



## FROM THE NNA PRESIDENT

Linda Hardy, PhD, RN, CNE, CTNA

### GREETINGS TO ALL NEBRASKA NURSES!

AS I WRITE THIS ARTICLE, we are preparing to attend the American Nurses Association Membership Assembly in Washington, D.C. June 27-29. Jocelyn Ramos, Membership Representative for NNA, and I will attend Hill Day on Thursday, June 27th. This is our opportunity to bring the concerns of Nebraska nurses to our representatives. We will have the opportunity to meet with our elected officials or their staff members. ANA facilitates this by scheduling the meetings, briefing us on current issues impacting nurses across the country, and arranging transportation to and from “The Hill”. On Friday and Saturday, we will be joined by Kim Houtwed, the Executive Director of NNA for the rest of Membership Assembly.

Every year, ANA chooses 3 topics to address via Member Dialogues. This year’s topics are as follows:

Dialogue Forum #1: Breaking Barriers to Nurse Workforce Well-Being: A Call for Licensure and Employment Policy Reform to Combat Stigma Description: Nurses have struggled with mental and emotional well-being due to the inherent obligations and stressors of their profession. Nurses encounter higher rates of mental health issues, substance abuse, and even suicide compared to the general population (Choflet et al., 2023). Tragically, the stigma surrounding seeking support perpetuates a culture of silence, where nurses suffer in solitude, fearing repercussions such as losing their license or enduring professional setbacks (Murthy, 2022). Because these realities have not been adequately addressed, they have resulted in a nursing workforce mental health crisis, which has been compounded by the COVID-19

pandemic. A fundamental shift in culture and a united organizational response are imperative to dismantle the systemic barriers obstructing personal and professional well-being. Speakers: Courtney Hickey, BSN, RN, Mary Satre-Kerwin, MSN, MBA, RN Colleen Casper, RN, MS, DNP

Dialogue Forum #2: Improving Care for the Veterans Population Description: The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have resulted in a significant increase in the veteran population, creating unique healthcare challenges and needs. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has faced strain in providing timely care, prompting Congress to pass the MISSION Act in 2018, allowing veterans to access healthcare services outside the VHA through the VA Community Care (VACC) program. While well-intentioned, the expansion of care into the community overlooks the specific healthcare needs of veterans, particularly in the context of the unique challenges arising from military service. ANA has historically supported increased access to care for veterans and, in response to the MISSION Act expansion, should reinvest efforts to ensure that United States veterans receive appropriate healthcare services. Veterans, with their distinct determinants of health and increased rates of mental health disorders and exposure-related illnesses, require healthcare providers, including Registered Nurses, to undergo specialized training and education for the detection and treatment of these challenges to improve healthcare outcomes. This policy proposal outlines recommendations for action to ensure that all healthcare providers are adequately prepared to provide the highest level of care to this specific patient population. Speakers: Edward Briggs, ANA Board of Directors Representative from the

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services within the Medicare system, ensuring that care is accessible and equitable.

## STRATEGIES FOR MEDICARE FLUENCY

Achieving Medicare fluency requires ongoing education and engagement with current policy changes, healthcare reforms, and patient advocacy opportunities. Here are several strategies for Texas nurses to enhance their Medicare knowledge:

**Leverage Resources:** Utilize resources from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and state-specific information from the Nebraska Department of Human Services.

**Continuing Education:** Participate in workshops, seminars, and healthcare policy and Medicare courses. Many professional nursing associations offer these as part of their continuing education programs.

**Engage with Patients:** Use patient encounters to discuss Medicare benefits and options, tailoring advice to their specific healthcare needs and situations.

**Collaborate with Experts:** Establish connections with Medicare experts, social workers, and insurance navigators who can provide up-to-date information and assistance.

## A CALL TO ACTION

The relationship between patient care and understanding Medicare is undeniable. As nurses, our commitment to patient advocacy extends beyond the bedside to include navigating the intricacies of healthcare coverage. By becoming fluent in Medicare, nurses in Nebraska can ensure their patients receive the full spectrum of care and services they deserve, ultimately improving healthcare outcomes across the state. 🌟

Al Kushner is an award-winning Medicare expert with a prosperous career spanning nearly four decades in the medical insurance industry. Kushner has been recognized by peers for his contributions to the field. His work focuses on demystifying Medicare for healthcare providers and patients alike, emphasizing the management of patient expectations and the importance of staff education on Medicare nuances. A committed advocate and educator, Al Kushner is a valuable resource for anyone looking to navigate the intricate world of Medicare and can be reached at 888-810-9725 or by email at [media@virtualmedi.care](mailto:media@virtualmedi.care) for insights grounded in extensive hands-on experience.

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Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA) Willa Fuller, CEO, Florida Nurses Association

Dialogue Forum #3: Enhancing Ethical Practice Through the Voice of Nursing: 2025 Code of Ethics Revision Description: The ANA's commitment to maintaining a Code of Ethics for Nurses is enshrined in its Certificate of Incorporation, which mandates the establishment and upkeep of ethical standards within the nursing profession. The Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements (the Code or Code) is subject to periodic updates, with revisions occurring approximately every ten years in accordance with ANA policy. The purpose of revising the Code is to uphold the longstanding tradition of nursing ethics rooted in relational values while addressing contemporary challenges. This Dialogue Forum provides an opportunity to learn about the evolution of the Code, the approach used to revise the document, and provide feedback on the proposed changes for the 2025 version. Speakers: Jennifer L. Bartlett, ANA Ethics Advisory Board Daniela

Vargas, Code of Ethics Revision Committee

Of note regarding #3, the Code of Ethics is updated every 5 years to be sure that it is current with nursing practice. This work has been ongoing for the past year or more.

Another issue before the Assembly is the question of dues escalation. Our NNA members received a survey regarding this issue in May. This is a tough question! If the dues escalation 'stands', the monthly fee for ANA/NNA standard membership would go from \$15 to \$15.75 per month. This would bring much needed revenue into the NNA. Having said that, all of us are feeling the effects of inflation and a tight budget at home. I will let you know the outcome in our monthly newsletter since the deadline for the Nebraska Nurse publication is before I will have the results.

Thank you, Nebraska Nurses, for all that you do for your patients, their families, our communities, and our nursing profession! 🌟

*Linda Hardy, PhD, RN, CNE, CTN-A*