



Focus on the Future

Guest Predictions: Leslie Durr

Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions questions that affect us all.

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Dr. Durr is an advisor, counselor and an advanced practice psychiatric nurse with a private psychotherapy practice centered in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Leslie received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Syracuse University, a Master of Science with a major in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing from Hunter College, and a PhD in Healthcare Systems Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University

Q: What changes in your professional environment in the past 3-5 years have you found to be the most beneficial?

A: Ironically, the global shortage of nurses has, once again, led organizations to ask what they need to do in order to attract and retain nurses to care for their patients.

The shortage can also serve as an agent of change in pushing the edge of nurses' scope of practice. For example, it is clear that there is a shortage of doctors in primary care, an area that is perfectly filled by advanced practice nurses.

Q: What changes have been the most troubling to you?

A: Unfortunately, as nursing has become an attractive choice for people considering a change of career, many new clinicians are not basing their decision on a real desire to help others.

Their decision to enter nursing seems to rest more on job security and perks and the difference can be felt in the patient care environment.

Q: How will globalization (e.g. the emergence of new global powers, such as China and India) affect your professional area in the near term?

A: Many organizations are trying to solve their shortage of nurses by recruiting nurses from countries such as India and the Philippines.

These countries are also experiencing a shortage of nurses for their populations and, while the nurses send needed resources back to their countries of origin, the trend does nothing to address why there is a shortage in the U.S.

Q: What significant challenges might be anticipated in your professional area in the next few years?

A: As nurses in my age group retire, there is not a steady stream of well-educated nurses in the 'pipe-line'.

If fundamental changes in healthcare are not achieved - the way it is delivered, the way it is financed - there will be temptations to substitute lesser-educated personnel for nurses; this was attempted in the early 90s to the detriment of patients and hospitals.

Q: What are the greatest challenges confronting young professionals in Western culture today?

A: There are two challenges, in my opinion: The ability to think critically and to write well. Enough said.