

Spotlight

JNN Direction Reflects Editorial Board Members' Vision

Brenda Moss Feinberg, *ELS*

When new members join AANN, they anticipate their benefits of membership will become apparent in their present work setting and, ultimately, result in professional—and perhaps personal—growth. They likely do not view their membership as a vehicle to influence the knowledge base of their fellow neuroscience nurses. In the case of Deborah Downey, MN RN ANP CNRN, however, this is exactly what happened.

Downey is a nurse practitioner, Neurology Service, at Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center in Cleveland, OH. About 10 years ago, Downey replied to a call published in *Synapse* for a member to review continuing education (CE) manuscripts for the *Journal of Neuroscience Nursing (JNN)*. Downey applied for a spot on the editorial board, was accepted, and immediately felt right at home performing publications-related work.

“It was fun to have input on what went into the journal because I got to look at a lot of different manuscripts and writing styles,” Downey recalls. “In addition to reviewing CE articles, I also helped to write questions and objectives for the articles. I had the chance to read all the CE questions before publication to ensure they fit with each article and that the answers were correct. This forced me to think about the things the article’s authors wanted the learner to know.”

About 2 years ago, Chris Stewart-Amidei, MSN RN APN-CNS CCRN CNRN, asked Downey if she would accept a new editorial board role as editor of the journal’s pharmacology section. She accepted and now solicits articles and works directly with authors on preliminary editing before submission.

Downey takes pride in her mentorship of two authors, and she recognizes that her own writing improves as a result of her mentoring work.

“Here’s something that helps me in the writing process: Once I have the first or second draft of an article on paper, I sit down and read it out loud,” Downey says. “This step helps you hear how your article really sounds and provides perspective on how other people will ‘hear’ the article as they read it. As you read the text to yourself, it might not say the things you want it to say, and you can work on making it sound right. I recommend this approach to the authors I mentor. I suggest that authors invite someone to hear them read the article aloud, and that person should take notes on the way they think they heard the writer describe something. When this is done, the writer can see if their meaning came through.”

Downey’s involvement on the *JNN* editorial board has enhanced not only her own writing, but also her social network. “Being on the manuscript review board is a fabulous way to get involved in the journal,” she says. “You read articles that may be written from a different perspective [than] your own. Seeing the editor’s comments and the subsequent rewriting helps my own writing. And you get to share your opinions with the editor.”

AANN’s Annual Educational Meeting serves as the venue for the annual *JNN* manuscript review board meeting. Downey always meets new people at this meeting, and she welcomes the opportunity to expand her view of neuroscience nursing. “It’s always interesting to talk to people who work in different parts of the country because practice varies from region to region,” she observes. “I attend talks and seminars with the hopes of hearing content that would be a good fit

for the pharmacology section. If I like what I hear, I will approach the speaker and invite them to write for us. All of us on the editorial board do this. Throughout the remainder of the year, the editorial board members maintain phone and e-mail contact.”

“People join organizations, but then they don’t feel as if they have input,” Downey continues. “But when you join *JNN*’s manuscript review board, this really gives you the opportunity to have input into AANN and provide direction for the journal. You get to help decide if we will accept an article or determine if it needs revision. I encourage anyone who is interested in *JNN* to contact [*JNN* Editor in Chief] Susan [Carroll at susan.carroll25@gmail.com].”

AANN Member Speaks on Stroke at NAACP Luncheon

Cindy Arpin, BSN RN

It appears the disparities in health care are finally being given the attention they so desperately deserve. However, health insurance and access to quality medical care are just part of the issues we face as a nation. The physiologic differences among ethnic groups are real and cannot be ignored.

That is why I eagerly accepted an invitation to speak about stroke prevention at a recent luncheon marking the 100th anniversary of our local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) at The William W. Backus Hospital in Norwich, CT.

Stroke rates in the African-American community are pretty astounding; they are nearly twice that of Caucasians. In addition, African Americans suffer from more physical impairments as a result of strokes. The reason appears to lie in the disproportionately high incidence of risk factors that can, and must, be prevented or at least controlled. These factors include hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and smoking.

Public education needs to focus on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of stroke—and especially how to prevent stroke in the first place. Prevention will make the biggest impact.

Through programs such as the Power to End Stroke, developed in 2006 by the American Stroke Association and the American Heart Association, we have a wealth of resources available to help get the word out about stroke. The program promotes the three Rs: reduce (your risk factors), recognize (the warning signs), and respond (by calling 911 immediately).

It was through the program’s Web site at www.powertoendstroke.org that I found information regarding the increased incidence of stroke among the African-American community. The site also listed the risk factors most associated with this community, as well as strategies to help reduce them. It was this information that I, together with Backus Hospital Chief of Neurology and Stroke Program Director Anthony Alessi, MD, was able to share with the members of our NAACP. After Dr. Alessi reviewed the types and causes of strokes, I continued to discuss ways to identify and reduce risk factors while he drove to nearby New London, CT, to host the weekly radio show we do together promoting wellness in our region.

The group at the luncheon brainstormed to come up with key points they wanted the public to know about stroke, stroke prevention, and their organization. We then called into the radio show and did a live segment from the luncheon.

It was fun, interactive, unique, and educational. By engaging the group to help solve a problem they themselves face, I believe the lessons learned will stay with them longer than if we had simply spouted off statistics and told them to “change or else.”

I would encourage everyone involved in stroke prevention to use the resources that are so readily available and find interesting ways to communicate preventive health information to the growing number of people who need it. Disparities in health care are much bigger than any one of us can solve—it will take all of us working collaboratively and proactively to improve the health of our communities.

Call for Member News

Would you like to share a new development or best practice at your facility or institution with AANN members in the bimonthly issues of *Synapse E-News*? We want to hear from you! Although we cannot accommodate all requests, AANN *Synapse E-News* will be happy to accept your news items. Please submit your news for our September issue to June Won, associate editor, at jwon@aann.org by August 19, 2009. Don't be shy—spread the word about your best practice or innovative program.