

Handbook for Celebrating



Health Professions Week

November 7 – 13, 2004



Sponsored by:
Health Professions Network
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions
National Network of Health Careers Programs in Two-Year Colleges
Health Resources and Services Administration

INTRODUCTION

The delivery of high quality health care has become very complex, and it relies on a diverse team of health professionals. Some on this team – such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists – are familiar to the public; others are less known. Most of these less known providers are in a category called allied health professionals. These essential members of the health care team are invaluable in all aspects of health care delivery in all settings.

The Health Professions Network, a collaboration of allied health professional organizations, along with the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions and the National Network of Health Career Programs in Two-year Colleges, are planning a celebration of allied health professions, and they encourage you to participate. Allied Health Professions Week is recognized in the first week of November. The focus of the week is to promote the celebration of allied health careers by providers, educators and accrediting organizations.

This celebration can be held in addition to individual profession's events since promoting allied health highlights collaboration by celebrating the importance of the allied health team. Allied health providers

must unite and recognize the immense benefits of cooperation and collaboration with other health professions, and Allied Health Professions Week is a great place to start.

Changes in health care have focused attention on the roles that America's 10.5 million health care providers play in the cost, quality, and accessibility of health care. Allied health providers, a large and very diverse constituency within the health care workforce, are part of the solution for addressing these issues. Developed from the specialization of medicine, and growth of technology, allied health providers work in a variety of disciplines at every level of the health care infrastructure. Broad-based collaboration will strengthen and benefit all allied health professions and enhance delivery of high quality, cost effective and accessible health care.

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There are over five million United States health care workers practicing in the over 80 unique allied health professions in medical delivery today.

There are more allied health professionals in the United States health care workforce than there are physicians or nurses.

IDEAS FOR PROMOTING ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS WEEK

The magnitude of your intervention is not as important as the fact that you do SOMETHING, and the fact that you COLLABORATE with other allied health professionals while doing so. Pick a project and get started NOW!

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To celebrate our professions...

- Provide allied health professionals with ribbons or buttons to wear for the week to celebrate Allied Health Professions Week.
- Hold a raffle for allied health staff each day during the week; post winners' names in location where other employees will see them.
- Develop a quiz or crossword puzzle about allied health and give prizes at the end of the week for the best entry.
- Have an "Allied Health Professional" or "Allied Health Student" honored for each day of the week by his/her colleagues. Publicize who is named and then have a small luncheon for all the winners to celebrate.
- Invite allied health leaders from area institutions to a luncheon; have a guest speaker celebrate contributions of the allied health workforce to health care.
- Organize a picnic, potluck dinner, softball game, volleyball, etc. for allied health professionals on one evening during Allied Health Professions Week.

To make the public aware...

- Post Allied Health Professions Week posters throughout the institution.
- Plan a bulletin board or display cabinet in a prominent area of the institution for a weekly/monthly display of allied health professions.
- Plan a balloon arch for the facility entrance or for the cafeteria entrance to hold a banner announcing Allied Health Professions Week.
- Have all employees in an allied health department wear the same color shirts, or produce shirts promoting Allied Health Professions Week.

- Profile special allied health professionals in the institution's newsletter.
- Profile outstanding allied health professionals, educators and/or students in the institution's newsletter for the week/month.
- Celebrate one outstanding allied health professional daily by displaying a poster with a large photograph, name, and brief biographical sketch in a public area.
- Contact local newspaper well in advance with idea(s) for an article(s) about Allied Health Professions Week and/or about local citizens who fill prominent allied health positions in local health care institutions.
- Have the institution or department purchase several bunches of flowers and distribute to the patients in honor of Allied Health Professions Week. Inform the patient that an allied health professional cared for them.
- Sponsor a series of films during the week that highlight contributions of allied health professionals to health care.
- Make "table tents" for the cafeteria that highlight allied health professions contributions. Feature a different profession daily.
- Contact local service organizations (Lions Club, Kiwanis, etc.) and offer to provide speakers on allied health professionals' contributions to health care.
- Set up a display table in the cafeteria or other central location to be manned during lunchtime by allied health providers or educators to highlight the different professions in allied health. Distribute promotional literature and snacks.
- Make use of your talents. Set up a display table and do short demonstrations of Art Therapy or respiratory spirometry, etc. Use this opportunity to EDUCATE!

MORE PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

To educate authorities...

- Have the institution's President/CEO invite a group of allied health workers to lunch or breakfast as an opportunity to talk with him/her about allied health contributions/challenges in the institution.
- Ask the CEO or Vice President(s) to take time that week to tour the workplaces of allied health professionals with the department leader and have them shake hands and express thanks to allied health staff.
- Have the President/CEO or VP of Human Resources send a bouquet of flowers to each allied health department with a message of thanks and congratulations for the excellent contributions of allied health professionals to the institution.

To recruit to the health professions...

- Send posters and information to local high schools advertising Allied Health Professions Week and about specific allied health professions.
- Invite a select group of local high school students to 'shadow' allied health professionals for a few hours to gain firsthand

experience and knowledge. Students should report back to their classes about their experiences.

- Invite high school guidance counselors to a luncheon with allied health department heads or educators to discuss opportunities in allied health.

To improve relationships within allied health...

- Invite all allied health staff to a coffee/donut reception in the morning or to a cookie reception in the afternoon with the institution's allied health leaders to say "thanks" for their contributions. (Give attendees a small gift: pen, mug, etc. with celebratory message on it.)
- Invite allied health faculty from local college/university to the institution to meet allied health clinical professionals; college/university faculty could invite allied health clinical professionals to campus to meet the faculty.
- Arrange panel discussion for institution's allied health leaders to discuss current issues in each of their professions; invite all health care colleagues.

All Allied Health Professions Week material including this packet, promotional product information and the Allied Health Professions Week Logo can be downloaded from the internet. Check the websites: www.healthpronet.org, www.NN2.org, www.asahp.org

IMPLEMENTATION OUTLINE FOR ACTIVITIES

Get financial assistance for your activity from vendors or local stores and organizations that might donate gifts, food or other resources. Also, solicit support from the marketing department, the CEO, human resources, or your department manager. Explain your cause, be professional and always send a thank-you!

With an idea in mind, here is a plan to get you started and to inspire you and your co-workers to celebrate Allied Health Professions Week. Keep in mind that most projects start with humble beginnings. Contacting and collaborating with other allied health workers and identifying common goals and interests are the real activities for this week.

STEP 1: Planning

1. Make a list of each allied health department and identify a contact person.
2. Run a general notice in the institution's newsletter asking for volunteers from as many allied health disciplines as possible – this should cover the departments you may have missed in your contact list.
3. Get a count for total allied health professionals at your organization.
4. Plan a meeting to organize Allied Health Professions Week events. Set a meeting room, then personally notify your contact list. Send a notice through the newsletter to anyone else interested in attending.

STEP 2: Organizing

1. Explain to the participants the purpose and importance of Allied Health Professions Week and stress the focus on collaboration among the disciplines.
2. Discuss ways to celebrate Allied Health Professions Week. Review the list of ideas or create some ideas of your own. Be cautious not to take on too much!
3. Assign each day to a discipline to prepare an activity - funny, educational, informational, charity-oriented, or plan one cooperative event for the week.
4. Don't forget about night and weekend shifts. Include evening celebrations, too!

STEP 3: Preparing

1. Hold short meetings every few weeks to check on group progress.
2. Contacts for donations always take the longest, so get to those vendors early!
3. Scheduling space in the cafeteria can also be tight, so set your time early.
4. Use email and phone to keep in touch with everyone.
5. Get concrete commitments from individuals for time to man tables, set up displays, etc.

STEP 4: Implementing

1. Get the right person into the right job. Everyone can contribute a few minutes during the week to make it run smoothly.
2. Make a chart of what happens when, who is in charge and their phone numbers and email addresses and the time required by each helper. List all helpers for each activity.
3. In general, do the food things earlier in the week and the give-aways toward the end.
4. Have a clean-up team for the end of the events and/or the week.
5. Make sure all donors get a thank-you letter. You'll want to have them for next year!
6. In the week following, meet with your team to assess successes and set the tone for next year's celebration.

HOW TO DISTRIBUTE PRESS RELEASE AND ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS STORY

Start early! Make clear, reproducible copies of the press release and Allied Health Professions Story as well as any pertinent information the source may find interesting. The information can be downloaded from the web at www.healthpronet.org or www.NN2.org or www.ASAHP.org.

1. Contact local/area newspapers with the information: the feature section, business section, and/or the employment section editors are a good place to start. Even the editorial section in some papers will accept this sort of material for publication. Document the name of the person(s) contacted for future reference.
2. Contact local radio and/or TV stations and arrange to send information to the program manager or director. Ask if they will announce the celebration of Allied Health Professions Week several times during the week. Offer to be interviewed on a “spotlight” program.
For both 1. and 2., follow up the initial contact to confirm receipt of materials and to answer any questions.
Contact them again approximately 2 weeks prior to Allied Health Professions Week. Try to get a firm date for publications and airing.
3. Contact your professional organization’s administrative office and ask that the news release be included in the organization’s newsletter and, if possible, fax or email a broadcast to the membership of your professional organization.
4. Contact other professional organizations with which you interact, such as physician groups, and ask that the news release be included in their organization’s newsletter, and/or that they celebrate Allied Health Professions Week by planning an event to honor your profession.
5. Contact your employer’s human resource department and ask them to distribute the information in paycheck envelopes or in your employer’s newsletter or publication.

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It is crucial that each individual profession realize the importance of promoting allied health to the population at large in a strong, organized effort. We cannot hope to gain the recognition, reimbursement and compensation that we deserve if we are an unclear entity to those responsible for our employment and utilization.

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