and how to apply:

- Visit our website: <https://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/Employment/careers-in-demand.html>;
- E-mail [omhnurse@omh.ny.gov](mailto:omhnurse@omh.ny.gov); or
- Call our Nurse Hotline toll free: **1-877-691-8270**.



**Recognized as one of the best mental health hospital systems in the United States**, OMH operates the largest state mental health system in the nation, with 22 Joint Commission accredited hospitals, 90 clinics, two world-class research institutes, and diverse community services.

OMH facilities are located throughout the state and provide the opportunity to explore everything New York has to offer — the excitement and culture of New York City, the natural beauty of Upstate, and year round family-oriented events.

**Attractive compensation and benefits package**, including:

- Competitive salaries with additional salary enhancements based on work location.
- Paid vacation, personal, and sick leave.
- Medical, dental, and vision insurance plans with competitive employee contribution rates.
- New York State Retirement defined-benefit pension.
- Health Care and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts.
- OMH sponsored Nurse Development Program.
- Professional development programs available to eligible NYS Public Employees Federation (PEF) represented employees.<sup>omh</sup>

# Recruitment: Encouraging More Students to Consider a Career in Nursing



With the average age of nurses in New York State currently about 47, it is expected that nearly half of the nurses working today – including the field of mental health care – will retire within the next decade. This will worsen the shortage of nurses that already exists, just as the Baby Boom generation reaches its 60s and 70s. In addition, nearly 2,000 qualified nursing students are being denied admission to RN programs in recent years, largely due to enrollment limits at nursing schools, caused by a shortage of nursing faculty.

To help address these needs, OMH offers financial support for tuition reimbursement for college courses and repayment of the cost for ANCC board certification exams.

These educational benefits are available to nurses employed by the OMH through the Nurse Development Program (NDP) or the Healthcare Workforce Retraining Initiative (HWRI).

## Nurse Development Program (NDP)

The Nurse Development Program offers tuition reimbursement to eligible OMH employees interested in pursuing a career in nursing and nurses wishing to advance their nursing degrees:

- Employees interested in pursuing a degree in Nursing
- LPN to RN (BSN)
- RN with Diploma/Associate Degree to Bachelor Degree
- BSN to MSN
- Nurse Practitioner in Psychiatry (NPP)
- Doctor Nurse Practitioner (DNP)
- ANCC Board Certification in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing (BC-PMHN)

To be eligible for NDP, employees must be committed to working for OMH, have at least one year of service, have with good time and attendance, and have a satisfactory performance evaluation.

## Healthcare Workforce Retraining Initiative (HWRI)

This program is funded through a grant from the New York State Department of Health and New York State Department of Labor and is administered by the State University at Albany Research Foundation for SUNY Professional Development Program.

- The **Workers Trained as RNs Program** seeks to increase the number of registered nurses working at OMH by providing funds to OMH employees to help pay for educational costs associated with pursuing RN licensure.
- The **Registered Nurses Trained as BSN/MSNs Program** seeks to increase the number of nurses with four-year nursing degrees or advanced nursing degrees at OMH by providing funds to OMH employees to help pay for educational costs associated with pursuing a Bachelor or Master of Science in Nursing Degree. Grant funds are provided at the start of the semester paid directly to the college and intended to offset out-of-pocket costs.

To be eligible for HRWI, employees must be in good standing with a good time and attendance record, maintain satisfactory work performance, have a positive performance evaluation record, and be considered by facility personnel to be highly motivated with an inclination for successful completion of required coursework. They must also have a letter of recommendation from their supervisor. Each program has specific eligibility requirements, as well.



To learn more about OMH's Tuition Reimbursement programs, contact OMH Chief Executive Nursing Officer Maxine Smalling, RN, at [Maxine.Smalling@omh.ny.gov](mailto:Maxine.Smalling@omh.ny.gov); or Program Administrator Juanita Goyette, RN, at [Juanita.Goyette@omh.ny.gov](mailto:Juanita.Goyette@omh.ny.gov).

Support and assistance are also available at each OMH facility through its Chief Nursing Officer and Facility Educational Mentor.

## Other and Nursing Education and Advancement Resources

The **Professional Education Program Review** unit in the Office of the Professions, which has the responsibility for registering nursing education programs within New York State, lists several other programs at its website: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/nurse/nurseprogs.htm>.

The **New York State Higher Education Services Corporation** provides other financial aid as well. To review the grants, scholarships, and awards reference page, visit: <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid.html>.

The **Edna A. Lauterbach Scholarship Fund** assists RNs and LPNs with training or education that will enhance the nurse's skills in either the clinical or business area. Visit: <http://www.nyshcp.org/content.aspx?id=228>.

The **U.S. Perkins Loan Cancellation Program** offers options for loan forgiveness for borrowers with Perkins Loans who are in specific professions, including nursing. For information, visit: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/charts>.

The **National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Nurse Corp Scholarship Program** offers scholarship opportunities for students accepted or enrolled in a diploma, associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree nursing program. The program offers receive funding for tuition, fees, and other educational costs. In exchange, students must work at a facility with a critical shortage of nurses — called a Critical Shortage Facility (CSF) — upon graduation.

In order to be eligible, participants must be enrolled or accepted in a professional nursing degree program at an accredited school of nursing in the U.S.; and beginning classes no later than September 30, 2017. Please note that, as of April 2017, the program is active at only Elmira and Binghamton. OMH is working to expand the program in 2018.

For information, visit: [https://bhw.hrsa.gov/loansscholarships/nursecorps/scholarship?utm\\_campaign=Now+Open%3A+NURSE+Corps+Scholarship+Program&utm\\_media=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery.omm](https://bhw.hrsa.gov/loansscholarships/nursecorps/scholarship?utm_campaign=Now+Open%3A+NURSE+Corps+Scholarship+Program&utm_media=email&utm_source=govdelivery.omm)

