

Connecticut Leaders Join Nightingale Committee in Celebrating Nurses

Why does Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal always make time to attend the Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing?

“I don’t know who was more scared – my oldest son Matthew or I – when he badly broke his wrist sliding into second base several years ago,” the attorney general remembers. “As we arrived at Greenwich Hospital, we were met by a nurse who administered incomparable treatment to both father and son (both needed it). Her combination of humor, kindness, grace under pressure and, of course, expert medical care, made all the difference. As painful as the experience was – followed by full recovery, and more baseball the next season – our nurse that day will always have a special place of warmth and gratitude in our hearts.”

The Nightingale Awards, held annually during National Nurses Week, celebrate outstanding Connecticut nurses whose caring and expertise make exactly the kind of difference Blumenthal recalls. This year, banquets will be held in four regions of the state on May 3, supported by visiting nurse associations, hospitals and other health care employers who rely on nurses everyday.

House Speaker James Amann had a great reason for attending last year’s Nightingale banquet in New Haven. His mother, Nancy Amann, won a Nightingale for her work at Golden Hill Healthcare facility in Milford.

“My mom is a nurse ... so I have a special place in my heart for the profession,” the Milford legislator says. “I am also a cancer survivor. That included a long hospital stay. That life-changing experience added greatly to my appreciation of nurses, and I will never forget the wonderful care I received.”

Programs like the Nightingale Awards are important because they help educate the public about nursing’s crucial contribution to health care, he continued. “Public recognition such as the Nightingale Awards is a great program because of the attention it brings to the important work that all nurses do. There is no doubt as our society deals with improving access to health care that nurses have a critical role to play in meeting that challenge,” Amann said.

Governor M. Jodi Rell agreed that supporting nurses is key to improving quality and access to health care.

"Our goal in Connecticut continues to be to increase nursing school opportunities, particularly in medically underserved communities, and improve the training of nurses so they can provide the highest quality of care. Our nurses are unsung heroes. We are grateful for their service, and we thank them for their commitment to excellence," Rell said.

The importance of nurses cannot be overstated, Blumenthal added.

"Nurses are health care personified – and have been its face and voice since the beginning of time," he said. "At our most frightening, vulnerable moments we rely on them for both medical skill and emotional support. Nurses greet us when we enter the world and are there when we leave it – providing care and comfort at every point between birth and death."