

I began my nursing career as an LVN trained at a community college working at a methadone maintenance center in Harlem. One of my patients was an HIV positive man who had contracted the virus from sharing needles with his 6 siblings, all of whom had died from the virus. I was fortunate enough to be an advisor for the HIV program planning committee for the City of New York where we decided that by providing clean needles we could save lives. It was my first lesson that in nursing you have the ability to care for one but the lesson from the one can result in change for many.

In addition to my thirty years as a nurse practitioner working with underserved communities, I have discovered that another way to have big impact on health care is by being a nurse educator. Helping foster the growth of the next generation of nurse leaders. My teaching career started working one-on-one as a clinical preceptor. Then I was brought into guest lecture and finally teaching full-time, becoming a director and then a dean of health sciences. When I talk with my colleagues and peers we all face the same struggle. For example, how to find qualified faculty, assuring meaningful clinical rotations, how to improve curricula to meet the changing needs of the community and how to support students. I was fortunate to meet the leaders from OADN and found dynamic leaders helping all who work and learn at the associate degree level. I feel honored to participate and add my voice to the organization. If what I have experienced and the lessons I have learned and the ideas I have can be used to help the profession and health in general I know the OADN is the platform that can do the most good.