



Reproductive Health in Nursing

Defining Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care is sometimes thought of narrowly as maternal-child, family planning, or women's health care, but the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined it more broadly as:

“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its function and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capacity to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so” (2011, p. viii).

A number of national health systems have sought to operationalize this definition as a minimum package of SRH care accessible to all people that includes: sexual health promotion; preconception care; contraception, pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy care; women's health/common gynecology care; genitourinary conditions of men; and assessment of specialty gynecology problems, including infertility; delivered within a system of public health and primary care services. **R^hN endorses this definition of SRH and is working to promote its implementation in the US.**

Reproductive Health in Nursing (R^hN) was formed by a group of nurse clinicians, educators, scholars, and activists who came to know each other through their common efforts to build on nursing's legacy of providing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care and promoting social justice and health equity. R^hN's leadership and support staff team includes: Molly Battistelli, MPH; Joyce Cappiello, PhD, FNP, FAANP; Amy Levi, PhD, CNM, WHNP-BC; Monica McLemore, PhD, MPH, RN; Kathy Simmonds, PhD(c), MPH, WHNP-BC; Diana Taylor, PhD, RN, MS; Program Coordinator Samantha Andrews, and Organizational Development Consultant Mary Dickow. **R^hN's vision is of a world where all people have access to high quality sexual and reproductive health care including abortion; and nurses are recognized, supported and celebrated as essential members of the health workforce, who can make this vision a reality.** Below, we offer a brief history to contextualize how and why R^hN came to be.

A New Wave of Nursing Activism and Leadership in SRH: 1960s-1990s

In response to high national maternal and infant mortality rates, physician shortages, and lack of attention to sexual health overall, nurses and midwives established birth centers and feminist health centers, got training through Planned Parenthood to provide contraception, treat sexually transmitted infections, and promote sexual health, and engaged in SRH-focused policy efforts in the 1960s and '70s. Political backlash in the 1980s led to cuts in funding for healthcare, family planning, and abortion services that negatively impacted many of these programs and SRH delivery sites, and the clients who received care from them.

In resistance to these funding cuts and the growing politicization of women's health, abortion and SRH services, nurses started a number of initiatives in the '90s, including Clinicians for Choice (a project of the National Abortion Federation); the Advanced Practice Clinician (APC) Initiative; the Reproductive Options Education (ROE) Consortium for Nursing (a project of the Abortion Access Project, now Provide);

and the first fledgling chapters of Nursing Students for Choice (now Nursing Students for Sexual and Reproductive Health). R^hN's founders were central in establishing and growing all of these initiatives.

Digging In: 2000-2015

In addition to continuing to work with the organizations mentioned above, R^hN's founders took on leadership roles and spearheaded SRH-related efforts within a number of other interprofessional and reproductive rights and justice groups in the new millennium, including:

- Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH)
 - Association for Health Professionals (ARHP), including the SRH Workforce Project
 - American Academy of Nursing/American Nurses Association, including the Women's Health Expert Panel
 - American College Nurse Midwives (ACNM), including establishing a caucus of Midwives in support of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Abortion
 - American Public Health Association (APHA), including in the Population, Reproductive and Sexual Health and Public Health Nursing sections
 - Center for Reproductive Rights
 - CoreAlign
 - National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, including formation of a SRH Special Interest Group
 - National Women's Law Center
 - Association of Women's Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
 - Society for Family Planning
 - Sister Song
 - Sea Change Program
 - IfWhenHow (formerly Law Students for Reproductive Justice)
- And more...

During these years, they also led a number of research, policy, scholarly and educational endeavors, generating a body of essential evidence, literature, teaching and learning tools, and sparking legislative changes relevant to nurses and SRH.

Bringing Nurses and SRH Care To A New Level: 2015-present

After many years of working individually and collaboratively to advance SRH and abortion care, these nursing thought leaders and clinician-activists came together to plan next steps for increasing the capacity, visibility, and awareness of nurses as vital providers of SRH and abortion care in the US. Recognizing that nurses who are committed to patient-centered sexual and reproductive health care needed a home, Reproductive Health in Nursing (R^hN) was founded in 2015. To learn more about this history and about R^hN, or to access our repository of nursing-focused SRH and abortion resources, **visit the R^hN website, www.rhnursing.org.**

The following is a selected list of publications by the R^hN leadership team:

Bibliography of Selected Publications on SRH and abortion by RhN Leaders, 1997-present (listed chronologically)

Beal, M.W. & **Simmonds, K.E.** (2002). Clinical uses of mifepristone: an update for women's health practitioners. *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health*, 47(6), 451-460.

Taylor, D. & Hwang, A. (2004). Care for women choosing medication abortion: What the NP needs to know. *The NP Journal*, 29(10), 65-70.

Simmonds, K., & Likis, F. (2005). Providing options counseling for the woman with an unintended pregnancy. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing*, 34(3), 373-379.
doi:10.1177/0884217505276051

Simmonds, K. & Likis, F. (2005) Providing options counseling for women with unintended pregnancies. *JOGNN*, 34 (3), 373-379.

Andrist, L.C., **Simmonds, K.**, Liebermann, E., & Healey, K. (2006). Women's experiences of medical abortion using mifepristone and misoprostol. *The American Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 10 (7/8), 59-65.

Foster, A., Polis, C., Allee, M., **Simmonds, K.**, & Zurek, M. (2006). Abortion education in nurse practitioner, physician assistant and nurse midwifery programs: A national survey. *Contraception*, 73(4):408-414.

Simmonds, K. & Likis, F. (2006). Unintended Pregnancy. In Schuiling, K. & Likis, F. (Eds.), *Women's Gynecologic Health* (pp. 361-379). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

Simmonds, K., Foster, A., & Zurek, M. (2009). From the outside in: a unique model for stimulating curricula reform in nursing education. *The Journal of Nursing Education*, 48(10): 583-587

Levi, A., Simmonds, K., & Taylor, D. (2009). The role of nursing in the management of unintended pregnancy. *Nursing Clinics of North America*, 44(3), 301-314.

Taylor, D., Safriet, B., Weitz, T. (2009). When politics trumps evidence: Legislative or regulatory exclusion of abortion from advanced practice clinician scope of practice. *J. Midwifery and Women's Health*, 54, 4-7.

Weitz, T.A., Anderson, P.A., **Taylor, D.** (2009). Advancing scope of practice for advanced practice clinicians: more than a matter of access. *Contraception*, 80,105-7.

Taylor D., Safriet B, Dempsey G, Kruse B, Jackson C. (2009). Providing abortion care: A professional toolkit for nurse-midwives, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. San Francisco: University of California, San Francisco.

Taylor D, Levi A, & Simmonds K. (2010). Reframing unintended pregnancy prevention: a public health model. *Contraception*; 81(5), 232-239.

Cappiello, J., Beal, M., **Simmonds, K.** (2011) Post-abortion care for the primary care nurse practitioner. *The Nurse Practitioner*, 36(5), 35-40.

Dragoman, M.V., Steinauer, J.E., Cepin, A.B., Guiahi,, M., Krajewski, C.M., **Taylor, D., & Battistelli, M.B.** (2011). Medical education in abortion. Medscape Roundtable in OB-Gyn and Women's Health.

McLemore, M., & Levi, A. (2011). Nurses and care of women seeking abortions, 1971 to 2011. *J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs.* 40(6), 672-7. PMID: 22273447.

Taylor, D. (2011). Evidence to inform policy, practice and education for unintended pregnancy prevention and management. *J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nursi.* 40(6), 773-774, doi: 10.1111/j.1552-6909.2011.01295.x

Taylor, D., & James, E. A. (2011). An evidence-based guideline for unintended pregnancy prevention. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing*, 40(6), 782-793, doi: 10.1111/j.1552-6909.2011.01296.x

Levi, A.J., James, E.A., **Taylor, D.** (2012). Midwives and abortion care: a model for achieving competency. *J Midwifery Women's Health.* 57(3), 285-9. doi: 10.1111/j.1542-2011.2012.00182.x

Auerbach, D.I., Pearson, M.L., **Taylor, D., Battistelli, M.,** Sussell, J., Hunter, L.E., Schnyer, C., & Schneider, E.C. (2012). *Nurse Practitioners and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: An Analysis of Supply and Demand.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012.
http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1224.

Berg, J., Olshansky, E., Shaver, J., **Taylor, D.,** & Woods, N.F. (2012). Women's health in jeopardy: Failure to curb unintended pregnancies: A statement of the women's health expert panel. *Nursing Outlook*, 60, 163-64.

Berg, JA., **Taylor, D.,** & Woods, N.F. (2013). Where we are today: Prioritizing women's health services and health policy. A report by the Women's Health Expert Panel of the American Academy of Nursing. *Nursing Outlook* 61(1), 5-15, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2012.06.004>

Nothnagle, M., **Cappiello, J., & Taylor, D.** (2013). Sexual and reproductive health workforce project: Overview and recommendations from the SRH workforce summit, January 2013. *Contraception*, 88(33), 2014-09. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2013.05.006>

Cappiello, J., Merrell, J., & Rentschler, D. (2014). Women's experience of decision-making with medication abortion. *MCN. The American Journal Of Maternal Child Nursing*, 39(5), 325-330. doi:10.1097/NMC.0000000000000063

Cappiello, J., Merrell, J., & Rentschler, D. (2014). A qualitative study of women's decision to view or not view an ultrasound image before early medication abortion. *Women's Health Issues: Official Publication Of The Jacobs Institute Of Women's Health*, 24(4), e413-e418. doi:10.1016/j.whi.2014.04.004

- Desai, S., Freedman, L., James, E.A., & **Taylor, D.** (2014). Women know best--findings from a thematic analysis of 5,214 surveys of abortion care experience. *Women's Health Issues*, 24(6), 594-9. PMID: 25442704.
- Foster, A.M., Jackson, C.B., LaRoche, K.J., **Simmonds, K., & Taylor D.** (2015). From qualified physician to licensed health care professional: the time has come to change mifepristone's label. *Contraception*, 92, 200-202. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2015.06.022>.
- Freedman, L., **Battistelli, M.F.**, Gerdts, C., & **McLemore, M.** (2015) Radical or routine? Nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, and physician assistants as abortion providers. *Reprod Health Matters*. 23(45), 90-2. PMID: 26278836.
- Hewitt, C., & **Cappiello, J.** (2015). Essential Competencies in Nursing Education for Prevention and Care Related to Unintended Pregnancy. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, 44(1), 69-76. doi:10.1111/1552-6909.12525
- McLemore, M.**, Burton, C., & Shattell, M. (2015). What's sexual orientation got to do with it? LGBTQI reproductive health. *Lavender Health*.
- McLemore, M.**, Kools, S., **Levi, A.** (2015). Calculus formation: Nurses' decision-making in abortion-related care. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 38(3), 222-231.
- Levi, A.**, Banks, E, Dieseldorff, J, Tueros, V. (2015). The clinicians speak: Why I am an abortion provider. *Women's Healthcare*, 47-50. http://npwomenshealthcare.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Comm_M15.pdf
- Cappiello, J., Levi, A., & Nothnagle, M.** (2016). Core competencies in sexual and reproductive health for the interprofessional primary care health care team. *Contraception*, 93(5), 438-45. doi: 10.1016/j.contraception.2015.12.013.
- McLemore, M.R.**, Desai, S., James, E.A., & **Taylor, D.** (2016). Letter to the Editor, re: article "Factors influencing women's satisfaction with surgical abortion" by Tilles, Denny, Cansino and Creinin. *Contraception*. 93(4), 372.
- Taylor, D., McLemore, M.**, Burton, C., Olshansky, E., Berg, J., **Levi, A.**, Woods, N., & Shattell, M. (2015, November 13). *Missouri shreds academic freedom*. Huffington Post Tech: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mona-shattell/missouri-shreds-academic-b_8555628.html
- Taylor, D., McLemore, M.**, Burton C., Hagan, T., Shattell, M. (2016, March 1). *Nurses Oppose Political Interference in Reproductive Health Care*. Huffington Post Tech: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mona-shattell/nurses-oppose-political-i_b_9365088.html
- Taylor, A., Hathaway, A., Luneau, M., McKenna, F., & **Cappiello, J.** (2016). *Four narratives on abortion training in Mexico City*. *Women's Healthcare: A Clinical Journal for NPs*, 4(4), 78-81.
- Aztlan-James, E.A., **McLemore, M., & Taylor, D.** (2017). Multiple Unintended Pregnancies in U.S. Women: A Systematic Review. *Women's Health Issues*.

Simmonds, K., Beal, M. & Eagen-Torkko, M. (2017). FDA updates to regulation of mifepristone: Implications for clinical practice and access to abortion. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*, 62, (2) 348-352.

Simmonds, K. & Stern, L. (2017). The challenge of unintended pregnancies. In I. Alexander et al (editors), *Women's healthcare in advanced practice nursing*, (2nd ed) (pp. 26-55). NY: Springer.

Taylor, D. (2017). Women as healthcare providers. In I. Alexander et al (editors), *Women's healthcare in advanced practice nursing*, (2nd ed) (pp. 26-55). NY: Springer.

Journal of Obstetrics Gynecology and Neonatal Nursing InFocus Series. [expected publication November 2017]

- **Cappiello, J.,** Coplon, L., & Carpenter, H. Sexual and reproductive health initiatives in pre-licensure education.
- **Levi, A.** Sexual and reproductive health in nursing education
- **McLemore, M., & Levi, A.** Expanding access to sexual and reproductive health services through nursing education.
- **Simmonds, K.,** Hewitt, C.M., Atzlan-James, E.A., & Skinner, E. Pathways to competence in sexual and reproductive health for Advanced Practice Nurses.