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### AGENCIES CELEBRATE NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

TALLAHASSEE—The work of America's 2.7 million registered nurses to save lives and maintain the health of millions of individuals is the focus of this year's **National Nurses Week**, which is being celebrated by the Florida Department of Health (DOH), the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), the Florida Nurses Association and many other organizations throughout Florida and the United States.

National Nurses Week begins on May 6, marked as RN Recognition Day, and ends on May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, founder of nursing as a modern profession. During this week, nurses throughout Florida are being honored at various statewide events. Today, in Tallahassee, nurses were recognized at a press conference followed by an educational seminar and luncheon.

"It's important that we encourage young people to enter the important field of nursing," said DOH Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A. "Governor Jeb Bush has shown his support for nursing in many ways. He is committed to addressing the current nursing shortage in Florida. Two areas that the Governor and I are focused on include the Nursing Student Loan Forgiveness Program and the Nursing Scholarship Program."

AHCA Secretary Rhonda Medows, M.D., added: "As a physician, I understand the significance of the daily dedication and commitment provided by the nursing community. Nurses Week is an excellent opportunity for us to honor their invaluable contributions to the health and well-being of Florida's citizens."

Using the theme "Nurses Care for American," DOH and AHCA are highlighting the diverse ways in which registered nurses, the largest healthcare profession, are working to improve health care. Nurses provide many health care services, including preventive care and primary care in a variety of clinical areas, including pediatrics, women's health, family health and gerontology.

There are many diverse opportunities in nursing in direct care, education, administration and research. Nursing care is wide ranging in scope, with nurse providers in advanced clinical specialties such as oncology, cardiology, geriatrics, neurology, neonatal, and certified nurse midwives and nurse anesthetists.

Nurses have expanded the types of services they provide and the settings where they give treatment, and continue to care for people from birth through death. Nursing is a challenging profession, with many opportunities and new directions for the future.

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