

President's Message



Cassy Abbott Eng
PhD, RN, LCN, CNE
ONA President

It is an absolute honor and privilege to serve as the next president of the Oklahoma Nurses Association. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude that you chose the nursing profession, for being the incredible person you are, and for serving as a beacon of hope and a steadfast pillar in our profession, in healthcare, and in our communities. Your relentless dedication over time has been unmeasurable. You are significant, and your impact is significant.

As nurses, we know how to stay the course and serve as the beacon of light and hope for not only our patients but for humanity. When we face challenges, our souls generate and maintain a reassuring flame that we refuse to let diminish. Why is this? Because nursing is not just a job; it's a calling—where ordinary people rise to do extraordinary things, day in and day out, often to improve the lives and outcomes of others.

I acknowledge and applaud our past, and I am primed and ready to forge a path where nurses lead and succeed in Oklahoma. My vision for the ONA Board of Directors is to come alongside and fan

your flame, fuel your tank, and support you and your passion for the profession. To be instrumental in forming meaningful networks across our state to add octane to your professional aspirations. I want to assure you that you are not alone on this journey. We are stronger together!

As the largest profession within healthcare, we have the center stage to make the greatest impact. We must swim in the same direction as we spread our spirit of optimism, restore hope in the health of our state, and raise awareness and the bar for the profession of nursing.

We must remain laser-focused and intentional as we lock arms across our state.

I plan to ignite the torch of intentionality as I counteract complacency and challenge myself—and you—to be inspirational and aspirational in the coming year.

First, INSPIRATION: I challenge you to find someone to pour into and offer inspiration for someone coming behind. A student, a new graduate, or a new colleague. I encourage you to inspire someone as you instill excitement, encouragement, and an example of excellence as a mentor. A notable example of this could be engaging

in the nurse residency programs. There are many more fabulous opportunities to be intentional in this regard. You have such a beautiful gift of life experience to share. Please join me as we each identify an emerging nurse to welcome and mentor into a strong link in the professional chain.

My next challenge to myself—and you—is that of ASPIRATION. I encourage you to reach further and stretch higher than you ever thought possible. Run for an office, step up to lead a committee, teach a course, write a book, launch a podcast, collaborate on an article. As nurses, we excel at doing incredible work. But you know what? We are great and we need to showcase this greatness by dancing on larger stages. Join me as we aspire to do even greater things.

This is my vision, the trajectory of ONA, and most importantly my commitment to you.

As your next President, the board of directors and I plan to lead by example, come alongside, and help breathe wind in your sails by creating opportunities for you to inspire those coming behind and aspire to showcase greatness within our profession.

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Please join me in the coming year as we make some noise and cause some healthy commotion in our state. Let us capture the attention of the citizens across our great

state and begin to serve as a state for others to replicate across our great nation.

Thank you again for entrusting me in this role. I am incredibly eager to launch

into the coming year and could not be more thrilled to be launching alongside this star-studded line-up of nurses across our state! ■

Everybody's Work!

Jane Nelson, CAE, Chief Executive Officer



Previously, I talked about nurses' power and how nurses are the backbone of healthcare. Well, that hasn't changed. There is still no substitute for nurses. However, we have work to do!

We must remember that we have a social contract with society that outlines the expectations between us.

We must uphold this relationship and muster up our power even when we are overwhelmed.

In a speech to the 2002 graduating class at Brown, former US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, "As you pursue your paths in life, leave tracks... Do your part to help move society to the place you would like to be for the health and well-being of generations that follow your own." There are so many ways that you can leave tracks. Whether it's how you provide care for your patients, the various ways you support your co-workers, or the consideration and encouragement you give to the new-to-practice nurses, you leave an impact. You leave a track. You leave a mark on every life you touch. It is up to you to decide what mark you leave.

We must work diligently to improve the health and well-being of everyone in our community. As part of that work, we put immense effort into passing the APRN Transition to Practice legislation, nurses shared stories about their patients with legislators, including information about what would happen to these patients if APRNs lost access to their physician supervisor. Legislators heard compelling stories about the financial burden of this supervision and its restrictive impact on APRN practice. Although the gov-

ernor ultimately chose not to sign the bill into law, your voices made a difference. We will continue to persevere and push forward.

Sharing stories is one of the most powerful ways to influence others: colleagues, supervisors, legislators, and the public. Through storytelling, we can show that nurses are not just statistics. Each of you matters, and people must acknowledge the reality you have conveyed and take action.

At the Annual ONA Convention this past September, we had the privilege of hearing powerful stories from nurses about their experiences with racism and its lasting impact. While conversations about racism can be challenging, they are essential. This is not just an issue affecting individual nurses or our profession—racism affects the patients we serve as well. Addressing it and understanding how to be an ally is everybody's work.

ONA remains committed to amplifying the voices of all nurses, from those who are new to practice to those with years of experience. We are dedicated to providing the resources and support that nurses need to thrive in their work, while also ensuring that this critical issue stays at the forefront of our efforts to advance the nursing profession. We are excited about the

opportunities we have in bringing groups together such as the Emerging Nurses and our Indigenous Nurses chapter along with the Advance Practice Nurses. Recently the board approved a new chapter focused on Innovation and Technology chaired by LaToya Smith that will launch shortly. We are also working on a new leader program so keep an eye out for more information in the coming year. ONA will continue our efforts in advancing nursing by creating tools and resources that will assist every one of you in fostering innovation and advocacy. In the words of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, we will leave our track, and it will take all of us working together, lifting our voices, to ensure that it is an exceptional one. ■

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