RCC Nursing Program joins forces with first lady to support veterans and military families

The Rogue Community College Nursing Program will join of hundreds of others in educating nursing students on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

First lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden announced a commitment from nurses across the country eager to serve U.S. veterans and military families as well as the veterans have served the nation, according to a press release issued today by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing,

In a broad coordinated effort, more than 150 state and national nursing organizations and over 500 nursing schools, including the Rogue Community College associate degree nursing program, committed to further educate the nation's 3 million nurses so they are prepared to meet the unique health needs of service members, veterans, and their families.

“Our nursing program has included coverage of PTSD and TBI in our curriculum for many years, and have, unfortunately, more recently had multiple examples regarding PTSD and TBI in military personnel to use from the nursing and other literature in class discussions,” said Linda Wagner, RCC Nursing Department chair and co-director, Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education (OCNE).

Led by the American Nurses Association, American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, and the National League for Nursing, in coordination with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense, nursing organizations and schools have committed to educating current and future nurses on how to recognize and care for veterans impacted by post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, and other combat-related issues, in ways appropriate to each nurse’s practice setting.

“Whether we’re in a hospital, a doctor’s office or a community health center, nurses are often the first people we see when we walk through the door. Because of their expertise, they are trusted to be the frontline of America’s health care system,” said first lady Michelle Obama. “That’s why Jill and I knew we could turn to America’s nurses and nursing students to help our veterans and military families get the world-class care that they’ve earned. It’s clear from today’s announcement that the nursing community is well on its way to serving our men and women in uniform and their families,” Mrs. Obama added.

“Nurses are at the center of providing lifesaving care in communities across the country, and their reach is particularly important because our veterans don’t always seek care through the VA system,”
Biden said. “This commitment is essential to ensuring our returning service men and women receive the care they deserve.”

The invisible wounds of war, PTSD and TBI have affected approximately 1 in 6 U.S. troops returning from Afghanistan and Iraq – more than 300,000 veterans. And since 2000, more than 44,000 of those troops have suffered at least a moderate-grade traumatic brain injury.

Veterans seeking care within the Veterans Affairs (VA) health system are often treated by health care professionals who have received extensive training in mental health issues, the majority of veterans seek care outside of the VA system. They usually visit their local hospital staffed by nurses and doctors in their communities.

According to the AACN press release, local nurses can make a dramatic and positive impact on the long-term health of hundreds of thousands of veterans by understanding the needs of those who have served; recognizing the warning signs of posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, or suicide; and knowing where to send them for help.

Nursing leaders also have committed to disseminating effective models for care and to sharing the most up-to-date information on these conditions across academic and practice settings. By working to expand the body of clinical knowledge in this arena, and by partnering with other health care providers and institutions, nursing leaders across the country will continue to advance high quality treatment for these conditions in every community.

To see the full text of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing press release, visit www.aacn.nche.edu/joining-forces/resources-for-schools.

To view schools that have signed the pledge, visit www.aacn.nche.edu/joining-forces/participating-schools.

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