

2017 WNA Reference Report and Recommendations

Topic: Water Quality and Availability

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Background

Water disputes have recently been heightened due to lead contamination in Flint, Michigan, city water supply and pollution of wells from heavy agricultural usage in Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. In addition, water availability is threatened due to drought, severe flooding, high capacity wells and the central sands area of Wisconsin. Common sustainability practices have included buffer strip to lower agricultural run-off, minimization of pesticides, methods to reduce irrigation for crops, awareness about pollution of aquifers due to concentrated animal feedlots (CAFOs), and attention to excessive consumption in homes. Aging water systems need to be updated throughout the country. Wisconsin's nurses need to be informed and visible advocates for the availability of safe and quality water.

Rationale

The Wisconsin Environmental Health Nursing Coalition (WEHNC) remains concerned about the quality of Wisconsin's water supply. WEHNC would like to have the WNA membership identify and/or support recommendations for practices and strategies needed to promote effective and sustainable water quality while at the same time balancing the needs of economic growth and environmental health.

Discussion at the October 20, 2017 Dialogue Forum yielded the following themes:

1. Social Media
 - a. Create a position on the WNA Board responsible for use of social media.
 - b. Use social media to disseminate information regarding water quality and availability.
2. Advocate for pharmaceutical companies to develop, fund, and implement a program for safe disposal of pharmaceuticals, to include education of the public.
3. Establish a portal on the WNA website specific to the topic of Environmental health, including water quality and availability.
4. Offer educational offerings (e.g., webinars) about water quality and availability with contact hours through WNA for members.
5. Partner with WI DHS and its Wisconsin Environmental Health Tracking Portal for consumer education.
6. Identify Wisconsin Environmental Health Nurses Coalition MIG as the clearinghouse for patient and nurse education.

7. Encourage nurses to become members of boards that determine policy regarding the impact of water quality and availability on "human health".
8. Advocate that nursing programs include content on water quality and availability as part of the curriculum.

Recommendations

That the Wisconsin Nurses Association:

1. Support the activities of WEHNC as the content experts in water quality and availability.
2. Work with WEHNC to establish strategies to engage in outreach and education for nurses and consumers using social media, the WNA website, partnerships, etc.

Approved: 10/21/17 WNA Annual Meeting