

## Caring, Collaboration, Mentoring and Quality Patient Care

By Melanie T. Gura, M.S.N., R.N., C.N.S.; Eileen Handberg, Ph.D., M.S.R.N.; and Abigail Matos, M.D.

**W**e, as members of the cardiovascular team, must use our skills and resources to care for our patients, collaborate with our colleagues and mentor other CCAs. Those CCAs new to our specialty will require guidance, encouragement and mentoring. Those of us who are veteran practitioners must come to realize that it is our professional responsibility to collaborate and mentor others. Doing this will promote quality patient care, lead the way for research promotion and create the opportunity to network and interact with colleagues across the U.S.

This year, we had the good fortune to start a collaborative journey with the CCA ACC Puerto Rico Chapter. We were invited to participate as guest speakers at the Cardiac Care Associates meeting during the 20th Annual Scientific Congress of the ACC Puerto Rico Chapter, held Jan. 23 – 25, in San Juan. Approximately 75 CCAs attended the multilingual presentations. In addition to the professional and clinical presentations, one session featured a review of the recently published American Nurses Association Scope and Standards of Cardiovascular Nursing.

The conference reinforced evidence-based practice, and we had the opportunity to learn more about nursing education and the recent development of nurse practitioner training programs in Puerto Rico. We also learned more about nursing in Puerto Rico. For example, according to our hosts, Puerto Rico is not experiencing a nursing shortage because most graduates continue to practice there after completing their formal nursing education.

### Patient-Centered CV Health Education

One of the most stimulating aspects of our collaborative endeavor was the opportunity to learn about the patient-centered cardiovascular health education programs conducted by the Puerto Rico Chapter. This past year, the Chapter held their 8th community symposium. The program included lectures, educational programs and clinics organized for the local community and patients with cardiovascular-related medical problems. Spouses, sons, daughters, grandparents and in-laws were invited to attend.

All of the presentations were given by members of the Puerto Rico Chapter. Additional information was provided in a separate program in Spanish specifically designed for the



registered patients. Members of the chapter were available before, during and after the seminar to answer questions and clarify specific situations. More than 600 participants attended the program.

This impressive effort was driven by Chapter's desire to provide their patients and the general public with useful health information so that they could become educated partners in their own cardiovascular health care. It was inspiring to hear from **Ana Santana, R.N., M.S.N.; Abigail Matos, M.D.; Miriam Nieto, M.D.; and Rivera del Río, M.D., F.A.C.C.**, about the excitement that surrounded the program. The Chapter plans to continue their efforts to offer additional programs in the upcoming years.

We were also able to network with many of ACC's present and past leaders, including incoming ACC President **Alfred Bove, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.C.C.** He was energized to hear about these patient-focused educational efforts because they parallel his interest in encouraging ACC's patient-centered efforts, such as the CardioSmart patient education Web site. He commented that CCAs play a prominent role in these efforts and encouraged us to think of ways of using the strength of our chapters to have a larger scale, more positive impact on our patients.

The Puerto Rico chapter has set a standard by starting the patient-centered education effort; however, we believe every ACC chapter has the ability to offer equally impressive patient-centered programs. As CCAs, we need to network within our own chapters to assist in the development of these programs.

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**1965** William D. Nelligan, F.A.C.C., becomes executive director of the ACC. He continues in this role for 27 years, becoming an honorary Fellow and beloved leader.