

6th World Nursing and Healthcare Conference

August 15-17, 2016 London, UK

An overview of the US Army professional nursing workforce

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US military healthcare is delivered via one integrated system, with the Army, Navy, and Air Force considered different subsystems. The Military Health System (MHS) as a whole has faced the same resource pressures as civilian hospitals, including nursing shortages and rising healthcare costs. However, the MHS also has the requirement of supporting a nation at war while providing healthcare to beneficiary populations worldwide. The Army Medical Department, one subsystem of the MHS and the medical arm of the Army, strives to provide a seamless continuum of care from battlefield to fixed hospital facilities worldwide. The nursing workforce in military hospitals is a dynamic combination of four types of nurses: Active Duty and Reserve Component military nurses, Army civilians, and per diem or contract nurses. The Army mission is to provide responsive, innovative, and evidenced-based nursing care integrated with the Army Medicine Team to enhance readiness, preserve life and function, and promote health and wellness for all those entrusted to our care. Army Nurse Corps officers are graduates of accredited Baccalaureate or Master's degree nursing programs and licensed to practice professional nursing in accordance with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Both military and civilian registered nurses are responsible for leading, assessing, coordinating, delivering, and evaluating all aspects of patient-centered care in ambulatory and inpatient settings. Nursing care in the Army is delivered by over 17,000 nursing personnel in 600 military ambulatory clinics with 300 million visits annually, and 22 hospitals providing all levels of acute and critical care.

Biography

Mary S McCarthy is a PhD, RN, CNSC and a senior nurse scientist at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, WA. She has over 15 years of clinical nursing experience in medical-surgical, emergency and critical care and 20 years of funded research in nutrition, bone health and nursing quality outcomes with a bench-to-bedside focus. Her program of research, supported by over \$2 million in grant funding, focuses on health and wellness for service members. She is currently leading a 3-year clinical trial funded by the Tri-Service Nursing Research Program to evaluate vitamin D genomics and War-fighter nutritional resilience.

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