

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Bringing Science and Passion to the Environmental Health Movement

Wingspread Statement, 2009

The Steering Committee of the newly established Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments gathered at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin to create a plan that will strengthen the environmental health and nursing movement. This June 25, 2009 meeting comes 11 years after a group of scientists, philosophers, lawyers, and environmentalists also met at Wingspread. In 1998, their Wingspread statement asserted that "the release and use of toxic substances the exploitation of resources, and physical alterations of the environment have had substantial unintended consequences affecting human health and the environment."

The Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments commits itself to the mission of promoting healthy people and healthy environments. Scientific evidence continues to affirm and strengthen the 1998 Wingspread report that linked the health of people to the health of the environment. 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.

The Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments believes that:

Human health is interconnected with every aspect of the natural and built environment. When the environment is harmed, human health is threatened. When the environment is healthy and robust it promotes the health of people.

All humans have the right to healthy and safe environments including a right to healthy living and working conditions, clean air and water, healthy and safe food and agricultural practices, and safe products that are free from harmful chemicals.

Nurses have a role in protecting human health, especially of the most vulnerable populations - the fetus, young children, the frail and elderly - from harm associated with environmental exposures. Nurses also have a role in protecting those populations affected by socioeconomics, ethnicity-related and or genetic vulnerabilities.

Nurses are responsible for health promotion and disease prevention. As the most trusted profession, nurses are crucial in creating policies and programs that prevent disease, solve environmental health problems and reduce disease burdens.

The values of service, evidence-based science, collaboration, equity, justice and love are the foundation of the Alliance and its work in our environmental health and nursing efforts.

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