Every year, National Nurses Week focuses attention on the diverse ways America’s nurses work to save lives and improve the health of millions of individuals. The American Nurses Association (ANA) has selected “Nursing: The Balance of Mind, Body, and Spirit” as the theme for 2017. This theme corresponds to ANA’s designation of 2017 as the “year of the healthy nurse.” As a Bellin nurse, this theme correlates well to our overall system mission and vision. Evaluating the whole person and incorporating mind, body, and spirit aligns with our goals to positively impact health and well-being. Annually, National Nurses Week begins on May 6 and ends on May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, founder of nursing as a modern profession.

Across Bellin Health System there are over 1,000 nurses providing care in a variety of settings. The impact that Bellin nurses have on the health of our population is measurable and evidenced in Bellin’s national quality and safety awards. For the sixth consecutive year, Bellin Health was recognized with a Five Star Rating in the Outstanding Patient Experience Award™ from Healthgrades®, and was also awarded with their 2016 Patient Safety Excellence Award™. Bellin, for the 5th time in a row received a Hospital Safety Grade of “A” from the Leapfrog Group. In addition, the American Heart Association “Get with the Guidelines” program has recognized Bellin with the 2016 Stroke Gold Plus Achievement Award and the 2016 Excellence in Stroke Care Award Door to Scanner Time. The Green Bay Press Gazette ‘Best of the Bay’ Awards cited Bellin Hospital for Best Hospital 2016. To share all this great work, in 2016 Bellin Nurses presented at national, state, and local conferences on quality and safety improvement work that has occurred at Bellin. Throughout the community and even the nation: **Bellin Nurses Change Lives!**

Emphasizing that fact, there is another great activity happening during this year’s Nurses Week and that is the launch of the new Department of Transportation Specialty license plate for Nurses. The “Nurses Change Lives” specialty license plate is now available and may be ordered through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The plate can be ordered by nurses, nursing staff, friends, students, and families. You don’t have to be a nurse to order the plates. The cost is $40 and there is an annual fee of $25. For every plate that is sold, $25 goes toward funding professional development, education, and scholarships for Wisconsin nurses.

![Wisconsin WI-Nurse](http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/vehicles/title-plates/nurses.aspx)

So on behalf of Bellin Health, thank you to all the nurses across the system for the work you do every day and in every setting. The impact you have on the lives of our patients, families, and communities is very much appreciated. We celebrate you!

Sincerely,

Laura Hieb, MBA, BSN, RN, NE-BC
Chief Nursing Officer, SVP Service Lines, and CEO Bellin Health Oconto Hospital