

Saving Lives

Why the Media's Portrayal of Nursing Puts Us All at Risk

Updated Second Edition

Sandy Summers and Harry Jacobs Summers

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For millions of people worldwide, nurses are the difference between life and death, self-sufficiency and dependency, hope and despair. But a lack of understanding of what nurses really do—one perpetuated by popular media's portrayal of nurses as simplistic archetypes—has devalued the profession and contributed to a global shortage that constitutes a public health crisis. Today, the thin ranks of the nursing workforce contribute to countless preventable deaths.

This fully updated and expanded edition of *Saving Lives* highlights the essential roles nurses play in contemporary health care and how this role is marginalized by contemporary culture. Through engaging prose and examples drawn from television, advertising, and news coverage, the authors detail the media's role in reinforcing stereotypes that fuel the nursing shortage and devalue a highly educated sector of the contemporary workforce. Perhaps most important, the authors provide a wealth of ideas to help reinvigorate the nursing field and correct this imbalance.

As American health care undergoes its greatest overhaul in decades, the practical role of nurses—that as autonomous, highly skilled practitioners—has never been more important. Accordingly, *Saving Lives* addresses both the sources of, and prescription for, misperceptions surrounding contemporary nursing.

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