

Alaska

BOARD OF NURSING

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020

The Board of Nursing (BON) has made a commitment to engaging stakeholders in nursing regulation, education and licensure.

This BON newsletter features the boards accomplishments over the past year as well as a spotlight on inspirational Alaskan nurses who have forged the path for us all.

About

The Alaska Board of Nursing

The Board of Nursing is made up of seven members. The Board's current members are RN Member and Chair Danette Schloeder, APRN member Wendy Monrad, Education member Cathy Hample, RN member Lena Lafferty, LPN member and Secretary Emily Shubert, Public member Shannon Connelly and Public member Julie Tisdale.

The BON has oversight of 17,600 total active licensees in six distinct categories: Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Certified Nurse Aides, Retired Registered Nurses and Preceptorship Approvals for Advanced Practice Nursing students.

The Board also grants various types of annual approvals to schools of nursing in Alaska and ensures that nursing education standards and certified nursing aide education standards are maintained to ensure safe healthcare for the citizens of Alaska. The board has received approximately 350 various applications each month in the years 2019-2020.

COVID-19

The Board responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency declaration called by Governor Dunleavy. The Board jumped into action in March 2020 and scheduled weekly meetings to create regulations which would allow Alaska to have access to frontline healthcare workers if needed. The Board also considered the needs of the nurses here in Alaska and created other regulations to lengthen renewal dates, eliminate fee increases and increase telehealth capabilities. The Board coordinated efforts with the local nursing schools to help senior nursing students graduate and receive temporary permits to work as nurses. Correspondingly, the Board Chair also contributed with other health occupation board chairs and met weekly to share best practices and contemplate interprofessional assistance during COVID-19. Chair Schloeder was also instrumental in rewriting health mandates to ensure safety of the citizens of Alaska.

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Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020 NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Alaska Board of Nursing supports acceptable standards in nursing practice and nursing education in Alaska. The members of the Board take their responsibility to protect the public very seriously. This year especially, the Board's actions reflect their commitment to ensuring Alaskans have access to healthcare in the face of a global health pandemic.

In 2019 the Board began proactive legislation to ensure "right touch regulation" by evaluating nurse interest in supporting the national Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC).

- In partnership with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing the Alaska Board of Nursing surveyed the 15,000 active LPN and RN nursing licensees. Results unveiled the NLC had 92% overwhelming approval from licensed nurses in Alaska.
- HSB 238 and SB 170 concerning the Nursing Multistate Compact Licensure were introduced to the legislature as Governor's bills. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic both bills did not move from committee.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the 2020 COVID-19 Health Crisis

The Board of Nursing notable accomplishments during the declaration of the public health disaster emergency in FY 2020 include:

The board created the Emergency Courtesy License (ECL) during the beginning stages of the pandemic the board. REG 12 AAC 44.318. This ECL has been instrumental in ensuring that the citizens of Alaska have healthcare. One of the requirements of the ECL is that the applicant must have a position as a nurse in Alaska to apply. To date over 150 employed ECL licensees have come to Alaska since April. The licensees have been employed all over the state but especially in small villages and areas with fisheries and canning facilities. The availability of the ECL is set to expire August 7th, 2020.

The board extended the nurse aid certification date from March 3, 2020 to a date set by the department. REG 12 AAC 44.815. When Governor Dunleavy declared a disaster, the board was in the middle of the Certified Nurse Aid renewal. The Board recognized the great need to extend the renewal date so that CNA's would not be severely worried about this during the beginning of the COVID-19 response.

The Board repealed Temporary Permit Fee and Courtesy License Fee 12 AAC 02.280. The Board followed the national trends related to the lack of nurse staffing and were moved to help new nursing graduates start practicing as quickly as possible to support the staffing that might be necessary.

The Board created new regulations for APRN's practicing telehealth 12 AAC 44.295. The Board worked tirelessly to create telehealth regulations for nurses that would both represent best practice and follow previous legislation such as SB 74 that was passed in 2016. Recently, Senate Bill 241, that was passed April 9, 2020, allows for telehealth across state lines without licensure while the public health disaster emergency remains or until November 15, 2020.

Board created orders to decrease continuing education (CE) requirements under SB 241. The Board was involved with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and was watching other national boards responses to the pandemic to evaluate CE requirements during the 2020 renewal period. The Board heard that many nurses were not able to attend conferences that were cancelled, and many Alaskan families have been hit hard financially by COVID-19. For these reasons the Board created orders to decrease the amount of CE's required for the 2020 renewal by 50%, from 30 CE's to 15. The Board also heard from licensees that they were unable to complete their volunteer hours with the state shutdown to "flatten the curve". Subsequently, the Board waived the volunteer hour requirement for the 2020 renewal.

Board created orders to accept simulation as an alternative to hands on clinical hours for nurses who were enrolled in the nurse refresher course so that they could be successful when the hospitals and clinics were shut-down to non- essential staff and visitors.

The Board recently approved virtual visits of CNA programs and has allowed CNA programs to collaborate regarding clinical and didactic training to ensure student success and meet workforce demands.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has created an unfamiliar rapidly shifting situation for everyone. The State Board of Nursing members are collaborating with stakeholders across Alaska to develop solutions through legislation, regulation or board orders. The BON remains dedicated to meeting the immediate needs of the citizens of Alaska while ensuring public safety.



The Heart OF THE ALASKAN NURSE

Lorraine Phillips has always admired the values and lifestyle of Alaska's indigenous people, particularly their culturally driven respect for elders and the family unit. As Lorraine's friend, Marie, a woman of Athabascan descent explains, this value system is borne of a deep regard for the history, wisdom, and knowledge that the elders carry. Marie further explains that it is a deeply ingrained cultural norm, and one not necessarily mirrored by those of other

cultures who came later to settle in Alaska.

As Marie speaks, Lorraine nods her head in agreement. Later she will tell me that one of her main goals in life had always been to come to Alaska and have contact with Alaska Natives, leading me to understand how this very moment personifies the culmination of that dream.

As the two women sit with me over a lunch of quiche on a hot summer solstice afternoon in Fairbanks,

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Marianne Schlegelmilch

is one of the last of the once dominant field of Diploma Nurses. She proudly considers nursing as the biggest part of who she is and credits her long career in caring for others as making her the person she is today. "If I could have found a way to survive financially, I would have done it for free," she writes.

She has written for as long as she can remember and often used writing to deal with the stress of critical care work. She is the published author of eleven books, with fiction being her preferred genre. She credits nursing with giving her the ability to understand people and life and uses her deep nursing experience in bringing characters to life in her books.

Marianne writes "What makes the Alaska Nurse? Who is she or who is he? What makes them tick? Drives them to greatness? Melds their Alaskan independent spirit with the practice of nursing?"

Over the past several years, I have had the pleasure of

interviewing several of our great nursing icons along with ordinary nurses whose names we have never heard. Without exception, they have all expressed pleasure and humility at having been asked to tell their stories along with wonderment as to why anyone would care to hear their story.

In seeking a cross section of Alaska nurses and after having talked with so many, the answer has become clear. Great Alaska nurses do what needs to be done, seek out innovative ways to accomplish the care, of their patients and give wholly of themselves in the pursuit of wellness, safety and the restoration of health for those entrusted to their care.

I am humbled that so many trusted me to tell their stories. I am proud to be one of them. Each of us and all of us who work tirelessly — and often without recognition — in this great state are the Heart of the Alaska Nurse.

Written by Marianne Schlegelemilch

there is no doubt that Lorraine has attained her goal as she shares that she and Marie have enjoyed a deep friendship that began years ago when Lorraine was the nurse taking care of Marie's severely injured daughter, Teisha.

There is little more that Lorraine tells about this alliance other than that she was working in home health when the two met. Marie is quick to agree that the care provided by Lorraine was of such significance that it sealed their friendship forever. The two women then look at each other and laugh, describing themselves as the female counterparts of a popular comedy movie about seniors.

There is an easiness about the way they relate to each other and a comfortable aura that surrounds them. They are old friends now some twenty years into their friendship. They are comfortable in each other's presence; relaxed and unassuming as if sisters. Marie's daughter has survived the catastrophic injury and by all accounts has surpassed everyone's expectations, leaving Lorraine and Marie to simply enjoy life as friends.

This part of Lorraine's story could easily define the essence of who she is as a person and the nurse became, but there is more.

In 1953, Lorraine Phillips graduated with a BSN from Rockford College in Illinois, which was affiliated with Evanston Hospital and Northwestern University. In those days, few women attended college and, unlike today, few nurses graduated from Baccalaureate programs.

Lorraine describes her career as one in which she worked her whole life, except for short intervals where she stayed at home for a year or two following the births of each of her three daughters. Home Health Care was her favorite area of practice. "I liked to practice outside the box," she says.

In 1976, Dr. Wood (former president of UAF—University of Alaska, Fairbanks) approached her about teaching a nursing refresher course to his wife, who

had graduated from the same hospital school of nursing as Lorraine had. So, Lorraine went about planning the curriculum for the first refresher course in nursing that was then taught at UAF—a three-month course taught at the old Denali Center retirement home. She had twelve students for that first course, and she taught it for three months—a successful endeavor for each of the nurses who passed the course and obtained their certificates.

She was then Staff Development Director for Careage North—a retirement home for the disabled, which is now the Denali Center. As the years went by, Lorraine worked, stopping for a year or two now and then to raise her family—her career moving nicely along, but still leaving her longing for new challenges.

"I always went for the excitement," she tells me, which was why her next opportunity seemed destined as her future.

As she recalls, one day she was home listening to the radio. With her husband out of town and her children grown, she was experiencing a good case of empty nest syndrome when she learned that the BLM—Bureau of Land Management—was looking for a nurse to work on the fire lines. Lorraine was 56 when she went in for the interview, and she was hired.

To accommodate her, the BLM pitched a tent in their main camp out of which she would operate. It was then she became the first nurse in Alaska, and the only nurse at the time, to work in a fire camp. She was there, as she tells it, to provide first aid and treat conditions that arose in the firefighters who were working the line—a show of genuine respect for the abilities of nurses when one stops to think about it.

There, in the course of her duties on the fire lines, Lorraine again tapped into her respect for the native culture by doing such things as teaching the firefighters—many of whom came from outside of Alaska—how to avoid hypothermia by sleeping off the ground on spruce boughs as the natives did and other skills for surviving in the Alaska climate she had learned from living here herself. **Continued on following page**

Here, late in her career, Lorraine Phillips had expanded on her original goal of incorporating her tremendous respect for the native cultures into her work as a nurse in Alaska.

As we sit sipping coffee, Lorraine mentions the small fact that some native cultures outside of Alaska always put towels over mirrors to protect them from stealing their souls. I draw a strange analogy to this in my mind as I look at Lorraine Phillips—quiet, unassuming, and reluctant to place herself into the spotlight. Perhaps there is a towel over her inner mirror as she talks about her work—work so deeply meaningful to her that she shares it only in small snippets, work as an Alaska nurse whose soul will not be stolen by reflecting too much on herself.

Marie joins us again and the interview draws to a close. After saying our farewells, I watch as the two women walk away, smiling as they stop to look at books in the store where we had met—quietly sharing as good friends do, comfortable in their own skin as women and as friends. Lorraine is retired now, but through her work, she will always be a part of the heart of the Alaska nurse.

Lorraine's story, having been written almost ten years before, had originally ended with her retirement, but upon learning my project telling Alaska nurse's stories was being embraced by our own nursing board she recently called me from her new home in Hawaii wanting to add a bit more to her story. In her own words, she writes:

Since my retirement, I have been in close contact with Marie and her three daughters and their families. I have been so impressed with the deep commitment displayed by Marie, her three daughters, their families, relatives, friends and communities in the healing of Teisha, whose care I was assigned as a home health nurse.

Teisha has been a quadriplegic since she was 15 years old. At first, she was a very angry, strongly defiant teenager, who felt her active life was gone.

With time, she slowly developed an intent interest in educational learning. She graduated from high school as Valedictorian of her class! She furthered her education with bachelor and master's degrees from University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Progressing on, she then met her future husband who has said, "I never see a disability," and who," pushes her like there is no wheelchair". Teisha and her husband conceived a baby girl, who today is a cheerleader at school and also for her mom.

Teisha has undertaken so many endeavors and attained so many accomplishments it is said her wheelchair has a hard time keeping up with her. She has held executive positions at University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Tanana Chiefs Conference. Today, she works from home as representative of a skin care business and has her own consulting business. In her spare time, she organizes fundraisers, is a raffle queen, and is a public speaker for many causes, which allows her to travel to many places she likes.

Clearly, Lorraine Phillips has formed a lasting bond with this woman—the daughter of her friend, Marie— she first met as a teenaged patient, and it is hard not to imagine that her loving attention as a nurse contributed greatly to Teisha's ability to recover from a catastrophic injury. Lorraine wants each reader to know that she tells Teisha Simmons story with Teisha's permission to use her name.

It is fitting that one of the first educators in nursing be the first nurse to be spotlighted in the Alaska Board of Nursing's new format quarterly newsletters with its intent to present a fresh and multi-faceted outreach to Alaska nurses.

It is also fitting that Lorraine Phillip's own story be the first to show the unselfish, humble and generous commitment to life, health and people so prominently displayed by Alaska's nurses in future stories that will appear in this space.

As we close our most recent interview, Lorraine says, "As for me, I'm thankful for having chosen a rewarding career and experienced many adventures in the 'Last Frontier.'" **Continued on following page**

She then shares on a more personal level that she was diagnosed with a rare Melanoma of the right eye in 2013 and was a research recipient in the Oncology Departments of Methodist Hospital, Houston Texas, which entailed surgeries for placement and removal of radiation plaques.

During one of our recent phone conversations, Lorraine told me she had just visited the ER and been diagnosed with multiple tumors on her liver that are probably metastases from her eye tumor. Even as I called to remind her of our deadline for this story, she insisted on talking to me from the recovery room, where she had just received liver biopsies, telling me she didn't want to miss my call. We laughed as we agreed that nurses get to take few days off and why should anything change now—surgery or no surgery! She is currently awaiting the biopsy results from that day.

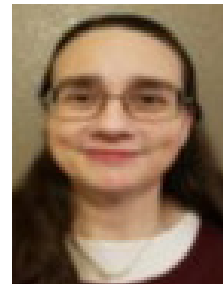
Lorraine Phillips will be 90 years old this September and she still thinks and talks like the nurse she has always been. With the grand humility and dedication of a nurse, she wants to share that she is enrolled as a resident of Hawaii's Willd Body program at Burns Medical Center, University of Hawaii and will be leaving her body to research in order to better medical care for the future.

Lorraine Phillips passed away the morning of July 16, 2020 in the loving arms of her family. Both her daughter and granddaughter expressed their heartfelt thank you for the writing of this story, which meant so much to them and to Lorraine. They reminded me that Lorraine has donated her body to medical research in her final contribution to medicine. We are saddened at the loss of yet another great Alaska nurse.

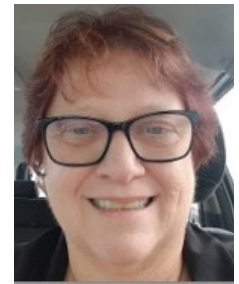
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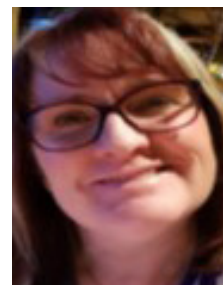
Danette Schloeder
MSN, RN
Board Chair



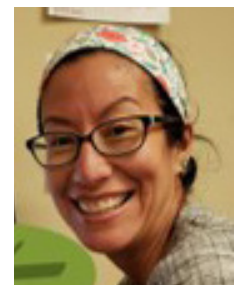
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