



RAISE the Voice

“While others continue to debate how to solve today’s health care challenges, such as the uninsured and disparities in health delivery, nurse researchers and experts are finding solutions, piece-by-piece, from the ground up. In hospitals, universities, and health centers, nurses are devising new strategies to get patients and their families the care they need, regardless of insurance status. The promise of these techniques is enormous and needs to be shared with the American people.”

Donna E. Shalala

President of the University of Miami and formerly the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services



Health care in America today is inaccessible to many, expensive for most and fragmented for all. Enabling the system to deliver the best possible care at an acceptable cost requires not just reformation but transformation — to one that is safe, effective, efficient and personalized.

Nurses are using their unique insight to take action and create innovative solutions that provide affordable, coordinated, and effective care that Americans so urgently need. Through the *Raise the Voice* campaign, the American Academy of Nursing is mobilizing its 1,500 Fellows, partner organizations, and health leaders to ensure Americans are aware of how nurses are changing — and improving — the fundamental way care is delivered.

Raise the Voice showcases research-based solutions developed by nurse “Edge Runners” — the practical innovators who are leading the way in bringing new thinking and new methods to a wide range of health care challenges. Edge Runners have developed options that help people stay healthy and cope better with illness, while producing exemplary financial and clinical outcomes.

True health care reform has already been set in motion by nurses who are on the ground and in the field working tirelessly to help Americans stay healthy.

Raise the Voice is their story.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

- America’s health care system is in desperate need of repair.
- Nurses’ contributions to health care are critical and an indispensable part of solving our health care crisis.
- Nurse-led models of care produce positive clinical and financial outcomes.
- Nurses’ innovations address people’s needs and wants for a humane and effective health care system, reducing disparities while increasing efficiency and quality of patient care.
- It is in our country’s best interest to adopt viable models of care that result in lower costs and a healthier population.
- The *Raise the Voice* campaign aims to transform America’s health care system to one that delivers effective, convenient, personalized and relevant care to patients, families and communities.

Mary Naylor, PhD, RN, FAAN

Marian S. Ware Professor in Gerontology; Director of the Center for Health Transitions, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, Philadelphia, PA

The Challenge

High rates of poor post-discharge outcomes that put elderly patients back in the hospital soon after their release following earlier treatment. Up to one-third of those hospitalizations are considered preventable.

The Goal

Improve post-discharge outcomes — lowering rates of re-hospitalization and thereby reducing health care costs.

An Innovative Solution

An innovative model of hospital-to-home care that helps improve post-discharge outcomes and reduces re-hospitalizations by focusing on transitional care led by master's-prepared advanced practice nurses (APNs) in conjunction with the patient's entire health care team, targeting high risk patients at risk for poor post-discharge outcomes.

The Details

Dr. Naylor developed a program that assures that APNs establish a relationship with patients and their families soon after hospital admission; design the discharge plan in collaboration with the patient, the patient's physician, and family members; and implement the plan in the patient's home following discharge, substituting for traditional skilled nursing follow-up. Findings from three clinical trials funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research consistently demonstrate that the APN Transitional Care Model improves quality of care and substantially decreases health care costs.

For example:

- Compared to standard care there are longer intervals before initial re-hospitalizations, fewer re-hospitalizations overall, shorter hospital stays and better patient satisfaction.
- Following a four-year trial with a group of elderly patients hospitalized with heart failure, the APN Care Model cut hospitalization costs by more than \$500,000, compared with a group receiving standard care — for an average savings of approximately \$5,000 per Medicare patient.



“For years nurses have been devising and developing practical innovations to address various health care challenges. Despite the advantages of many nursing care models, the current financial and structural problems of the U.S. health care system stand in the way. Through the Raise the Voice campaign, the Academy will promote the ideas and initiatives that offer the kind of affordable, coordinated, and effective care that Americans so urgently need.”

Louis Stokes

*Senior Counsel, Squire, Sanders & Dempsey, LLP,
and former Member of Congress*

RAISE
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Ruth Watson Lubic, EdD, RN, CNM, FAAN

Founder and Chair Emeriti, Family Health and Birth Center,
Washington, D.C.

The Challenge

Low-income mothers are more likely to experience preterm births, low birth weight babies and cesarean sections — all of which can lead to other medical complications and increase health care costs.

The Goal

Improve the health and quality of life of young families by reducing the number of pre-term births, low birth weight babies and c-sections — and, in turn, reduce the cost of care.

An Innovative Solution

Provide a modern birth center in a low-income community, and supplement birth services with comprehensive women's and children's health care, social supports and early childhood development.

The Details

Family Health and Birth Center is the only independent birthing center in the District of Columbia, housed in a former supermarket in a low-income community. It provides midwifery and nursing services and healthcare for women and children — backed by hospital, obstetrical and gynecological consultants — in a nurse-driven setting. The center has seen success in both delivering healthy infants and lowering costs.

For example:

- Preliminary data for 2006 indicate the center delivered a record number of infants — more than 150 last year, as well as the highest percentage ever delivered outside the hospital in D.C. (25 percent of births took place at the facility, with the rest at Washington Hospital).
- After less than six years of operation, there was a substantial lowering of preterm birth (9 percent at the Center versus 14.2 percent for all of D.C.), low birth weight (7 percent at the Center, compared with 14.6 percent overall in D.C.) and cesarean section rates (15.3 percent at the Center versus 29 percent for all of D.C.).
- The Center's successes in 2005 alone reduced costs for the District of Columbia's health care system by more than \$1.15 million — more than the total of the Center's annual operating budget.



“We are seeing more and more evidence that programs led by nurses can improve patient care and outcomes while reducing costs. Meeting the overall needs of each patient as effectively as possible has long been the goal of nursing care, and we need nurses' leadership now more than ever. Raise the Voice recognizes these contributions and offers them as real solutions to the great challenges facing our nation's health care.”

Mark B. McClellan, MD

Director, Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform
The Brookings Institution

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