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 Co-author: *Saving Lives: Why the Media's Portrayal of Nursing Puts Us All at Risk*

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**THE TRUTH ABOUT NURSING**

is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that seeks to increase public understanding of the central, front-line role nurses play in modern health care. Our focus is to promote more accurate, balanced and frequent media portrayals of nurses and increase the media's use of nurses as expert sources. The Truth About Nursing's ultimate goal is to foster growth in the size and diversity of the nursing profession at a time of critical shortage, strengthen nursing practice, teaching and research, and improve the health care system.

**Planning speakers?**

**Sandy Summers can empower nurses and nursing students!**

Media images of health care—ranging from the news media to TV dramas like *Grey's Anatomy* or *Code Black*—have an important effect on the nursing profession. Many nurses and nursing students feel frustrated and disrespected when influential media products undervalue nurses. But how can we change what the media tells the public about nursing?

Sandy Summers, RN, MSN, MPH, founder and executive director of The Truth About Nursing, has led high-profile efforts to promote more accurate and robust depictions of nursing since 2001. She has shared her insights in dynamic presentations to groups around the world. She teaches nurses how to reshape their image into one that reflects the profession's true value. When nurses get the respect they deserve, they will attract more resources for nursing practice, education, and research, so we can improve the quality of patient care and resolve the nursing shortage. Sign Sandy up for your next graduation ceremony, conference, or gala event!

**Abstract: The Value of Nursing**

The under-funding of the nursing profession is a public health crisis and one of the greatest dangers to patients and the public. Sandy Summers will explore some overlooked roots and effects of the nursing crisis, then offer strategies to help nurses respond. By reconsidering how our society thinks and acts toward nursing, we can empower nurses to reduce healthcare errors, improve retention of nurses in the workforce, and enhance public health

Media products have long shaped and reinforced inaccurate perceptions about the nature of nursing work. Public health research shows that even entertainment media products have a

significant effect on how people think and act with regard to health care. But today too few decision-makers, from government to the public at large, know that nurses are skilled professionals who save lives and improve outcomes. Resources flow accordingly.

The media commonly presents nurses as unskilled handmaidens, sex objects, angels, or battle-axes. Advanced practice nurses are often ignored or portrayed as cut-rate physician substitutes, even though studies show their care is at least as good. While there are exceptions, the most influential media rarely conveys the importance of nursing. Indeed, the media often not only fails to portray nursing accurately, but depicts physicians doing exciting and dramatic work that nurses actually do. The news media primarily interview physicians. Nurses appear in only less than 4% of news articles, and then generally just for color commentary, not scientific explanations of health processes and how to attain wellness.

On the whole, that media environment suggests to the public that nurses lack substantive knowledge and autonomy. Such undervaluation can demoralize practicing nurses; discourage talented people, especially men, from entering the profession; legitimize poor staffing and the dilution of nursing with less-educated technicians; and contribute to under-funding of nursing education, research, residencies, and clinical practice. These are factors in the nursing shortage that takes millions of lives worldwide.

Sandy Summers will explore strategies to help nurses and nursing students reach out to the media, using the Truth About Nursing's web site and the book *Saving Lives: Why the Media's Portrayal of Nursing Puts Us All at Risk*. Sandy can inspire *your* group to help move the image of nursing toward that of a profession that's second to none!

**See Sandy's: Biography:** [bit.ly/sandy\\_bio](http://bit.ly/sandy_bio)  
**Calendar:** [bit.ly/sandy\\_events](http://bit.ly/sandy_events)  
**Photo:** [bit.ly/sandy\\_photo](http://bit.ly/sandy_photo)

**Check Sandy's availability at [info@truthaboutnursing.org](mailto:info@truthaboutnursing.org) or 410-323-1100!**

*All honoraria and book royalties go directly to The Truth About Nursing, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Truth About Nursing asks for a \$4,000 donation to our organization for a speech, presentation or even a series of presentations by Sandy Summers—this includes all travel expenses. For engagements outside North America, we ask for a \$5,000 donation to cover extra travel costs. If your school, organization, hospital or group has difficulty affording this, please get in touch and we will try work things out at [info@truthaboutnursing.org](mailto:info@truthaboutnursing.org). Thank you!*