

A Letter From Outreach and the School of Nursing

Rural Greene County is an area of Pennsylvania where the mountainous terrain, lack of public transportation, or illness prevents many residents from being mobile. These individuals might never have access to health care without a new mobile health clinic—a health care office on wheels—that makes convenient stops close to their homes.

The cover story in this issue explores how the clinic, run by *Dr. Mona Counts, Elouise Ross Eberly Professor of Nursing* at Penn State, responds to the needs of these citizens of Appalachia, so they can have the quality of life that we all deserve. The initiative also shows nursing students how health care can be delivered—with *innovative approaches, support and thoughtful providers*.

This is one outstanding example of outreach from faculty in the School of Nursing. The school takes an entrepreneurial approach toward its outreach programming, through continuing education and professional development offerings that allow nurses to be better providers. More knowledgeable and skilled providers will, according to research, *improve patient outcomes and the quality of health care*.

Some new activities that not only advance the educational level of nurses but also address the *critical nursing shortage* include an on-site program at the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center that prepares the center's licensed practical nurses as registered nurses (RN) with an associate degree.

An accelerated A.D. to B.S. program is now available at Penn State Altoona and Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus. Funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, this program is designed to allow registered nurses with an associate degree to *obtain a baccalaureate* in nursing in one calendar year, taking courses one day per week.

In addition, an online Graduate Certificate in Geriatric Nursing Education—a program of the John A. Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence at Penn State and the School of Nursing—will *give nurse educators a background in caring for the elderly* that they, in turn, can use in teaching RNs and nursing students.

This online certificate, delivered through Penn State World Campus, demonstrates the effective partnership of the School of Nursing and Penn State Outreach. The school and the Outreach organization team up to make the school's vision of outreach a reality—delivering education and service activities that have a broad impact on Pennsylvania citizens. ▀



School of Nursing Dean Dr. Paula Milone-Nuzzo with Vice President for Outreach Dr. Craig Weidemann