

Presidential Remarks

NIGHTINGALE AWARDS FOR NURSING EXCELLENCE

May 11, 2022

- For three decades, the Nightingale Awards for Nursing Excellence has acknowledged those professionals in healthcare for their outstanding contributions in going “above and beyond” in strengthening Michigan’s nursing community.
- I think it’s worth noting that a common trait among those who have answered the call to be a nurse is to go “above and beyond.”
- As each of us know, nurses aren’t the type of people who seek attention. Rather, they are the type of people who give their attention.
- For them, nursing is more than a profession, it’s a calling.
- Nursing is also an art and a science.
- At its best, nursing is a vital connection with a patient... a connection that reflects the care, compassion and humanity at the heart of our societal ethos of caring for each other.
- At every stage of the entire patient experience, there is one constant – the role of nurses.
- A nurse’s work is conducted alongside the patient... in the same room... often times, holding a patient’s hand, and giving encouraging words as part of identifying the patient’s needs while serving as protectors and advocates.
- Nursing in the 21st century has become a highly specialized profession that is responsive to the health needs of society. Quite often, nurses have the first-hand perspective that proves decisive and can be most accurate when considered alongside the range of diagnostic data about a patient.
- As a one-time practicing physician, I learned early on that a nurse often knows more about a patient than physicians. Okay, maybe it’s more than often that nurses know more.

- While over the past two years, most of us have experienced “pandemic fatigue,” the nurses and healthcare professionals we honor tonight showed the selflessness and dedication that required them to find strength and energy when most of us would be overcome by exhaustion.
- In its publication, “The Future of Nursing 2020-2030,” the National Academy of Science concludes that the “decade ahead will test the nation’s nearly 4 million nurses in new and complex ways,” including being on the frontlines in caring for those who suffer from disparities in healthcare.
- There’s no doubt that today’s nurses are up to the challenge.
- But there is also no doubt that we must do all that we can to take better care for today’s nurses.
- In a recent New England Journal of Medicine Perspective¹ piece, two U-M Nursing faculty members point out that while attention is focused on a “nursing shortage,” more attention should be given to creating safe, supporting working environments for nurses.
- It begins with improved working conditions that do not put nurses at risk, which many of them are with Covid hospitalizations.
 - It begins with mandates for a sensible patient-to-nurse ratio in hospitals.
 - And, it begins with a review of the nursing’s scope of practice regulations.
- At Oakland University, we are mindful that nurses are the bulwarks of our healthcare system.
- And at Oakland University, we take great pride that Oakland educates many healthcare professionals in the region. In fact, 83% of our School of Nursing graduates remain in Michigan, and distinguish themselves daily, patient by patient, in providing the outstanding health care.
- As a school, our success is based on our strong partnerships with the local healthcare systems... We are grateful to them and look forward to our ongoing collaboration.
- Congratulations to tonight’s Nightingale Award honorees.
- By thought and deed, you uphold the finest traditions of nursing.

- For your hard work, dedication and compassion, you have our deepest appreciation and gratitude.
- Thank you