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Next-Level Practice: Updates and Essentials for Georgia APRNs

March 7, 2026

CONFERENCE
PROGRAM

Shaping the Future of Advanced
Practice in Aging Care and Beyond

PARK SPRINGS LIFE PLAN COMMUNITY
5610 BERMUDA RD SW, STONE MOUNTAIN, GA

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ABOUT GAPNA

The Georgia Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GA GAPNA) is a professional organization that seeks to promote high standards of healthcare for older adults through Advanced Gerontological Nursing Practice, education, and networking. The Georgia chapter was founded in 2007 and hosted its first annual continuing education conference in 2010. We are proud to have provided annual continuing education conferences for over a decade.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Robin Pingeton, RN, MSN, FNP

Principal Officer: Nikki Davis, DNP, MSN, FNP-C, GNP-BC, ACHPN

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Brette Svensson, DNP, MSN, AGPCNP-BC

Cotenna Clark, AGNP-C

Alison A. Schlenger, APRN-BC, GNP-BC

Thasha Ann Chu, DNP, MSN, CCRN, AGACNP-BC

Kari Burdzinski, MSN, AGPCNP-BC

Robin Pingeton, RN, MSN, FNP

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MORNING AGENDA

7:30 am - 8:15 am

Registration and Breakfast Buffet Open

8:15 am - 8:30 am

Welcome and Announcements

8:30 am - 10:00 am

Keynote Speakers

Essential Updates for Georgia APRNs

Jennifer Johnston, MSN, FNP, NEA-BC

Robin Pingeton, RN, MSN, FNP

-Raffle Drawing-

-Penny Maynard Memorial Presentation-

10:00 am - 10:30 am

Break & Exhibit Hall

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Highlighted Speakers

Cultivating a Robust Preceptor-Student Relationship

Bertha Calloway, DNP, APRN, ANP-C

Cotenna Clark, AGNP-C

Jennifer Johnston, MSN, FNP, NEA-BC

-Raffle Drawing-

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AFTERNOON AGENDA

12:00 pm – 12:15 pm

GeneSight Lunch Sponsor Presentation

12:15 pm – 1:15 pm

Exhibit Hall with Lunch

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

Urology Updates in Older Adults

Christie McCauley, NP-C

2:15 pm - 3:15 pm

Best Practices: Managing Behavioral and Psychosocial Symptoms of
Dementia

Joel Kirson, MD

3:15 pm – 3:30 pm

Short Break

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Closing Speaker

Critical Knowledge Check: Death Certificate Training

Romana Mayer, MD

4:30 pm

Closing Announcements and Final Raffle Drawings

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Jennifer Johnston, MSN, FNP, NEA-BC
Advanced Practice Division Lead:
Ambulatory and Specialty Services
NP Transition to Practice Program
Lead
Wellstar Health System

Jennifer is a Family Nurse Practitioner with more than 13 years of clinical practice and has served as the Advanced Practice Division Lead for Ambulatory Services at Wellstar Medical Group since 2019. In this role, she provides system-wide leadership for advanced practice provider (APP) workforce strategy, governance, and professional development while maintaining an active clinical practice. She advises system leadership on APP utilization, performance, engagement, retention, and regulatory compliance. Jennifer also directs the RN-to-NP Transition to Practice Program at Wellstar Health System, which supports newly graduated nurse practitioners as they transition into clinical practice.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Robin Pingeton, RN, MSN, FNP Owner, Pingeton Senior Health & Wellness

Robin is a nurse practitioner with over 35 years of experience in healthcare. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Kansas and her Master of Science from Georgia State University. Her career began in the field of geriatrics in 1998 after joining EverCare (now Optum). She has professional experience in psychiatric health, dementia, depression, mood disorders, and primary care of the elderly. She has worked with Dr. Gary Figiel, a nationally recognized leading expert in Neurology and Psychiatry in the elderly, with experiences in transitional care and acute rehabilitation.

Robin is a successful entrepreneur as the owner of Pingeton Senior Health & Wellness, a practice focused on delivery of comprehensive dementia and chronic care management in residential communities. In this role she prioritizes communication between patient families and their communities to achieve high quality, seamless medical care.

Robin has worn many hats, including Secretary of the Gwinnett and Forsyth County Chapters of the United Advanced Practice Registered Nurses of Georgia (UAPRN), co-chair of the Government Relations Committee, and now the current Chapter President of Georgia GAPNA. She is also active in the national GAPNA Legislative Affairs Committee. In 2023 she was awarded the Nurse Practitioner Advocate State Award for Excellence for the State of Georgia by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, as well as the prestigious 2023 Mary Jane Seacole "Champion in Healthcare Advocacy" by Help for Healthcare Professionals.

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HIGHLIGHTED SPEAKERS



Bertha Calloway, DNP, APRN, ANP-C
Clinical Instructor
Georgia State University

Dr. Calloway holds over a decade of experience as an advanced practice nurse. She received her Doctor of Nursing Practice from The University of Alabama in Huntsville with a project focus on prevention of pressure injuries long-term care facilities. Dr. Calloway has dedicated the last several years to cultivating strong advanced practice nursing foundations in the Adult Health courses at Georgia State University and guiding Adult-Gerontology students in their clinical experiences. She strives to ensure all her students are comprehensively prepared to tackle the challenges, overcome barriers to patient care, and promote the role of advanced practice nurses in the ever-changing healthcare setting.

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HIGHLIGHTED SPEAKERS



Cotenna Clark, MSN, APRN, A-GNP-C, MA
Integrated Memory Care Clinic

Cotenna Clark received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2013 and her Master of Science in 2019, both from the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University. As an Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner she specializes in dementia care within her role at the Emory Integrated Memory Care Clinic, providing well-rounded primary care services to patients in the community and clinic. Cotenna is passionate about educating future advanced practice nurses and is a frequent preceptor for Emory MSN students.

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SESSION SPEAKERS



Christie McCauley, NP-C
Wellstar Urology, Austell

Christie McCauley is a certified nurse practitioner who has been part of Wellstar Health system for more than 15 years. Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, she developed an early passion for healthcare and began her career as a medical assistant in a gynecology office at Northside. She later pursued nursing, working full-time as a patient care technician and sitter while earning her Associate of Science in Nursing from North Georgia College.

After graduation, Christie joined the CCU at Wellstar Kennestone Regional Medical Center, where she spent 10 years providing patient-centered care. During this time, she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from North Georgia College. Committed to advancing her clinical knowledge, she completed a dual degree in Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner in 2014.

Since graduating, Christie has served at Wellstar Urology, where she cares for men and women with a wide range of urologic needs. She is dedicated to delivering world-class healthcare and strives each day to make a positive impact on the lives of her patients.

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SESSION SPEAKERS



Joel Kirson, MD

**Board Certified in Adult Psychiatry and Addiction Psychiatry
Geriatric Psychiatry Medical Director, CareNow Services
Psychiatric Consultant, Black Bear Lodge**

Dr. Kirson possesses over 20 years of experience and geriatric psychiatry expertise in depression, dementia, sleep issues, anxiety, stress, and multiple other conditions. He received his medical degree from the University of Maryland and completed a psychiatry residency at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He is Board-Certified in Addiction Psychiatry through the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Kirson leads CareNow Services, a network of multiple specialists, including APRNs, psychiatrists, and licensed clinical social workers who collaborate to provide psychiatric evaluations, pharmacological management, and therapeutic interventions for patients living in long-term care facilities.

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CLOSING SPEAKER



Romana Mayer, MD
Associate Medical Examiner
Georgia Bureau of Investigation, DOFS

Dr. Romana Mayer received her undergraduate degree from Emory University in 2014. She stayed in Atlanta to earn her medical doctorate from Morehouse School of Medicine in 2018, then completed residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore in 2022. She returned to Atlanta to then complete her Forensic Pathology Fellowship at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in 2023, joining the GBI as an Associate Medical Examiner that same year.

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THE PENNY MAYNARD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Penny Maynard was a nurse practitioner and Director of Clinical Operations with Optum (formerly Evercare). Since the inception of the Georgia Chapter of GAPNA, Penny was an active member. She previously served on the Georgia GAPNA board of directors as Secretary. In her 15 years at Optum, Penny dedicated her career to advancing geriatric care in a variety of roles. She loved her geriatric patients and could always put a smile on their faces.

In 2013, she was diagnosed with cancer, which she succumbed to in 2014, sadly leaving us too soon. Penny's laughter was infectious and would warm the hearts of those around her. She was loved and respected by all of her friends and colleagues. Penny's legacy will live on through all those whose lives she touched. She is survived by her husband Kevin and her three children, Kelli, Kevin and Tyler.

To honor her memory, the Penny Maynard Scholarship Fund was established through GA GAPNA. Donations to the fund will be used to provide assistance to an adult/gerontological advanced practice nurse who supports the mission and values of GAPNA.

Please visit georgiagapna.org to donate.



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2026 PENNY MAYNARD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Diana Cruz, BSN, RN



Diana plans to practice as an Adult–Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner with a focus on oncology and preventive care. Drawing on her experience as a registered nurse and ongoing DNP studies, she is committed to improving health outcomes for adult and older adult populations through early detection, chronic disease management, and patient education.

Having a strong clinical background and understanding of barriers patients face navigating complex healthcare systems, Diana intends to practice in settings where preventive strategies and oncology–focused care can be integrated to promote timely screenings and reduce burden of cancer, among other chronic conditions.

Passionate about addressing health disparities, she is particularly dedicated to expanding access to preventive services and education for underserved communities. Through advanced clinical practice and leadership development, she seeks to enhance quality of care, support innovation in practice, and advocate for equitable healthcare across the adult lifespan.

Congratulations Diana!

Buy your raffle tickets today!

The Penny Maynard Memorial Scholarship is made possible due to the generous donations of GAPNA Members and the annual Georgia GAPNA conference raffle. Please support our adult/gerontological advanced practice nursing students today by purchasing your raffle tickets at the GAPNA Booth.

Tickets are 1 for \$5 and 5 for \$20. Winners must be present to win.

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CONTINUING EDUCATION INFORMATION

ACCREDITATION STATUS

- Emory Nursing Professional Development Center (ENPDC) is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) Commission on Accreditation.

RELEVANT FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- ENPDC has evaluated everyone who has the ability to control content of this activity (planning committee members, subject matter experts, presenters) and found no relevant financial relationships, or the relationships have been divested.

DISCLOSURE TO LEARNERS: AWARDING CONTACT HOURS

To obtain contact hours participants must:

- Complete and submit the activity evaluation within 2 weeks of activity conclusion (March 21, 2026)
- Score 75% or higher on post-activity evaluation, and post-test knowledge of at least two (2) diagnostic codes for dementia and behavioral symptoms on end-of-activity evaluation

Certificates will be distributed upon individuals' completion of activity evaluation and at the end of the evaluation window.

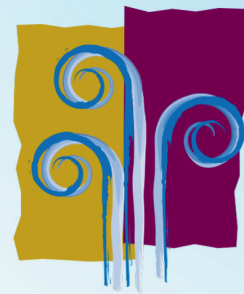
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Thank you to
Park Springs Life Plan Community
for their generous support and
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Lunch Sponsor

Thank you,
GeneSight, for generously sponsoring lunch!



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Thank you to our 2026 Exhibitors!

