



SO CAL ARN Chapter NEWSLETTER

August - September 2026
Volume 32 Issue 11

Message from the New President Southern California ARN Chapter 2026-2027



It is my great honor and privilege to serve as the new President of the Southern California Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (So Cal ARN) Chapter. I am grateful for the confidence and support entrusted to me and look forward to working alongside our members, board, and rehabilitation nursing community to make the upcoming year meaningful and impactful.

As rehabilitation nurses, we play an important role in helping individuals regain independence, improve their quality of life, and achieve their highest level of function. Our chapter has an opportunity to strengthen rehabilitation nursing practice, support professional growth, and build a stronger network among nurses and other healthcare professionals.

Goals for the Upcoming Year

1. Education and Professional Development

We will provide educational opportunities that address current rehabilitation nursing practices, clinical challenges, leadership, and professional development. Our goal is to offer educational programs that are practical, engaging, and beneficial to nurses at all levels of experience.

(continued)

President, SoCal ARN Chapter

Goals for the Upcoming Year

2. Mentorship and Support for New Rehabilitation Nurses

We will focus on encouraging and supporting nurses who are new to rehabilitation nursing. Through mentorship, networking, and educational opportunities, we hope to help new nurses develop confidence and a strong foundation in rehabilitation nursing practice.

3. Encourage CRRN Certification

One of our priorities will be to promote the Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN) certification. We will encourage nurses to pursue certification and explore opportunities for study support, educational sessions, and peer guidance.

4. Increase Membership and Engagement

We will work to increase membership and encourage active participation in chapter activities. We want members to feel that So Cal ARN is a professional community where they can connect, learn, share experiences, and grow.

5. Networking and Collaboration

We plan to create more opportunities for rehabilitation nurses to connect with one another and collaborate with rehabilitation professionals and organizations throughout Southern California.

6. Community and Professional Outreach

The chapter will seek opportunities to participate in community activities, professional events, and initiatives that promote awareness of rehabilitation nursing and the important role rehabilitation nurses play in patient recovery and independence.

7. Leadership Development

We will encourage members to become involved in chapter leadership and committee activities. Developing future leaders will help ensure the continued growth and sustainability of our chapter.

Our vision is to build a chapter that is engaged, inclusive, educational, and supportive. We want every member to have opportunities to learn, contribute, and develop professionally.

I encourage all members to share their ideas, participate in chapter activities, and become involved in shaping the future of So Cal ARN. Together, we can create meaningful educational experiences, strengthen our professional relationships, and advocate for excellence in rehabilitation nursing.

I look forward to working with each of you during this upcoming year. With teamwork, commitment, and a shared passion for rehabilitation nursing, I am confident that we can make this a successful and memorable year for the Southern California ARN Chapter. Thank you for your support, dedication, and commitment to rehabilitation nursing.

Sincerely,

Fatima Villacruz, DNP, MBA, MS, RN, CRRN

President, Southern California ARN Chapter
2026–2027



ARN Philosophy Statement

Rehabilitation nursing is a specialty practice, across various settings, that focuses on helping patients with physical and/or cognitive disabilities to achieve their maximum potential and independence.

ARN's Mission

Promote and advance the rehabilitation nursing practice through professional development, advocacy, collaboration, and research to enhance the quality of life for those affected by disability and chronic illness.

ARN Health Policy Digest August 2026

We encourage you to check out the latest health policy updates at <https://rehabnurse.org/health-policy-advocacy/arn-health-policy-digest-august-2026-1>

This month's highlights include:

- 1. Department of Education
Revises Professional Degree
Definition*
- 2. Administration Releases a Rule
that Narrows Definition of
Medically Frail*
- 3. ARN Submits Comments to
OMB For Federal Financial
Assistance*
- 4. Notice of Funding
Opportunities*



2026-2027 Chapter Board

President

Fatima Villacruz, DNP, MBA, MS, RN,
CRRN

Secretary/Communications/ Website Moderator

Paddy Higgins, MN, RN, CRRN-retired,
CNS, PHN, FARN

Treasurer

Deepa Kannampuzha, MSN, RN, CRRN,
CNML, NE-BC, FARN

Immediate Past President/Historian

Adnan Haidar, MSN, RN, CRRN

Board Members at Large

Yvette Trigueros, BSN, RN, WOCN, WCC,
CRRN

Izaah Panganiban, BSN, RN, MAN, CRRN

Stephanie Lim, MSN, RN, CRRN

Lynn Wetherwax, MSN, RN, CRRN

Wei Pang, BSN, RN, MSN, CRRN

Program Liaison/Newsletter

Elaine Morris, BSN, RN, CRRN



(From left to right) Geraldine Gutierrez,
Deepa Kannampuzha, Stephanie Lim,
Yvette Trigueros, Izzah Panganiban,
Elaine Morris, Elizabeth Roberson,
Lynn Wetherwax, Fatima Villacruz,
Victoria Alvarenga, Paddy Higgins,
Adnan Haidar

Get involved!

The purpose of the Southern California Chapter of ARN (SoCal ARN) is to represent and promote the objectives of ARN within its boundaries. SoCal ARN is committed to its members and the sharing of resources that promote the value and importance of rehabilitation nursing. Our Chapter Board is seeking members to help with chapter activities. If you are interested or just want to give feedback, we would love to hear from you!

Follow us on social media!
www.socalarn.nursingnetwork.com
www.facebook.com/laocarn



2026 SoCal Summer Social

*Saturday, July 18, 2026
Heritage Park, Cerritos, CA*

A total of 11 members and their guests were able to attend this year's summer social and barbecue. Fun was had by all in spite of the heat!!! Hope to see more of you at our Winter Social. Stay tuned for more information!





ARN Conference

By: Elaine Morris, BSN, RN, CRRN

ARN Conference
West Palm Beach, Florida
August 2-4, 2026

The Southern California Chapter of the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN)





2026 ARN Conference

By: Elaine Morris, BSN, RN, CRRN

Southern California ARN Chapter Recognized as 2026 Chapter of Excellence!

The Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN) hosted its Annual Rehabilitation Nursing Conference in beautiful West Palm Beach, Florida, from August 2-4, 2026. The conference brought together rehabilitation nurses, leaders, educators, researchers, and healthcare professionals from across the country to share innovations, evidence-based practices, and strategies to advance rehabilitation nursing care.

This year was especially memorable for the Southern California Chapter of ARN as our chapter was honored with the prestigious 2026 Chapter of Excellence Award. This national recognition celebrates chapters that demonstrate outstanding leadership, member engagement, professional development opportunities, community outreach, and contributions to advancing the specialty of rehabilitation nursing.

Representing Southern California, 13 chapter members, including chapter board members, attended the national conference. Throughout the three-day event, attendees participated in educational sessions, networking opportunities, leadership meetings, poster presentations, and discussions focused on the future of rehabilitation nursing. Members gained valuable insights into emerging clinical practices, innovative care models, technology integration, workforce development, and patient-centered rehabilitation strategies that can be brought back to benefit our local communities and healthcare organizations.

The Chapter of Excellence Award reflects the dedication and hard work of our board members and volunteers who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to provide high-quality educational programs, community outreach initiatives, networking opportunities, and professional growth experiences for rehabilitation nurses across Southern California. This achievement would not have been possible without the active participation and support of our chapter members.

Receiving this national recognition serves as both a celebration of our accomplishments and an inspiration to continue advancing our mission of promoting excellence in rehabilitation nursing. We are proud to represent Southern California on the national stage and look forward to building on this success through continued collaboration, education, advocacy, and service to our members and the patients we serve.

Congratulations to all of our Southern California ARN members for helping make this honor possible. Together, we continue to demonstrate the strength, innovation, and commitment that define rehabilitation nursing.

"Excellence is not an achievement of one individual but the collective effort of a dedicated community working toward a shared purpose."



ARN Conference





Meet and Greet

By: Stephanie Lim, MSN, RN, CRRN

California ARN Chapters Connect in West Palm Beach

The Northern California and Southern California Chapters of ARN came together on August 2, 2026, for their annual social meetup during the ARN Conference in West Palm Beach, Florida. There were twenty-eight members of both Chapters who enjoyed refreshing gelato while catching up, sharing rehabilitation nursing stories, building new connections, and strengthening friendships across California. The gathering celebrated the shared commitment of rehabilitation nurses across both California chapters, created space for networking and fellowship, and marked the occasion with a fun, memorable moment at the national conference. It was a sweet and meaningful way to celebrate the rehabilitation nursing community and the connections that continue to bring the California chapters together.





"The Four M's in Action: Building an Age-Friendly Health System in Rehabilitation"



1

What Matters

2

Medication

3

Mentation

4

Mobility

Join us for an engaging webinar exploring how the 4Ms Framework can be integrated into rehabilitation practice to improve outcomes and enhance care experience in older adults.

Hosted by: SoCal ARN
Speaker: Stephanie Lim, RN, MSN, CRRN

OCTOBER 3RD, 2026, 10 AM - 11 AM

FOLLOWED BY OUR ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING 11-12 NOON

1.0 CEU CREDIT WILL BE OFFERED (CALIFORNIA BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING, PROVIDER # 007495)
FREE FOR ALL ARN MEMBERS
NON-MEMBERS - \$25.00
ZOOM LINK WILL BE EMAILED AFTER REGISTRATION

PLEASE REGISTER AT
[HTTPS://SOCALARN.NURSINGNETWORK.COM](https://SOCALARN.NURSINGNETWORK.COM)



CELEBRATING RECOGNITION

Welcome to our New Chapter Members and Newly
Certified Rehabilitation Nurses!!!



Ma. Lucille Taberna, BSN, RN, CRRN
Long Beach Medical Center - IRF



Grace Maristhel Maralit, BSN, RN, CRRN
Rancho Los Amigos



California Rehab Hospital
Sherry Duarte
HOUSE SUPERVISOR
NIGHT SHIFT



Yana Bartlett
HOUSE SUPERVISOR
DAY SHIFT



CELEBRATING RECOGNITION

**Welcome to our New Chapter Members and Newly
Certified Rehabilitation Nurses!!!**



Encompass Health, Bakersfield

Milene Kalano, BSN, RN, CRRN

Naomi Doughty, BSN, RN, CRRN

Huntington Hospital, Pasadena



**Celeste Christiansen,
BSN, RN, CRRN**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



LIFE ROLLS ON “They Will Surf Again” August 22, 2026



Life Rolls On

By: Elaine Morris, BSN, RN, CRRN

SoCal ARN Chapter Volunteers at Life Rolls On 2026, Huntington Beach

On August 22, 2026, Board members of the Southern California Chapter of the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (SoCal ARN) participated in the Life Rolls On “They Will Surf Again” event in Huntington Beach. This annual adaptive surfing event provides individuals living with spinal cord injuries, paralysis, and other physical disabilities the opportunity to experience the freedom and excitement of surfing in a safe, supportive environment.

SoCal ARN member volunteers joined athletes, families, and community supporters for an inspiring day focused on inclusion, empowerment, and recreation. The event highlighted how adaptive sports promote physical, emotional, and social well-being while showcasing participants' resilience and determination.

One participant reflected on the impact of the event, sharing, “The first time she went in the water, she fell off the board, but she came up saying, ‘Again!’ and we've been coming every year since.” The family's experience illustrates how Life Rolls On creates opportunities for joy, confidence, and lasting connections within the disability community.

The SoCal ARN Chapter was honored to support Life Rolls On's mission and reinforce the values of rehabilitation nursing by promoting independence, community engagement, and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve their fullest potential.

"Rehabilitation is not only about helping people recover. It is about helping people live life to the fullest."



Internship OPPORTUNITY

**Professional
Growth**

Skill Development

GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

***If you are an active member who is interested
in becoming a board intern,
please watch for details about how to apply for our
2027 Emerging Leaders Internship Program!***



Members In the Spotlight



Ma. Lucille Taberna, BSN, RN, CRRN
Long Beach Medical Center - IRF

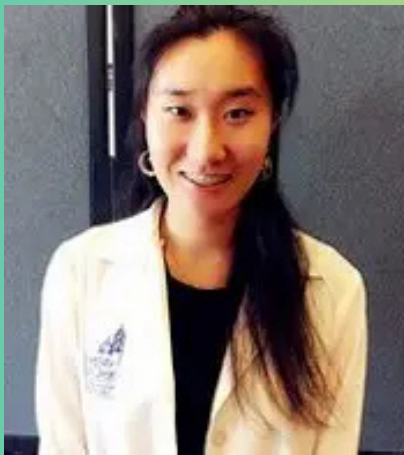
We are proud to spotlight Lucille for her remarkable nursing journey and her recent achievement in obtaining certification in rehabilitation nursing.

Born in Iloilo, Philippines, Lucille earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from West Visayas State University and began her career serving patients through private nursing and public health before continuing her practice in the United States. Throughout her career, she has gained valuable experience across skilled nursing, medical-surgical, cardiac monitoring, and inpatient Rehabilitation. Her long-standing service at **Long Beach Medical Center**, including nearly two decades in the Cardiac Monitoring Unit and her current role in the Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility, reflects her adaptability, clinical expertise, and unwavering commitment to compassionate care. Lucille also serves as the rep for the Strategic Workforce Council. As a preceptor, Lucille has made a meaningful impact by mentoring colleagues, supporting staff development, and promoting strong team-based care. Lucille joined the national ARN in 2025 and is a member of the Southern California Rehabilitation Nurses. In preparation for taking the CRRN exam, the **Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit** proudly sponsored Lucille's CRRN review, supporting her continued professional growth and specialty development. Her rehabilitation nursing certification is a well-deserved recognition of her specialty knowledge, perseverance, and dedication to improving the lives of rehabilitation patients. Congratulations, Lucille, on this outstanding accomplishment and for continuing to inspire those around you.



Members In the Spotlight

Meet Our Newest Board Member!



Wei Pang, MSN, RN, CRRN, is an accomplished nurse leader with over a decade of clinical and administrative expertise dedicated to advancing rehabilitation nursing. Holding a Master of Science in Nursing Executive Leadership from the University of San Diego, she centers her practice on fostering a Just Culture, empowering bedside clinicians, and driving evidence-based quality improvement to deliver top-tier patient outcomes—including previously leading a rehabilitation team to a national top-performer ranking in the UDS Program Evaluation Model. An active member of the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses since 2019, Wei is passionate about interdisciplinary collaboration and continuous professional development. She looks forward to connecting with fellow ARN members to share best practices and champion high-quality, restorative care. Wei currently works as the nursing manager of the inpatient rehabilitation unit at Northridge Hospital Medical Center in Temple City, CA. Please help us welcome Wei as one of our new board directors!



**Save
THE
Date**

**SoCal ARN
Annual Conference
&
Business Meeting
Saturday,
April 10, 2027**

Hot Topics & Updates In Rehabilitation Nursing

We are continuing a popular feature...

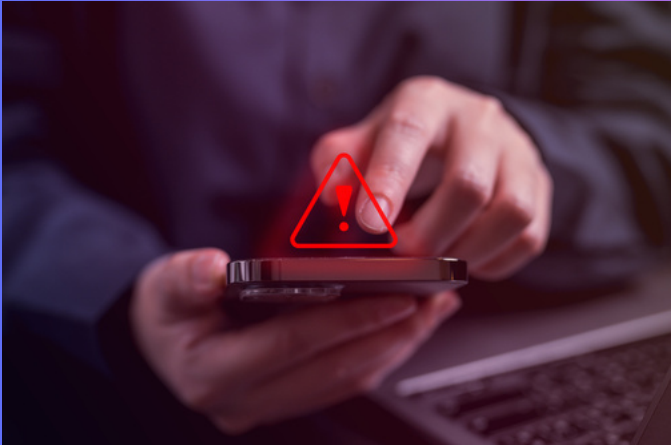


This quarter's newsletter
highlights the dangers of cybercrime
and how to keep your personal
information safe!

“Online Safety for All”

Submitted by Paddy Higgins, MN, RN, CRRN-Retired, CNS, PHN, FARN

In a world filled with online scammers, we all need to be reminded of how we can continue to be safe as we browse and engage online. With the sophistication of social media, electronic records, and data banks, along with sharing of privacy, coupled with AI, more than ever, we must be vigilant in our ever-changing digital world.



Here are some practical measures to keep us all safe as we navigate websites and our smart phones:

1. **Passwords** – never reuse passwords unless you have employed a reputable password manager to generate and store passwords. Always aim to create strong passwords.
2. **Multi-factor authentication**- always arrange for 2FA (factor authentication) when signing up for new accounts or updating current ones. An MFA adds an extra layer of security that will send a verification code to your smartphone or email address before allowing you to enter the site.
3. **Antivirus software**- whenever possible, install reputable and trusted antivirus or anti-malware software on your phone, laptop, or other digital devices. And remember to keep it up to date.
4. **Phishing** – identify signs that someone may be phishing you to provide private information they are not entitled to. Always be cautious with emails and links. It is amazing how cyber criminals are trying to trip us up into thinking it is a legitimate email or text. If it doesn't look right, it probably isn't. If you are at work, always report it to your IT department. At home, don't open the link.
5. **Protection against ransomware**- regularly backup and update your data on a periodic basis. At work, your IT department is usually the one to do this. At home, you can also consider a reputable anti-malware program to download.
6. **Use of a VPN** to encrypt online traffic is one additional measure to use outside of your home or workplace. It can be especially helpful if you are traveling but still be cautious when opening emails or texts. Try to set your system up to recognize something that could be SPAM or JUNK.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

7. Checking for HTTPS when doing online searches – always verify secure sites (your antivirus software will also assist you in this endeavor).
8. Avoid saving credit card account information online- be cautious about storing card or account information unless you know the site is secured and encrypted.
9. Keep your software updated on your smart phone, laptop, or desk top computer.
10. Avoid using public or unsecured Wi-Fi for any sensitive transactions.

Some additional tips that have been suggested to keep us all safe are to:

1. Keep up to date on the common cyber threats that are out there and any security best practices that are recommended.
2. Regularly check to see if your credentials or information has been compromised in any way.
3. Always use secure and encrypted payment tools for your online transactions.
4. Use caution when scrolling through social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc. Don't fall for the latest gimmick from an online influencer.
5. Periodically, if not daily, ensure that you have cleared history and cookies from websites unless you are certain that they are trusted sites. Most smart phones have this function built in and it is easy to use.
6. Finally, always log off from an online account or website to prevent personal information from being shared.

These are just a few tips to keep your personal and sensitive information safe.

For more information, check out these sites:

[cyber security tips and tricks - Search](#)

[Cyber Security Tips, Facts & Statistics for 2026 | Security.org](#)

Why become a Member?



MEMBERSHIP TO ARN

- **FREE** subscription to Rehabilitation Nursing Journal (RNJ) to read your peer's articles on practice issues, research, editorial features, and more.
- **ARN MEMBER CIRCLE** is your online community where other rehab nurses network and share ideas, interests, and documents.
- **SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP** for you to join and collaborate with colleagues.
- **WEEKLY ARN PULSE NEWSLETTER** will keep you informed and provide additional opportunities to publish research and data.
- Participation at the yearly conference as a moderator or speaker.
- Various scholarships to apply for such as Nurse in Washington internship; attendance at ARN's annual conference etc. Various scholarships to apply for, such as the Nurse in Washington internship, attendance at ARN's annual conference, etc.
- Opportunity to be a leader within ARN
- **ARN LEARNING CENTER** offers on-demand access to education sessions and webinars to help you with your continuing education and professional growth.
- And much more!

MEMBERSHIP TO ARN + SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$15.00:

- **FREE CEUs** with webinars offered.
- Complimentary membership to nursingnetwork.com, where you can see the latest events/activities in your So Cal chapter.
- Quarterly newsletter available at nursing network for you to see the activities of your local chapter. A quarterly newsletter is available at the nursing network for you to see the activities of your local chapter.
- **SUMMER and WINTER** social events to network and offer a much-needed break from our monotonous daily work.
- Participate in fun volunteer activities with major non-profit organizations in rehab with your peers and family.
- Opportunity to be a leader in the local chapter and eventually ARN.
- Discount on annual conference and CRRN review "BOOTCAMP" held yearly.
- And much more!

MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD



President

Fatima Villacruz

Vice President

(open)

Secretary

Paddy Higgins

Treasurer

Deepa Kannampuzha

Immediate Past President/Historian

Adnan Haidar

Members at Large

Lynn Wetherwax, Stephanie Lim, Yvette Trigueros,
Izzah Panganiban, Wei Pang

Educational Program Liaison/Newsletter Editor

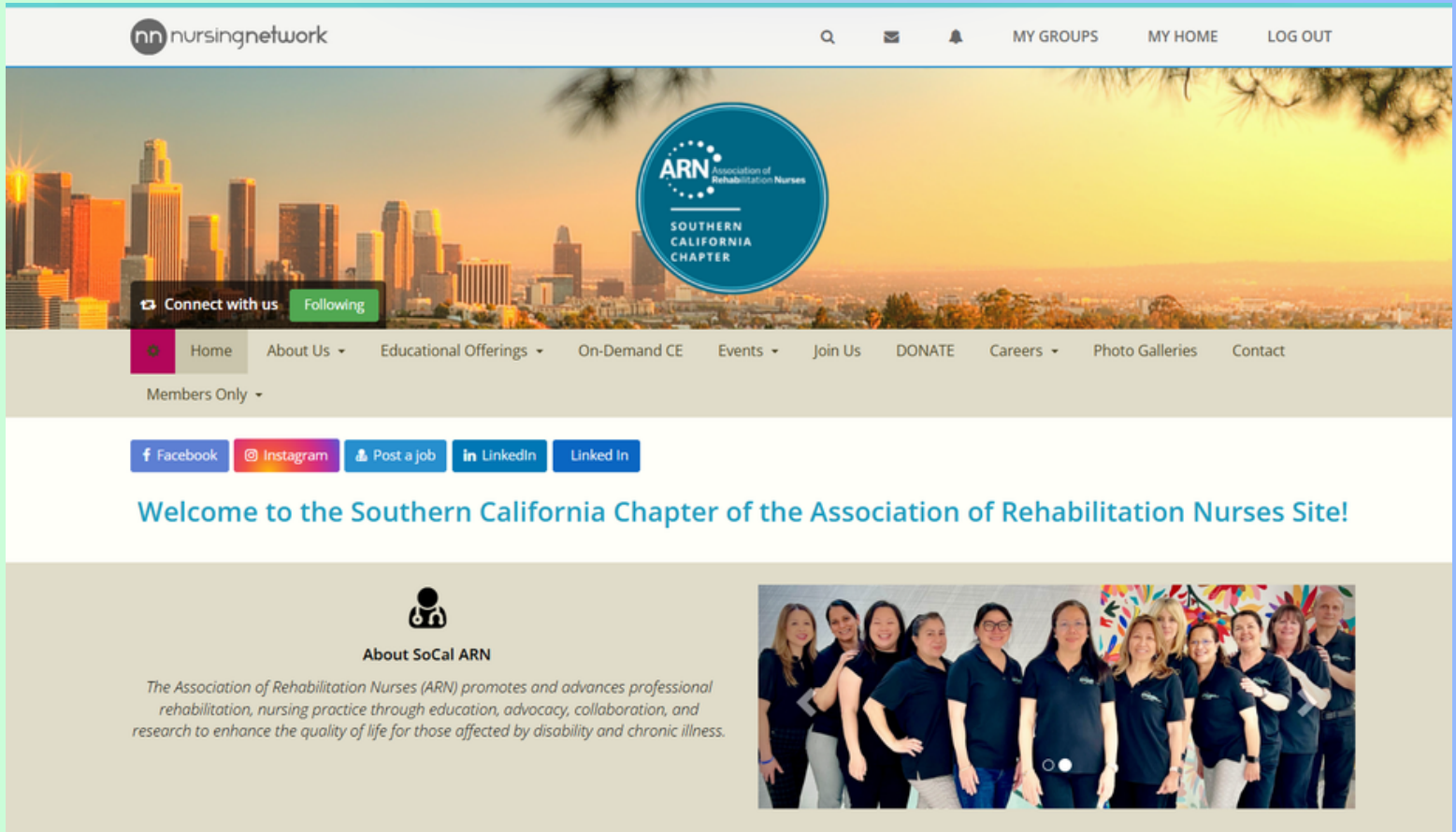
Elaine Morris

Communication Director/Website Moderator

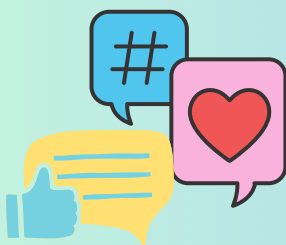
Paddy Higgins

Learn more about our Chapter: <https://socalarn.nursingnetwork.com/>

SoCal Website!



[Check out our website at
https://socalarn.nursingnetwork.com/](https://socalarn.nursingnetwork.com/)



Please register on our website so you don't miss special announcements, events, & our newsletter.

Follow us on social media:
www.facebook.com/laocarn

HAVE YOU SEEN THE LATEST ARN RESOURCES?

Online education

to enhance your knowledge and
advance your rehab nursing practice



Rehab Nursing Essentials: Transformational Education Leadership: A Vision for Nursing Excellence | ARN Learning Center

<https://learn.rehabnurse.org/course-catalog-list?>

[f%5B0%5D=field_course_format%3A14&f%5B1%5D=field_course_category%3A62](https://learn.rehabnurse.org/course-catalog-list?f%5B0%5D=field_course_format%3A14&f%5B1%5D=field_course_category%3A62)



**ARN
FOUNDATIONS**

Enroll in the full curriculum
or select modules to round
out your rehabilitation
nursing knowledge.

LEARN MORE

<https://learn.rehabnurse.org>