

Meet the new ANA Enterprise CEO

Loressa Cole: Lifelong commitment to making a difference

LORESSA COLE, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, celebrated National Nurses Week as the new chief executive officer (CEO) of the ANA Enterprise, which is composed of the American Nurses Association (ANA), the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), and the American Nurses Foundation. In this position, she provides strategic leadership and is responsible for the operating activities throughout the Enterprise. She recently shared her thoughts with us.

What would you like nurses to know about you?

I always wanted to be a nurse, and I've been employed full-time since the day after I graduated from nursing school. In my many years in nursing, I've worked in a variety of specialties and roles, taking positions with progressively more responsibility.

I've always felt strongly connected with ANA and believe the work the association does for all nurses is unparalleled. I'm committed to listening to the voices of all of America's nurses so ANA remains relevant to their practice and responsive to their needs.

What sparked your interest in becoming the CEO of the ANA Enterprise?

While serving as chief officer and executive vice president for ANCC for the past year and a half, I became keenly aware of the many significant efforts undertaken throughout the ANA Enterprise. For me, this was an opportunity like no other—to be able to lead the organization that, for more than a century, has represented American nurses.

What's your vision for the ANA Enterprise?

My vision is to connect nurses in a meaningful way to the work we do here every day across the Enterprise—ANA, ANCC, and the Foundation—to ensure quality practice and safe environments for RNs and patients. We can accomplish that by offering programs that are relevant to nurses in all settings and roles and through our ongoing advocacy. ANA has been protecting the rights of

nurses for over 100 years. We also must make sure that we meet the changing needs of nurses as they progress in their careers across the care continuum, as well as be prepared to meet future needs within healthcare.

Additionally, we want to engage with student nurses more effectively to increase their interest in having a relationship with ANA throughout their careers.

How can the ANA Enterprise help meet challenges facing the profession?

We must strengthen the image and diversity of nursing so that it's recognized as a good opportunity for all individuals across our society. We also have to ensure that there are enough nurses in the pipeline. That will require finding creative ways to expand enrollments in nursing programs. And once students graduate, we must make sure they have a safe, respectful transition into practice so nursing will be a lifelong choice.

As healthcare continues to present new and complex challenges, the ANA Enterprise can play a crucial role in helping nurses meet them through our professional development opportunities, for example, by gaining professional or specialty certification, building credentials, and participating in the programs offered by ANA.

What are two of your proudest achievements?

Certainly being offered this CEO position, which feels like the pinnacle of my career, is one of them. I'm very excited about the opportunities this role represents.

The second achievement is when I obtained my doctoral degree, which was a lifelong dream. I started my nursing career with an associate degree, followed by a baccalaureate, a master's, and a doctorate—literally a degree every decade. I always was a part-time student, while working full-time and supporting a family. So at the point of attaining my “terminal” degree, I realized what an accomplishment that was.

What do you love about the nursing profession?

Regardless of the role you're in, a day in the life of a nurse is never the same. Each day brings a new opportunity. And we are a profession that serves the public and our patients. Regardless of where you practice, at the end of the day you absolutely know you've made a difference.

Read more at bit.ly/2JcPbJH.



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