

## History of Public Health Nursing in North Dakota

The first public health nurses were nuns. When nuns were cloistered, St. Vincent De Paul organized the Sisters of Charity to be the public health nurses of their day. He said to them, Nuns must need have a cloister but the sisters of charity must go everywhere, her monestary the house of the sick, her cloister the streets of the city.

The modern Public Health movement was begun when Wm. Rathbone of Liverpool in 1859 impressed by the comfort which a trained nurse brought into his home, asked her to try the experiment of caring for the poor in their homes. Our of the work of this one nurse grew a permanent system of Public Health nursing, but it was not until 1912 that the American Red Cross began its rural work which was called town and country nursing. Club women of Grand Forks had form some time discussed the need of a visiting nurse among the sick poor, and in the autumn of 1910 the Associated Charities were organized and plans were perfected to have a tag day. The proceeds of which were to be used to maintain a full time nurse. Miss Louise Packebusch of Chicago, Ill. was engaged and entered upon her duties about Dec. 1st. the same year.

The call for a city school nurse was brought forth by an Epidemic of Measles in Feb, 1913. Prior to this time, the visiting Nurse had made examination of a few of the school children with some very good results but the work was too extensive to be carried on successfully in connection with the visiting nurse, so the school nurse was made a separate branch of the Public Health Nurse.

In 1911 session of our Legislature, a bill was passed which read; The Board of any school corporation may employ one or more physicians as medical inspectors of schools and etc. It was becoming recognized, however, that a nurse could do the same work and by reason of her position could enter into the homes and tackle successfully many economic and social problems that the physicians with all his superior technical knowledge could not touch.

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The State Tuberculosis Association in its Bulletin in August 1911 advocated the employment of a school nurse to give practical instruction to High School girls on the truths of maturity and in nursing, feeding, and caring for babies. In the same issue was advocated the employment of a visiting nurse to give instructions to mothers, actual and expectant, in personal and infant hygiene.

The seed thus sown seemed to grow, for the 1913 legislature enacted a law authorizing the County Commissioners to employ a Visiting Nurse under certain restrictions. Here was official legal recognition of the nurse as a public servant in health work.

In the Pennant of August 1914 appears this paragraph: A full time Health Officer for the State and a full time nurse for the county should be the slogan of the Good Health Campaign. The Community Nurse and the School Nurse soon made places for themselves in the larger cities, but it was not until 1914 that the rural school nurse was employed.

Miss M. B. Johnstone, County Supt. of Grand Forks County, early recognized the need in the rural schools of a visiting nurse and in consultation with Dr. Healy then the County Health Officer who had long held similar views, it was decided to place the matter before the County Commissioners. To their delight on July 20th, 1914, their request was granted. To Dr. Healy became the task of procuring and training a nurse who would work thru the Supt's office and report to the county. To Grand Forks County must thus be given the credit of having the first full time nurse in the state, if not in the nation, La Mour County followed the same year, supplied by a Red Cross nurse.

No History of Public Health Nursing in North Dakota would be complete without some consideration of the Traveling Health Clinic. Miss Cora Farley employed by the State T. B. Association worked four years in a sparsely settled rural district of the Western part of the State. She found that there were counties and counties where approximately 15,000 people lived without a resident physician, Miss Farley's work revealed the dire need of a physician in these communities and in 1921 the Traveling Health Clinic was established,

maned by Dr. McCrea and Miss Cora Farley, R.N., traveled in the western part of the state from early spring until late fall, and gave Ethical, Medical, and Nursing service to those who came, continuing over a period of six years, reaching service to 25,000 people.

Following the close of World War a great many countries employed a nurse but in most cases service has been interrupted presumably by lack of funds. We have today according to Dr. Whittemore thirteen full time workers, three itinerant nurses, and three more itinerant nurses will be added this year.

Full time Nurses employed as follows:

Red Cross.....	2
Red Cross and County.....	3
City.....	3
Board of Education.....	4
Itinerant.....	3
( 3 more to be added this year)	
State Public Health, Division of Child Hygiene...	1