

Professional Nursing Organization

INTRODUCTION

An organization is a group of people who work together to achieve a common goal or purpose (McNamara). In organizations or associations, there is always a common set of objectives that the members are trying to attain by using collective effort. People join organizations because of different reasons. Some may join associations to advance their personal careers or to promote a personal agenda. Some may truly have altruistic ideals of contributing to a cause and some may want to develop their connection to certain groups of people or build a network.

There are several associations for nursing professionals. Some are general in nature catering to all types of nurses and some are specialized groups with membership limited to nurses performing specified functions. Some associations are even specific to the location. These are called State Nursing Organizations.

I chose the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) as focus for this paper because it is specific to the field that I am involved in. Acquiring membership in this organization would help me particularly in the fulfillment of my duties as an emergency nurse. It could provide me a venue where I could have access to useful and available information or resources related to my job. Frequent interactions and sharing with emergency nurses from other hospitals would enrich my knowledge and would keep me updated with the current happenings in the field. I will also have the chance to contribute to the efforts in advancing the causes of the association, particularly in developing the field of emergency nursing. By joining the organization, I will be

increasing my competency in my chosen profession by taking active steps in enhancing my own personal learning.

I. Emergency Nurses Association (ENA)

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) is a professional organization of nurses comprising of emergency nurses who are dedicated to the development of the emergency nursing practice (This is ENA). It was originally incorporated as The Emergency Department Nurses Association in 1971, but the name was later changed to The Emergency Nurses Association in 1985 to specify the role and not the site (ENA History).

A. Functions

The Emergency Nurses Association's primary aim or function aside from serving its members is to be the leader and expert on emergency nursing. It intends to promote the field of emergency nursing and establish its standards of excellence through improvement of methods in the actual emergency nursing practice. It also seeks to identify issues or problems in emergency care and come up with solutions to these problems. In the attainment of the solutions, the association focuses on leadership and public policy.

A part of the association's function is to focus on education as a means to improve learning in the emergency care community. It serves as an educational resource center on emergency nursing for nursing professionals, educators, consultants and researchers. It provides educational activities like talks, seminars or short courses for members who are interested in enriching their knowledge or those who need clarifications on certain matters.

The association works in partnership with other health-related organizations in endeavors which will help improve the field of emergency care. It has a role in the emergency nursing profession advocacy where it takes an active part in contributing to reform programs at the legislation stage. It functions as the representative voice or entity of the emergency nursing professionals in matters or issues concerning their field when dealing with the government or other organizations in the community.

B. Mission and Vision

The vision of the Emergency Nurses Association is to be a leader in the provision and advancement of emergency care resources, knowledge and awareness for the emergency nurses, the patients and the patients' families.

The mission statement of the emergency Nurses Association states that it is an international organization known and valued for its efforts in the advancement of excellence in the field of emergency nursing through leadership, advocacy, research and education (Vision/Mission Statements and Code of Ethics).

C. Membership Requirements

Membership is open to nurse practitioners, emergency staff nurses or managers, flight nurses, pre-hospital nurses, emergency clinical nurse specialists and pediatric or trauma emergency nurses. It is likewise open even to administrators, educators and students. The Emergency Nurses Association is not concerned with the size of the emergency department where the person belongs to or the level or extent of experience. It gives the best value for membership for people engaged in the emergency nursing field.

There is an application form to be completed and fees to be paid based on the type of membership that a person is interested in. Some of the membership types include active member, senior member, affiliate member and RN nursing student. Those who wish to maintain active membership for a longer period pay higher fees.

II. The Potential Advantages and Disadvantages of Membership in the Organization

The potential advantages are numerous and they outweigh the possible downside effects of being a member of the association. The primary benefits that a would-be member easily thinks of include the educational opportunities and resources available and the networking possibilities. These are actually almost always the main purpose of a member in joining an organization, aside of course from the affiliation. The networking aspect is very important as this provides connection to people within the industry or field. Since the association consists of professionals who are experienced and experts in the field, a member will have access to a wide array of ideas and opinions which could be very useful in the course of doing specific tasks (Curtis, 2006). A member would have numerous contacts or references for job-related questions or verifications. Assistance would be vast and reachable. Networking is likewise important in employment needs or other professional opportunities. The association may assist in referrals to prospective employers or members may directly be responsible in hiring emergency nurses.

The educational opportunities are extensive. From reading materials like reference books and newsletters to actual resource persons, a member may attain professional growth by pursuing further learning. Aside from the mentioned benefits, one very significant advantage in joining the Emergency Nurses Association is the security of having more strength in number. The voice of a group is always louder and better heard than an individual voice. The power of collective

effort is stronger than the attempts of an individual. The association may be of tremendous help to members in times of problems or issues at work that need to be referred or elevated to a higher authority. Grievances at work could be best addressed by a group than an individual if the goal is to effect reforms.

The possible disadvantages that I could foresee is the responsibility of the member to give his or her time and effort in helping the association achieve its goals and the fees involved. There are responsibilities attached to membership because it is a mutual endeavor. The process is give and take and not a one way street. If the member is clear as to his or her reasons for joining and the duties needed of him to help the association continue its service to the members, then this should not be a problem. A member of an association should be responsible enough to give a reasonable amount of time and effort to the association. This will pose as a disadvantage if the member does not have ample time or is not willing to give some of his spare time out of work to contribute to the association. If the member is also not willing to pay the fees in support of activities or fees for reference materials like journals, then this leaning towards only one purpose, which is personal gain, will be a problem. Otherwise, membership in the association is all good and is always beneficial.

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