A Long White Line

The modern nurse keenly interested . . . . in the present and the future of the profession, knows little of its past. She loses both the inspiration which arises from cherished tradition and perspective which shows the relation of one progressive movement to others. Only in light of history can she clearly see how closely her own calling is linked with the general conditions of education and liberty . . . . (Nutting & Dock, 1912)

The term “a long white line” refers to the history and traditions of the nursing profession, to those who have come before us and who will follow us. October 2011 extends the long white line to add PNEG’s 38th Annual National Conference, “Advancing and Empowering Nurse Educators: Charting a Course for the Future.” PNEG is the Professional Nurse Educators Group, a group devoted to enriching those of us who provide education to nurses.

Beginning in the 1960s, a group of continuing education providers were instrumental in the development of the discipline of continuing nursing education. One of their outgrowths was the establishment of The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, primarily through the efforts of Dorothy Hutchinson from the University of Wisconsin and the founding editor. Another outgrowth was the interest in establishing standards. Thanks to their efforts, the American Nurses Association (ANA) was able to create structures, standards, and processes in continuing education, including accreditation and a Council on Continuing Education. Prior to 1974, this illustrious group of educators met to hold conferences; and in 1974, the Council held its first annual conference to meet the networking and educational needs of its members. Over time, the Council expanded to include membership for all educators. Following ANA’s change to a constituent membership model in 1999, the various councils disbanded and the Professional Nurse Educators Group (PNEG) was established as a way to keep professional development providers connected. PNEG is a virtual group of educators dedicated to encouraging and supporting those involved in lifelong learning from schools of nursing, hospitals, and entrepreneurial and continuing nursing education programs to promote best practices in the delivery of nursing care.

This issue of The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing features several articles that were written following presentations at the PNEG conference held in Baltimore last October. These authors took advantage of a call for abstracts. They were subsequently selected as conference presenters for 2010. Following their presentations, they took the next step and turned their presentations into manuscripts, which in turn went through the Journal’s peer review process. The results of their efforts are evident in this issue. Does it feel as if we have come full circle?

REFERENCE