

INTRODUCTION:

The Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE) was begun in December 2008 when a gathering of 50 nurses representing national nursing organizations met to advance environmental health in nursing. The Mission of ANHE is: Promoting healthy people and healthy environments by educating and leading the nursing profession, advancing research, incorporating evidence-based practice, and influencing policy. According to the ANHE Wingspread Statement of 2009 “The Alliance will guide the nursing profession by strengthening education, advancing research, incorporating evidence-based practice and influencing policy to promote healthy people and healthy environments.” In response to the 1995 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *Nursing, Health and the Environment*, ANHE developed strategies to assure that nurses have access to education about environmental health factors that affect nursing practice and the populations that nurses serve. The IOM report noted that no accrediting or regulating body mandated that environmental health content be included. This holds true today. Further, the report recommended that

- environmental health content be included into all levels of nursing education as well as for professional development;
- environmental health content be included in nursing licensure and certification examinations;
- education environmental health should be interdisciplinary;
- environmental health content be part of life-long learning and continuing education for nurses in practice; and
- resources and educational opportunities should be available through public and private organizations and agencies.

To address these recommendations the Education Workgroup of ANHE was formed and strategic goals were established.

At that time of ANHE’s inception, one of the goals was to develop an open access electronic textbook for nurses and other health professionals. The offerings differ from a typical textbook in that some are written as chapters that would be familiar to most readers, others are presentations with voice added, and some are educational strategies that target academic and professional development educators. The contributors include experts in special areas salient to the

environment and health. Through the intervening years portions of this book were completed and made available on the ANHE website. For this 2016 edition, earlier portions were updated and new information was completed to offer our first PDF version of this textbook. At the present time other contributors are completing additional material to add to this body of work that will be added in future versions.

The value of this online textbook is that it can reach a wide audience of nurses across the globe, is freely accessible, and has hyperlinks built into the chapters to bring the reader directly to well established and evidence based information from governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations. The book is organized into 9 units that address a board range of topics essential for nurse knowledge in environmental health.

Unit 1 Why Nursing? serves to inform the reader of the relevance of environmental health content for nursing practice as well as mandates from not only the 1995 IOM report but also the inclusion of environmental health (currently Standard 17) into the ANA Scope and Standards of Practice: Nursing beginning as Standard 16 in 2010.

Unit 2 Harmful Environmental Exposures and Vulnerable Populations provides an overview of populations across the lifespan and their specific vulnerabilities as well as specific populations such as workers, immigrants and persons with alterations in cognitive and physical abilities.

Unit 3 Environmental Health Sciences includes information about sciences that inform environmental health such as ecology, toxicology, epidemiology and risk assessment.

Unit 4 Practice Settings addresses hazardous exposures in healthcare, Green Teams, green cleaning in hospitals, and pharmaceutical waste.

Unit 5 Sustainable Communities provides environmental health content that looks at communities. This includes information on green building initiatives, green cleaning in homes, transportation, Brownfields, food, antibiotic use in agriculture and environmental justice.

Unit 6 Climate Change informs the reader about the impact of climate change on health and its implications for nursing practice.

Unit 7 Energy introduces the ANA resolution on healthy energy and addresses the important topic of

Hydraulic Fracturing (Fracking) and its implications for health.

Unit 8 Advocacy includes information about advocacy for nursing practice, coalitions, legislative meetings and chemical policy reform.

Unit 9 Research includes summaries of interviews with 8 nurse researchers in environmental health.

Other resources available to educators are the curriculum recommendations developed by a team of nurse educators representing Associate Degree BS completion programs, basic entry into practice BS programs, and graduate programs. These were developed from the ANHE 2009 EH Competencies and the 2010 ANA Standard 16 Environmental Health to address information and curricula updates from the 1995 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, Nursing, Health and the Environment curriculum integration points.