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From the V.I. State Nurses Association: May 2020 Nurses Week and Month Celebration

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Staff Consortium **May 08, 2020**

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The Virgin Island State Nurses Association (VISNA), a member of the American Nurses Association (ANA), will be joining the millions of nurses on the mainland, Guam, and Hawaii as we celebrate under the Theme "Year of the Nurse 2020". The official celebration commemorates the birthday of Florence Nightingale the founder of modern nursing. The celebration is from May 6th - May 12th each year with May 6th recognized as Nurses' Day.

The year 2020 has become incredibly challenging to frontline workers as the world faces a pandemic of epic proportion. The American Nurses Association (ANA) has designated the month of May 2020 as National Nurses Month and will promote weekly themes and activities of which VISNA will be taking part. Due to social distancing, face to face

activities will be limited and the nurses in the community are encouraged to visit the ANA website at nursingworld.org and the VISNA website at visna.nursingnetwork.com for webinars with accurate and updated information about the COVID-19 pandemic . These webinars are provided free for all nurses and continuing education credits are also offered.

The themes for the month as follow:

Week 1 2020 Self-care (May 1-9) Nurses are known to put their patients first but to be able to give the best care to the patients, they must also take care of themselves. This is where employers, family and friends can play a major role in assisting them by offering support whether financially, mentally, and just being there to lend a hand or listening ears. Nurses must also reach out to someone they can trust if they believe they are at a breaking point; they also must maintain good eating habits, exercise regularly and get at least 7 hours sleep nightly. VISNA will be sponsoring a hotline where nurses can call in and speak in confidence about any concerns they may have, receive some words of encouragement and know that someone cares. The number is 340-692-4627, the official launching will be announced later this week.

Week 2 Recognition (May 10-16)

This is when the community, the government and the powers that be reach out to the nurses and show support to them for their hard work and dedication. Tell a nurse thanks when you see him or her, offer to provide a lunch, send some flowers or candies for the staff; these small gestures will be welcomed. Ensure sufficient supplies and equipment for the nurses to carry out their duties efficiently; this will help reduce the stress that they are facing daily.

Week 3 Professional Development (May 17-23)

Now more than ever nurses are challenged to keep up to date with the changes that are taking place in the world of medicine. Things change daily and to ensure that the nurses are getting accurate and correct information, the American Nurses Association (ANA) puts out a series of webinars weekly about the COVID19 virus and other topics related to taking care of infected patients can be accessed on the nursingworld.org website or visna.nursingnetwork.com. Nurses are encouraged to utilize these free educational sessions that are available to members of the association. Continuing Education Credits are also offered which can be used towards licensure renewal.

Week 4 Community Engagement (May 24-31)

VISNA will be reaching out to the community asking for their support of all nurses in whatever way they can. We are calling on the Governor and the Legislature to do all in their power to assist the healthcare workers. We are extremely fortunate and blessed in the territory to have not lost any healthcare workers to this dreadful virus to date and for that we give God thanks. We as a Christian community should and will continue to pray for our frontline workers.

Our colleagues on the mainland have lost many of their co-workers and family members and our hearts go out to them. One of the benefits extended to them is a weekly hotel stay at any Hilton Hotels in each state, during the month of May. This offer was given to

the American Nurses Association by the Hilton Brand. VISNA is appealing to any of the hotels or Airbnb which have available rooms that they can offer to the nurses taking care of COVID-19 patients to give them a time away from their families to protect them. This is one way in which community support will be greatly appreciated. VISNA can be reached at 340 244-6874 ,The Executive Director Joyce Heyliger, 340 778-3044 President Evet Rivera, Charlene Jones 340 998-0051, Charlene White- Hewitt 340-998-1145 or by email at visnaus@icloud.com.

We are all in this together and we will work with each other to overcome this challenge, Stay safe everyone and follow the guidelines and directives as put out by Governor Albert Bryan Jr, the Commissioner Of Health Justa Encarnacion RN and other members of the COVID-17 task force.

Submitted by: Evet Rivera RN

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