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Celebrating Nurses Week

May 6-12, 2020

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National Nurses Day is Wednesday, May 6. It anchors National Nurses Week, which culminates in the commemoration of the birthday of Florence Nightingale on May 12. It has become one of the largest national workday celebrations across the health care continuum. For good reason. It serves to remind us to pause and give thanks for the many contributions nurses make in our day-to-day lives, our patients' lives, in our communities, and to our nation. Especially now, in our post-COVID-19 world, we have many, many reasons to thank our nurses and allied health professionals.

Every crisis has its heroes, every disaster its displays of selflessness and sacrifice. Firefighters race into burning buildings. Police officers place themselves in the line of fire. Soldiers march into war. And now, amid the Corona virus pandemic, our health care workers -- especially our nurses -- risk becoming infected themselves, or worse, and risk infecting members of their families, while making extraordinary sacrifices to care for the rest of us in this unprecedented time.

There but for the grace of God go I. And most of us. Personally, I have not needed medical intervention in recent memory, but for the thousands who have, due to COVID-19, or other reasons of medical necessity, I am most grateful for our nurses' caring, commitment, and compassion. In particular, here at home, I am grateful for our 275 Community Health Center nurses in our 16-member organizations for their incredible and invaluable service in providing care to our 850,000 patients during their 3.6 million visits -- each year. Let those numbers sink in...

And, while you're thinking about that, also consider that the nursing profession offers many types of careers, with opportunities for growth and advancement for millions. Nursing is purposeful, soul-filled work. Nursing can take many different directions, too, from providing direct care in any number of clinical ambulatory and inpatient settings, to teaching, to research, and directing and managing those who deliver care to others. The nursing professions calls to it those with the brightest minds, and the most caring hearts. Nurses are often the first friendly face we see when we are sick. It is they who reach out to let us know we're in good hands when we're hurting. It is they who help us get better and stay well.

Take for example Kristen Kellogg (pictured), a Family Nurse Practitioner at La Maestra Community Health Center. She has been working alongside a team of health care workers to

assess and test individuals with Corona virus symptoms. Kristen loves her patients and cannot imagine not being involved in this time of need.



So, while we're sheltering in place, in the safety of our own homes, lets imagine how our nurses feel -- how Kristen feels -- getting up, leaving home, and going to work every day, to take our vital signs, to give us our flu shots, and to confront this new, terribly dangerous virus for us, with us, day in and day out. This day, and every day, let's remember to say thank you.

Kristen at the Cough and Cold Clinic this month.

Kristen on a normal work day.

This week we honor Kristen, our 275 Community Health Center nurses, and all the nurses in our lives. We celebrate you. And we thank you for all that you do to keep us living our lives and fulfilling our dreams -- especially during these uncertain times. So, in this week during which this nation recognizes you, please accept my personal gratitude, and know that all of us at Health Center Partners of Southern California, and your colleagues at our 16-member organizations, celebrate you. This week. Every week. Always.

Sincerely,

Henry N. Tuttle
President and Chief Executive Officer