



WONL September 2026 News Horizons

Message from Our President

Reflect. Evolve. Lead the Future.

By: Dennise L. | WONL President

Dear WONL Members and Colleagues,

As summer winds down, there is so much to celebrate and look forward to at WONL! And with our fall conference headed to Green Bay, it seems only fitting to bring a little **Packer spirit** along with us.

The game plan is set, our team is ready, and it's time to bring our championship mindset to Lambeau!



Your WONL Executive Team, Board and Nominations Committee have been busy preparing for the months ahead. I am excited to share that we have selected our **three 2026 Nurse Leader of the Year honorees** in the categories of **Nurse Executive, Nurse Leader, and Rising Star**. We look forward to recognizing these outstanding leaders during our **Awards Dinner on September 17** at the Fall Conference.

It is also **2027 nominations time!** A special thank you to our **WONL Nominations Committee** for its work identifying and engaging nurse leaders willing to serve our organization. Thank you to all of our candidates so far for stepping forward and being willing to serve. Developing our next generation of WONL leaders is essential to the continued strength and future of WONL.

And then—it's time for **Green Bay!** Our 2026 Annual Conference, "Championship Mindset: Building the Nurse Leader Playbook for Winning Teams," takes place September 16–18 at the Hyatt Regency Green Bay. We will kick off Wednesday evening with our Tailgate Party at Lambeau Field, followed by two days of learning, networking, celebration, and inspiration. Consider it our WONL kickoff—Wisconsin nurse leaders coming together as one team, ready to learn, connect, and lead! Registration [link](#) here, due by September 8. Hope to see you there!



WONL Advocacy Updates: Advancing Nursing Practice & Education

WONL continues to partner with the **Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA)**, **Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA)**, **Wisconsin Center for Nursing (WCN)**, and our **academic partners through ANEW** to advance policy solutions that strengthen nursing practice, education, and Wisconsin's healthcare workforce.



APRN Modernization Act Takes Effect September 1

September marks an important milestone for nursing in Wisconsin as the APRN Modernization Act (2025 Wisconsin Act 17) takes effect September 1, 2026, following years of advocacy and collaboration across our state.

The new law establishes APRN licensure for four nationally recognized roles —Nurse Practitioner (NP), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), and Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). Qualified APRNs who complete 3,840 hours of advanced practice experience over at least 24 months may become eligible for independent practice as outlined in Wisconsin law. [Read Full Article](#)

Nurse Well-Being: Caring for Those Who Care for Others

Advocacy Updates | Taking Care of You



Creating physically and psychologically safe work environments remains an important component of WONL Strategic Priority #1: Workforce. This fall, WONL continues to collaborate with statewide partners on important initiatives focused on caring for those who spend their careers caring for others.

Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers — September 10

WONL continues its involvement in the statewide Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers initiative, with WONL President Dennise Lavrenz serving on the Steering Committee. On September 10, WONL will be represented at WHA's inaugural Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers Well-Being Summit. The Summit launches Phase 2 of this state initiative, moving organizations from commitment to action by strengthening the systems, practices, and cultures that support workforce well-being.

A key component will be the introduction of The Breen Scale™, an evidence-based tool designed to help healthcare organizations assess their current environments, identify opportunities for improvement, and prepare for Phase 3 implementation in 2027. [Read Full Article Here](#)

WONL Workforce Update: Wisconsin Center for Nursing Summit

WONL was proud to be represented at the 2026 Wisconsin Center for Nursing (WCN) Nursing Workforce Summit on August 7, continuing our strong

partnership with WCN and supporting WONL

Strategic Priority #1: Workforce.

A highlight of the Summit was “**The State of the Wisconsin Nursing Workforce: RN, LPN & Nursing Faculty**,” which shared the latest findings from Wisconsin’s statewide nursing workforce surveys. **Roberta Pawlak, PhD, RN, NEA-BC**; **Katie Gillespie, DNP, RN, CPH, FAAN**; and **Gail Hanson Brenner, PhD, RN, CNE** provided valuable insights into Wisconsin’s **RN, LPN, and nursing faculty workforce**. [Full Article Here](#)



Spotlight on WONL 2026 Nurse Award Nominees

Thank you for your service and congratulations on being nominated!

Name

Victoria Varsho
La Tivia Carr
Kate Homes
Dana Jahr
Josephine (Jo) Kowalczyk
Abby Reagan
Jacob Damro
Amanda Czerniewski
Victoria (Tori) DePrey

Category

Nurse Executive
Nurse Executive
Nurse Leader
Nurse Leader
Nurse Leader
Rising Star
Rising Star
Rising Star
Rising Star



*Winners will be recognized at dinner on 9/17/26

Get Involved | Submit Your Name

Help Shape the Future of WONL

By: Laura H. | Nominations Chairperson

Nominations are now open for:

- President Elect (1-year term)
- Treasurer (2-year term)
- (4) At-Large Directors (2-year term)



Please take a minute to review the roles for your open 2027 Board Positions. The submission form can be found [here](#). The nominations period is extended to Monday, September 21. To provide an opportunity for conference participants to speak with and ask questions of a board member, the decision was made to extend the process. Questions email WONL@badgerbay.co (not com).

WONL License Plate

Celebrate a Nurse

By: Sharon W. | License Plate Chairperson

You can show your support by ordering a “**Nurses Change Lives**” license plate online or at any DMV office. Personalization is optional, but makes it easy to display your nurse pride.



Order Plates
Here

Upcoming Events

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Green Bay WI | September 16-18

Register [HERE](#)

*Or in person after 9/9/26



WEBINARS | Save the Dates!

Leading the Way: Best Practices
in Falls Prevention | Sept 8

Transitions to Leadership | Oct 6

WisPAN Partnership | Nov 10

Balance & Well Being | Dec 8

Register/Info: [HERE](#)

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