

GUEST EDITORIAL

## Special Issue on Primary Health Care

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In 1978, at the 1st International Conference on Primary Health Care, held in Alma-Ata in the former Soviet Union, the World Health Organization declared primary health care (PHC) as the means of achieving "health for all" of the world's people by the year 2000. PHC is considered to be essential health care that is based on practical, scientifically sound, socially acceptable methods and technologies that are universally accessible to people in their local communities (World Health Organization, 1978). Professional nursing associations quickly embraced these principles and advocated for reform of the health-care system with PHC as the guiding framework. Nursing also called for more research on PHC, to explore and evaluate effective ways of working with individuals, families, groups, and communities to improve health.

In the papers, short reports, and book reviews that follow, we celebrate the successes achieved to date in the implementation of PHC and reflect on the challenges ahead. The three major papers in this special issue of the Journal illustrate different developments in PHC. Munro and colleagues discuss the Prince Edward Island Conceptual Model for Nursing, which they developed based on PHC principles. This model challenges nurses to work with clients, building on individual strengths within the broader framework of the collective influences of the determinants of health. Hilton and colleagues report on the impact of the AIDS Prevention Street Nurse Program, a program of collaborative work with clients and other personnel based on the PHC model. Whyte and Stone provide a retrospective analysis of the work of one provincial association, the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia, to promote PHC as the foundation of the health-care system. Glass, in the *Discourse*, provides a comprehensive overview of the origins of PHC and the progress made to date. Edwards, in the *Happenings* section, highlights many exemplars of PHC projects and current and future opportunities for nursing research in this area. Finally, three books are

reviewed. Clarke, Gallagher, and Leipert each provide the reader with a critical examination of current resources available for educators, students, practitioners, and policy-makers.

These papers and reviews highlight the importance of development and action in many sectors if the goals of PHC are to be achieved — theoretical development of PHC, sustained and systematic efforts to influence policy, knowledge development, and program evaluation. I hope that this issue of the Journal will inform, challenge, and contribute to the further development of PHC.

### **Reference**

World Health Organization. (1978). *Primary health care: Report of the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Ata, USSR*. Geneva: Author.

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