

## Perspectives from INS Partners

# Teamwork Can Change Everything

Kate Judge, BA



Kate Judge, BA  
Executive Director  
American Nurses Foundation

*"Teamwork is essential for patient safety and quality of care."<sup>1(p235)</sup>*

**T**eamwork. We all know it makes a huge difference in the quality and quantity of our work. When we have good colleagues working *with us*, the outcome is much better.

The importance of teamwork is well documented in research, ranging from high performing organizations to classroom learning. In infusion nursing, collaboration between nurses and pharmacists leads to better care, and teamwork is cited as essential for total quality management.<sup>2</sup> We also know that a lack of teamwork in nursing increases nurse dissatisfaction, errors, missed care, and stress.

So, what can we do? First, we need to start with imagining the power of real teamwork. Nurses working together could change everything. If the largest component of the health care delivery system with the greatest patient contact regularly engaged in and demanded teamwork, both patient care and nurses' lives would be significantly better.

Second, we can act. As individuals and groups, we can combine our expertise and resources. No one has to do it all, know it all, or be it all. If we commit to and expect ourselves and our organizations to come together, we can ensure that everyone wins and that everyone's contributions matter.

An example of working together to combine resources for better outcomes is the collaboration on infusion research between the Infusion Nurses Society and the American Nurses Foundation. In 2009, the Society began making an annual contribution to the American Nurses Foundation's Nursing Research Grant Program to encourage more infusion research. The Foundation's grant program, more than 60 years old and recognized nationally for supporting innovative research, ensures that nurses have the resources to put their knowledge into action. In 2016, more than \$250 000 in Foundation grants enabled nurses in

clinical and academic institutions to advance nursing knowledge, help patients, and improve care.

The Infusion Nurses Society is 1 of 15 nursing organizations that collaborate with the Foundation to generate more nursing knowledge. By partnering with the American Nurses Foundation, they take advantage of the Foundation's extensive experience in grants management, including access to distinguished reviewers, an online system, and national visibility.

The Society's and the Foundation's work together has led to additional resource sharing. When the American Nurses Foundation received a contribution targeted for financial aid, we turned to our existing partners who had expertise in awarding scholarships. Beginning in 2015, the Foundation has made an annual award for scholarships to the Infusion Nurses Society.

At their core, teams share. Members of teams share resources, credit, and trust. Sharing is not the first place we often go as individuals or as part of an organization. We think about our own needs and goals, and miss how critical and aligned others' needs and goals are with ours. But nurses want to go home each day knowing that their patients received the best, safest care more than they want to go home knowing they did it all themselves—regardless of the outcome. We know better. I encourage every nurse to read Beatrice Kalisch's *Errors of Omission*. You can find it at [nursesbooks.org](http://nursesbooks.org), with a new lower price.

The American Nurses Foundation is grateful to partner with the Infusion Nurses Society on research, scholarships, and now, in the Nurses on Boards Coalition. As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

## REFERENCES

1. Kalisch BJ. *Errors of Omission: How Missed Nursing Care Imperils Patients*. Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association; 2015:235.
2. Alexander M, Corrigan A, Gorski L, Hankins J, Perucca R, eds. *Infusion Nursing: An Evidence-Based Approach*. 3rd edition. St. Louis, MO: Saunders Elsevier; 2010.

**Author Affiliation:** American Nurses Foundation.

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

DOI: 10.1097/NAN.0000000000000213