



Summer 2025

HORIZONS

President's Message

Summer Greetings



As we embrace the warmth and vibrancy of summer, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your continued leadership, resilience, and unwavering commitment to nursing excellence.

This season reminds us of the power of renewal—whether found in time with loved ones, moments of rest, or the spark of new ideas and inspiration. I encourage you to take time this summer to recharge and reflect, knowing that your dedication makes a lasting impact on our communities and the future of our profession.

I'm incredibly proud of all we've accomplished together so far this year and excited about what lies ahead.

Looking Ahead: WONL's 2025–2027 Strategic Plan

This summer, the WONL Board has been hard at work developing our next strategic roadmap. The 2025–2027 Strategic Plan focuses on three key priorities:

1. Leading, inspiring, and supporting the healthcare workforce
2. Improving health through advocacy
3. Advancing nursing leadership

Upcoming Fall Conference: *The Power of Storytelling in Leadership*

September 17–19 | The Ingleside Hotel, Pewaukee, WI

In support of our third strategic priority—**Advancing Nursing Leadership**—we're thrilled to invite you to our upcoming Fall Conference!

We'll kick off with a lively welcome luau, celebrating storytelling through hula dancing. Don't miss this unique start to a powerful few days of learning, connection, and inspiration.

Featured Speakers:

- RaDonna Vaught, RN – *Criminalizing Errors: Advocating for safe, supportive practice environments*
- Deborah Zimmerman RN– AONL President, CEO Daisy Award: *The Power of Nurse Leadership: Influence, Impact, and the Human Connection*
- Christina Gall RN– CNO, Collette Health: *Empowering Change: How Nurse Leaders Drive Innovation Through Strategic Storytelling*
- Amelle Karam – Performer: *We All Have a Story – Exploring generational narratives*
- April Hansen RN – WONL Board Membership chair & CEO: *The Story of Nurse Leadership*
- Jackie Gaines, RN – Huron Group: *The Power of "Magic" in Leading High-Performing Teams*
- Ann Zenk, RN – Wisconsin Hospital Association: *Legislative Story Updates*

New this year: Poster board displays showcasing stories of innovation from nurse leaders across Wisconsin!

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We'll also honor several outstanding nurse leaders and celebrate their inspiring journeys. Most importantly, this event is a chance to connect with nurse leaders from across the state and share in the collective strength of our community.

Register today: [Click here to sign up.](#)

Strengthening Our Workforce: Advancing Strategic Goal #1

We continue to champion healthy, safe work environments through meaningful partnerships and initiatives:

- Partnered with WisPAN President Kristin Waite-Labott in support of:
 - » The Nurses Peer Support Preferences research study
 - » The Healing Tapestry: The Collective Stories of Nurses podcast
 - » The WisPAN Gala
- Moderated WNA/WisPAN hosted webinar:
Nurses Caring for Nurses: Empowering Nurses to Thrive: A webinar for Nurse Leaders
Presented by Chris Wojnar, APRN, PMHNP-BC, and Liesette Rendell, BSN, RN, Nurse Manager, Westfields Hospital & Clinic (Stay tuned— presentation to be repeated for WONL members!)

Advocacy in Action: Advancing Strategic Goal #2

WONL has been actively engaging at the policy level to transform health care through our expert and influential leadership to advance health for all in Wisconsin:

- Testified in support of the APRN Modernization Act
- Advocated for BSN-prepared nurses to serve in academic mentorship roles before the Board of Nursing
- Joined AONL Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., meeting with the offices of Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin, and Representative Scott Fitzgerald to discuss:
 - » The One Big Beautiful Bill (impacting Medicaid)
 - » The Save Healthcare Workers Act
 - » The Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Reauthorization Act
 - » The Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act
- Partnered with WHA and Ann Zenk to provide testimony at the State Capitol during the annual workforce briefing

Thank you again for all that you do—for your patients, your teams, and each other. Stay connected, stay inspired, and enjoy a safe, joyful rest of your summer. Hope to see you next month at the Fall Conference in Pewaukee!!!!

Warm regards and in partnership,
Dennise Lavrenz, President, Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders (WONL)
denniselavrenz@wi.nn.com

Tribute to Barbara Nichols



The Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders (WONL) extends our deepest gratitude and admiration to Dr. Barbara Nichols, who retired as Executive Director of the Wisconsin Center for Nursing on June 30, 2025, after nearly a decade of extraordinary and transformational leadership.

Dr. Nichols is a pioneering nurse, policy expert, and a nationally recognized advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in healthcare. Her unwavering commitment to the nursing profession has profoundly influenced health policy, elevated the visibility of nurses as leaders, and reshaped the future of nursing in Wisconsin and across the nation.

Throughout her tenure, Dr. Nichols has been a visionary force—championing data-driven workforce planning, mentoring emerging nurse leaders, and amplifying the voices of underrepresented communities within the nursing profession. Her impact will be felt for generations to come.

WONL proudly celebrates Dr. Nichols' legacy, and we thank her for her tireless service, her courage to lead, and her enduring contributions to nursing excellence. We wish her all the best in retirement and look forward to continuing the work she so passionately advanced.

Dennise Lavrenz, President of WONL, Attends AONL Advocacy Academy & Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C.

From June 1-3, I had the privilege of joining hundreds of nurse leaders from across the country at the American Organization of Nursing Leadership (AONL) Advocacy Academy and Advocacy Day. It was an incredible opportunity to speak with key lawmakers and advocate for the future of nursing.

I was proud to meet with Wisconsin Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin, as well as Representative Scott Fitzgerald, to discuss critical issues facing our profession. Our key legislative priorities included:

- Co-sponsoring the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act
- Co-sponsoring the Dr. Lorna Breen Healthcare Provider Protection Reauthorization Act
- Co-sponsoring the Save Healthcare Workers Act
- “One Big Beautiful Bill” focus Medicaid funding
- APRN Modernization Act



L to R: Rachel Culpepper, Dennise Lavrenz, Claire Zangerle, Stacey Chappell

(And yes—I brought my Cheesehead!)

A huge thank you to AONL CEO Claire Zangerle, President Deb Zimmerman, Senior Director of Advocacy Stacey Chappell, and Region 5 Leader Rachel Culpepper for organizing this meaningful opportunity to raise our voices for nursing.

Together, we’re shaping the future of healthcare through strong, united advocacy.

Honoring Nurse Leaders at our Summer WONL Board Meetings!

We had a wonderful time celebrating our amazing Board members and their dedication to nursing leadership. One highlight? Their creative specialty **Wisconsin nurse license plates**—what a fun way to show pride in our profession!

Want to learn more about the Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders (WONL) and how we’re advancing nursing leadership across the state? Visit us at: <https://wonl.nursingnetwork.com>.

Feel free to post your own nurse plates on our WONL Facebook site and LinkedIn page—we’d love to see them!



Partnership Highlight: WisPAN – Nurses Caring for Nurses

During Nurses Week, WONL President Dennise Lavrenz and Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA) Executive Director Gina Dennik-Champion were honored to attend the Wisconsin Peer Alliance for Nurses (WisPAN) Gala, hosted by WisPAN President Kristin Waite-Labott and WisPAN Board Member Liesette Rendell—our 2024 WONL Nurse Leader of the Year!

This powerful evening brought awareness and support to WisPAN's mission: promoting mental wellness for nurses across Wisconsin. Thank you to WisPAN for loving and caring for nurses—so they can continue to care for our communities.

Exciting News from WisPAN!

The trailer for their brand-new podcast just dropped: ***The Healing Tapestry: The Collective Stories of Nurses***

This powerful series shares real, raw, and inspiring stories of nurses navigating:

- Mental health challenges
- Substance use
- Burnout
- Recovery and rediscovery of purpose

Created by nurses, for nurses, this podcast is a beautiful labor of love and healing. Whether you're looking for encouragement, tools, or simply to feel seen—you'll find all that and more.

Listen to the trailer now: [The Healing Tapestry](#) on Spotify

The first full episode launched June 21st!

Please share this with every nurse you know. Together, let's build a profession where nurses are supported, empowered, and truly able to flourish.



L to R: Liesette Rendell, Kristin Waite-Labott, Dennise Lavrenz.

Check Out WONL's New and Renewing Members for June and July!

NEW MEMBERS

Lindsay Carberry
Heather Ard
Jean Ten Haken
Tammy Jackson
Cari Sonntag
Pamela Van Zeeland
Crystal Guns
Allison Nodes
Peter Seyfarth Lechner
Kindra Mullenberg
Sarah Dunham
Kristen Peterson
Dawn Greeson
Jessica Modjewski
Helen Saha

RENEWING MEMBERS

Jennifer Loesch
Sandra Goldman
Stacie Quinn
Tonja Ramthun
Lynne Cardinal
Jane Routhieaux
Amy Berentes
Heather Ard
Amy Hermes

Tamara Schattschneider
Renee Glesner
Sandra Goldmann
Jamie Ludlum
Loraine Carley
Jill Roach
Sarah Kolbe
Kelsey Lund

To become a member of WONL, visit <https://wonl.nursingnetwork.com/page/77591-membership-join-today>



2025 Annual WONL Conference

The Power of Storytelling in Leadership

September 17 – 19, 2025
The Ingleside Hotel
Pewaukee, WI

Exhibiting, Sponsoring, and Poster Presenting Opportunities

Exhibiting

WONL has exhibiting space available for this year's conference. This space is limited. Please register today! Exhibiting space includes:

- Eight-foot table with draping; Location of table: In main conference room
- Two chairs
- Two complimentary registrations
- Electricity, if needed
- Exposure to all conference attendees (Nurse executives, nurse managers and anyone else with responsibility for leading nurses)
- Event page logo

Expo set-up dates/times include:

- September 17: Afternoon
- September 18: 6:00-7:30AM

Expo times dates/times include: (Times are approx.)

- September 18/7:30-8:30AM (Registration/Breakfast)
- September 18/10:15-10:45AM (Break)
- September 18/11:45 AM- 1:15PM (Luncheon; Please note there will be a business meeting from 12:00-1:00)
- September 18/2:25-2:55PM (Break)
- September 18/5:30 – 6:00PM (Cocktails)
- September 18/6:00-8:00PM (Award Dinner)
- September 19/7:30-8:30AM (Breakfast)

Expo space is \$1,750. Deadline to register for a space is **September 8**, however space will most likely sell out prior to that date. To register, click [here](#).

Sponsoring

WONL is offering exclusive sponsorship opportunities at this year's conference. All sponsorship listed below includes the following benefits:

- Exposure, access, and networking opportunities to 100+ hospital and health nurse leaders.
- Company logo included in looping PowerPoint presentation, running throughout conference
- On-site acknowledgement from conference emcee
- Prominent acknowledgement in on-site agenda
- Pre- and post-conference attendee lists
- Recognition on conference registration site leading up to event
- Two complimentary attendees for conference
- Prominent signage with your company name and logo throughout the room

Please note: Opportunities may be broken up into co-sponsorship. WONL provides the previous year's sponsor first right of refusal, with other opportunities being sold on a first come first serve basis. They will go fast, so contact us today with your interest at education@wha.org.

The below reflects updated status as of 8/7/2025

Opportunity	Cost	Status
Welcome Networking Reception (9/17)	\$2,500	SOLD
Conference Refreshments	\$2,500	SOLD
Breakfast Day 1 (9/18)	\$2,500	SOLD
Keynote (9/18)	\$3,000	SOLD
Lunch (9/18)	\$2,500	SOLD
Bar Host (9/18 Dinner)	\$2,500	
Dinner (9/18)	\$4,500	
Dessert (9/18)	\$4,000	
Post dinner informal gathering	Direct Cost	
Breakfast Day 2 (9/19)	\$2,500	
Closing Presentation (9/19)	\$3,000	
T-shirts	\$3,500	

If you are interested in donating items to the silent auction, please contact [Annye Graff](#).

If you are interested in donation gift cards to be raffled off at the conference, contact us at education@wha.org.

Upon registering for an exhibiting spot and/or sponsorship, complimentary registration codes will be provided.

Expo space and sponsorship must be paid prior to September 8. No exceptions. If payment is not received by this date, your space and/or sponsorship will be forfeited, and your registration cancelled.

Poster Presenting

Attention Conference Attendees:

Is your hospital participating in innovative improvement efforts? Do you have an organizational project that you would like to share at the conference? The 2025 WONL Annual Conference is the perfect opportunity for you to share and highlight this work with fellow nursing leaders from around the state.

Register today, at a discounted rate, and proudly share the work that you are involved with.

For all information on the conference, including registration, please click [here](#).

Important information

1. WONL will provide you with an easel stand. You must bring your poster mounted and ready to be displayed. Materials will not be provided for you.
2. Attendance rates for poster presenters are:
 - a. WONL Member Poster Presenter- \$250.00
 - b. WONL Non-Member Poster Presenter- \$300.00

Featured Presenters

Jackie Gaines, M.S., R.N., Principal, Huron Consulting Group

Jackie Gaines, MS, RN, is a high-performing senior executive, national speaker, and best-selling author with a progressive career encompassing more than 40 years of sustained leadership and accomplishments with major health systems and organizations. She has dedicated most of her career to the advancement of quality healthcare programs throughout the United States, particularly those focused on the care of the poor and underserved. Jackie travels all over the country, telling her story and sharing the leadership lessons learned throughout her career. She also continues to give back to the community by serving on numerous boards and task forces



Christine Gall, DrPH, MS, BSN, Collette Health Chief Nursing Officer



Dr. Christine Gall DrPH, MS, BSN is a distinguished healthcare visionary with over three decades of experience in Virtual Care, Patient Safety, Quality, and Public Health. Her clinical expertise spans med-surg, pediatric clinical/critical care, oncology, and blood and marrow transplant across multiple care settings. As Collette Health's Chief Nursing Officer, she drives clinical innovation, integrating virtual care solutions into caregiver workflows. Dr. Gall collaborates with clients and leads teams in applying human-centered AI to enhance workflows and reduce care costs. Her leadership enables proactive interventions that measurably improve patient safety and extend the capabilities of local care teams.

April Hanson, MSN, RN, Group President, Aya Healthcare

As Group President of Aya Healthcare, April led the company to an unprecedented 27x revenue growth over six years, culminating in \$11B in annual revenue in 2022. A Top 100 Workforce Leader, TEDx Speaker, Serial Entrepreneur, Nurse, and Recognized Business and Personal Growth Expert, April has been featured in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Forbes' 40 Under 40, CBS, CNBC, and many others. April motivates leaders and teams to infuse adaptability into their core, driving growth, innovation, and change. Her Growth Game Plan™ keynote and framework helps individuals thrive in the chaos of change and become personal agents of growth.

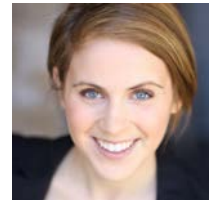


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Amelie Karam

After studying at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Richmond University in London, and finishing her degree in Performance and Film Studies from Loyola University in New Orleans, Amelie Karam recognized that people in her Gen Y age group, known as “Millennials,” view the world differently than do previous generations. The great divide between Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y piqued Amelie’s interest. Amelie is passionate about bridging generational gaps. She speaks and consults both nationally and internationally about how organizations can better work together to attract and retain the Millennial generation to ultimately bridge generational gaps. Through her Millennial perspective and rich research, along with her background in theatre, film, health, and wellness, Amelie brings an entertaining and informative voice to this important and highly sought-after topic of bridging generational gaps.



Dennise Lavrenz, MBA, RN, CENP, WONL President



Dennise Lavrenz has been an active member of AONL/WONL for the past 15 years and a board member for the last 6 years. She is the current WONL President. Her prior service includes chairperson of the Bylaws Committee, co-chair of the Program Planning Committee (9 years) and Scholarship Committee member (4 years). Dennise is among the first generation of nurse managers to adopt modern quality management methods to improve the overall quality and safety to clinical care. As a nurse leader and senior consultant with NICHE, a national nurse-led geriatric care program, she has made a substantial impact toward changing the landscape of older adult population health across the nation for the last 25 years. Dennise supports senior nurse managers to more effectively implement large scale transformative changes in clinical practice that leverage best practices, quality improvement tools and theories of planned organizational change.

RaDonda Vaught

RaDonda Vaught was the subject of one of the highest profile healthcare criminal cases in recent years. She holds a BSN and a Certificate in Leadership from Western Kentucky University. While working as a BSN prepared registered nurse, Mrs. Vaught committed a medication error that ended the life of a patient in 2017. She was charged under administrative law by the Tennessee Department of Health, leading to the revocation of her nursing license by the Tennessee Board of Nursing in a July 2021 hearing. Additionally, she was charged under criminal law and found guilty by jury trial of two felony charges in March of 2022: Negligent Homicide, and Abuse of an Impaired Adult, with placement on an Elder Abuse registry in the state of Tennessee. Mrs. Vaught is uniquely qualified to speak first hand on the impact this sentinel event has had on her life and her profession, along with the implications of the legal actions that followed. A passionate advocate for safety and improvement, her story will be one that is not easily forgotten.



Ann Zenk, RN, MHA, Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice, Wisconsin Hospital Association



Ann has served the Wisconsin Hospital Association as Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice since June 2017. As a member of WHA’s Government Relations (GR) team, Ann acts as the lead staff person in the critical areas of workforce development and clinical practice. This position also functions within the GR advocacy team to educate and inform WHA staff and members about health care and hospital related issues. Prior to joining WHA, Ann’s greater than 30+ years’ experience in health care included patient care and leadership roles across hospitals, clinics, and long-term care--including nursing, quality improvement, risk management, and utilization review. Ann holds Bachelor’s degree in Nursing from Viterbo University and a Masters in Health Administration from Ohio University.

Deb Zimmerman, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, CEO DAISY Foundation

Deb Zimmermann, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, is the Chief Executive Officer for the DAISY Foundation, the worldwide leader in the meaningful recognition of nurses. Before joining DAISY, Deb served in the United States Army Nurse Corps, practiced as a nurse practitioner, and served in chief nursing officer positions in New York and Virginia. She is the president of the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) and a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Deb is dedicated to strengthening the education and influence of nurses, creating collaborative, thriving, interprofessional care environments, and quantifying the contribution of nurses in improving health outcomes.



WONL Board of Directors 2025

President

Dennise Lavrenz, RN, MBA, CENP
Former Chief Clinical Officer
N7W27485 Woodridge Line
Waukesha, WI 53188
262-470-5345
denniselavrenz@wi.rr.com

Past President

Laura Hieb CNO, SVP
Bellin Health System
744 S. Webster Ave
PO Box 23400
Green Bay WI 54305-3400
(W) 920-433-7436
(C) 920-639-1020
laura.hieb@bellin.org

Treasurer

Sharon Cox
VP/CNO
Beloit Health System
1969 W Hart Rd
Beloit, WI 53511
(W) 608-364-5530
scox@beloithealthsystem.org

Secretary

Sharon Warden
ICU/CCU Manager
Mayo Clinic NWWI
(W) 715-838-3842
Sharon.wardenmsnmha@gmail.com

Board Members

Nicole Gruebling, DNP, RN, NEA-BC
Vice President, Member Connections
(W) 312-775-4572
(C) 608-334-0298
Vizient
155 N. Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606
Nicole.gruebling@vizientinc.com

Leanne Roggemann RN, MPH
VP Patient Care Services/CNO
Westfields Hospital & Clinic
535 Hospital Road
New Richmond, WI 54017
(W) 715-243-2855
(C) 651-257-5530
Leanne.M.Roggemann@WestfieldsHospital.com

Board Members (continued)

Kayla Ficker, RN, MSN
Quality Director
Amery Hospital & Clinic
203 Minneapolis Ave
Amery, WI 54001
(W) 715-268-0211
kayla.l.ficker@amerymedical.com

Jen Drayton
Nursing Administrator
Mayo Clinic Health System
2321 Stout Road
Menomonie, WI 54751
(W) 715-233-7287
drayton.jen@mayo.edu

Jamie Ludlum
Nursing Administrator
Mayo Clinic Health System SWWI
700 West Avenue S
La Crosse, WI 54601
(W) 608-392-6907
Ludlum.jamie@mayo.edu

Kelsey Lund
Director of Inpatient Operations
Gundersen Boscobel Area Hospitals & Clinics
205 Parker St.
Boscobel, WI 53805
(W) 608-375-6252 x 63770
kmlund@gundersenhealth.org

Heather Logslett
Nurse Manager, Primary Care Clinic
Mayo Clinic Health System
2321 Stout Road
Menomonie, WI 54751
(W) 715-688-9532
logslett.heather@mayo.edu

WONL Committee Chairs 2025

License Plate Committee

Sharon Warden
ICU/CCU Manager
MAYO Clinic NWWI
1221 Whipple Street
P.O. Box 4105
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4105
(W) 715-838-3842
warden.sharon@mayo.edu

Scholarship

Tracy Galione
Dir. of Performance Improvement
TeamHealth, Inc.
120 Twin Harbor Drive
Winneconne, WI 54986
(C) 920-573-2329
tgalion98@gmail.com

Education:

Learning Community Webinars

Dennise Lavrenz, RN, MBA, CENP
Former Chief Clinical Officer
N7W27485 Woodridge Line
Waukesha, WI 53188
262-470-5345
denniselavrenz@wi.rr.com

Historian

Leilani Mazzone, MS-M, BSN, RN
Patient Care Director- Inpatient
Neurosciences Department
Children's Wisconsin
8915 W. Connell Ct.
Milwaukee, WI 53226
(W): 414-337-3223
(C): 414.243.0209
LMazzone@childrenswi.org

Legislative

Ann Zenk
Sr. VP, Workforce & Clinical Practice
Wiscnsin Hospital Association
5510 Research Park Drive
Fitchburg, WI 53711
(W) 608-274-1820
azenk@wha.org

Marketing and Communications

Annye Graff
Med. Unit, Clinical Decision Unit,
Outpatient Infusion &
Adult Hospitalists
Bellin Health
755 Webster Ave.
Green Bay, WI 54301
(W) 920-433-7406
Annye.Graff@emplyhealth.org

Committee Chair/WI Board of Nursing/Program Chair

Lori Cardinal
Dir. of Hospital Nursing Resources
St. Agnes Hosp.-SSM Healthcare
430 E. Division St.
Fond Du Lac, WI 54935
(W) 920-926-4768
(C) 920-979-4249
Lori.Cardinal@ssmhealth.com

Bylaws Committee

Amy Hermes
VP Patient Services, CNO
Stoughton Hospital
900 Ridge Street
Stoughton, WI 53589
(W) 608-873-2308
ahermes@stoughtonhealth.com

Membership

April Hansen, RN, MSN
Group President
Aya Healthcare
W7746 Cora Lane
Crivitz, WI 54114
april@aprilhansenspeaks.com

Nominations Committee

Laura Hieb CNO, SVP
Bellin Health System
744 S. Webster Ave
PO Box 23400
Green Bay WI 54305-3400
(W) 920-433-7436
(C) 920-639-1020
laura.hieb@bellin.org

Member Checklist

- Please contact Erika Quamme whenever you have a change in either employment or residential address to guarantee timely mailings. E-mail equamme@wha.org or 608-268-1806.
- Submit articles for publication in the next issue of *Horizons* to Annye Graff, 920-433-7406, Annye.Graff@emplyhealth.org
- If you are interested in being a part of a specific committee, contact the committee chair.

WHA Contact

Erika Quamme
Receptionist
Wisconsin Hospital Association
5510 Research Park Drive
Fitchburg, WI 53711
(W) 608-274-1820
E-mail: wonl@wha.org

WHA Liaison

Ann Zenk
Sr. VP, Workforce & Clinical Practice
5510 Research Park Drive
Fitchburg, WI 53711
(W) 608-274-1820
E-mail: azenk@wha.org