Why nurses’ voices matter

- Experts the public trusts.

Annual Gallup surveys: Most trusted profession every year except 2001.
Why nurses’ voices matter

• **Unique perspective** on experiences of health, illness, health care and policy.

• With patients 24/7—“frontlines of care” and understanding of what patients and families need and want.

• Clinical experts as APRNs—self care, symptom management, hand hygiene, etc.

• CNO as a business expert.
Why nurses’ voices in health news media matter

• “If you’re not interviewing a nurse, you may be missing the best part of the story.”
Woodhull Study Revisited

• Original Study in 1997: The Woodhull Study on Nurses and the Media: Health Care’s Invisible Partner

• Sources:
  • 7 newspapers
  • 3 news weeklies
  • 3 trade publications

• Nurses were invisible in health news media

In 1997,
4% in newspapers
1% in weeklies and industry publications

In 1997,
- 4% in newspapers
- 1% in weeklies and industry publications

In 2017,
- 2% in newspapers and weeklies
- 1% in industry publications

Difference is not statistically significant
WHY is the largest group of health professionals invisible in news media?

Overall Theme

Biases about women, nurses, and positions of authority in health care impede journalists’ use of diverse sources in health reporting.
SubThemes

• Editorial biases, policies and processes can get in the way of using nurses as sources.
SubThemes

• Journalists don’t fully understand the range of nurses’ roles, work, and education.
SubThemes

• Journalists don’t know how to find nurses to interview and have limited time to track them down.
SubThemes

• Communications staff of health care organizations and universities aren’t offering nurses as sources unless journalists ask for them.
SubThemes

• Nurses and nursing organizations aren’t being strategic about accessing and engaging journalists.
COVID-19, Nurses and Media

• Comparison with Ebola
COVID-19, Nurses and Media

• Frontline experiences
COVID-19, Nurses and Media

• PPE
COVID-19, Nurses and Media

- Emotional “war-like” aspects of care
- ~30% increase in RN reports of mental health distress since global pandemic (International Council of Nurses, 2021)
COVID-19, Nurses and Media

• Nurses’ innovations:
  Facetime, “The Pause”, leading hospital processes and procedures, rescuing failing hospitals, public health and prevention measures, contact tracing, and more.
Challenges

• Media policies, gag orders and public relations staff
• Job loss
• Fear of speaking even off the record
• Policymakers hearing from nurses (Biden’s COVID TF)
• Using nurses as trusted messengers
  • Wear the mask
  • Testing and vaccine roll out
Changing This Picture

- Newsrooms
- Healthcare Administrators, CEOs, CNOs, PR staff
- Policymakers
- Schools of nursing and university PR staff
- Nursing associations
- Nurses
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