

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF NAJ

The Jamaica General Trained Nurses Association (JGTNA), came into being in July 1946, as a result of the vision, determination and hard work of twelve (12) founding nurses who recognized the urgent need for improving standard of nursing education and service in Jamaica. The Association operated from a suitcase which was kept in the position of one of the Officers. The Association aimed to obtain a state recognition of nursing as a profession and to advance the status of nursing.

The Main Objectives then were to achieve
(The Three R's)

REGISTRATION, RECIPROCITY, RECOGNITION

- State Registration for nurses
- Reciprocity of nurse training with recognized nursing bodies abroad, especially the General Nursing Council of England and Wales;
- National and international recognition of the Association as the professional organization for nurses in Jamaica.

These objectives were met successively:

1947 - In July, the first Annual Summer School was held

1951 - On December 15, Nurses Registration Law was passed providing registration of General and Mental trained nurses

1952 - In the earlier parts of 1952, regulations were made. The General Nursing Council of Jamaica was established and the law proclaimed that The Nurses Association of Jamaica (NAJ), should maintain majority of membership on the council

1953 - The NAJ (then JGTNA) was admitted as a member of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) at its Quadrennial Congress in Brazil.

1960 - Nurses Association of Jamaica (NAJ) admitted as a member of the Caribbean Nurses Organisation (CNO). The Mary Seacole House, the Association's Headquarters at 72 Arnold Road was opened. Land for the building was given by the Colonial Government. The Association was then able to establish an office but the work of the organization was still done by volunteers. The building was rented in order to get funds for the organization.

1961 - The Association launched its official journal "The Jamaican Nurse" which was published twice yearly. It has been included in the cumulative index of Nursing Literature since 1966.

1964 - Nurses and Midwives Act passed.

1966 - Psychiatric nursing was introduced into basic nursing curriculum.

In June, the Association's name changed from Jamaica General Trained Nurses Association (JTNA) to Nurses Association of Jamaica (NAJ)

1968 - NAJ hosted 6th Biennial Conference of the Caribbean Nurses Organisation (CNO). Nursing Welfare Officer post established at the Ministry of Health on the recommendation of NAJ.

1969 - Bust of Mary Seacole unveiled at NAJ's Headquarters. Members of NAJ attended (ICN) Quadrennial Congress in Canada. First course in Intensive Care Nursing started at the University Hospital.

Nurses invited to participate in seminars on collective bargaining and negotiations at the Trade Union Education Institution (TUEI) UWI.

2nd Vice President of NAJ, Lola Bragg elected 3rd Vice President of Jamaica Civil Service Association.

1970 - In April 1970, NAJ held its first Island Conference. NAJ was admitted a member of the Professional Centre Jamaica, now Professional Society of Jamaica (PSAJ).

1972 - In October, NAJ published first position paper "Blue Print for Progress". NAJ's President attended seminar on effective Nursing Care in Denmark

1973 - National Nurses Week was celebrated for the first time in May. Jamaica enrolled Assistant Nurses (JEANA) offered Associate Membership in NAJ.

August 1973 - Inaugural meeting of NAJ's negotiating body.

1974 - NAJ became the official bargaining as well as representational body for nursing matters in the country.

1975 - First Nurse of the Year Award:- (Recipient - Mrs Sara Mullings-Hamilton, Public Health Nurse from Mandeville

Norman Washington Manley Foundation Award for Excellence awarded to NAJ's Recipient, Miss Gertrude Swaby.

Foundation Members of NAJ Credit Union participated in training sessions to start Study Club as basis for establishing NAJ Co-op Credit Union. NAJ's representatives to government resulted in establishment of Assistant Nursing Officer (Educator) post in the Ministry of Health.

1976 – NAJ was represented on government's delegation to ILO Convention in Geneva. In April, NAJ's Co-op Credit Union was established

NAJ participated in Kingston Public Hospital Two Hundred years celebration on December 14, 1976.

1977 – Nurse Practitioner Programme commenced after years of lobbying with NAJ and the Ministry of Health.

1978 – In September, NAJ acquires property at 4 Trevennion Park Road as Annex to Mary Seacole House and the Secretariat of the Association set up full time staff.

1982 – Senior Administrative Nursing Group (SANG) a special interest group of the Association had its first award for Excellence in Clinical Nursing. This award is given annually to primary and secondary care alternately.

1983 – Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) programme introduced at the University of the West Indies after years of lobbying with the NAJ and Government.

1984 – NAJ participated in a four week multi-regional study programme in the USA and attended the 3rd Biennial Convention and 10th Anniversary of the Coalition of Labour Union Woman in Chicago.

In May, 1984, NAJ hosted the 5th two weeks workshop organized by ICN for nurses in the English speaking Caribbean and the USA on mobilizing Nursing Leadership for Primary Health Care.

It was the year of the "Bonded unemployment nurses". NAJ lobbied with the government to employ thirty-eight new graduates.

A new NAJ logo with the Jamaican map designed and implemented. NAJ was instrumental in getting government to ratify ILO Convention Number 167.

1985 NAJ representative elected Director of ICN Board.

1988 – NAJ hosted the 16th Biennial Conference of CNO

1989 – Office complex and Leleka Champagne hostel was officially opened on July 31 at 4 Trevennion Park Road. NAJ representative elected 3rd Vice President of ICN.

1991 – NAJ hosted the International Council of Nurses, Council of National Representatives ICN/CNR meeting.

The ceremonial opening was at the Jamaica Conference Centre. A two-day International conference was also hosted during the period.

1993 – NAJ's Secretariat moved to the ground floor of the new office block at 4 Trevennion Park Road.

1994 – Participated in CNO in Bermuda

1995 – Participated in ICN/CNR in Zimbabwe, Africa

1996 – NAJ celebrated its 50th Anniversary. All past presidents honoured on July 19, 1996. Bust of 1st President, Dame Nita Barrow erected at NAJ Secretariat, unveiling done by 2nd President, Mrs Grace March.

NAJ participants (3) commenced two year Leadership for Change – ICN Kellogg Foundation

1997 NAJ's participants in Leadership for Change Project accorded Kellogg's Fellows

NATURE OF NATIONAL NURSES ASSOCIATION

The National Nurses Association (professional organization) as a representative body works closely with the regional and international Organisation on matters affecting nursing health care in all spheres.

The Organisation is run by nurses from diverse background who share learning experiences, explore nursing issues and exchange information of clinical and general interest. Every member of the Association is an important and valuable part of the professional organization.

The NAJ is a non-government, voluntary non-sectoral organization representing over Two Thousand and Six Hundred (2,600) members, including General nursing students.

Created by agreement and resolution of interested parties, Jamaican nurses

The Association is autonomous and independent that is:-
Makes its own constitution, rules and negotiates for itself
Financed exclusively by dues from members, public subscriptions sometimes obtained through fundraising efforts.