

2026 GNA Professional Development Conference

“The Future of Nursing: Courageous Transformations”

Courtyard by Marriott Atlanta Decatur Downtown/Emory
 Decatur, GA
 August 20 – 22, 2026

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Time	Session	Location
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM <i>Exhibitors set up at 10 am.</i>	Registration	Foyer
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM <i>Additional registration required.</i>	Pre-conference leadership workshop – <i>Leading Systems Through Human-Centered Excellence</i> - Karla Schroeder, DNP, RN, ANP-BC, MHA, NE-BC; Robert E. Boesch, DNP, RN, CENP, CPHQ, FAONL; Ashley Nicole Marston, PhD, MSN, BS, RN, NE-BC; Lucy Leclerc, PhD, RN, FAAN; Jonathan Lee, BSN, RN	Mary Gay
12:00 PM – 12:50 PM	Poster Presentations and Time with Exhibitors	Pre-function area
1:00 PM – 1:15 PM	Conference Welcome – Georgia Nurses Association (GNA) President Dr. Joy L. King & GNA/GNF CEO Matt Caseman	Decatur Ballroom
1:15 PM – 2:15 PM	Keynote Speaker 1 , American Nurses Association President Dr. Jennifer Mensik Kennedy – <i>Stronger Together: How Nurses Build Power, Shape Policy, and Lead What’s Next.</i>	Decatur Ballroom 1 contact hour
2:15 PM – 2:25 PM	Break	
2:25 PM – 3:25 PM	Plenary Session – <i>Courage to Transform...Leading Nursing into the Future</i> - Pat Horton, RN, MN, MBA, CMC; Karla Schroeder, DNP, RN, ANP-BC, MHA, NE-BC; Lynne P. Meadows, MSN, RN, FNASN; J. Dwayne Hooks, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, NEA-BC, PMHNP-BC, FACHE, FAANP, FAAN;	Decatur Ballroom 1 contact hour
3:25 PM – 3:35 PM	Break	
3:35 PM – 4:35 PM	Track 1 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>Actualizing High Reliability Principles in Nursing Practice</i> - Cynthia Gamache, DBA, RN	1 contact hour

	<i>Hardwiring an HRO: Transforming Ambulatory HTN and DM Outcomes</i> - Ashley Nicole Marston, PhD, MSN, BS, RN, NE-BC	Mary Gay
	Track 2 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>Nervous System-Informed Care: A Courageous Transformation in Nursing Practice</i> - Estacy Colon Porter, DNP, MSN-ED, FNP-C, PMHNP-BC, PHNA-BC	
	<i>From Compassion to Capacity™: Practical Strategies to Reduce Nurse Burnout Through Individual Reserves and Supportive Culture</i> - Audrey Boyce, RN, BSN, MSL, NBHWC, ICF-ACC	Henry Oliver
4:35 PM – 5:30 PM	Poster Presentations and Time with Exhibitors	Pre-function area
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM	Reception – Drinks and heavy hors d'oeuvres <i>Sponsored by Piedmont Healthcare</i>	Pre-function area and Decatur Ballroom

Friday, August 21, 2026

Time	Session	Location
7:00 AM – 8:45 AM	Breakfast with Exhibitors	Decatur Ballroom
8:50 AM – 9:00 AM	Day Two Welcome	Decatur Ballroom
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Keynote Speaker 2 , Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing Assistant Dean Data Science and Professor Dr. Roy L. Simpson <i>AI Is Not Your Problem. Forgetting You're a Nurse Is</i>	Decatur Ballroom 1 contact hour
10:00 AM – 10:10 AM	Break	
10:10 AM – 11:10 AM	Track 1 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>Integrating ACE Screening into Women's Primary Care: A Trauma-Informed Quality Improvement Initiative</i> - Vonnie Cesar, DNP, FNP-C; Rebekah Chance-Revels, DNP, WHNP-BC, RN, MPH, CPH, CPPS, CPHQ	1 contact hour
	<i>Health Outcomes in Rural Georgia: A Pre- and Post-Implementation Analysis of the Two Georgias Initiative</i> - Sharon F. Beasley, PhD, RN, CNE, NEA-BC; Hridith Sudev, MPH; Naomi Tezera Tadesse, MD	Mary Gay
	Track 2 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>A Comparison of Thirst Management Strategies in Patients in the Intensive Care Unit</i> - Roberta Kaplow, PhD, APRN-CCNS, AOCNS,	

	NPD-BC, CCRN, FNAP, FCCM, FAAN; Kathleen Diatta, PhD, RN, NE-BC, NPD-BC, CCRN, FNAP	Henry Oliver
	<i>Social Determinants of Health and Pressure Injury Risk: Disparities Across the Care Continuum</i> - Ashley Nicole Marston, PhD, MSN, BS, RN, NE-BC	
11:10 AM – 12:00 PM	Poster Presentations and Time with Exhibitors	Pre-function area
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Lunch and Dr. Sandra Rayburn Scholarship Awards	Decatur Ballroom
12:30 PM-12:50 PM	GN-PAC Rally!	
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Track 3 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>Enhancing Peer Connections in MSN Programs: A QI Project</i> Diana Meeks, PhD, RN, MSN, CS, FNP-BC, CNE, NE-BC, CACTS <i>Building today's Charge Nurse: Professional Development Strategies for an Empowered Emerging Leader</i> - Naomi James, MSN, RN, CPAN, CNEcl Track 4 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>Courageous Micro-Transformations: A Scalable Quality Improvement Model to Strengthen Nurse Well-Being</i> - Rajitha Bommakanti, BSN, RN, NBC-HWC, FCN <i>Courageous Transformation in NP Education</i> - Pamela Lynn Brown, FNP-C, MSN	1 contact hour Mary Gay Henry Oliver
2:10 PM – 3:30 PM	Candidate Forum – Governor and Secretary of State candidates	Decatur Ballroom 1.5 contact hour
3:40 PM – 4:10 PM	Plenary Session - The Reset: A Somatic Flow Experience for Nurses Who Give Everything – Lauren Dike, CEO & Founder, Harmonna Inclusive Wellbeing, LLC	Decatur Ballroom 0.5 contact hour
4:10 PM – 4:30 PM	Wrap Up & Time with Exhibitors	Pre-function area

Saturday, August 22, 2026

Time	Session	Location
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM <i>Exhibitors take down at 10 am.</i>	Breakfast with Exhibitors & Georgia Nurses Foundation Scholarships Awards	Decatur Ballroom
8:55 AM – 9:00 AM	Day Three Welcome	Decatur Ballroom

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Keynote Speaker 3 , National Bestselling Author Chris Tuff <i>Leading with Genuine Connection</i>	Decatur Ballroom 1 contact hour
10:00AM – 10:10 AM	Break	
10:10 AM – 11:10 AM	Track 1 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>Active Minds, Better Care: Redesigning Nursing Curricula for Modern Success</i> - Joshua Kies, DNP, APRN-BC, FNP-BC; Kimra Tollefson, DNP, MSN-Ed, RN	1 contact hour Mary Gay
	<i>The Role of AI-Assisted Learning in Both Online & Traditional Teaching Modality</i> - Hoi Sing Chung, PhD, RN; Ash Yeager, MSN-Ed, RN	
	Track 2 – Back-to-back 30-minutes breakout sessions <i>Melatonin Use in Pediatric Sleep Management: An Integrative Review and Policy Framework for Safe Prescribing and Deprescribing</i> - Anoohya Kalidindi, DNP, MN, RN	1 contact hour Henry Oliver
	<i>From Inhalers to Impact: A Nurse-Led Strategy to Reduce Asthma-Related Absenteeism</i> - Amber Sharpe; Keonshe Anderson, LPN; Kimberly A. Foster, PhD(c), MBA, BSN, RN	
11:10 AM – 12:10 PM	Plenary Sessions , <i>A Novel Component of Hospital Unit Practice Environments Related to Staff Engagement: Team Trustworthiness and Seeing Leadership in Action: A Qualitative Study of Clinical Nurses' Perceptions of Nurse Leader Visibility</i> - Roberta Kaplow, PhD, APRN-CCNS, AOCNS, NPD-BC, CCRN, FNAP, FCCM, FAAN; Polly Willis, MSN, RN, PCCN	Decatur Ballroom 1 contact hour
12:10 PM - 12:40 PM	Plenary Session , <i>Small Changes, Big Impact: A QI Approach to Fall Reduction</i> - Alison Yam, MSN, APRN, AGCNS-BC, AGPCNP-BC	Decatur Ballroom 0.5 contact hour
12:40 PM – 12:50 PM	Raffle and Conference Wrap up	Decatur Ballroom

Please note: 10 posters have been submitted. Calculating based on Merenger's formula word count of an average of all the abstracts for the posters, each poster will be awarded 0.32 contact hours. **Total number of contact hours = 3.2**

Total number of contact hours for conference = 13.7