

## Omaha System Excellence Awards 2017

The biannual awards for meaningful and continued contributions to the Omaha System in Practice, Education, and Research were presented at the April 2017 Omaha System International Conference.

An Excellence in Practice award was presented to Gail Peterson, RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse, Polk County Health Department (PCHD), Balsam Lake, WI. Gail has provided training and mentorship on the use of the Omaha System to all incoming public health nursing staff for the past 30 years. In 2011, the PCHD selected Nightingale Notes by CHAMP software as its new electronic health record (EHR) with a goal of having one record for all client-based programs. Prior to this, each program had its own charting system. While the public health nursing staff had previously used an EHR, none of the other programs had. Gail took on the responsibility of training staff in the Reproductive Health Services Program, WIC Program, and Birth to 3 Program in Omaha System basics and creating program-specific client pathways so that all MCH programs are able to utilize the same EHR for PCHD clients. Gail's latest accomplishment has been the creation of a crosswalk between the Omaha System and a Wisconsin maternal-child health data base (SPHERE) that had been converted into a documentation system for the Wisconsin Medical Assistance Prenatal Care Coordination Program (PNCC). SPHERE has been the only documentation program considered acceptable to the state, leaving those using the Omaha System within an EHR vulnerable to PNCC program audits. Gail took the SPHERE language and translated it into the language of the Omaha System, using it to align with the state program for assessment, care planning, health information and education, and case management. The changes Gail has made will make PCHD less vulnerable to financial loss and more able to receive full reimbursement. Gail's skill set in understanding the application of the Omaha System to public health work is remarkable and her commitment to the implementation of the Omaha System in local public health nursing practice is indeed exemplary.

An Excellence in Education award was presented to Madeleine Kerr, PhD, RN, Associate Professor, University of Minnesota, School of Nursing, Minneapolis, MN. Dr. Kerr first incorporated the Omaha System in her teaching of public health nursing at the University of Michigan in 1995. She later integrated the Omaha System into the undergraduate Public Health Nursing course at the University of Minnesota. In 2003 she was awarded grant funding to develop a clinical experience using standardized language in the electronic health record. Many undergraduate nursing students, agency public health nurses and faculty received advanced preparation in use of the Omaha System over the course of the 2-year grant. The tools developed and lessons learned from this grant provided the foundation for future Omaha System educational innovations. In the past 5 years Dr. Kerr has developed a community assessment tool using the Omaha System to represent student observations in the public health nursing clinical experience. In 2012, Dr. Kerr initiated the Omaha System International Windshield Survey project. The aims were to evaluate an Omaha System-based windshield survey tool for undergraduate nursing student learning and to examine the feasibility of using the Omaha System for community-level observations. Omaha System problems and strengths for 11 Omaha System concepts were generated by a total of 284 students from 5 countries; Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Turkey and the United States and feasibility was successfully demonstrated. The Omaha System has been a theme of Dr. Kerr's teaching in the undergraduate Health Informatics course for the past 10 years. Dr. Kerr is engaged in ongoing collaboration with the Nursing Informatics Case Study group led by Dr. Debra Eardley. In 2012, she was awarded a faculty fellowship to develop *Nursing Informatics Experiences in Geographic Information Science*. An outcome was a geographic map of student-generated community

observations using Omaha System terminology. This method of *mapping* Omaha System sign/symptom data using GIS technology was applied internationally in collaboration with Dr. Michelle Honey at the University of Auckland and presented at Nursing Informatics 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland.

An Excellence in Research award was presented to Frances Kam Yuet Wong, PhD, RN, FAAN, FHKAN, Associate Dean, Faculty of Health & Social Sciences, Professor, School of Nursing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong. Dr. Wong has been applying the Omaha System in her program of research for over 15 years. The spread of the Omaha System within the Eastern world can be directly attributed to Dr. Wong's work. Her landmark work in translating the Omaha System to Chinese made it possible for millions of clinicians and researchers to use the Omaha System in their teaching, practice and research throughout Asia. Her global reach continues through the six PhD graduates who used the Omaha System in their studies while being mentored by Dr. Wong. Dr. Wong's prolific program of research and mentoring has produced 116 Omaha System articles in Chinese and 28 in English peer reviewed journals. Her publications are in top-tiered interprofessional journals and she is cited widely and often. The depth and breadth of Dr. Wong's Omaha System research is remarkable. In addition to general use of the Omaha System to document Transitional Care Interventions, she and her team have applied the Omaha System to care for patients with COPD, heart failure, stroke, cancer, hypertension, end stage renal disease, and coronary heart disease. The settings of care range from hospital to rehabilitation, to home and community. Her work covers the time from onset of illness to end of life. Dr. Wong truly demonstrates the value of the Omaha System and the breadth of its coverage as a standardized language to illustrate patient care. Dr. Wong also serves on the Omaha System Board of Directors.

We congratulate the three winners who are representative of the many individuals who have contributed to the Omaha System over the years. The nomination process is not difficult and we encourage each of you to identify others who have contributed and to make a nomination for the 2019 awards.