**American Travel Health Nurses Association: A Journey to ANA Specialty Status for Travel Health Nursing**

**Background:** According to CDC, an estimated 25,000 nurses provide pre- and post- travel clinical care to U.S. travelers. In 2012, the American Travel Health Nurses Association (ATHNA) began a seven year journey to achieve American Nurses Association (ANA) recognition of travel health nurses (THNs) as a specialty group of professional nurses who adhere to a strict code of ethics in accomplishing the most beneficial and cost effective travel health care for their clients. To engage support for this goal, ATHNA offered free membership and provided travel health continuing education and resources for nurses who work in various settings providing health and safety information to clients traveling for business, pleasure, medical procedures, religious obligations, and study abroad.

**Objectives:**

* To document the role, skills and knowledge of the THN in the United States
* To achieve ANA recognition of travel health nursing as a nursing specialty

**Methods:** Between 2012 and 2019, ATHNA´s Board of Directors convened a series of working groups to document the role of the U.S. THN and to meet the 14 ANA criteria required for specialty recognition. The project began with focus groups and a member survey to determine THN interest in specialty recognition. 81% of 200 nurses identified this as the highest professional priority. A two year role delineation initiative was undertaken involving experienced nurses from multiple practice settings who reviewed the professional literature and job descriptions.

**Summary of Results:**

Documents developed-

* A History of THNs in the U.S.
* THN Code of Ethics
* THN Conceptual Framework
* Forecasting THN Trends
* *Scope and Standards of Travel Health Nursing, 3rd ed.*
* Ten prototypical case scenarios demonstrating a distinct THN role and expertise

And 500% ↑in ATHNA membership with 1300 members from 47 states, 12 practice settings

**Conclusions:** ATHNA has engaged expert nurses from a multitude of practice settings to provide a comprehensive summary of the essential role that THNs play in providing optimal care to travelers. By developing the above documents, ATHNA has substantiated the expert knowledge and skill required to effectively work in the role of a THN. It’s clearly a role worthy of specialty recognition. The ANA application for specialty recognition is currently pending.