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## Forum on the Future of Nursing

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December 3, 2009



## What's Different About Public Health and Nursing

- Public health cannot be separated from politics:
  - It's a part of everything we do — “public” health
  - “Politics” is not a bad word
    - It's “the art and science of government” (Webster)
  - Politicians are not inherently evil
    - They are public servants elected to represent the values and beliefs of their constituents



## What's Different About Public Health and Nursing

- Science informs public health policy development
  - Science is NOT policy, but is considered in the policy development process
- Consideration of community values is a public health professional ethic



## What's Different About Public Health and Nursing

- Communication and relationships are key
- Political instinct and judgment are essential
- Public health leaders must be strategic
  - Know the public health needs of your community
  - Understand the science and the best policy options for meeting the needs
- A public health leader must provide a buffer and a bridge between the political world and the health world

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## What Nurses in Public Health Need to Do or Learn

- Understand your role in the development and implementation of public policies that impact health
- Inform policy development with science and evidence-based facts
- Be ethical, professional, and cooperative



## The Current Public Health Environment

- Investment in public health doesn't meet the need
- Accountability and performance requirements are increasing
- H1N1 phase two is here...and we're preparing for phase three
- The possibility of health care reform is on the horizon



## A New Approach

- Nurses in public health need to:
  - Understand politics, public policy, and partnerships
  - Be adaptive to new technology, new evidence
  - Be skilled communicators — “plain talk”
  - Be ready — know the basics and be prepared for new health threats, changing priorities, new opportunities

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