

# Nurses Month 2020: Week 4 – Community Engagement

[VIDEO TRANSCRIPT – May 25, 2020]

Hello this is Anne Woods, Chief Nurse of Wolters Kluwer, Health Learning, Research and Practice and we are in the last week of Nurses Month. As you know, the ANA designated this month to be Nurses Month and throughout this time we've been talking about their main theme – A Voice to Lead: Nursing the World to Health. And each week we focus on several different concepts:

- Week one, we looked at self-care and the importance of taking care of ourselves so we can care for others.
- Week two, we talked about the importance of recognition and in the state of COVID-19, it's not only about recognizing those in critical care and in hospitals, it's recognizing all the other nurses who are doing everything they can to support the work of people on the frontlines, but also caring for people in long-term care rehab and in-home care.
- In week three, we looked at the importance of professional development and recognizing that we are on a lifelong journey, looking at education and learning more and more as we go so we can provide the best care to our patients.
- And this is week four and this week we're going to talk about the importance of community engagement.

That's right, we need to go back and take a look at the importance of our community and the care that hospitals deliver. No more is it taking care of one patient at a time, it's really looking at caring for the whole community because only then can you really make a difference in people's lives. Today we know health care when we look at the amount of dollars that are spent, the majority of dollars that are spent are in acute care and we need to flip that scenario so we put the majority of dollars that are spent in the community and primary care to keep people out of the hospital and get them on a path to wellness. And in order to do this, we need to take a look at the social determinants of health. Healthypeople.gov has coordinated all the social determinants of health under five key areas:

- The first one is neighborhood and built environment, meaning do the patients and does the community have housing?
- Security the next one in health and health care. Does the community and all the people within it have access to primary care and do they have the opportunity to get screening and help?
- Prevention the next one. In social and community context, does the community have adequate resources in order to care for every member within the community setting?
- The next one is education. Do the people living within that community have access to primary and secondary schooling? What percentage of the community has actually completed high school or receive their GED and what is their health literacy?
- And the next one is economic stability. What is the financial situation of the people within the community? Why is this important? What we need to ask ourselves? If a primary care provider

writes a prescription, will that patient even be able to afford that prescription at all or will they make the choice to go without food in order to fill that prescription? We all know that food is a basic need, so the bottom line is the patient's not going to fill that prescription if they can't afford it?

So social determinants of health are a key driver and what we do as nurses, and we need to pay really particular attention to it. We have that ability to develop that trust with our patients and they may tell us things that they are not willing to tell other people so we need to make sure that each and every time we have an interaction with a patient that we ascertain whether anything has changed in their environment or within their life. And as healthcare organizations, we need to be equally embedded within the community as we are but taking care of one patient at a time. And as nurses, we need to celebrate the fact that we are making a difference one person and one community a time in order to improve patient outcomes. Thank you very much.