

Nursing Resource Centers Open Across the NIS

By Sharon Weinstein, RN, CRNI, MS

Over the past three years, nurses have become actively involved in NIS hospital partnerships and have initiated a variety of changes, including curriculum redesign in Almaty, Kazakstan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; advances in postgraduate education in St. Petersburg, Russia; introduction of the clinical nurse educator role in Moscow, Russia; and association development in Yerevan, Armenia. To help foster ongoing learning opportunities and support partnership nursing initiatives, three Nursing Resource Centers (NRCs) were established in the fall of 1996, and additional centers are expected to open later this year.

The concept of the NRCs is a direct result of the partnership programs' overall nursing initiative aimed at reforms in practice, curriculum and professional development. The first center opened in Odessa, Ukraine in September, followed by centers in Semipalatinsk, Kazakstan and Vladivostok, Russia. Additional NRCs will open in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and Almaty, Kazakstan in January 1997.

The purpose of the centers is to provide schools of nursing, nursing associations, and hospital faculty and students with a facility to support alternative forms of learning. Resources are available to encourage independent learning and to enhance traditional teaching methods. A typical center consists of two rooms: a learning laboratory for clinical practice using an assortment of models and learning materials, and a study area that may also be used as a meeting site for the local nursing association. Each center also typically has its own director, responsible for monitoring the use of the materials and teaching guides, scheduling computer learning sessions, and ensuring optimum utilization of all resources.

Educational resources cover a range of content areas: pharmacology, pathophysiology, maternal and child health, gerontology, fluid and electrolyte balance, intravenous therapy, critical care, death and dying, oncology, nutrition and diet therapy, perioperative nursing, pediatrics, medical-surgical nursing, nurse-client interaction, laboratory and diagnostic tests, nursing documentation, respiratory care, obstetrics, blood administration, critical thinking and computer skills.

For each subject category, organizers have attempted to select the most current books available--ones that present contemporary concepts, theories, and trends in nursing, and establish sound clinical methodologies. Selection criteria include authorship, readability, content organization and presentation, effective use of illustrations, and information accessibility from indexes.

Additionally, videotape and computer-based educational programs are available to walk the viewer through the essential steps to becoming a skilled and confident nurse manager, administrator or team leader. Videos demonstrate how to define goals, identify strengths, overcome weaknesses and realize a nurse's full potential in the process.

Within the framework of today's information age, nursing literature, in hard copy or on computer, will become more important than ever before. The challenge before the nursing profession is to use various media effectively to communicate its vast store of unique knowledge. Nursing is a knowledge-intensive profession whose future demands the ability to organize and manage information. The NRCs are a clear step in that direction and will ensure the continuity of the partnership programs' nursing initiatives and have a positive impact on patient outcomes.

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