



Media Release

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FORT HOOD, Texas—Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center honored its more than 900 nursing staff members during national Nurses Week as they celebrated with a series of fun and educational events.

National Nurses Week begins each year on May 6, also known as National Nurses Day, and ends on May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. The purpose of the weeklong celebration is to raise awareness of the value of nurses and the critical role they serve in saving lives and improving patients' health.

“Nurses have direct impact on the outcome of the health of patients and we’re seeing a positive culture change as we practice patient-centered care throughout Army medicine,” Col. Brian Kondrat, deputy commander for Nursing and Patient Services, said in his remarks at the Nurses Week kickoff ceremony. “What you do every day resonates with our patients.”

This year’s theme “Ethical Practice, Quality Care” emphasizes the need to sustain safe, competent, ethical environments to ensure positive patient outcomes. The theme also fits with Army Medicine’s Patient Caring Touch System’s value of the month--advocacy.

“When you speak out on behalf of the patients you serve, you are advocating for that patient. It’s about promoting patients’ rights, ensuring patients’ needs are met and following standard procedures and medical ethics,” Kondrat said. “Ethical practice means to show courage to report any mistakes or errors early and often. By reporting events in a timely manner we can change systems and processes to make it safer for all and improve outcomes for patients.”

Nursing is the nation's largest health care profession with nearly three million employed professionals. The nursing staff at Darnall includes registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nurse practitioners who work in clinics, managed care, behavioral health, education and training,

public health, and quality management. They are advocates for quality care in various roles ranging from direct care, educator, researcher, and administrator and fill many job roles such as nurse navigators, care coordinator specialists and nurse wellness coaches.

In her 29 years as an Army nurse, Col. Ann Blunt, chief, Maternal-Child Health Nursing, has seen many changes.

Blunt was a civilian nurse for two years before receiving a direct commission and transitioning to Army nursing. Since her first duty assignment at Fort Bliss, she has served in different departments and clinics at a variety of posts around the world.

“The biggest changes, of course, are in technology. I think one of the most positive changes is Army medicine’s focus on patient-centered care. We’ve always said it but now we have practices and policies in place which support it,” Blunt said.

Capt. Amy Hammock, clinical nurse officer-in-charge, Labor and Delivery, agreed with Blunt, adding that the Army does a good job about adhering to standards to ensure the best possible care for patients.

A former enlisted Soldier, Hammock used the GI Bill to get her degree in nursing and then spent most of her civilian career at Scott and White Hospital working in the emergency room, surgical trauma unit and Labor and Delivery department.

“Having been both a civilian and a military nurse, I can say that the care and services we provide are the same. The big difference I see is that the Army exceeds the standards on providing positive outcomes for patients,” Hammock said. “If there’s an incident or finding reported, immediately they are on it investigating and implementing steps to ensure that it doesn’t happen again. It’s all about keeping the patients and families healthy and safe.”