We’ve all been there. You’re exhausted at the end of your workday, but you still have all the things to do that need doing. Your mental “to-do” list overflows with what you need to get to once you’ve taken care of everything else. “I’ll get around to it after I . . . .” You can fill in that blank with any number of immediate demands.

Perhaps one issue you haven’t gotten around to is retirement planning. Whether you’re just starting out in the workforce or winding down a lifelong career, it’s an issue that needs your attention. But it’s hard to get it off your “to-do” list with so many competing demands.

Many busy nurses are in the same boat. In a survey conducted by the Center for American Nurses and the Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER), 61% of respondents acknowledged they don’t spend enough time on retirement planning because of other time consuming priorities. Here’s another barrier that may ring true to you: not knowing where to begin. Fifty-nine percent of nurses report feeling this way.

This is where the Center for American Nurses comes in. The Center and WISER, a nonprofit organization focused on women’s retirement security, have teamed to create the Nurses’ Investor Education Project. The initiative, funded by a grant from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, aims to provide nurses with the financial planning information they want and need, in a variety of formats that can fit into their busy schedules.

“Our survey had some good news – that most nurses are putting money away for retirement,” says Wylecia Harris, the Center’s executive director. “What’s troubling is that less than half have tried to figure out how much income they’ll need when they get there.”

The Center and WISER are using results from the survey and from focus groups to create financial planning tools and resources geared to nurses. Dubbed “The Busy Nurses Guide” series, the resources include in-person group workshops, webinars, podcasts, a newsletter, and a decision-making guide.

The Center is taking an innovative approach to the group workshops. The project team has been training nurses across the country to run them. “Through the survey and focus groups, we know nurses are wary of ‘outsiders’ when it comes to financial issues,” explains Harris. “So we are replicating an approach that WISER has found very successful. We’re training a cadre of nurses that will run workshops in their local areas.” So far, the project team has run training sessions in seven states.

Workshop topics came directly from the survey and focus groups. Nurses indicated they want to know more about:

- Making retirement savings last a lifetime
• Preparing for retirement
• Basics of investing
• Setting, measuring and achieving financial goals

These same issues are informing a series of financial planning webinars. You can find recorded versions of three the Center has sponsored so far at www.centerforamericannurses.org.

The team is currently producing five-minute podcasts on financial planning topics of interest to nurses. The Busy Nurses’ Guide to Making Money Last as Long as You Do podcast is the first one out of the gate, and is currently available for download from the Center’s website. “This is something nurses can listen to when they’re running errands or folding the laundry,” says Harris. “We’re trying to come up with as many ways as we can to reach as many nurses as we can, no matter how hectic their lives may be.”

The program also includes a financial planning newsletter. Published quarterly, WiserNurse also focuses directly on issues uncovered in the survey.

The latest tool from the initiative is a decision-making guide called, The Busy Nurses Guide to Financial Planning. As with other resources created for the Nurses’ Investor Education Project, the booklet focuses on retirement planning issues specific to nurses. “It’s an easy read,” comments Harris. “It should help all nurses take concrete steps to secure their financial futures.”

A key step the team hopes nurses will take is figuring out how much money they will need to support themselves in retirement. As Harris notes, “Once you have a tangible goal, it’s more clear what actions you need to take to get there.”

With resources offered through the Nurses’ Investor Education Project, you’ll finally be able to get around to retirement planning. Before you know it, you’ll be able to move it from your mental “to-do” list to one that says, “Done!” Now if you can just get around to cleaning out the garage…. (Sorry – the Center hasn’t figured that one out – yet!)

About the Center for American Nurses

The Center for American Nurses is a national professional nursing organization that educates, equips, and empowers nurses to develop healthy work environments for themselves and their patients. The Center offers evidence-based solutions and powerful tools to navigate workplace challenges, optimize patient outcomes, and maximize career benefits. Established in 2003, the Center partners with organizational and individual registered nurse members nationwide to develop resources, strategies, and tools to help nurses manage evolving workforce issues, and succeed in their careers. Additional information about the Center can be found at www.centerforamericannurses.org

About WISER

The Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement is a nonprofit organization that helps women, educators and policymakers understand the important issues surrounding women’s retirement income. WISER works to provide low and moderate income women with basic financial information aimed at helping them take financial control over their lives and to increase awareness of the structural barriers that prevent women’s adequate participation in the nation’s retirement systems. Additional information about the Nurse Investor Education Project can be found at http://www.wisewomen.org/portal/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=390&Itemid=0