



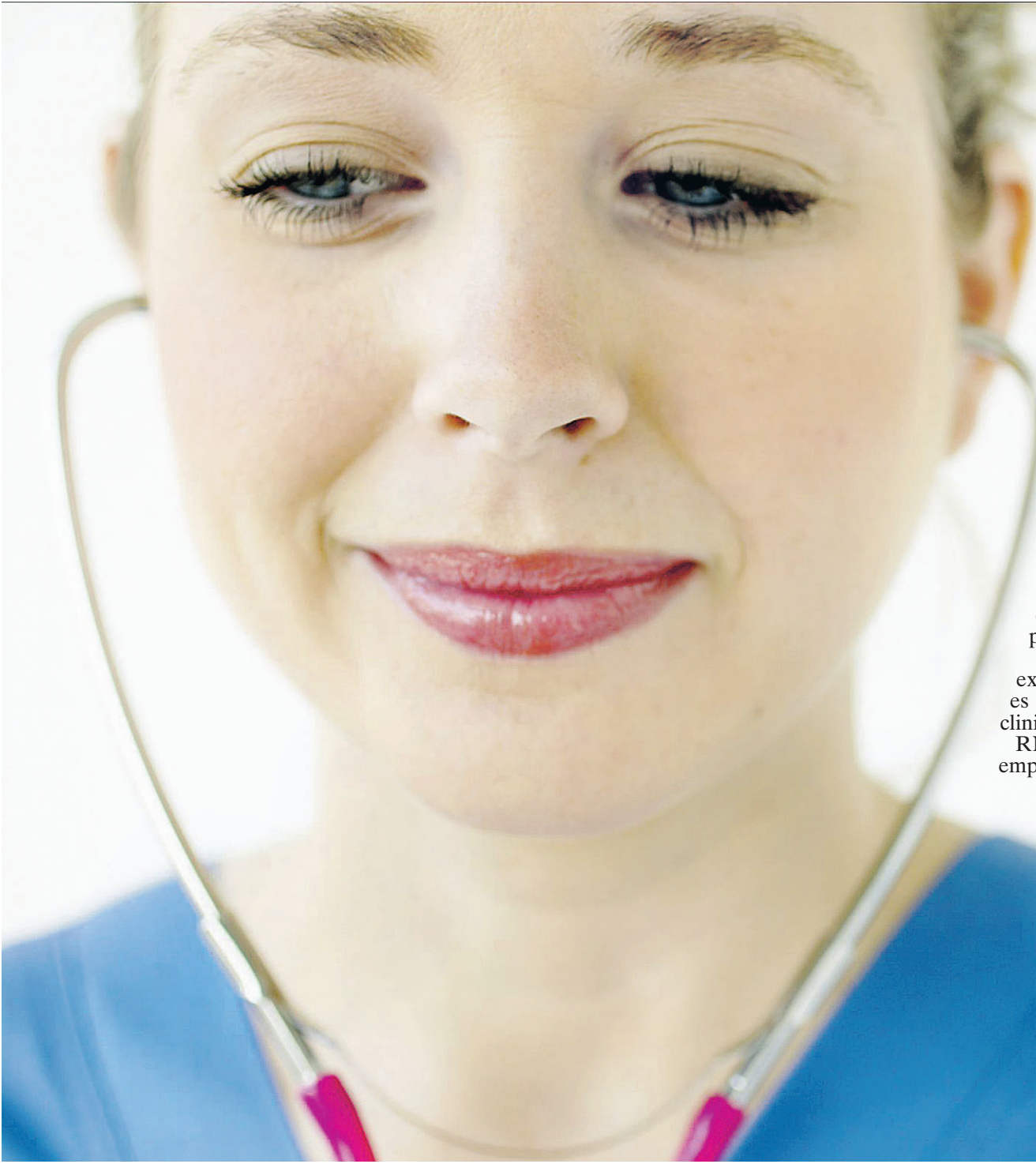
National Nursing Week

• May 7 - 12, 2006 •



The many faces of nursing

What's the difference between a Registered Nurse (RN), a Registered Practical Nurse and a Nurse Practitioner? They are all professionals who have a vested interest in, and commitment to, providing excellent health care.



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Registered Nurses

Registered Nurses (RNs), regardless of specialty or work setting, perform basic duties that include treating patients, educating them and the public about various medical conditions, and providing advice and emotional support to patients' family members. RNs record patients' medical histories and symptoms, help to perform diagnostic tests and analyze results, operate medical machinery, administer treatment and medications and help with patient follow-up and rehabilitation.

RNs teach patients and their families how to manage their illness or injury, including post-treatment home care needs, diet and exercise programs, and self-administration of medication and physical therapy.

Some RNs are also trained to provide grief counseling to family members of critically ill patients. RNs work to promote general health by educating the public on various warning signs and symptoms of disease and where to go for help. And they may run general health screening or immunization clinics, blood drives, and public seminars on various conditions.

RNs can specialize in one or more patient care specialties. The most common specialties can be divided into roughly four categories: by work setting or type of treatment, disease, ailment, or condition, organ or body system type, or population.

RNs may combine specialties from more than one area — for example, pediatric oncology or cardiac emergency — depending on personal interest and employer needs.

They may specialize by work setting or by type of care provided. For example, ambulatory care nurses treat patients with a variety of illnesses and injuries on an outpatient basis, either in physicians' offices or in clinics.

RNs specializing in a particular disease, ailment, or condition are employed in virtually all work settings, including physicians' offices, outpatient treatment facilities, home health care agencies and hospitals.

Those specializing in treatment of a particular organ or body system usually are employed in specialty physicians' offices or outpatient care facilities, although some are employed in hospital specialty or critical care units.

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