

Launching a new season: Fall, football, and a focus on being the best



THIS ISSUE of *American Nurse Today* marks the start of my new role as Editor-in-Chief, following Pam Cipriano's long, successful tenure. Her shoes will be hard to fill, just as her commitment to giving nurses an influential voice through this journal will be hard to match.

Serving as Editor-in-Chief is an honor and a privilege—one of the highest professional callings I can imagine. I'm tasked with ensuring the relevance, usefulness, and success of ANA's premier journal. As I step into this new role, I can't help but think of September (my first month with *American Nurse Today*) as a metaphor for new beginnings.

In the United States, it marks the start of fall and the beginning of the new school year.

By fall, the long, hot days of summer have cooled and shortened,

heralding the winter ahead. Summer vacations are over and signs of the harvest appear.

Leaves lose their green tinge, turning vibrant shades of red, yellow, and orange before peaking in a spectacular show of foliage.

There's another reason I treasure fall: the American football season kicks off. Yes—football. I'm undeniably a football fanatic. Those who love the game will be glued to their TVs. Everyone else will be wondering what's so appealing about watching players kick, run, or pass a ball down a long, green field. The appeal isn't just the sport; it's also the drama. For the players, it's an opportunity to be recognized as the best—something that's measured by winning.

Nursing, believe it or not, shares some similarities with football.

- All of us have an innate desire to excel. We want to give the very best care to the patients who depend on us. Just as world-class athletes build their lives around the dream of achieving a personal best

and being part of a winning team, we enter nursing with a dream and a desire to improve others' lives. We might not be professional athletes, but we have the desire to become the best at what we do—and the same commitment to excellence. Imagine what we could accomplish if we brought the energy needed to win a championship to delivering excellent patient care.

- Football is a team sport. It's about individual performance in a team-based format. All team members understand that smooth handoffs are essential. Similarly, learning to function effectively as part of a team is a critical success factor for nurses and the patients and families who depend on us. I have never saved a patient by myself during a code, and I learned early in my career that attempting to revive a patient in cardiac arrest demands teamwork. We should never forget this important lesson.
- Football demands that players learn the playbook and execute it successfully. They must commit to learning new plays constantly, often with signals and terms no one else could possibly understand. Likewise, nurses must stay current on new healthcare technology and evidence-based practices. Our playbook is always being updated, often in real time.

As a system chief nursing executive with international responsibilities, I see firsthand the challenges all nurses face at all levels across many countries. But I also see many ways to excel as nurses—and many ways to contribute to a team.

A beautiful fall is all around us. Let's enter this new season with the same spirit of new beginnings that fall symbolizes—to pursue our dreams, never stop learning, and work as a team. Start by asking yourself, "Am I committed to excel both as an individual contributor and in my role as a team player?"

I've asked myself the same question as I start my new role. This I know: I'm committed to you, to ANA, to *American Nurse Today*, and to the staff who've entrusted me as a leader. Together, let's begin.

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