

KNA Newsletter 2002

New KNA President Inaugurated at 2002 KNA Assembly

The 2002 KNA Assembly, attended by 278 representatives from all over Korea, was held in Seoul on the 19th and 20th of February culminating with the election of Dr. Euisook Kim as president for the 2002 - 2003 term, upon conclusion of former president, Dr. Hwa-Joong Kim's term of office.

New KNA president, Dr. Euisook Kim, clarified her aspirations; "I am honored to accept this important duty to actualize the hopes and ambitions that we have always dreamed of. Nurses must be recognized as being among the most respectful persons in society, and I will do my best to upgrade nursing in Korea."

New president Dr. Kim is also Professor at the Yonsei University of Nursing, and served as Board member of the KNA between 1982 and 1986, and chairperson of the Seoul Chapter from 1986-1988. She served on the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centers for Nursing and Midwifery from 1994 to 1998, and is expected to achieve much progress for the nursing profession in Korea as president of the KNA with her experienced in international activities.

Unifying the Nursing Education System & Accreditation of Nursing Education

The Korean nursing education system is a dual system in spite of unitary licensing, which negatively influences improvements in nursing and social awareness with the difficulty of maintaining consistency in establishment of nursing standards and selection of assessment standards for nursing education institutions. In the 1980's, an increase in medical institutions affected an increase in nursing colleges, and as a result, 3-year programs rapidly increased to fulfill the demand.

However unified opinion within the field of nursing is very difficult to achieve which makes unity in the nursing education system difficult to attain over all. The KNA has been trying to unify the system with degree based, 4-year university programs, and this

year, a nursing college began offering a 4-year Bachelor's program. On the other hand, the KNA realized that the quality of nursing education should be equalized and uniform at one level.

Nursing education in Korea has developed steadily over the past 100 years with a history of both qualitative and quantitative advancement. However quality management has been comparatively insufficient in spite of the growth. The educational environment for nursing was poor despite newly established nursing institutions, and a new form of nursing education system was needed to address the concerns of modern society. Based upon this demand, the KNA established CANEK (Council for Accreditation of Nursing Education in Korea) in May 2001 to enhance the quality of nursing education and establish standards through self-assessment.

The KNA celebrated the new operation of CANEK, and a steering committee was composed consisting of experts from both the government and from within the nursing field. A preparatory committee for establishing CANEK has been operating since last year to develop standards for nursing education and CANEK's goals, which were this year; the model assessment of nursing education institutions, preparation for the operating examination system of certification programs approved by the KNA, and basic copyright research to protect nursing related publications.

This year, CANEK took the first step for the "Accreditation Work of Nursing Programs" making a great vertical strike in nursing history. The exhibition work has been completed successfully for 4 nursing programs prior to the formal beginning of the work. Formal accreditation work of the nursing programs will start in 2003 for all nursing institutions nation-wide.

Revitalization of Overseas Employment

Since the peak activity period of overseas employment to the USA in the 1960's and 70's, there has not been big overseas employment until 2000. However, many other countries face serious nursing shortages since the latter half of the year 2000. We assume it will affect the Korean situation in a variety of ways in the future. Since the World Trade Organization has asked Korea to open the door to Health and Services, overseas employment is one of the KNA's top concerns.

Interest in overseas nursing employment is now surging, offering nurses an opportunity to experience advanced nursing in developed countries. The KNA has been

developing overseas employment opportunities in a variety of ways, and will be actively involved in the overseas employment of Korean nurses under appropriate working conditions. The larger issue however is ability in the English language, and we are aware of the need to develop English learning programs.

According to research, the desire for overseas employment is very high for nurses and student nurses, and nurses will usually take extra courses to acquire a foreign nursing license after graduation from domestic nursing schools. We believe that now is the time to provide this study in regular course-work during nursing school education, allowing them to graduate from their nursing school better prepared for overseas employment.

The KNA will work with the Human Resources Development Service of Korea keeping closer relations. As a representative agency of the government, HRDSK has been actively involved in the overseas employment not only of nurses, but also other members of other workforces. HRDSK interviews nurses for possible employment in the USA, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and for British hospitals, and many recruiting agencies arrange for employment, and present screening interviews as well. Successful candidates will study English in a language program, and upon assessment, will begin hospital employment after completion of hospital training.

However the nursing shortage grows more serious in many other countries, and they seek to bring in Korean nurses. Co-hosting with HRDSK, KNA arranged a seminar of professors in the education field to stress the importance of “Revitalization of English Education for Nursing Students.” Participants showed great interest in the English program arranged by a nursing college combining clinical English and English conversation in the official nursing curriculum. The KNA is providing all information regarding overseas employment on our website which is full of important information for everyone. It is located at www.koreanurse.or.kr.

Expanding Professional Domains as Nurse Specialists

The Nurse Specialist System was formalized in Korea to fulfill changes in the medical environment. Specialized nurses are certified through the Ministry of Health and Welfare after completion of a program that includes lectures and clinical practice.

Historically, according to world trends in health policy, which shifted focus since the 1960s mainly from treatment of disease, to disease prevention methodologies, there has

been a significant increase in the demand for qualified nursing professionals, which has prompted the government to approve public health nurses as a domain for professional nurses.

Because of this, the government is in the process of making policy to gradually reduce the number of physicians. Currently, tertiary general hospitals plan to utilize nurses to fill gaps in medical treatment and ensure the quality of healthcare services. It is clear that not only hospitals that train and use nurse specialists will be affected, but that other fields will also require a systematized nurse specialist system. Therefore the KNA proposed together with hospitals that the government should be responsible for establishing the system.

Originally, Anesthesia nurses, public health nurses, mental health & psychiatric nurses, and home healthcare nurses are approved for practice under Medical Law, and community health practitioners are approved for practice by the Special Law for Agriculture as Nurse Specialists. However in 1999, the KNA submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Health and Welfare to extend the domains of nurse specialists and held hearings with other health related professionals to consider all aspects of appropriate healthcare applications.

The review process was delayed due to a physicians strike in 2000, opposing the policy of separation between medical prescription and pharmaceutical dispensary, which led Korean society into great turmoil. However, persuading physicians concerned about the cross-over of their roles with that of nurses, the KNA managed to gain seven more domains for specialty nurses in June 2002 including; Occupational Nursing, Geriatric Nursing, Emergency Nursing, Infection Control Nursing, Critical Care Nursing, and Hospice Nursing. Recognizing the need as presented by the KNA, the Ministry approved the proposal. So far, the domains for nurse specialist in Korea have increased from four to ten at this point.

The prospect of systematizing the nurse practitioner system is encouraging in this country, but we still need to define professional domains, provide an education framework and curriculum including a designated name that properly represents the roles, and establish the process of qualification approval.

The meaning of the title “Specialized Nurse” is still an issue of contention. The KNA’s definition of Specialized Nurse is; “a nurse who, having specific knowledge and skills through study at a graduate level educational program and supervised practice, can practice advanced nursing in a defined area.”

The specialized Nurse as a clinical skills nursing expert in their specific advanced nursing area provides safe, quality, and effective care to their patients and are expected to perform numerous roles such as advanced clinical nursing provider, educator & counselor, consultant, cooperator, coordinator, researcher, leader, agent for change, ethical decision-maker, and to act as role models for general nurses.

An increase in chronic disease, an aging population, extended lifespan, and increase of health consumer's needs for quality care are positive influential factors for the advanced practice nursing system in Korea. On the other hand, nurses require strong support and acceptance from the public, and more positive cooperation from other health professionals. The KNA will continue to make all efforts to stabilize the system in a desirable and appropriate way to provide better quality nursing care for public health.

Proposing KNA Political Statement for the Presidential Election

Since the late 1970's, changes in the Healthcare Service System have precipitated a need to expand nurses' roles desperately and this has stimulated political activity to that end. Since then, the opportunity for political activity demonstrated society's need for solidarity and belief in the rights of nursing professionals.

With that trend, the KNA established the Korean Nurses Political Society (KNPS) in 1991 to embody and empower appropriate nursing policy. It supports nurses' activity in politics for the health and welfare of the public. With cooperation with the KNPS, the KNA issued a political recommendation for the 16th presidential election to show the strength of nurses' power to the candidates. The KNA presented 5 political tasks of nursing professionals, and proposed that they realize the tasks in their incumbency as president. The 5 tasks are as follow:

- Guarantee establishment of professional nursing care institutions
- Guarantee by law, a nurse-patient ratio, and realization of a nursing reimbursement
- Unifying the nursing education system as Bachelor's degree program
- Establishment of a Nursing Act
- Establishment of a self-regulation body for nursing professionals

The KNA has made it clear that it will support political parties that share the KNA's goals and the 5 political tasks. Supporting the political party that works hardest for nurses' benefits can show the dominance of nurses' cohesive power, and politicians

must consider nurses as an important group of constituents with a strong political background.

Hotline Service & Internet Legal Advice Service

The KNA is getting positive reaction from the “Hotline Service” and “Internet Legal Advice Service” as part of the welfare service program for members.

For the Hotline Service, volunteers with a variety of professional experience from various nursing fields stay in the KNA office for the period of time, 4 hours daily, 5 days a week, to consult on issues regarding suffering, dilemmas, hardships, and anything members undergo in their working fields.

The Internet Legal Advice Service is provided by an expert lawyer, dealing with all kinds of medical accidents, labor problems (Salary, Retirement Grants, Workplace Accidents, etc.), and housekeeping matters. The lawyer, with a background in nursing, offers her advice through the KNA Internet homepage.

The 5th Korea-China Nursing Forum

The 5th Korea-China Nursing Forum was held at the Far East Ever Bright City Hotel in Shanghai, China from October 9th to the 12th under the theme of ‘21st Century, Health and Nursing.’ The forum has been held approximately every year, or every other year since 1996 in each country in turn. This forum in Shanghai was hosted by the Chinese Nursing Association, which is a historically sentimental place for Koreans as one-time home of the provisional Korean government. A delegation of 41 Korean participants arrived in Shanghai the day before the Forum, and attended the Forum along with about 120 Chinese participants. At the opening remarks presentation, presidents of the each country stressed the point that the conducting of a forum, and a study exchange between Korea and China will affect solutions for innumerable problems, and contribute to the health of the people worldwide as the ultimate goal.

At the special keynote speech, President Euisook Kim presented a talk on “21st Century, Health and Nursing” while the president of the Chinese Nursing Association presented a parallel speech entitled; “Nursing Development and Prospects in China” as the introduction of the Forum’s theme.

Dr Kim stressed that now, at the starting point of the 21st century, there is a new stream to give greater definition on Health, Humanity, and Science, as the meanings of each grow broader and more complex. Therefore, it is time for us to apply a new definition to nursing, which can step forward and be more contemporary by those new definitions. By re-defining the fundamental idea of nursing, we will finally realize our mission and goals. In addition, nursing can be more care-oriented by collaborating with other professional domains and sharing information with them.

Ms. Cheunsheng Wang, President of CAN pointed out that the priority issue of China's nursing development plan is the development of nursing education. She posed that they must upgrade their education level as 89% of their nurses are only high school graduates, only 6% from college, merely 5% from university, and only 1% are master's graduates. She said that an increase in the total quota for nursing schools and reform of the nursing education curriculum would be the key to addressing the problem.

In the main sessions, representatives from Korea and China made presentations under the themes; "nursing management," "nursing education," "community nursing," "geriatric nursing," "clinical nursing," and "new technology in nursing." The forum was run by two concurrent sessions for 2 days. 20 presenters were from Korea and 10 from China.

At the meeting with CAN administrators the day before the forum, President Euisook Kim introduced several subjects. We want to initiate a joint research program to develop unique oriental nursing. And also that it will be possible to run an exchange program for nurses by the year 2003. This will allow Korean nurses to study about Oriental nursing in Chinese hospitals, and Chinese nurses can take the Master's Degree program in Korea. She also indicated that year 2003 is very special for the KNA, and we will host the 6th Korea-Chinese Nursing Forum concurrent with our commemoration event in May. CNA administrators agreed to the idea in that many Chinese participants will enjoy celebrating the KNA's commemoration event together. Upon successful conclusion of the forum, the delegates from each country enjoyed a banquet together under the sponsorship of the CNA, in celebration of the milestone event.

Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the KNA

Since 1923, we believe that the KNA and all members have contributed greatly to promotion of the nursing profession for people from all walks of life over the past 80 years, and look forward to a momentous celebration this year. The Commemoration of

the 80th Anniversary of the KNA will be held in Seoul on May 29th and 30th, 2003.

Nurses and nursing students will attend our commemorative event and a well-recognized speaker will be invited to present the keynote address to Korean nurses, offering encouragement and recognition of their contribution and commitment for nursing development.