



Thomas A. Kirk, Jr., Ph.D.
Commissioner

May 6, 2009

Nurses: Building a Healthy America

I think one's feelings waste themselves in words, they ought all to be distilled into actions and into actions which bring results.
- Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, epitomized the qualities that nurses strive to achieve. DMHAS nursing staff meets that challenge as they take action to help people recover their lives. During **National Nurses Week**, May 6 through 12, 2009, we honor the vital role that is made by our current nursing workforce and recognize DMHAS nursing students who will become our nursing workforce of tomorrow.

I applaud the DMHAS employees who have pursued the educational opportunity to enter the nursing profession or advanced their nursing skills with support from the State of Connecticut, DMHAS Human Resources, and District 1199 Career Mobility Program. These dedicated employees balanced work, school, and family obligations in order to pursue their profession. Please join me in offering each of the following DMHAS employees our gratitude and congratulations.

NURSING GRADUATES

- **Shanon Beckford, Forensic Treatment Specialist, Connecticut Valley Hospital – Whiting Forensics Division**, is completing her Associate in Science Nursing degree from Springfield Technical Community College in May 2009. She began state service in 2000 at Cedarcrest Hospital. She was accepted into the school of nursing program in 2007. In just two years, she successfully completed this degree program and joins the graduating class of 2009. She plans to pursue her license as a registered nurse by taking the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Examination.
- **Jamila Fennell, Mental Health Assistant 1, Cedarcrest Hospital – Blue Hills Substance Abuse Division**, began her career with the state in December 2004, balancing the demands as a 3rd shift employee while meeting the challenges of being a student. After earning her Associate in Arts degree Cum Laude in May 2007, she was admitted into the nursing program at Capitol Community College where she will successfully complete her Associate in Science Nursing degree in May 2009. She plans to pursue her license as a registered nurse.
- **Tahishia Waugh, Mental Health Assistant 1, Cedarcrest Hospital – Cedar Ridge Campus**, began her career in August 2001 at the Connecticut Mental Health Center. In January 2004, she accepted a transfer to Cedarcrest Hospital where she continued to pursue her academic studies. She will successfully complete her Associate in Science Nursing degree requirements at Greenfield Community College in May 2009. She plans to pursue her license as a registered nurse.
- **Janice Pereira, RN, Supervising Nurse, Connecticut Mental Health Center**, is a 30 year “veteran” with DMHAS. She began her state nursing career in 1977 at Fairfield Hills State Hospital shortly after she graduated from the University of Bridgeport with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She pursued her Bachelor of Health Sciences degree from Charter Oak State College and is now a supervising nurse at the Connecticut Mental Health Center West Haven Clinic. She matriculated at Fairfield University in the Master of Science Nursing Program in 2005 where she was enrolled in the Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner concentration. In May 2009, she was awarded her M.S.N. degree and plans to pursue her certification as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse.

Please join me in thanking all DMHAS nurses for their dedication, compassionate spirit and the quality nursing care that they provide. I encourage all DMHAS nurses to continue to share your passion for nursing and take great pride in your accomplishments.

Happy Nurses Day to all DMHAS nurses!

Comments are welcome at Thomas.Kirk@po.state.ct.us