

2016

A Tribute to our Nurses

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Recommended Citation

Govind, MD, Anusha (2016) "A Tribute to our Nurses," *The Medicine Forum*: Vol. 17 , Article 22.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29046/TMF.017.1.022>

Available at: <https://jdc.jefferson.edu/tmf/vol17/iss1/22>

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A Tribute to Our Nurses

Anusha Govind, MD

I turned faint and weary as the page came through
 "Your patients heart rate is one hundred eighty"
 My legs shook as I ran up the stairs
 Thoughts racing a mile a minute, hoping someone more knowledgeable might be there first
 As I turned a corner, color draining from my face
 Then I spot my savior, the nurse, holding a syringe filled with the medication
 I knew now my patient and I were in good hands.

As I had a conversation with my patient and her family
 Her medication pumps went off, the bed alarm blared, the television roared loudly in the background
 We were trying to answer her serious questions in somber, hushed tones
 Trying to convey our understanding of her disease processes
 Removing every distraction, her nurse was there
 To turn off the pump, help the patient up in bed, pause the television remote
 Allowing us all to focus on the health of our patient
 Another patient needs labs every four hours to make sure his body doesn't reject his medications
 Veins thin and thready, rolling and scarred
 He winces in pain as he was stuck for the fourth time tonight
 Ultrasound, tighter tourniquets, smaller needles
 When all he really needed was a nurse's sensitive touch.
 One finger on the target vessel, holding it taut
 Finally, labs were drawn.

Three more hours into the night, a patient complains of more pain
 We had already given him large doses of analgesics
 We told the patient once, knowing he'll ask again, against his better judgment
 "No more, not for another few hours"
 A seemingly simple answer from the house staff
 While behind the scenes, a nurse was truly alleviating pain by adjusting his bed, placing a heating pad, laying a comforting hand on where it hurts
 Compassion, a virtue each nurse is blessed with.

As the night comes to an end,
 Sleepy eyed house staff wander,
 CODE BLUE, CODE BLUE
 Suddenly everyone's running
 Nurses there first, compressions already begun.
 I frantically wonder, what exactly happened? What do I do next?
 The nursing team already with the crash cart in hand
 Suggest epinephrine.
 The code quickly turns from chaos to an organized rhythm
 Her pulse restarted. Nurses calling loved ones.
 Compliment the team on a job well done.

The early hours dawn, and the 4 am interns start their rounds
 Interns turn pale as the patient yells about his pain and all the distractions over night
 Only the intern, often the receiver of frustration, as the day starts
 Tears pouring down, trying to comfort
 Who runs in to save the morning,
 But the nurse. Easing the patient and intern alike
 A twinkle in her eye, as the nurse knows year after year, her jobs gets harder on July first.

That beloved last page of the night.
 "Patient is vomiting. I've cleaned them, changed them, and restarted their fluids. Maybe they need something for nausea?"
 Everything the patient really needs has already been done.
 As I reflect on the night, There's little I could have done well without my nurses.
 "Sure, zofran. Thank you...For everything"