The National Black Nurses Association is fortunate to have great nursing leaders among its leadership in a variety of areas. The summary below is just an example of the signature programs and activities that draw African American nurses to NBNA. These programs help NBNA members grow stronger as they seek to provide culturally competent health care services in our communities.

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) was organized in 1971 under the leadership of Dr. Lauranne Sams, former Dean and Professor of Nursing, School of Nursing, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Alabama. NBNA is a non-profit organization incorporated on September 2, 1972 in the state of Ohio. NBNA represents 150,000 African American registered nurses, licensed vocational/practical nurses, nursing students and retired nurses from the USA, Eastern Caribbean and Africa, with 83 chartered chapters, in 34 states.

The NBNA mission “is to provide a forum for collective action by African American nurses to investigate, define and determine what the health care needs of African Americans are and to implement change to make available to African Americans and other minorities health care commensurate with that of the larger society.”

In 2003, the National Black Nurses Association became one of the five founding organizations of the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations, along with Asian American/Pacific Islander Nurses Association, Inc., National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association, Inc.; National Association of Hispanic Nurses, Inc.; and, the Philippine Nurses Association of America, Inc. This collaboration gives voice to 350,000 minority nurses. Dr. Betty Smith Williams is the NCEMNA president and a past NBNA president.

Its goals include support for the development of a cadre of ethnic nurses reflecting the nation's diversity; advocacy for culturally competent, accessible and affordable health care; promotion of the professional and educational advancement of ethnic nurses; education of consumers, health care professionals and policy makers on health issues of ethnic minority populations; development of ethnic minority nurse leaders in areas of health policy, practice, education and research; endorsement of best practice models of nursing practice, education, and research for minority populations.

Advisory Committees

NBNA holds membership on various national and federal advisory committees including the National Advisory Committee, Office on Women's Research, NIH; National Advisory Committee for the Office of Minority Health; National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice; FDA Nominating Group; Joint Commission of Healthcare Organizations Nursing Advisory Committee; National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.; National Council of Negro Women; Balm in Gilead Cervical Cancer Advisory Board, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, CMS Medicare Partners, Coalition to End Cervical Cancer and Nursing Spectrum Magazine, just to name a few.

NBNA Signature Programs

NBNA's signature programs and services make NBNA a superb organization to join.

NBNA Institute and Conference

NBNA annually hosts its Institute and Conference. Over 1200 nurses and nursing students obtain state of the art clinical instruction on such subjects as cardiovascular disease, cancer, children's health, diabetes, end of life, HIV/AID, kidney disease, research and women's health. One hundred sixty exhibitors showcase their services and products. Continuing education units are provided by Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, California. Outstanding keynote speakers have included Dr. Beverly Malone, President and CEO, National League for Nursing; Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Dr. Freda Lewis Hall, Senior Vice President, Medical Affairs, Bristol Myers Squibb Company; Congressman Charles Rangel; Marie Smith, President, AARP; U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher; Ron Williams, President and CEO, Aetna; and Kevin Lofton, President and CEO, Catholic Healthcare Initiatives and Chairman-elect, American Hospital Association. NBNA presents nursing awards in nine categories and Life Time Achievement Award and Trailblazer Awards. Scholarships are offered to nursing students at all levels and chapter awards are presented for community service; service to youth; and for chapter recruitment and retention.

National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill

Since 1988, NBNA has hosted, National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill, to educate the U.S. Congress on the nursing shortage, the nursing profession and health care disparities. Over 200 nurses and nursing students attend the event. Following the day on Capitol Hill, the National Black Nurses Foundation hosts CEU sessions and an awards ceremony honoring public health advocates. Former National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute director, Claude L'Enfant; Dr. Garth Graham, Director of the U.S. Office of Minority Health; and Dr. Clive Callender, Director, Minority Organ, Tissue Transplant Education Program and Chairman, Department of Surgery, Howard University Hospital.

Journal of the National Black Nurses Association

Published twice annually, the Journal of the National Black Nurses Association contains peer refereed health research based articles. Dr. Joyce Newman Giger, Professor and Lulu Wollf Hassenplug Endowed Chair, UCLA School of Nursing, has been the editor of the Journal since 1997. Dr. Hilda Richards, NBNA immediate past president, was the previous editor.

National Black Nurses Association Newsletter

The 40 pages NBNA Newsletter is published quarterly. It is filled with information on the membership and articles written by NBNA members, NBNA partners and sponsors on a variety of nursing and health issues. Themes have included public policy, aging and research. In 2005, NBNA published a special issue on "Surviving the Storms: Katrina, Wilma and Rita". The articles were written by NBNA members as survivors and caregivers.

Based on an article that she wrote for the Newsletter in 2006, Cynthia Hickman, Member, Fort Bend County Texas Black Nurses Association and St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, Houston, Texas, received a $50,000 leadership award from Johnson and Johnson. NBNA Executive Director, Millicent Gorham is Editor-in-Chief.

Grants

In September 2005, NBNA and five other organizations were awarded a $300,000 grant from the U.S. Office of Minority Health to provide services to Katrina survivors. In 2006, NBNA published a manual on surviving disasters which was distributed to 1000 entities in Houston and along the Gulf states.

In 2004 and 2005, NBNA received a grant from the John Hartford Geriatric Institute to publish two newsletters that focused on aging. In 2006, the existing articles and new articles were published on the NBNA website as the "Special Report on Aging". The NBNA website is www.

nbna.org
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In 2003-2004, the National Black Nurses Association and the National Black Nurses Foundation collaborated on a series of workshops on recruitment and retention of African American nurses into the profession. Funding was provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Memorandum of Understanding
Moreover, for many years, NBNA has had a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Red Cross to help provide nursing services in times of natural and man made disasters. In 2006, NBNA representatives participated in several American Red Cross workshops on diversity. The purpose of the workshops was to craft curriculum that would help Red Cross volunteers to provide services in a culturally competent manner.

NBNA National Obesity Initiative
At the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill, NBNA launched its National Obesity Initiative on February 14, 2008. The Obesity Initiative is NBNA's effort to help stem the tide of chronic diseases caused by obesity and lack of exercise. The 79 NBNA chapters have been challenged to collectively lose 360 pounds each. Each chapter is to hold continuing education sessions on obesity and co-morbidity factors such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. To get physically active, each chapter is to hold physical activity events and they can be linked to collaborating events like city wide walks. On May 3, each member is asked to walk one mile. This is the Saturday before National Nurses Week, May 6-12. A compendium of NBNA activities will be published.

NBNA Institute of Excellence
At the 2006 Annual Conference, NBNA launched the Institute of Excellence which is to honor African American nurses for their in the areas of clinical skills, research, academia and policy. Twenty-five nurses were inducted in the first class.

Scholarships
At the NBNA Conference, NBNA offers scholarships to student nurses at all levels. The NBNA chapters also provide scholarships. The scholarships are based on merit and financial need.

NBNA Nursing Awards
NBNA recognizes nurses who have made major contributions throughout their nursing career and are honored with the NBNA Life Time Achievement Award and the NBNA Trailblazer Award. Awards are also provided in nine other categories. The awards are made at the NBNA Conference.

Certification
In collaboration with other organizations, NBNA offers certification programs on HIV/AIDS and end-of-life-care.

NBNA Women's Health Research Program
The NBNA Women's Health Research Program was established in 1999 for nurse researchers to enhance existing research or develop new research around women's health issues.