

Nurses on Boards

Submitted by **Stephaney Brondum, MSN, RN, CNL, INA Nursing Practice Committee Member**



For twenty-two years in a row, the nursing profession has been ranked as the most trusted profession in the Gallup poll. This poll has been conducted for thirty-three consecutive years, and 2024 will be year number thirty-four (Walker, 2024). As the most trusted profession, nurses have much to offer committee boards in various settings. People respect the opinion of nurses and value their contributions as board members. Several nurses below have offered their insights on being an active part of a variety of boards.

"I have served on the Sunrise Retirement Community Board of Directors for over 10 years and on the Sunrise Quality, Compliance and Ethics Committee. Sunrise has an excellent reputation, high quality ratings, and provides exceptional care for long-term, assisted, and independent living.

I believe my nursing voice on the Sunrise Retirement Community Board of Directors is essential to the care and support of the organization and people they serve. For example, I have shared my nursing expertise during strategic planning, selection of leadership positions, and

considerations for managing healthcare challenges. I speak up on issues especially related to staffing, budgets, and resident care and believe my input has made a difference in vital decisions. Having a nurse on the board is also reassuring for the staff knowing there is a board member who can relate to their essential work.

Serving on the board has allowed me to learn about the operations of a large healthcare organization including financial and regulatory matters. I value the collaboration opportunities to work with other board members, a network of professional community leaders, and the staff. This experience has been extremely rewarding by allowing me to serve the community while growing as a nursing leader in healthcare."

— **Mary Kovarna, EdD, RN (Merrill, IA)**

"I've been in healthcare for almost 25 years. I started my healthcare journey as a dietary aide, cook, environmental aide, CNA, and then an RN these last 16 years. I received my ADN at Iowa Central Community College ('08), completed the RN-BSN program at The University of Iowa ('14), MSN program at Grand View University

('17), and next summer I should complete my MBA through Nebraska Wesleyan University. I am currently the Director of Oncology & Infusion Services at McFarland Clinic in Ames.

The first board I participate in is MOPS (Midwest Oncology Practice Society). I have been a member since 2019, was elected Secretary in 2022 and re-elected in 2024. However, due to recent retirements, now sit as the Vice President. The society was created in 1994 and is a Nebraska non-profit corporation. The society is made up of Nebraska and Iowa oncology community practices. These independent practices have come together to negotiate drug contracting on chemotherapy and immunotherapy drugs frequently administered throughout our practices, used to help treat patients with cancer diagnoses.

The second board that I sit on is Gilbert Education Foundation (GEF). This board is also a non-profit foundation that raises funds for educational needs in our Gilbert School District. We support our teachers and students by providing funding for their educational requests. I'm much newer to this board, as I joined in 2023 as a voting member."

— **Christina Foster, MSN, RN, OCN (Ames, IA)**

"I serve as the Vice President on the board of a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the unmet needs of individuals in our community who have mental, physical, or intellectual disabilities. In my role as a nurse leader within a community hospital, I bring valuable insight into the gaps in services and the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. This allows the board to make informed decisions on projects and priorities that can effectively address these needs. While this role does not involve direct patient care,

it represents a holistic approach to nursing, with the potential to address unmet needs and help prevent hospitalizations.”
 — **Hope Dunn, BSN, MHSA, RN, CENP**
 (Burlington, IA)

“I have had numerous opportunities over the years to participate on boards and commission. I suspect that these opportunities are related to nurses’ ability to use our critical thinking and project management skills. I constantly apply these skills on volunteer projects, boards and commissions. Currently I am serving on the following boards:

1. Madison Co. Conservation Board (appointed by County Supervisors)
2. Winterset Friends of the Public Library (elected as a Director)
3. Session Member at the Presbyterian Church in Winterset Iowa (Appointed by Congregation)
4. Chairing of the Madison Co “Get out the Vote” Committee, Madison Co. Democratic Central Committee (Appointed by

Central Committee)
 5. Treasurer of the Iowa Nurse Foundation (elected by the INA membership)”
 — **Pam Deichmann, MSN, RN**
 (Winterset, IA)

“Del Konopka, Central Region, a retired RN with a master’s degree in community health nursing, with an interest in physical fitness and well-being, serves on two boards. The first is Ankeny’s Lake Country Cyclists as secretary. A longtime club member, she enjoys sharing her love of cycling. Having a board role provides an opportunity to support the club and bicycling in the Ankeny area. Secondly, she is the Facilities Committee co-chair on the Session (board) of Ankeny Presbyterian Church. By being on the Session, she gives input on the direction of the church and its community’s and neighbors’ spiritual wellbeing and service. More practically, her team maintains a safe and healthy environment for worship and fellowship. Most recently, this has included a decision to

install solar panels to demonstrate climate awareness and environmental stewardship for the health of our area. Lastly, Del serves on Wellness Committee for her church, providing health-related activities and newsletter articles, and Mission Committee, sharing compassion and service in our community and world.”

— **Del Konopka, MS, RN (Ankeny)**

As the most trusted profession for years, nurses have serious clout among the general population. We also hold a unique position in public service that allows us to see the needs of the communities we serve. Hopefully, this article has encouraged you to get involved in boards that are meaningful to you! ■

Reference

Walker, A. (2024, January 23). *Nursing Ranked as the Most Trusted Profession for 22nd Year in a Row*. Nurse.org. Retrieved October 11, 2024, from <https://nurse.org/articles/nursing-ranked-most-honest-profession/#whos-at-the-top>

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Advertising					
Recognition on INA's partners webpage including company logo and a link to website	X	X	X	X	X
Submit an article or banner ad for e-newsletter	1 per year	2 per year	3 per year	4 per year	4 per year
Recognition as a partner in INA publication	1 per year	1 per year	2 per year	3 per year	4 per year
Opportunity to submit an educational article for INA publication		1 issue	2 issues	3 issues	4 issues
List events on INA's online calendar of events and in e-newsletter	X	X	X	X	X
Email blast to members			1 per year	2 per year	3 per year
Sliding banner ad on INA website home page			1 month	2 months	3 months
Provide information webinar to INA membership				1 per year	2 per year
Conference Related Benefits					
Exhibit booth (in-person or virtual)		1 per year	1 per year	1 per year	2 per year
Recognition - verbal, signage, website, and break slides	X	X	X	X	X
Advertisement in Mobile Event Platform			1 event per year	2 events per year	2 events per year
Conference Exclusive Event sponsorship recognition					X
Complimentary registration to social events at conference		X	X	X	X