

Should I Be Calling Myself an RN?

Posted on April 10, 2020 by Dean Benard

I have the privilege of using the title RN after my name, but as of now that stops...let me explain why.

My first career choice was to be a nurse. I was especially fascinated with cardiovascular disease and so I pursued my qualifications in coronary care and became an Emergency Room nurse and then an ICU nurse. I practiced for about 6 years in these areas and then got intrigued by a different profession, policing, so I moved on. I dabbled here and there doing some casual shifts in nursing but eventually drifted away from nursing practice entirely. After a short career in policing I got the itch for change once again. I took a position at the College of Nurses of Ontario as an investigator, which eventually led me to be the Manager of Investigations.

Then, yes you guessed it...that itch came back. I wanted to be an entrepreneur, so in 2004 I started my own investigation and mediation firm. It seems the itch was finally scratched because I'm proud to say we are in our 16th year of business. The firm has a focus on investigating complaints or concerns about professionals for their regulatory bodies. Because of the work we do, we often see some unfortunate things in the various health professions, but we are comforted knowing that the negatives we see are a small scratch on the surface, and the vast majority of our health professionals are amazing, dedicated, knowledgeable people.

Now as we deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic we see the incredible demands placed on our health professionals; we see first-hand how amazing they truly are. The dedication to their profession shows every day as they put themselves in harm's way to be there when they are needed most. The work they do in "normal times" is not easy, and it takes a physical and emotional toll, especially in a time of crisis. Now the crisis is daily, even hourly, and yet they push on and work through it.

A few weeks ago, I heard about many retired nurses, physicians, and respiratory therapists coming out of retirement to help. Students of these professions who are close to graduating, are being granted permission to start working where they can. These people could easily avoid the risk, say they have paid their dues, or are not yet ready to practice...but they don't. Instead they seek a way to make a difference and they consider the greater good over their personal needs.

The dedication and selflessness of these professionals makes me very proud to say I was one of them. BUT the key word is WAS. I am not one of them anymore. Sure, I'm a supporter, and I know what the job demands, but I am too far removed and could not possibly provide safe and effective care today. So, this brings me back to the first sentence of this article...

"I have the privilege of using the title RN after my name, but as of now that stops."

I have a "non-practicing classification" that allows me to keep using the title RN. I have no problem with the designation being used by others in my circumstances but for me personally I see myself as a former nurse. I don't practice, and I can't practice. However, one way I can pay tribute and show respect to the real nursing heroes is to stop using the designation RN. I'm leaving that for the nurses that continue to care for our society or who spent an entire career doing that.

Thank you to all the nurses, and other healthcare professionals we rely on, and thank you to the many retired nurses who dedicated your lives to caring for others. We have always owed you a debt of gratitude but now everyone sees it and recognizes it even more.

I, and the entire staff at Benard + Associates wish you the very best and want you all to stay safe and healthy.

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