

BOLD Ideas, ESSENTIAL Reading

Nursing the Nation

Building the Nurse Labor Force

JEAN C. WHELAN

"Filled with 'aha! moments,' *Nursing the Nation* provides an interesting lens through which to explore and illuminate the early days of the nursing profession. In an illuminating discussion, Whelan traces historical roots explaining our relationships to each other as nurses, our students, our physician colleagues and the hospitals in which many of us work."

—Dr. Robert Atkins, Director of New Jersey Health Initiatives

Modern health care cannot exist without professional nurses. Throughout the twentieth century, there was seldom a sustained period when the supply of nurses was equal to demand. Whether the complaint was too many or too few, there has been little satisfaction with the number of nurses working at any point of time since the inception of American professional nursing. *Nursing the Nation* offers a historical analysis of the relationship between the development of nurse employment arrangements with patients and institutions and the appearance of nurse shortages from 1890-1950. The response to nursing supply and demand problems by health care institutions and policy making organizations failed to address nurse workforce issues adequately, and this failure resulted in, at times, profound and lengthy nurse shortages. Nurses also lost the ability to control their own destiny within health care institutions while nevertheless establishing themselves as the most critical part of health care provision today.

JEAN C. WHELAN was an adjunct associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Whelan was named president of the American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN) in 2012. She received the 2013 Legacy Award from Penn Nursing Alumni in 2014 and the Mary M. Roberts Award from the AAHN in 2015.

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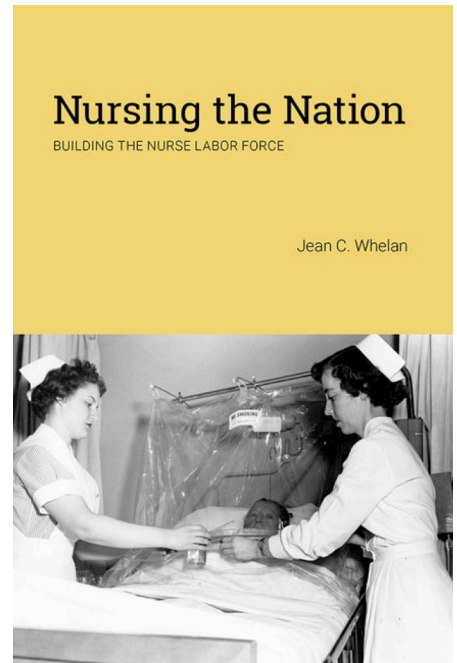
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