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CONTACT: Jemarion Jones, 301-628-5198
jemarion.jones@ana.org
Adam Sachs, 301-628-5034
adam.sachs@ana.org

American Nurses Foundation Launches E-tools, Interactive Website to Aid Nurses in Providing PTSD Care

Foundation responds to President Obama's call to deliver quality health care to veterans

SILVER SPRING, MD – In conjunction with President Obama's address to the American Legion's 96th convention, the [American Nurses Foundation \(ANF\)](#), the charitable and philanthropic arm of the American Nurses Association (ANA), on Aug. 26 announced the launch of an interactive, web-based post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) toolkit to help civilian registered nurses (RNs) better assess and treat PTSD in the nation's veterans and military service members.

The [Foundation's PTSD toolkit](#) was highlighted in a [White House fact sheet](#), issued as part of the event, as an innovative way to address veterans' mental health.

"We are committed to ensuring nurses have the tools they need to be as effective as possible," said ANF Chair Joyce J. Fitzpatrick, PhD, MBA, RN, FAAN. "Nurses can play a far greater role in helping address major, national health issues, such as PTSD, among our nation's veterans and service members."

The PTSD Toolkit for Nurses is available at www.nurseptsdtoolkit.org.

PTSD is a cluster of symptoms that occur when a person experiences or witnesses a threat of injury or death. It is estimated that half a million veterans and military service members

suffer the disabling agitation, nightmares and emotional withdrawal that characterize this disorder.

To improve nurse competency in screening and intervening with PTSD in military members, in June of 2013, ANF made an \$85,000 grant to the [University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing](#) (Penn Nursing) to develop the toolkit. Penn Nursing's Nancy Hanrahan, PhD, RN, FAAN, led the project at the university. The grant was made possible by funding from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund.

“Nurses often represent the first point of contact for veterans and military personnel seeking care. We want them to have tools to help veterans find the help they need to transition back to civilian life,” Hanrahan said. “The PTSD toolkit’s care interventions maximize the potential for self-care management and help move veterans to providers and programs that can help them. PTSD can be treated and cured. Failed transitions from military life to civilian life are unacceptable outcomes.”

The toolkit, an interactive, PTSD-focused website and an e-learning module, is based on advanced gaming techniques that will provide immediate access to materials for RNs to assess, treat and refer military members and veterans for help with their symptoms. These e-learning tools will certify that an RN is grounded in assessment, treatment, referral and non-stigmatizing educational approaches to self-care and mutual help.

Joining Forces is a national initiative to engage all sectors of society to give our service members and their families the opportunities and support they have earned, led by First Lady Michelle Obama and Jill Biden. In 2012, ANA, in coordination with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense, convened a coordinated effort of more than 160 state and national nursing organizations and more than 500 nursing schools to ensure our nation’s 3.1 million nurses can better meet the unique health needs of service members, veterans and their families. ANF has prioritized support of the ANA Joining Forces initiative as a key component to its mission of “transforming the nation’s health through the power of nursing.”

Next, ANF will distribute the toolkit nationally via nursing publications, websites and through emails and newsletters of nursing associations and schools.

For more information about ANF, visit www.givetonursing.org.

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About the American Nurses Foundation

The [American Nurses Foundation](#) is the charitable and philanthropic arm of the [American Nurses Association](#), the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent and state nurses associations and its organizational affiliates. The Foundation supports programs that transform the nation's health through the power of nursing.

About the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

*The University of Pennsylvania was the first Ivy League school to offer baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees in nursing and currently is the **only** Ivy League school to offer a baccalaureate degree in nursing. [Penn Nursing](#), a world-recognized leader in advancing nursing education, prepares students for trends in nursing and interdisciplinary care by offering a number of excellent resources and experiences not found at most other schools including: a state-of-the-art simulation center featuring high-fidelity mannequins, student research opportunities across all levels of scholarship, one of the first PACE - Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly - practices owned and operated by a School of Nursing, classrooms with the latest hospital-based electronic medical records (EMR) technology, and rigorous clinical experiences with prestigious hospital partners, including The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, two of the nation's top-ranked facilities. Penn Nursing's faculty include some of the top researchers in the world who collectively rank near the top of all schools of nursing receiving federal funding. Research produced here at the School of Nursing is nationally and internationally recognized, helps to inform public health policy, and is consistently published in a wide range of high-impact, interdisciplinary journals.*