

Be Nurses the Precious

Written by: Sho-Hsin Chien,
Superintendent of Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital



“I love you more than I can say”. Nowadays, this old song does not work anymore. Love needs to be spoken out bravely, but beyond saying, action is also needed. Therefore, I always use the word “darling”. It is meaningless if you only say it.

I recall last year’s Nurse’s Day, which happened to be on Sunday, so we celebrated ahead for the “hospital darlings”, and presented gifts to express our sincere thoughts and love for them.

That day, besides physicians and staff, the hospital also invited volunteer brothers and sisters to come together to each nursing station, so that every nurse could feel the loving care and appreciation. Of course, the most important thing was to be practical. Being there was not enough; we brought real gifts to let them touch our care and love. We brought with us six different kinds of gifts - we called them the “Six Gifts (Appreciation)”.

The contents of the “Six Gifts” were very special. Introducing one by one was not to copy the practice of shopping channel, but to let people know our good intentions behind each gift. The first gift “Clay Cooking Pot” was chosen by the nurses’ own choosing and presented by the hospital. “Shampoo & Conditioner” was the gift of the Nurse Association and forwarded by the hospital, but we insisted to deliver them personally to the hands of every nurse.

“Deluxe Cinema Tickets” was an idea from all the doctors. The physicians believed that all nurses work hard, and hope they have a chance to watch movies to relax. With a movie ticket per nurse, they can go together to enjoy the movie and relax together!

In addition, food vouchers (to be used at the hospital food court) called “Soho” coupons meaning, “relax”, (not from SOGO) were presented to everyone. Our goal is to make Taichung Tzu Chi hospital a comfortable and happy place for nurses to work. There were also “Dried Berries” from the Hualien Abode to let everyone feel the warmth from Hualien. “Golden Eggs” was another gift they made all night long though they were “a little bit well done”; the main purpose of which was to let all nurses taste the thought of our caring. It was important that the golden eggs were not salty and relatively healthy, so that busy nurses after a whole day of busy clinic works could refresh their energy from fatigue. Tzu Chi volunteers brought a big cake, which also represented the love and care from Tzu Chi.

Many medical institutions often advertise to recruit nurses with high salaries; sometimes more than fifty thousand dollars. People familiar with the operation of the medical field are aware that this is just a gimmick. When the new nurses start to work, they will find out the truth. Using inflated salary figures to recruit new nurses is not a good practice.

Medical institutions have often been criticized as slave drivers who do not pay attention to nurses’ welfare. As I think about the situation in Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, I feel that we have achieved the goal of treating the nurses as “darlings” while paying them fair wages. Not only the hospital treats the nurses that way, Tzu Chi brothers and sisters, patients and their families care for them as darlings like their own children.

Of course, the ways to care for darlings are not just providing gifts. We have designed a “smart mobile nursing care system” to reduce the work load of nursing staff from walking back and forth between nursing stations and patients; and on top of this “smart mobile nursing care cart”, we also constructed a “state of the art” cloud calling platform.

A patient simply presses the bell; a smart phone is carried by the nursing staff, as well as the “cloud phone” in the “smart mobile nursing care cart”. Both ring at the same time. This makes the “smart mobile nursing care cart” a mobile nursing care station. This is equivalent to adding a high-end processor to the current environment. With the help of modern technology, this lets nursing staff in the front line feel closer to patients, to be efficient and focused.

As we think about it, nurses' work is very complicated. If we spend a lot of time writing a report, there will be less time available to care for patients. Therefore, the intellectual information is like a "deposit collection" system; it can collect the wasted time on paper work, and let the nurses spend time with the patients. This is a win-win situation for both patients and nursing staff. Whenever a patient needs to reach a nurse during an emergency, no matter where the nurse is, can immediately respond to the situation to take care of the patient. If there is no such a system, when a patient needs urgent care and presses the emergency bell, the red light in the nursing station lights up, but the nurse may be busy attending to another patient in another room, and cannot respond to the urgent call effectively. Being able to have an overall monitor of patient's disease and interact with patients as needed is a competitive edge using modern technology. Although it is called "cloud technology", it is more like "body side technology" as it helps to take care of patients as if the staff is next to them.

In Tzu Chi, nurses are often referred to as the "White Clothes Buddha". Like Bodhisattva, the work to take care of patient is in the human world, but taking care of the patients' heart is in the "cloud". With cloud phone and cloud data technology, nurses can closely monitor patients' condition and use modern technology to link patients' treatment to nursing care. Information technology is the means, and the goal is to make patients feel that physicians and nursing staff are always accessible to them. Through the launch of the "Smart mobile nursing care system", one can see the achievements building a step at a time. I hope nursing staff can use the extra time to talk more with more patients, so as create a different look of patient-nursing relationship.

Taichung Tzu Chi hospital teams are working hard to do research in order to transform nursing work with technology and let the nursing staff to spend more time on patients. This is the result of hard work from nurses, cooperation of patients and the efforts of hospital technology team. I hope the patients and their families appreciate the innovation. This "Hospital" after quality improvement is truly the future direction of modern medical care.