



Leading Forward

**Aligning Culture,
Reimagining Workforce,
Adapting Leadership**

2026
Annual Conference

Featured Speakers & Sessions

Meet the nurse leaders, educators, and innovators presenting at the 2026 NWONL Annual Conference.



Kay Kennedy

DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CPHQ

Chief Executive Officer, uLeadership™

Dr. Kay Kennedy, an internationally recognized nurse leader, educator, and author, brings deep experience from roles spanning bedside care to the Chief Nursing Officer and national faculty appointments.

[LinkedIn →](#)

Keynote — It Starts with You! Leading in a Human-Centered Way

Thursday, Sept 24 · 8:30–10:00am • 1.5 CE Credits



Megan Carter

DNP, RN, NEA-BC

President & Founder, MC Health Care Consulting, LLC

Dr. Megan Carter DNP, RN, NEA-BC is the President & Founder of MC Health Care Consulting LLC, where she started the Chaos Whisperer movement in healthcare for leaders who are ready to stop leading from a place of exhaustion. She shares over 18 years of nursing and executive experience with clients and audiences across the country as a national speaker, workshop facilitator, and podcast host. Dr. Carter is an AONL Nurse Executive Fellow with a DNP in Executive Leadership from Duke University and is board certified as an Advanced Nurse Executive.

Keynote — The Chaos Whisperer's Guide to Healthcare Leadership

Friday, Sept 25 · 10:30am–12:00pm • 1.5 CE Credits

Featured Speakers & Sessions



Perry Gee

PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN

Nurse Scientist & Director of Nursing Research, Intermountain Health

Dr. Perry Gee holds a PhD in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership from the University of California, Davis, a master's degree in Clinical Informatics from the University of Utah, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Montana State University. He is board certified as an Advanced Nurse Executive and serves as Nurse Scientist and Director of Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice at Intermountain Health, leading system-wide initiatives that advance nursing science and improve patient outcomes. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, a Fellow of the Western Academy of Nurses, and co-founder of the Sigma Theta Tau International Nurse Scientist Collaborative.

[LinkedIn →](#)

Leading Forward with Caring Intelligence: How Nurse Leaders Can Use AI to Reduce Burden, Strengthen Culture, and Reimagine Workforce

Thursday, Sept 24 · 11:00am–12:00pm • 1.0 CE Credit



Dani Bowie

DNP, RN, NE-BC

SVP, Workforce AI, Qualivis/Aya Healthcare

Dr. Dani Bowie brings over 15 years of experience in driving operational excellence in healthcare systems and specializes in leading innovative staffing and scheduling technology initiatives that boost nurse engagement and cut labor costs. Dr. Bowie leverages her expertise in healthcare, technology, and people management, along with bold leadership strategies, to help organizations achieve clinical and financial KPIs.

[Learn more about Aya Healthcare →](#)

The Era of Workforce Digitization: How to Lean in and Embrace the AI Revolution

Thursday, Sept 24 · 3:00–4:00pm • 1.0 CE Credit

Featured Speakers & Sessions



Jennifer More

MN, RN, NPD-BC

Associate Director, Baxter

Jennifer More, MN, RN, NPD-BC, is an experienced nurse executive and healthcare innovator with more than 23 years in clinical practice, nursing leadership, professional development, and clinical informatics. As Associate Director of Optimized Care Solutions at Baxter, she partners with health systems to advance workforce sustainability, care delivery, and technology-enabled clinical transformation.

[Learn more about Baxter →](#)

Beyond the Transaction: Clinical Partnerships as a Strategic Leadership Advantage

Thursday, Sept 24 · 10:00–10:30am

The “Other Half” of Leadership: Storytelling, Courage and Meaning

Friday, Sept 25 · 10:00–10:30am



Larissa Africa

MBA, BSN, RN, FAONL, FAAN

Vice President, Healthcare Solutions, Ascend Learning

Larissa Africa is a healthcare executive, strategist, and nationally recognized nurse leader known for driving organizational growth, workforce innovation, and transformational change. She currently leads strategic initiatives at Ascend Learning focused on workforce readiness, leadership development, and technology solutions. Previously, Larissa served as President/CEO of Versant Healthcare Competency Solutions, a national provider of nurse residency programs. She is widely published, presents internationally, co-founded two nonprofit organizations including SoloVeri, and serves as Deputy Editor of The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing.

[Discover more about Ascend Learning →](#)

Engaging and Retaining Gen Z Nurses

Thursday, Sept 24 · 1:30–2:30pm • 1.0 CE Credit

Featured Speakers & Sessions



Olivia Brooks

MSN, RN, NPD-BC, NEA-BC

Director of Nursing Leadership Development, MentorLead

Olivia Brooks is a Nursing Professional Development Specialist and leadership coach currently pursuing ACC credentialing through the International Coaching Federation. She brings deep expertise in designing and advancing systemwide role-development programs, including mentoring, preceptorship, shared leadership, and transition-to-practice initiatives. Olivia holds an MSN in Nursing Leadership from Gonzaga University, a BSN from Seattle Pacific University, and ANCC board certifications in Nursing Professional Development and Nurse Executive Leadership.

[Learn more about MentorLead →](#)

Pre-Conference: 2026 Mentor Cohort Mentoring Lab — Focused Connections, Meaningful Insights

Wednesday, Sept 23 · 3:00–4:30pm



Pat Patton

DNP, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Chief Nursing Officer · 2026 NWONL Board President

Chief Nursing Officer, Central Puget Sound Service Area (First Hill, Cherry Hill, Issaquah, Ballard, Redmond); Interim CNO, Swedish Issaquah. Pat serves as the 2026 NWONL Board President.

[LinkedIn →](#)

NWONL President's Message & Adjournment

Friday, Sept 25 · 12:00–12:15pm

Conference Agenda

Pre-Conference

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 · 3:00pm – 5:30pm PT

2:00pm – 4:00pm Early Check-In Registration

3:00pm – 4:30pm Pre-Conference: 2026 Mentor Cohort Mentoring Lab — Focused Connections, Meaningful Insights

Olivia Brooks, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, NEA-BC — Director of Nursing Leadership Development, MentorLead

This interactive session and mentoring lab, facilitated by MentorLead, gives participants a dynamic, structured way to build meaningful professional connections. Through guided conversations and rapid-rotation partner exchanges, participants strengthen communication skills, expand professional networks, and walk away with practical strategies they can immediately apply within their own leadership and practice settings.

4:30pm – 5:30pm Pre-Conference: NWONL Regional Councils Meetup and Social Hour

For those coming in the night before the main conference, this is a great opportunity to connect face to face with peer leaders! Special thanks to Medtronic, 2026 Premier Annual Partner, for their sponsorship of the Meetup and Social.

Main Conference · Day 1

Thursday, September 24, 2026 · 7:00am – 5:00pm PT

7:00am Check-In Registration Open

7:30am – 8:30am Breakfast & Exhibit Hall Opens

8:30am – 10:00am Keynote — It Starts with You! Leading in a Human-Centered Way

Kay Kennedy, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CPHQ, FAAN

**1.5 CE
Credits**

As healthcare grows more complex and unpredictable, leaders are being called to lead with greater clarity, intention, and humanity. This keynote introduces a human-centered approach to leadership that strengthens alignment, connection, and team culture.

**10:00am –
10:30am**

Beyond the Transaction: Clinical Partnerships as a Strategic Leadership Advantage

Jennifer More, MN, RN, NPD-BC — Associate Director, Baxter

This 30-minute session explores how clinical partnership and interoperability can help organizations move beyond silos toward more connected, adaptive healthcare ecosystems, using the Baxter-NWONL relationship as an example.

Conference Agenda

10:30am – 11:00am Morning Break & Exhibit Hall Touring

11:00am – 12:00pm Leading Forward with Caring Intelligence: How Nurse Leaders Can Use AI to Reduce Burden, Strengthen Culture, and Reimagine Workforce

1.0 CE Credit

Perry Gee, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN — Intermountain Health

This talk reframes AI as a leadership strategy, not a technology initiative, exploring how AI can reduce burden, strengthen workforce sustainability, and restore time for human connection.

12:00pm – 1:30pm Lunch & Exhibit Hall Touring

1:30pm – 2:30pm Engaging and Retaining Gen Z Nurses

1.0 CE Credit

Larissa Africa, MBA, BSN, RN, FAONL, FAAN — Ascend Learning

2026 is the year Gen Z RNs reach a tipping point in health systems, redefining workplace norms as they fill the first major cohort of nurse manager roles.

2:30pm – 3:00pm Afternoon Break and Exhibitor Sponsored Raffles!

3:00pm – 4:00pm The Era of Workforce Digitization: How to Lean in and Embrace the AI Revolution

1.0 CE Credit

Dr. Dani Bowie, DNP, RN, NE-BC — SVP, Workforce AI, Qualivis/Aya Healthcare

A review of the history of AI in healthcare, why it's becoming essential today, and how AI-driven workforce management can improve efficiency and patient care.

4:00pm – 5:00pm Conference Social Hour & Networking

Main Conference · Day 2

Friday, September 25, 2026 · 8:00am – 12:15pm PT

8:00am – 9:00am Breakfast and NWONL Annual Awards Presentations

NWONL formally announces and celebrates the 2026 Nursing Leaders selected for the NWONL Daisy Nurse Leader Award, NWONL's Rising Leader Award, and the NWONL Excellence in Nursing Award.

9:00am – 9:30am NWONL Meeting of the Membership

NWONL updates on its programs progress, membership base, and key legislative issues impacting our region and what's next for NWONL members and affiliates.

9:30am – 10:00am Morning Break & Room Check-Out

Conference Agenda

10:00am –
10:30am

The “Other Half” of Leadership: Storytelling, Courage and Meaning

Jennifer More, MN, RN, NPD-BC — Associate Director, Baxter

This interactive, reflective session focuses on storytelling as a leadership competency, narrative medicine, and human-centered approaches to innovation and culture.

10:30am –
12:00pm

Keynote — The Chaos Whisperer's Guide to Healthcare Leadership

1.5 CE
Credits

Megan Carter, DNP, RN, NEA-BC — President & Founder, MC Health Care Consulting, LLC

You are not meant to prove your worth through exhaustion. Dr. Carter shares the Chaos Whisperer movement for leaders ready to stop leading from a place of exhaustion.

12:00pm – 12:15pm

NWONL President's Message & Adjournment

Pat Patton, DNP, MSN, RN, NEA-BC — NWONL Board President

Our own NWONL Board President wraps up our conference, shares a call to action, and sends us off to rejoin our families, communities, and the teams we all serve as Northwest Nursing Leaders.

Thank You to Our Partners

NWONL is grateful to the corporate partners whose support makes this conference possible.

ELITE DIAMOND SPONSOR

Baxter

Uniting to save and sustain lives — as a trusted partner, we provide clinically essential innovations that transform care along the patient journey. We empower clinicians to confidently make data-driven decisions, enhance the patient experience, and ultimately save and sustain lives.

baxter.com →

PREMIER ANNUAL PARTNERS



Grand Canyon University

Grand Canyon University (GCU) is a premier institution dedicated to developing visionary healthcare leaders through its robust graduate programs in nursing and leadership. With a focus on evidence-based practice, servant leadership, and real-world application, GCU empowers nurses to advance their careers and drive meaningful change in healthcare systems.

gcu.edu →

Connexall

The Heart of Connected Care.

Connexall

Connexall is a global leader in vendor-neutral, integrated clinical communication and workflow automation. We bridge the gaps in healthcare by connecting systems, people, and data — creating a seamless ecosystem that drives better outcomes, reduces frontline fatigue, and cuts costs. Trusted by over 60% of the top hospitals across the U.S. and Canada.

connexall.com →

Thank You to Our Partners

Medtronic

Medtronic

Medtronic is a global leader in health technology, dedicated to a bold purpose: a healthy life, on a healthy planet, for everyone. Backed by more than \$2.7 billion in annual research and development and a portfolio that has touched the lives of over 79 million patients worldwide, Medtronic partners with nursing leaders to bring the latest in medical innovation to the point of care.

[medtronic.com](https://www.medtronic.com) →

2026 EXHIBITORS

Amergis



Since 1988, Amergis Healthcare Staffing has served our clients and communities by connecting people to the work that matters, delivering unmatched staffing experiences and workforce solutions.

[amergis.com](https://www.amergis.com) →

Bruin Biometrics



Bruin Biometrics pioneered biology-based pressure injury detection, enabling clinicians to identify sub-clinical tissue damage days before it's visible with the Provizio® SEM Scanner and PIPPA™ digital platform.

[bruinbiometrics.com](https://www.bruinbiometrics.com) →

Array Behavioral Care



Array Behavioral Care is the nation's leading virtual psychiatry and therapy practice, delivering integrated behavioral health services from hospitals to homes, helping care teams enhance outcomes and reduce costs.

[arraybc.com](https://www.arraybc.com) →

Cable CTS



Cable CTS delivers cutting-edge connectivity solutions tailored for healthcare environments, ensuring seamless, secure, high-performance communication and network infrastructure.

Dynamic Access



Dynamic Access is a leading provider of vascular access solutions, offering bedside vascular access services delivered by skilled clinicians — reducing delays and freeing nursing teams to focus on core patient care.

[dynamicaccess.com](https://www.dynamicaccess.com) →

Boehringer Laboratories LLC



Boehringer Laboratories LLC is an innovative medical device company dedicated to advancing patient care through high-quality, precision-engineered surgical and respiratory care technologies.

[boehringerlabs.com](https://www.boehringerlabs.com) →

Thank You to Our Partners



Glooko

Glooko is a global digital health company bridging the full spectrum of diabetes care, unifying data from CGMs, meters, and insulin pumps directly into the EHR, including its FDA-cleared EndoTool clinical decision-support system.

glooko.com →



Laudio — StaffGarden by Ascend Learning

Ascend has expanded into frontline leadership and talent development through its acquisitions of Laudio and StaffGarden — AI-enabled platforms supporting frontline nurse managers and powering digital clinical ladder programs trusted by more than 800 hospitals.



Health Carousel

Health Carousel is a national healthcare staffing and workforce management company that has cared for more than 15 million patients since 2004, investing in professional development to build a stronger nursing workforce.

healthcarousel.com →



M7 Health

M7 Health delivers AI-powered nurse scheduling and labor optimization founded by a registered nurse, forecasting demand and filling staffing gaps before resorting to costly premium labor.

m7health.com →



Jeron Electronics

Since 1965, Jeron Electronic Systems has designed and manufactured internal communications and nurse call solutions for hospitals, made in the USA by a family-run company committed to reliability and value.

jeron.com →



Outset Medical

Outset Medical is transforming dialysis care with innovative, user-friendly technology. Its Tablo® Hemodialysis System simplifies treatment in hospitals, clinics, and homes.

outsetmedical.com →



Kurin Inc.

Kurin provides an innovative blood culture collection set with integrated diversion technology, helping hospitals reach the industry's 1% blood culture contamination target through clinical evidence and CE-accredited education.

kurin.com →



Qualivis

Qualivis is a trusted workforce partner helping healthcare organizations build stronger, more resilient teams through innovative staffing solutions and data-driven workforce planning tools.

qualivis.com →

Thank You to Our Partners



Wieland Healthcare

Wieland Healthcare designs and manufactures furniture purpose-built for healthcare environments, pairing patient-centered facility design with its Wieland Nurse Appreciation Scholarship.

wielandhealthcare.com →



Workpointe

Workpointe delivers high-quality equipment and furniture solutions designed for healthcare environments, enhancing patient care and workflow efficiency with durable, adaptable solutions.

workpointe.com →



Stryker

Stryker is one of the world's leading medical technology companies, impacting more than 150 million patients annually with equipment services, financing, and training that free clinicians to focus on patients.

stryker.com →



Wolters Kluwer – Lippincott

Wolters Kluwer empowers healthcare professionals with trusted, evidence-based solutions that enhance clinical decision-making and improve patient outcomes, from UpToDate® to Medi-Span®.

wolterskluwer.com →



The Morel Company

The Morel Company enhances patient care and caregiver efficiency with innovative mobility solutions, including the Hercules Patient Repositioner®, which automates safe, effortless repositioning.

morelcompany.com →



The DAISY Foundation

Founded in 1999, The DAISY Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit celebrating the art of nursing through the DAISY Award, honoring compassionate nurses across more than 7,900 healthcare organizations in 47 countries.

daisyfoundation.org →



West-Com & TV, Inc.

West-Com & TV, Inc. is a leading provider of patient-centered communication and safety solutions, delivering innovative nurse call systems and visual communication tools trusted by hospitals nationwide.

westcomtv.com →



MentorLead

MentorLead is the leading strategic mentoring solution for healthcare, partnering with hospitals nationwide through evidence-based mentoring programs — Stanford Healthcare reported a 50% reduction in turnover through its partnership.

mentorlead.com →

Continuing Education

A valid RN license is required along with attendance and completion of the post event CE survey. Continuing Education Provider approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing, Provider #17495



Corporate Partner Marketing & Promotions

Your basic information, name, role, organization and email provided by your registration will be shared with all attending corporate partners for both a welcome and follow up email. If you desire further information and engagement with a Partner, please make time to secure a follow-up! **We rely on our Corporate Partners to sponsor our live events**



Contact us

 **NWONL: Northwest Organization of Nurse Leaders**
5331 S Macadam Ave. Ste 258 PMB 1135
Portland, OR 97239-3871

 +1 503-479-5834
 admin@nwonl.org
 www.nwonl.org