



Honoring and Celebrating National Nurses Week

Nurses might suggest “Healthy at 75” should be your new retirement goal

National Nurses Week begins each year on May 6th and ends on May 12th, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the one most credited with pioneering modern nursing. The week kicked off with President Trump declaring May 6th as National Nurses Day and concludes with International Nurses Day being observed worldwide on May 12th.

From President Trump’s proclamation of National Nurses Day, 2020:

“Every day, nurses provide quality, compassionate, and critical care to patients during both routine medical visits and in times of great vulnerability, fear, and uncertainty. Over the past weeks and months, as our nurses have worked heroically on the frontlines of the coronavirus response, their contributions to the health and well-being of our citizenry have been exponentially magnified. On National Nurses Day, we honor and celebrate the extraordinary men and women who devote themselves to this vital and noble profession.

Nursing is not merely a vocation; it is a special calling to serve others selflessly, particularly in times when help is needed most. Throughout our Nation’s history, in times of war, natural disaster, medical emergencies, and both epidemics and pandemics, nurses have rushed in – undaunted by danger, personal sacrifice, and discomfort to provide hope, help, and healing to people in need.”

As our nation gives wholehearted thanks to the nation’s largest healthcare profession, with more than

3.8 million registered nurses nationwide, let’s consider what kind of advice Florence Nightingale might give if she added the role of financial advisor to her first calling. Because after all, nurses and financial advisors both care deeply about the well-being of those entrusted to their care.

Here are some financial thoughts from a nurse:

What Good is Wealth Without Health?

Too many people don’t realize that taking care of themselves physically leads to better financial tomorrows.

Planning for retirement should start in your early twenties, if not before. Why? Because you develop good health habits early and health governs the quality of life long before retirement, and certainly after.

A report from the Institute of Medicine entitled: *U.S. Health in International Perspective: Shorter Lives, Poorer Health*, gives reason for concern. Think about your goals and aspirations. Your future depends on good health, for you, and the people you love and care for. In that context, the report is alarming.

The IOM examined life expectancy and other health data for the U.S., versus 16 other high-income democracies in Western Europe, plus Canada, Australia and Japan. Compared to the average of peer countries, Americans as a group fare worse in infant mortality and low birth weight, injuries and homicides, HIV and AIDS, drug-related deaths,

obesity and diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung disease and disability.

Why the Risky Behavior?

Parents should also be concerned about young people's risky behavior, which reduces the odds that they will live to age 50. Though Americans currently do not smoke as heavily or consume as much alcohol as those other countries, we are more likely to drive drunk with more alcohol-related accidents – and less likely to use seat belts, consume more calories and drive rather than walk. We have higher rates of drug abuse and more often use firearms in committing violent acts.

For those who do survive to 50, risky and unhealthy behaviors lead to poorer health, impeding job advancement and the asset accumulation that leads to independence. Relative to the 17 countries ICOM studied, the U.S. was dead last in life expectancy at birth.

Your New Retirement Goal

Is there any good news in the IOM report? We do have lower cancer deaths and greater control of blood pressure and cholesterol levels compared to peer nations. Those Americans who do reach 75 can expect to live longer than those in the other countries. "Healthy at 75" should be your new retirement goal.

We cannot write off Americans' health problems to socioeconomic conditions, although that is a factor in the macro-statistics. Studies show that the more fortunate Americans – defined as college-educated, insured, or upper income – are in worse health than similar individuals in other countries.

Investments in health and healthy living may be as important to financial independence as investment strategies. Joining a gym and showing up on a regular basis, engaging a personal trainer, moderation in eating and drinking, health screenings and yearly physicals may make a difference in your quest to make it to 75 and beyond, fit and financially secure.

Certainly, an adequate insurance program is part of the equation. Life, health, disability, liability and umbrella liability insurance is critical to asset

protection and the well-being of loved ones and potential survivors.

If the worst happens, someone should have a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care covering you, and all family members, including children age 18 or older. Without such documents medical information cannot be shared.

Good health means you can both accumulate wealth and enjoy it.

Thanking Nurses Everywhere, Everyday

More from the White House:

"Few times has our reliance on nurses been more profoundly evident than during the coronavirus outbreak. In the midst of this crisis, nurses have displayed incredible examples of humanity, selflessness, and sacrifice as they have fought to care for their fellow citizens and save lives. Nationwide, in hospitals, clinics, and other treatment centers where Americans are suffering from the virus, these warriors have steadfastly provided remarkable care and vital assistance to patients. In spite of fatigue and the threat to their own health, nurses soldier on in combat against this invisible enemy. Often the first to treat patients in our hospitals, they provide critical support to doctors, alleviating burdens throughout our healthcare system. They are adaptable and capable of enduring and overcoming unbearable hardship, immeasurable stress, tremendously long hours, and extreme mental and emotional exhaustion so that others may live. Nurses are awe-inspiring and truly worthy of admiration and praise."

The best thanks we can offer to nurses might be investing in healthy habits. And the more-than-occasional thank you.