

Karen Mosen's Remarks on the APHA Public Health Nursing Section Creative Achievement Award

It is a great honor to be here with public health nurses from throughout the USA and the world. Minnesota is known as the home of the Public Health Intervention Wheel - we're very proud of that! We're also known for our cold winters, and mythical Lake Wobegon, where all the women are strong, the men are good looking, and the children are above average. We Minnesota PHNs were formerly known for speaking Minnesotan. (As you probably know, many of us have learned to say "Uffda", and "Ya, sure, you betcha", so that we could engage in culturally appropriate conversations out in the community!) We're now becoming known for adopting the languages of our many new refugee and immigrant groups - PHNs can be overheard speaking Spanish, Somali, Hmong, and many other languages. And as you may have gathered from Linda's remarks, we've developed quite a fluency speaking Omaha System!

My excellent colleagues in the Minnesota Omaha System Users Groups were unable to join us at APHA, so I asked them to respond to the question "What would you like to share with the PHN Section about our Minnesota Omaha System Users Group?" What they had to say was inspiring and even poetic!

Here are a few of their comments, which seem to come together in five themes:

We do this together for the fun of it!

- . It's my favorite of all my meetings - maybe because it isn't mandated!
- . It is exciting to be networking - we come up with new ideas - We learn from each other
- . Everyone has something to share and it all builds our collective expertise.

We are empowered to lead

- . It's a leadership thing
- . We are creating direction for practice - then we re-create it based on our experience
- . it's a process that leads and supports practice

We see the value of structure and standards

- . I value the standardization of practice
- . I like the inter-county reliability brainstorming
- . We are now able to standardize our data
- . It helps us see the bigger picture, and the importance of our documentation

We do this to improve practice

- . This provides hope for practice improvement
- . To improve our work with families
- . It's very validating to be able to show our outcomes
- . We have a bridge between people and science

Finally - we have a voice!

- . We are learning how to communicate to other people about what we do
- . It has allowed us to talk about something that we only guessed at before
- . It gets to the meaning of what we do
- . We can tell the story of public health nursing

Now that's powerful.

The Omaha System Users Group is an exemplar of PHN pragmatism and critical thinking combined with vision and insight. Give PHNs a tool - in this case, the Omaha System - and they'll check it out to see what it can do. Gather their collective wisdom around that tool, and you've got a force to be reckoned with.

I see the Minnesota Omaha System Users Group as sort of a creative vortex in which public health nursing practice, nursing documentation, and standardized language come together. The magic of that vortex is the spirit of public health nursing ingenuity. We're an ever expanding community of practice, supporting excellence in public health nursing, and demonstrating the value of public health nursing's work. I am humbled and honored to represent Minnesota's Omaha System Users, and I thank the PHN section for this recognition - from the bottom of my heart.