

## Prelude

### The Nature Never To Forget: Introducing the Special Edition

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“Love done right can change the world.”

– Dr. Loretta Wade (CCH Pounder)  
NCIS New Orleans, *Chasing Ghosts*  
Season 1, Episode 9  
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Since its founding five years ago in 2015, the *Journal of Health and Human Experience* has been especially dedicated to exploring the fulness of what is meant by health itself as fundamental to the experience of being human. While this may seem to some a natural avenue, or perhaps may even be perceived as an easy course of exploration, in today’s experience it is far greater. In fact, it is a stinging commitment of conscience. Many of us who have worked in healthcare are impacted by what is often heard as a predominating obsession with metrics of productivity, relative value units, or business and financial success. As one individual who has worked in hospitals and healthcare institutions since I was in high school, the contemporary fascination with metrics and money has always struck me as odd. Given the approach often taken to these areas, it is gravely problematic. In fact, without proper proportionality it can become contradictory to the very nature of healthcare itself.

With this in mind, over the years it has struck me repeatedly and even more deeply that healthcare is not about metrics or money. Indeed, fundamentally and phenomenologically healthcare is human care. Nothing more. Nothing less. And this definition of healthcare is about the care needed by individuals as well as families, communities, nations, and the world. Healthcare is about preventing the worst and promoting the best. And this is in all aspects of what it means to be human persons living in our world. In this regard, healthcare calls us to expand who we are, how we think, and how we live. Healthcare, while dealing with our physical selves, also is about the fulness of who we are as people and as groups. We are creatures of mind, matter, emotion, and ultimately the meaning of who we are as persons and as members of all life’s communities. And healthcare touches all of this in the deepest possible ways.

With all of this in mind, the Journal always welcomes various submissions that explore this full expanse of what we mean by health....including how healthcare includes social justice and human rights. Over these years since our founding, we have published outstanding academic

## From the Editor-in-Chief

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articles, historical explorations, explorations of ethics and law, reviews of powerful films and books, and creative works whose artistry pierce us and call us to expand our vision and become committed to “the more” of life’s invitations. It is in this spirit, and given our commitment to healthcare as human care, that the Journal is honored to publish this special edition. This edition explores the nature of nursing and the roads that various universities have taken to welcome our military veterans, with their commitment to “defend those who cannot defend themselves,” into the powerful pathways to become nurses --- to become selfless instruments of healing for others.

This year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern-day nursing. As such, the World Health Organization declared this year of 2020 as “The Year of the Nurse and the Midwife.” And this year many universities, with federal grant support, established extraordinarily successful programs for veterans to pursue undergraduate degrees in nursing. With all this in mind, this special edition of the *Journal of Health and Human Experience* shares the best practices and lessons learned from the findings of the various Veterans to Bachelor of Science in Nursing projects. These findings and results benefit universities and colleges for their desire to make their campuses more veteran-friendly. The findings and results help guide veterans’ efforts to succeed in building nursing careers. At the conclusion of this prelude, a summary of the original US federal government program initiating these efforts is included.

These successful endeavors, addressed in the various article/reports to follow, also pose for us all a deep and powerful message about the very nature of health and healthcare. As we know, it is fascinating that in medieval Europe, the experience of healthcare was often provided by the men and women who were members of local monasteries, priories, abbeys and convents. Indeed, their healthcare service has been referred to as part of their dedication to “pastoral care.”

An interesting term, this “pastoral care.” Was the care given by these brothers and sisters about religious conversion? Was it about ecclesiastical issues? I wonder.....And wonder we should. For the original term in Latin for pastoral care is “Cura Pastoralis.” And that term is not about religion. It actually is a farming term: “care of the pasture.” You see, those who suffered from illness and sickness in any and all forms went to religious houses and were welcomed in for various acts of healing and given products developed by the brothers and sisters to bring about relief. There the sick were touched at the deepest levels of their selves. The sisters and brothers touched and brought healing into the very ground work, the soil, of those searching for care. There the sick were stirred into healing and fertilized with all they needed at the very deepest parts of their selves. And it is in this spirit of “pasture-care-of-persons” that we understand and appreciate the role and the very nature of all those who are called to be healers – including in this special year, the men and women who today are nurses.

As the opening World War II photograph of this prelude shows us, the wounded from battles then could never forget the nurses who cared for them on the battlefield. Indeed, today we can celebrate and honor that, for all those who suffer from the very battlefields of life, we can never forget the women and men who embody healing itself in their service as nurses. Indeed, our appreciation for the care of nurses is powerfully explored in the academic special opening article on nurses as everyday heroes. Above all, in this special edition of the Journal, we are

powerfully invited to remember that at the heart of nursing and in the very nature of healthcare is the commitment to that experience of Love Itself that brings the totality of healing to all of the pasture-depths of what it means to be human. And when this happens, then we know truly what “Doc Wade” from NCIS New Orleans meant in the opening quote of this prelude:

*“Love done right can change the world.”*

### Special Note

Entitled *I'll Never Forget Her*, the Prelude's opening World War II photograph expresses the gratitude of those serving in uniform toward the nurses they met in that time frame especially on the battlefield. The photograph is from the U.S. National Records and Archives Administration and is therefore in the public domain. The record creator of the photograph is noted as the Office for Emergency Management, Office of War Information, Domestic Operations Branch, Bureau of Special Services. It is dated within the period from 03/09/1943 to 09/15/1945. Further detailed information can be found at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22I%27ll\\_Never\\_Forget\\_Her\\_-\\_\\_%22\\_-\\_NARA\\_-\\_514600.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22I%27ll_Never_Forget_Her_-__%22_-_NARA_-_514600.jpg)



### The Veterans Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing: A Background Summary

In 2013, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a new, innovative and transformative program to help military veterans with healthcare experience or training to pursue professional nursing careers. *The Veterans Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing* (VBSN) program was designed to build upon veterans' unique strengths, reduce the burden of obtaining a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN), address the nation's growing need to strengthen the nursing workforce, and ensure that program graduates are trained to provide high quality care that is culturally and linguistically aligned with the communities they serve.

This new initiative was an important step towards addressing a number of employment barriers detailed in the February 2013 White House report entitled, "*The Fast Track to Civilian Employment: Streamlining Credentialing and Licensing for Service Members, Veterans and Their Spouses.*" Registered nurses (RNs) have long been considered a high growth occupation by the U.S. Department of Labor with an expected growth rate of 26% (nearly 711,000 nursing positions) between 2010 to 2020. With the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, and a confluence of related factors, the demand for RNs has intensified in both civilian and military settings. Since many of our returning Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans are young men and women with dependents, and as unemployment and underemployment rates rose, the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) felt an urgent need to join forces to remedy veteran joblessness using a multi-pronged approach.

Administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (VBSN) Program initially funded nine cooperative agreements in 2013, added 11 more in 2014 and 11 more in 2015 for a grand total of 31 funded projects. The VBSN program was designed to prepare veterans for the transition from military to civilian professional nursing at the baccalaureate level by building upon their military-acquired knowledge, skills and training so as to increase employment opportunities. Examples of support services provided to veterans through this program included many areas such as: career advisement, military transcript analysis and awarding of academic credit as applicable, mentorship, academic support services that increase retention, matriculation and graduation, and preparation to support successful passage of the NCLEX-RN licensing exam. In addition, existing BSN curricula and support services were modified or newly developed to address the unique needs of veterans, and to prepare veterans for the transition from military to civilian professional nursing practice at the baccalaureate level.

The VBSN program was authorized under Title VIII, Sections 831 and 831A (42 U.S.C. § 296p and 42 U.S.C. § 296p-1) of the Public Health Service Act as amended by Section 5309 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act), P.L. 111-148 (42 U.S.C. 296p and 42 U.S.C. 296p-1).

*General Notation: This summary was written by Ms. Marian Smithey, MS, RN, the original project officer for HRSA's VBSN program. She authored this summary from her own personal capacities. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of, nor an endorsement by, the Health Resources and Service Administration, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the U.S. Government. For additional information regarding the summary, contact Ms. Smithey via email: [MSmithey@hrsa.gov](mailto:MSmithey@hrsa.gov). Finally, information on currently funded nursing grants is available at the HRSA Bureau of Health Workforce website: <http://bhw.hrsa.gov/nursing/>.*



*“We are each of us angels with only one wing;  
and we can only fly by embracing one another.”*

— Luciano De Crescenzo