



2026

NURSES WEEK

Honoring the Heart of Hawaii's Health Care



The History Of Nurses Week

By Kyle Galdeira

Florence Nightingale is known as the founder of professional nursing and became an industry pioneer after her work during the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856. Nightingale's habit of making rounds at night led to her being known as "The Lady with the Lamp," and, appropriately, National Nurses Week shines a light on the current crop of dedicated nurses.

National Nurses Week is May 6-12 each year — May 6 being Nightingale's birthday. The nursing profession has been supported and promoted by American Nurses Association since 1896. Each of ANA's state and territorial nurses' associations promotes the nursing profession at the state and

regional levels, and conducts celebrations to recognize the contributions that nurses make to the community.

"As the largest group of health care professionals in the U.S. and the most trusted profession, nurses are with patients 24/7 and from the beginning of life to the end. Nurses practice in all health care settings and are filling new roles to meet the ever-growing demand for health and health care services," states former ANA president Ernest Grant. "Despite the major role nurses play in health care delivery and community outreach, there are opportunities to increase understanding of the value of nursing in order to expand investment in education, practice and research, as well as increase the number of nurses who serve in leadership positions."



COMPASSIONATE. COMMITTED.

Happy National Nurses Week to our nursing teams.

Join us as we honor our teams of dedicated nurses across our organization. Their commitment to providing compassionate, high-quality care to our patients, their families and our communities is invaluable to our mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

**HAWAII'
PACIFIC
HEALTH**

KAPI'OLANI
PALI MOMI
STRAUB BENIOFF
WILCOX

CREATING A HEALTHIER HAWAII'

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Aloha friends,
Nurses are the heart of our health care system. Often, they're the ones we turn to when a doctor isn't available — and even when they are, it's the nurses who stay by our side.

They are there when no one else is — offering comfort, words of kindness and quiet reassurance that things will get better. In moments of uncertainty, nurses remain a steady presence, guiding patients and families with compassion and care.

These outstanding professionals use their training, experience and instincts to respond quickly in times of need. Whether they're administering care, monitoring our health or simply helping us feel at ease, they make every visit to a clinic or hospital more manageable.

As we honor Nurses Week in 2026, let's remember that our gratitude should extend far beyond a single week. In recent years, nurses have continued to give so much of themselves to care for our communities, and they do so with unwavering dedication.

To all the nurses in Hawaii: thank you for treating us like ohana. Your compassion and aloha mean more than words can express.

Mahalo nui loa,



DR. JOSH GREEN

Governor, State of Hawaii



Nurses are the heart of our communities, and it is a privilege to recognize their compassion and dedication to the health of Hawaii. Amidst the uncertainty and challenges our nation has encountered in recent months, nurses play a critical role now more than ever. They work on the front lines around the clock, respond to our everyday health conditions and jump into action for emergency disaster recovery efforts. All the while, they offer respect and aloha for each human life.

Our nurses endure ongoing workforce shortages and quickly adapt to contagious and evolving epidemics, and through every challenge, they remain pillars of strength, healing and hope. Nurses are a saving grace for many who suffer in silence, caring for those experiencing disease, injury, and ailments both physically and mentally. They understand us inside and out, and offer comfort and care that reminds us of the value in every life.

In Hawaii, we are fortunate to have more than 1,600 licensed practical nurses, 16,000 registered nurses, and 1,200 advanced practice registered nurses serving across hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities and community health centers; yet the demand for nurses continues to rise. Each nurse is vital to advocate for health equity, address the various social determinants of health and expand access to care for our most vulnerable populations, including keiki, kupuna and those experiencing homelessness, chronic illness or behavioral health challenges. They are the everyday heroes who safeguard each precious life.

To the nurses across Hawaii, with the utmost honor and respect, mahalo nui loa for your tireless efforts, your sacrifices and aloha. Your work makes a lasting impact on every patient and beyond.

With warmest aloha,

Every shift. Every patient.
Every gesture of kindness.

Mahalo to the nurses who hold Hawai'i's health
in their hands — who give their whole hearts
to our community.

Our Nurses. Our Heroes.

Star  Advertiser

Mahalo for Your Healing Hands.

In the quiet hours before dawn.
In moments when hope matters most.
In the care that goes beyond medicine—
our nurses show up with aloha.

The Garden Island salutes
Hawai'i's nurses.



KAPIOLANI MEDICAL CENTER FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN

Caring For Hawaii's Women And Children

It's been more than 130 years since Queen Kapiolani founded the Kapiolani Maternity Home. Today, her vision to provide quality health care for the women and children of Hawaii continues to inspire the nurses at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children.

"Our nurses touch the lives of new moms, proud parents, growing families and more during some of their most joyful and challenging times," says Joan Kanemori, RN, Kapiolani vice president and chief nurse executive. "As the only medical center of its kind in Hawaii and the Pacific, Kapiolani cares for our women and children when they need us most, and our nurses are there for them."

Kapiolani is roughly 2,500

miles from the next full-service women's and children's hospital. Kapiolani focuses on investing in the latest technology and treatments so patients don't have to leave Hawaii.

This year, Kapiolani will break ground on a project that will further expand its cancer services for women and children. The Martha B. Smith Cancer & Infusion Center is named in honor of Kapiolani's late CEO who dedicated more than 30 years of her career to improving health care in Hawaii.

The new \$31 million center will be more than four times larger than the existing area and will be a central location for the newest treatments and clinical trials. Expanded spaces will allow multidisciplinary teams to col-

laborate more efficiently in providing the most advanced services for pediatric, breast and gynecologic cancers, as well as autoimmune and neuromuscular diseases. In addition, it will continue to offer groundbreaking cancer therapies, including CAR T-cell therapy, which utilizes a person's own immune cells to fight cancer.

The new center is also designed with patients in mind. Recognizing how important it is for patients to have their personal support network, there will be spaces for families and friends as well as Kapiolani's nurses and medical teams.

"We are thankful for the compassion and care our Kapiolani nurses provide for our patients every day," Kanemori says.



Chelsey Miyake-Leong, RN
Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children
Nurse for 10 years



What is your favorite thing about being a nurse?

Nursing became a personal passion for me after seeing the difference nurses made for my family when we needed care. That experience continues to shape how I care for my own patients. In the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, I'm able to offer that same compassion in a fast-paced environment while continuing to challenge myself to grow.

STRAUB BENIOFF MEDICAL CENTER

Caring For The Future

Something exciting is happening near the intersection of King Street and Ward Avenue. It's the newest chapter in more than a century of community health care that began with a single surgeon.

Dr. George Straub opened "The Clinic" in 1921 as a place where he envisioned entire families could receive convenient and specialized care under one roof. Now, the practice he began has grown to thousands of physicians, specialists, clinicians and staff who focus on patient-centered care.

Nurses have been an essential part of Straub Benioff Medical Center from the very beginning. Their commitment resonates through deep relationships developed over

generations through the medical center and its network of neighborhood Straub Benioff clinics.

"Our nurses are resilient, compassionate and dedicated to serving others, especially during some of the most difficult moments in our patients' lives," says Stella Laroza, RN, Straub Benioff vice president of patient services and chief nurse executive.

Straub Benioff serves the community 24/7, especially its emergency department. In 2025, there were more than 37,000 patient visits to the ED. A recent renovation allows teams to treat patients in a larger, more efficient space. The new ED includes eight private treatment rooms, two tri-

age rooms, and a central workspace where physicians, nurses and staff can collaborate to best meet patients' needs.

By the end of 2026, Straub Benioff is scheduled to open its new parking building. The 1-million-square-foot structure will have more than triple the number of parking spaces as well as feature a state-of-the-art meeting and conference center, as part of its multiyear redevelopment project.

"Beyond high-quality care, our nurses at Straub Benioff build strong, trusting connections with our patients and their families," Laroza says. "We are so proud to work side-by-side with them to care for our community now and for generations to come."



Leonard Fontanilla, RN
Straub Benioff Medical Center,
Resource Team
Nurse for 15 years



What is your favorite thing about being a nurse?

I love nursing for the opportunity to serve, care for and provide dignity to the people in our island community of Hawaii — our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons and daughters. During what can be chaotic times for patients, I'm grateful to be able to provide calm in the storm, offering compassion, strength and a steady presence.

PALI MOMI MEDICAL CENTER

Connected To The Community

For nearly 40 years, families in Central and West Oahu have counted on Pali Momi Medical Center for every medical need, from annual checkups to unexpected emergencies. It's a legacy of care and commitment that began with the vision of a young neighborhood physician.

Dr. Joseph Nishimoto, known affectionately as Dr. Joe, started his practice in Pearl City in 1957. Over time, he saw the need for a state-of-the-art hospital for people in the growing communities so they could receive care close to home. From the moment Pali Momi opened its doors in 1989, nurses have been an integral part of the patient experience.

"Our nurses do more than

care for the patients they see every day, they are dedicated to the continuous health and well-being of our community," says Robyn Kalahiki, RN, Pali Momi vice president of patient services and chief nurse executive. "This is our kuleana — to care for our family, friends and neighbors with love and aloha."

That passion includes responding to the needs of the community, including preventive care. In Hawaii, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths, yet the state ranks last in the nation when it comes to early diagnosis. That is why Pali Momi is creating a Lung Cancer Procedure Suite. The new suite will expand the capacity for Pali Momi's specialists, using the latest robotic technology, to con-

tinue evaluating and treating lung nodules early.

"While we continually advance to provide cutting-edge and complex treatments for our community, one thing remains the same as it has for the past four decades — the compassionate and high-quality care our nurses provide," Kalahiki says.

And many have been doing just that for Hawaii's patients for decades. More than 41% of Pali Momi's nurses have been with Hawaii Pacific Health for 10 years or more, continuing the legacy created by Dr. Joe.

"Our nurses are hardworking, dedicated and passionate," Kalahiki says. "I am incredibly proud and fortunate to work alongside them."



Cathrine Snodgrass, RN

Pali Momi Medical Center, Telemetry Medical Surgical Unit Nurse for 16 years


What is your favorite thing about being a nurse?

The privilege of supporting individuals during their most vulnerable moments. The ability to serve as a caregiver, educator and advocate allows me to make a meaningful difference in patients' lives, which I find deeply fulfilling and rewarding.

Caring For Kauai

In November 1938, Wilcox Medical Center opened to serve what was then an active plantation community. Today, the hospital that began with 17 physicians in a T-shaped, two-story building is the largest medical center on Kauai.

Wilcox is the first American College of Surgeons-verified Level III Trauma Center in Hawaii. It also offers more than 30 specialties and programs, from cardiology to OB-GYN, orthopedics as well as pediatrics and family medicine. Together, Wilcox and Kauai Medical Clinic comprise Wilcox Health, with more than 700 physicians, nurses, technicians and employees all dedicated to doing what the medical center has done for decades — care for Kauai's people

close to home.

"On Kauai, our sense of community is especially strong, and our nurses are deeply committed to the patients we serve," says Cathye Sataraka, RN, Wilcox vice president of patient services and chief nurse executive. "Our nursing team comes from all over Kauai with a shared purpose — to provide the best care possible."

Wilcox continues to introduce innovative treatments for families on the Garden Isle. This year, a new multipurpose room will expand Wilcox's expert teams' capacity to perform more specialty procedures. This includes interventional radiology services, where specialists are able to look inside the body, make a diagnosis and potential-

ly treat the issue immediately.

In addition, Wilcox is working to build future generations of health care workers on Kauai. The medical center recently hired four new nurse aides who graduated from Waimea High School's Nurse Aide Program. For the past several years, Wilcox has partnered with Kapaa and Waimea high schools to train students before they graduate. Those who successfully complete their certification are given priority employment consideration, including the new nurse aides who are now learning from and working alongside Wilcox's experienced nurses.

"We are so thankful for our nurses. Their passion and dedication inspire us every day," Sataraka says.



John Agni, RN
*Wilcox Medical
Center, Emergency
Department
Nurse for four years*

What is your favorite thing about being a nurse?

My favorite part of my profession is the variety. Nursing offers a broad range of pathways and opportunities that allow me to choose the best way to serve my community in the most impactful and fulfilling way.