Nurses are among the hardest working people I know. Even after more than 25 years in the profession, I am endlessly amazed and gratified by the sacrifice nurses make every day to ensure the best possible care for their patients. They’re not only experts at patient care, but also masters of family support. They’ve held hands, wiped tears, and helped patients and their families determine that “next step” on the healthcare journey. Despite aching feet and often sore hearts, nurses remain selfless. With this approach to their work, it’s no wonder nurses are consistently part of one of the most trusted professions in the United States.

Nurses occasionally gain the spotlight. Of course we mark Nurses Day and Nurses Week in May of each year, coinciding with the birth of Florence Nightingale. We also recognize Certified Nurses Day annually on March 19, the birthdate of Margretta Madden Styles. Dr. Styles was the architect of the first comprehensive study of nurse credentialing in the 1970s and was a driving force behind the creation of the American Nurses Credentialing Center. These dates represent a great opportunity for nurses everywhere to celebrate each other as valued members of an esteemed profession.

Medical-Surgical Nurses Week
Nurses also can celebrate their commitment to specialty practice. Medical-surgical nurses, our time is coming! The Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses designates November 1-7 annually to recognize the compassion and commitment of nurses in our specialty. If leaders in your facility have no current plans to mark this important week, why don’t you take the reins in organizing activities to honor medical-surgical nurses? Encourage your nurse leaders to identify a special day in this week to recognize the contribution of medical-surgical nurses. Unit-level celebrations may include potluck meals or dessert receptions. Invite facility leaders to join you for these special events so they can connect personally with clinical nurses in medical-surgical practice.

You also can post the poster included with this issue to acknowledge the caring nurse experts on the medical-surgical units (see ideas for celebrating on the AMSN website at https://www.amsn.org/membership/its-all-about-you/medical-surgical-nurses-week). In addition, certificates of appreciation are available on the AMSN website to ensure every nurse is honored. How about a newsletter just for Medical-Surgical Nurses Week to introduce patients to their nursing caregivers and highlight the years of experience represented on each unit? Submit a column to your facility newsletter or a local newspaper to identify the history of medical-surgical nursing and the important role of this specialty in public health and safety. Go big by requesting a proclamation from your city’s mayor or your state’s governor to recognize the members of this critical specialty during this important week.

Does this seem to be a lot of fuss? You bet…and each of you deserves the accolades! While we all enjoy the personal attention, the best part of this celebration is helping our communities understand the way medical-surgical nurses affect health for so many people. Get ready for Medical-Surgical Nurses Week…and see how many ways you can celebrate!