

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF RURAL NURSING AND HEALTH CARE

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Editor

It seems like yesterday that I was discussing the need for a accessible source of knowledge for nurses and other health professionals practicing/working in rural areas and/or populations. The year was 1997. I had just begun my tenure at The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing, as the Saxon Endowed Chair for Rural Nursing. The more I discussed this with my colleagues and mentors the more I realized that what was needed was a peer reviewed electronic journal that could be accessed by all rural nurses and that would facilitate the sharing of research and practice knowledge. After some research and more discussion and with the support of the Rural Nurses Association and The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing Dean, Dr. Sara Barger the first issue of the Online Journal of Rural Nursing and Health Care was posted to the Rural Nurse Organization in 2000 as a fully refereed journal. In those first years we published the Journal quarterly but soon realized that that was too fast to be handled by all volunteer time. So the decision was made to back down to two issues a year, Spring and Fall. That tempo worked well for the amount of personnel and time we had to work with the Journal.

The next step was to get the Journal indexed and through the work of managing editor Dr. Steven MacCall, we were first referenced in CINAHL in 2003; however, since that time, the CINAHL has indexed all articles and columns of the Journal since volume 1, number 1 from 2000, so the complete run of all articles and columns published in the Journal is available through a bibliographic search of the primary index to the nursing literature.

As time moved on and the amount of articles submitted increased, we realized in 2006 that we needed to evolve the method used to publish the Journal, so we moved the Journal to a better online publishing environment. We chose (and presently use) one of the top open source e-journal publishing platforms called "[Open Journal Systems](#)". Again Dr. MacCall took the lead and with the help of the Rural Nurse Organization Webmaster made the change with all back issues now available in the PDF format.

At this same time it became evident that in order to preserve the Online Journal of Rural Nursing and Health Care as the official journal of the Rural Nurse Organization we implemented the policy that at least one author of published articles had to be a member of the Rural Nurse organization. This has worked well and the number of submissions have continued to grow to the point that additional personnel/resources are needed to manage the Journal submissions and reviews in a timely manner so during the next several months the Editorial Board and staff will be exploring options and strategies to facilitate the continued growth of the Journal while having it as accessible to rural nurses and other health professionals as possible.

I will update the progress in each issue for the next year as we explore what direction the Journal will take and how it will continue to grow. One thing I do know is that there will continue to be a need for manuscript reviewers for our panels so if you are interested in doing that for us please send me an email stating your interest and include your vita. The email is rural.nurse.org@gmail.com