The Year 2020, designated by the World Health Organization as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, is pivotal for our profession and for engaging nurses to reshape healthcare through their innovations. The ANA Enterprise is recognizing this momentous occasion by highlighting and magnifying the work of innovative nurses across various practices and fields of expertise. We’ll be celebrating nurses as trusted change agents who are leading and innovating throughout healthcare.

Nursing has a rich history of creativity and inventing solutions to meet the needs of people and communities. Have you ever imagined how healthcare could be different if just a few (or a lot of) things changed? If you answered yes, these musings were a new design for the future of healthcare. Whenever you improve upon something existing or create something new, you’re innovating. Some innovations are simple everyday hacks, some change processes, and still others lead to new products, devices, or technologies.

We can all think of innovations that have changed the world. My sincere belief is that nurses can create solutions to some of the greatest challenges of our time. As a nurse, how are you already innovating?

In my role as vice president of nursing innovation at the ANA Enterprise, I look forward to collaborating with nurses and nursing leaders around the country to develop a strategic national framework for innovation. These efforts involve building an inclusive and transparent space to ensure nurses’ ability to lead at all levels of society so they can transform practice and individuals’ health across the continuum of care.

Like many of you, I pursued nursing to positively impact people’s lives. On my first day of nursing school, the World Trade Center towers collapsed. This was an immediate reminder that things we believe to be constants can and do change rapidly. The events on September 11, 2001, led to my desire to prepare for, manage, anticipate, and ultimately create the solutions for workflows, processes, and systems to improve nursing practice, operations, and the communities we serve. Because of this, I began my journey to immerse myself in the work being done across the innovation ecosystem and to understand the possibilities for our profession.

My goal at the ANA Enterprise is to validate and develop the courageous spirit that exists within every nurse. The innovation led by nurses today will empower and educate the next generation of nurse innovators. To this end, the ANA Enterprise has created several opportunities to recognize nurse innovators, including our Innovation Awards, powered by BD, and HIMSS NursePitch™ events. Our hope is to partner with even more organizations that lead in the design and innovation space to expand the possibilities for nurse engagement and education.

Nursing and nursing innovation can no longer be invisible. The current healthcare system and paradigm need innovation at every level of practice, which requires creativity, original thinking, diversity, inclusion, and interprofessional partnerships. The world needs nurses and health professionals to bring their amazing ideas forward to transform health, our profession, and healthcare.

My 2020 charge to all nurses is to tap into the innovator within you.

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