

The AORN 56th Congress was held in Chicago March 14 through March 19, 2009 and I was privileged to serve eChapter as a Delegate. For far too many years, I have said, “I will become more involved” or “I should do more” and “I wonder if...” I would like to thank eChapter for the opportunity and the honor of serving as a 2009 Delegate for it allowed me to do more by becoming an active participant within our organization.

As the dates for Congress drew closer, I found myself becoming apprehensive regarding my duties; however, once I arrived, I was able to relax and enjoy the role much more than I had anticipated. Based upon my experiences this past week, I must encourage others within our organization and our chapter to take a greater role in **our** organization...one will not regret it. Not only did I feel a part of something greater but I was afforded the opportunity to forge new relationships that I may not have accomplished otherwise.

As in past years, Congress included important education programs, prominent speakers, peer submitted poster displays, and cutting-edge OR technology displayed by the more than 500 exhibitors and industry partners; however, the emphasis of Congress 2009 was clearly how our profession will be required to “*Embrace The Future*” for continued success. In particular, key areas of focus for AORN are:

- The advancement of legislative initiatives to safeguard the role of the Perioperative Registered Nurse as Circulator
- To preserve and protect the Perioperative Registered Nurse's scope of practice
- To support workplace safety and patient safety initiatives
- To participate in the national discussion on health care change to promote the role of the Perioperative Registered Nurses in achieving optimal patient safety.

In terms of personal highlights there are three. Keith Harrell’s Jerry G. Peers Lectureship presentation, *CONNECT*, was most energetic and motivational while Tim Porter-O’Grady’s General Session, *Future of Nursing*, was thought provoking and enlightening. Thirdly, a Concurrent Session entitled, *Balad, Iraq, Return to the Sandbox*, was one of the most superlative sessions I have ever attended. This presentation documented the return of three United States Air Force Registered Nurses to Balad, Iraq for a second tour of duty. Through their eyes and their story, I was able to see the “joys, sorrows, and everyday life” of battlefield nurses.

In conclusion, The AORN 56th Congress in Chicago was one I will never forget and again, I thank my fellow eChapter members for the opportunity to participate as a delegate.

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