2017 Nurse in Washington Internship Report

Linda Casale
The knowledge gained from attending the Nurse in Washington Internship program will assist me in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and promote legislation to improve access to mental health care. Providing accurate information that combats the stigma of mental illness and educates the public about the value of efficient services that prevent and treat mental disorders is critical. Advocating for expanding access to mental health care and providing accurate information regarding mental illness is a responsibility that I am committed to pursuing.

The VA Regional Office will obtain the knowledge received by attending the NIWI program. Also, a presentation will be scheduled at the monthly journal club lunch and learn sponsored by the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs. The VA Nursing Sharepoint will contain a summary of the information of the related nursing legislative issues.

In addition, I will disseminate the results with a poster presentation at the Florida Conference of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) and during a Sigma Theta Tau initiation tea in May 2017. The NIWI program information will also be available as a reference for mental health nurses orienting on inpatient psychiatry.

In my experience as a behavior health nurse, I have come to find that passion is a key ingredient to the study and practice of nursing and life. I have witnessed mental health care injustices, and I just sat there and let it happen. But now I know better, that one honest voice can be louder than a crowd.

It is with passion, the courage of conviction, and a strong sense of self that I am determined to impact mental health legislation and educate college students regarding mental health. Remembering always to have faith in the people and most importantly, in yourself. I appreciate the opportunity to attend this life changing event. Sincerely, linda casale