



Deb Kiley DNP, FNP-C, FAANP is an innovator and entrepreneur focusing on functional medicine and integrative practices. One cannot attend an AANP or FAANP meeting without having Dr. Kiley lead a “wellness” break between sessions. She was one of the first 100 members of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (now American Association of Nurse Practitioners). She served as the Alaska state and Region 10 representative and served on AANP’s Board of Directors. She remains active with AANP and FAANP. She was an innovator of telehealth when she lived in Alaska and providing access to specialists in Anchorage. She also worked in a multidisciplinary pain center in California where the focus was on function and the biosocialphyscial being of patients with chronic pain. She obtained her certification in Integrative Medicine from Duke University and now has her own practice, Fearless Wellness Inc, a consulting practice to keep people out of the health care system. She utilizes motivational interviewing along with integrative practices to improves one’s well-being and function.

Interview Abstract:

Dr. Kiley initially was involved in critical care nursing following her baccalaureate in nursing degree. When she decided to return for a master’s education, she considered an MBA but decided that she did not want to limit herself to critical care management. She obtained her master’s degree as an FNP. Nurse practitioner positions were somewhat limited at the time so took a position as an NP in a multidisciplinary pain center. This experience taught her to determine the root cause of the pain, listen to patients and focus on function rather than pain medication. While working in Alaska she was an early adoptor of telehealth technology. She was co-founder of Alaska Health Resources that developed and maintained a server that provided rural sites to utilize telehealth and access specialists in Anchorage. She became involved in AANP while living in Alaska. She emphasizes the importance of developing networks and colleagues throughout the US. She became a certified integrative medicine coach to add a dimension to her consultation services, Fearless Wellness, Inc. Her enthusiasm and passion for her patients as well as her own well-being is very evident in her interview. She

recommends that new nurse practitioners get involved and expand their horizons. She also stresses quality and integrity of nurse practitioner programs.

Bio Sketch:

Dr. Kiley is an energetic patient advocate seizing any opportunity to speak out for patients as individuals or groups. She was one of the first 100 members of AANP. She served as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, served as region 10 Director, as well as AANP state representative for Alaska. Dr. Kiley has been an early adopter of telehealth technology, sharing concepts and designs in Alaska with clinicians and at the University of Alaska. She was co-founder of Alaska Health Resources, a consulting company that developed and maintained a server that allowed rural sites to utilize telehealth to access specialists in Anchorage, completing the first telehealth efficacy project in Alaska, which demonstrated the utility of telehealth technology for patients and clinicians. As a Nurse Practitioner at the Alaska Center for Pain Relief and the founder of Fearless Wellness LLC, Dr. Kiley addresses the cause of disease when working with patients to identify their best path to improved health. She looks for innovative approaches to persistent problems and provides a functional approach and integrative health coaching. She earned certification as an integrative health coach through the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine. She speaks nationally to clinician and patient groups on patient engagement, non-opioid pain management and accessible lifestyle strategies to improve health and well-being. She was inducted as a Fellow in AANP in 2005 and as a Fellow of the National Academy of Practice. She co-authored a text on Pain Management for Primary Care Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants. She continues to mentor nurse practitioners and students in professional development, leadership, patient centered care and personal wellness.

Key words: wellness, integrative medicine, telehealth, functional medicine, entrepreneurship

Deb Kiley

Interview

AANP Oral History Project



Dr. Deb Kiley DNP, FNP, FAANP

Place for Interview: Telephone Interview

Education:

University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, BSN, 1973

University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA, MSN, 1983

Rush College of Nursing, Chicago, IL, DNP, 2008

Certifications:

FNP- American Nurses Credentialing Center and American Association of Nurse Practitioner Certification Board

Certified Integrative Health Coach – Duke Center for Integrative Medicine, Durham, NC

Short Biography:

Dr. Kiley is an energetic patient advocate seizing any opportunity to speak out for patients as individuals or groups. She was one of the first 100 members of AANP. She served as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners serving as region 10 director, and AANP state

representative for Alaska. Dr. Kiley has been an early adopter of telehealth technology, sharing concepts and designs in Alaska with clinicians and at the University of Alaska. She was co-founder of Alaska Health Resources, a consulting company that developed and maintained a server that allowed rural sites to utilize telehealth to access specialists in Anchorage, completing the first telehealth efficacy project in Alaska, which demonstrated the utility of telehealth technology for patients and clinicians. As a Nurse Practitioner at the Alaska Center for Pain Relief and the founder of Fearless Wellness LLC, Dr. Kiley addresses the cause of disease when working with patients to identify their best path to improved health. She looks for innovative approaches to persistent problems and provides a functional approach and integrative health coaching. She earned certification as an integrative health coach through the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine. She speaks nationally to clinician and patient groups on patient engagement, non-opioid pain management and accessible lifestyle strategies to improve health and well-being. She was inducted as a Fellow in AANP in 2005 and as a Fellow of the National Academy of Practice. She co-authored a text on Pain Management for Primary Care Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants. She continues to mentor nurse practitioners and students in professional development, leadership, patient centered care and personal wellness.

When did you become an NP? What was the motivation?

I started working as a registered nurse in Boston in 1973 and as a critical care nurse in Los Angeles in 1974. I always knew I wanted to continue my education. I started a MBA program in 1978 because at that time I was running an ICU and thought I should get my MBA. But then I decided that I did not want to manage an ICU any longer. So, I decided to enroll in the FNP program at UCLA because I wanted the most flexibility. That way, I could do or go anywhere after graduation. MSN programs at that time were only full time, so I would work 20 hours a week teaching critical care and drive across LA to attend classes. I was also pregnant at that time. I drove 500 miles a week.

What experiences did you bring into the role?

I worked in many diverse jobs. After graduating from my BSN program, I worked at Beth Israel, an academic institution associated with Harvard University. It was there that I would talk with patients who were awake and learned to listen. I learned that presence makes good practice. We then moved to

Los Angeles so that my now husband could attend dental school and I worked at St. John's Intensive Care Unit. Those were the early days of ICU where I was involved in the care of the first patients with PA lines and intra-aortic balloon pumps. I then persuaded the powers to be to allow a transfer to dialysis. Things have certainly changed from my time in ICU and dialysis. The challenge, innovation and drive of an ICU nurse makes a good nurse practitioner. There is motivation to obtain information and then apply it. I think that working in ICU is easier than working in a medical-surgical centered unit.

Did you experience any challenges? How were they resolved?

After graduation from my master's program in 1983, there were not many NP positions available at that time. NP practice was protocol driven. NPs did not have prescriptive authority in California, but the concept of "furnishing" provided for supervision by an MD. I was very tired of driving by then so I accepted a position within ten minutes of my home in Pain Management. This multi-disciplinary program was designed to help patients, including many workers' compensation patients, to improve functional ability and reduce/eliminate their reliance on pain medications. Working closely with the physician medical director of the program, I did comprehensive intake evaluations of patients and followed them through the six weeks program. I had the privilege of working with talented and visionary physical therapists and psychologists, and seeing firsthand the benefits of self-efficacy for patients with chronic diseases. The patients had many complex physical and psychological challenges, I learned the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, and working as a team.

Are there any experiences that you would like to talk about?

I have worked with skilled people who had a broad view of pain management and that stayed with me. I have carried forward the biopsychosocial model for patient centered care. It is now recognized that there is a difference between pain and suffering, and that persistent pain has biopsychosocial factors, and optimal care comes from this perspective. This perspective impacts my practice. Throughout my career people who have invisible wounds have sought out my care; such as patients with fibromyalgia, schizophrenia, eating disorders. It was a privilege to be able to help them whether it be a nudge or blunt approach. They knew I always had their best interests at heart. When I left a pain practice where I had worked for many years, some of the patients were tearful, and

fearful, one said “I know they will see me, but they won’t love me like you do.” Today, practicing functional medicine, informed by Integrative health coaching, I enjoy focusing on patient history and lifestyle, and using focused testing to determine the root cause of problems to help people optimize their health. I have lived by the sacred rule of getting to know people.

Another experience that has had impact in my life is my involvement with AANP and becoming a Fellow in AANP. It is a privilege getting to know “icons” who don’t take themselves seriously. When I decided to obtain my DNP, I chose Rush College of Nursing because it fit my beliefs and style; every course had the word “change” in it. I did not feel pressure to obtain a DNP; I did it for myself. Shortly after starting the program, I was attending a FAANP meeting and in walks Dr. Ruth Kleinpell, who I was scheduled to have for class the following semester. I was very nervous about meeting her but she was so gracious and just like all of us at that meeting. I learned so much about Evaluating Outcomes from taking her course and have used those concepts ever since. Humility and approachability are two qualities I see in most Fellows.

What was most challenging in your career/ most important?

I never focused solely on my career. I looked to see what fit with my family. I could have been more purposeful but I have no regrets.

Is there anything you would want to change?

I would have utilized and learned more about functional medicine earlier.

What do you see as pivotal moments in the past years?

When I became involved with AANP, it opened my horizons. I was one of the first 100 members. It was on a whim that I ran for AANP Alaska state representative. I started meeting people and never turned back. I went to a policy meeting with Jan Towers and sat next to Mona Counts. One doesn’t meet Mona without becoming involved. I was then appointed to Regional 10 Director and have been active ever since. The key message here is that acting on a whim got me to meet many people I would not have known. It was a treasure.

Another pivotal moment was the decision to start my Fearless Wellness Practice. I wanted to start a consulting practice to keep people out of the health care system. I rely on functional medicine and integrative practices. I still use

diagnostics such as advanced lipid testing and work to change life styles. I also use motivational interviewing. I strive to help my patients find their own path to success in their own life and identify what makes them happy. I try to help people fulfill their lives by using all the tools in my toolbox. Functional medicine is complex and utilizes a holistic approach early in care.

What advice would you give to new nurse practitioners?

I would encourage new nurse practitioners to find their inner joy and to take care of themselves first. I would also encourage them to take chances and reach out to “icons.” Nurse practitioners like everyone else should try something new every day. Get involved in local and national professional organizations; it is important to contribute, and you always get back more than you give.

What do you see as the role of Nurse Practitioners in the next 25 years?

That is hard to say. The optimistic view is that we will be providing most of the primary care and holistic specialty care in the U.S. We need to be vigilant on maintaining our roots and quality educational programs. We will look to AACN and NONPF to take leadership in this regard.