Presented at the 2011 DNP Conference

First Author: Noelle C Lipkin, DNP, APRN-BC

Affiliation: Gulf Coast Practitioner Services

Abstract Category: DNP in Policy Leadership

Title: The DNP and Environmental Health Policy: Opportunity for Leadership and Collaboration

Purpose: Purpose: An interactive presentation/discussion to promote the concept of DNP as a leader in environmental health policy making at the local, state, and national levels. Rationale: Nurses have long been involved in environmental health policy. DNPs can provide leadership at many levels. This presentation aims to stimulate thought and discussion, and promises no controversial politics, but opportunities to communicate strategies for DNP leadership in policy making.

Objective 1: Identify three environmental health policy issues relevant to DNP/APRN practice.

Objective 2: Identify the "major players" in environmental health policy making.

Objective 3: Verbalize beginning familiarity with concept of DNP as leader in environmental health policy development.

Abstract:

Noelle Lipkin

The DNP and Environmental Health Policy:

Opportunity for Leadership and Collaboration

The purpose of this presentation is to inform the DNP community of the current work of nursing in the environmental health public policy arena, and to delineate the leadership role of the DNP in environmental health policy advocacy. Discussion will outline a roadmap to involvement and leadership.

This presentation will briefly introduce the present policy issues and the "alphabet soup" of the major players: ATSDR (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry) CWA (Clean Water Act), NRDC (National Resources Defense Council), and a few others. Included in the presentation is a brief summary of recent victories for environmental policy at the federal level, and current challenges facing nursing and DNPs. Discussion will include a tactical (short-term) plan for DNP leadership, including suggestions for education in the DNP curriculum (or utilizing existing educational structures for competencies in environmental health). A strategic, long-term plan is outlined as well, suggesting DNP-led initiatives to solicit nursing input regarding environmental health policy; implement change within organizations to protect environmental health; communicate environmental health risks to nurses, and in turn, to patients; and lead community-organization collaborations to improve the local environment.
Finally, discussion will focus on the role of the DNP. The DNP must serve as an example to nursing and other disciplines as a model of intra- and interdisciplinary collaboration. Environmental public policy brokering is no exception. DNPs should lead interdisciplinary teams of scientists, physicians, healthcare executives, public health officials, marketing and media specialists to inform and impact environmental health policy. Healthcare corporations and other global corporations are now being held accountable for their impact on the environment. Consumers are demanding information about where their foods, medications, cleaning supplies, and energy come from and where it goes. The DNP is uniquely educated to examine the issues, and to collaboratively lead healthcare teams in solving these challenges.

An “action list” will be provided upon request from a simple list of vetted websites where DNPs can obtain reliable information, to how to email senators and representatives, to resources designed specifically for nurses by nurses on how to become informed. This will be available after the presentation and not used as part of the presentation.