

Holistic Nursing Achieves Specialty Status

Flagstaff, Ariz. – The profession of Holistic Nursing has attained new levels of acceptance, now officially recognized by the American Nurses Association (ANA) as a nursing specialty with a defined scope and standards of practice. Standing behind this great achievement is the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA), the non-profit support organization for nurses and holistic healthcare professionals. To apply for specialty approval, the AHNA submitted a 76-page document to the ANA that clearly describes holistic nursing as a focused area of nursing practice.

AHNA President, Carla Mariano states that “this is a phenomenal step forward and a very special achievement for holistic nursing. Having holistic nursing recognized as a specialty gives us legitimacy and authority within the mainstream of our profession and credibility in the eyes of the health care world. It also acknowledges our unique contribution to the health and healing of people and society”. She applauds the hard work of everyone involved throughout the years.

In order to qualify for specialty status, the ANA required the completion of a proposal explaining why holistic nursing should be granted specialty status, the development of a scope of practice statement indicating the “who, what, when, where and why” of holistic nursing practice, and the articulation of a defined set of standards depicting the details and complexity of holistic nursing practice. The *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (2006) define what holistic nursing is, what holistic nurses do, and those responsibilities for which holistic nurses are accountable. These are consistent with the definition, values, assumptions and standards of nursing as outlined by the *Nursing’s Social Policy Statement, Second Edition* (ANA, 2003) and *Nursing: Standards of Practice* (ANA, 2005).

Specifically, holistic nursing is a specialty practiced nationwide that is based on a body of knowledge, evidence-based research, sophisticated skill sets, defined standards of practice, and a philosophy of living and being that is grounded in caring, relationship, and interconnectedness. Obtaining specialty status also means that clients/patients now have the assurance that any person practicing holistic nursing as a specialty must hold a license as a Registered Nurse from a State Board of Nursing.

“Achieving specialty status will have major implications for the future of holistic nursing and the AHNA,” states Jeanne Crawford, AHNA’s Executive Director. In addition to legitimacy and authority, specialty status provides holistic nurses with clarity and a foundation for their practice, strengthening the voice of the entire profession and allowing clients/patients to trust that they will receive quality care that facilitates health and healing of the whole person.

The AHNA will co-publish *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* with the ANA. The book will be available for purchase through ANA and the AHNA online bookstore in the summer of 2007. It will serve as an essential resource for nurses and others in related healthcare work, including care providers, educators, researchers and administrators, and those involved in funding, legal, policy and regulatory activities.

The AHNA was founded in 1981 and promotes the education of nurses, other healthcare professionals, and the public in the philosophy, concepts, practice, and research of holistic caring and healing.

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**The Heart of Nursing
The Science of Holism**

American Holistic Nurses Association

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