

REGION 6 NEWS (Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth, Ocean)

By: Kathleen Mullen, DNP, MA, RNC-MNN, CNE, Region 6 VP Communications

Newly elected officers were installed to their positions in January as members of the Board by our new President Sheila Caldwell:

- Denise Nash-Luckenbach, President-Elect
- Kathy Mullen, Secretary
- Laurie Huryk, VP to the Congress for Policy and Practice
- Anastasia Klimchenia, Ocean County Chairperson
- Jackie Arnone, Nominating Committee Chairperson

The election for the 2025-2026 Region 6 Board of Directors was conducted online in conjunction with NJSNA elections in November 2024. *Call for Nominations:* It's never too early to think about taking

on a leadership role in the Region. Please contact Nominations Chair Jackie Arnone jackiea412@aol.com to learn more about leadership positions within the region. At the end of 2025, the term of office will expire for the Region 6 positions of Treasurer, Vice President Membership, Atlantic County Chairperson, Monmouth County Chairperson, and members of the Nominating Committee. Joining the nominating committee or working with a county chairpersons is a great way to learn more about leadership in the region.

Check your email for the announcement of the Region 6 Spring general

membership meeting. Join us at a dinner meeting to network and earn NUPDs. If you'd like to become a member of Region 6, or if you are a member but did not receive an email blast about recent Region 6 general membership meetings, contact Helen Heinmets at hheinmets@brookdalecc.edu.

Use the Region 6 microsite to find out about all the Region's upcoming events. How to connect? Click on your county on the NJ map on the NJSNA home page or bookmark: <https://njsna.org/regional-site/region-6/>. Tell us about the content you'd like to see on the microsite: email Kathy Mullen, kmmullen@comcast.net. ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We Are Not Here to Care for the Computer!

As healthcare providers, we spend far too much time documenting in the Electronic Health Record (EHR). Each task in patient care requires numerous clicks, pulling us away from what truly matters—our patients. Often caring for multiple patients, nurses must repeat these steps across their shifts, leading to documentation fatigue. This is not only frustrating but also contributes to burnout, impacts well-being, and limits time at the bedside (Lindsay & Lytle, 2022). Moreover, inefficient workflows can affect patient safety (Gesner et al., 2019; Hilty et al., 2022).

Since the introduction of EHRs, documentation burden has only increased, while nurse-to-patient time has decreased. Many nurses find themselves overwhelmed by the demands of the EHR. Though well-intentioned, these workflows often feel disconnected from the realities of bedside care. What's miss-

ing is continuous feedback to our nurse informaticists from the very people using these systems day in and day out—front-line nurses.

EHR systems should prioritize human-computer interaction (HCI) principles and reduce task complexity. Workflows must be intuitive, efficient, and designed with a nurse's perspective. While informatics teams strive to improve these systems, the most effective solutions will only emerge with direct input from front-line nurses. It's not about assigning blame; it's about fostering collaboration. All nurses need to be part of the conversation to ensure that we are working smarter, not with greater complexity, so that we can focus on patient care.

We must advocate for more innovative, efficient workflows that reduce documentation burden and enhance situational awareness. If nurses don't actively share their ideas and insights, our voices

will be overlooked, and we risk perpetuating workflows that fail both nurses and patients. We need EHRs that work for us, not the other way around. Nurses' input is crucial to designing systems that improve patient care and well-being while reducing burnout.

Let's ensure that nurses stay where we're needed most—at the bedside, delivering excellent patient care, and not spending more time tending to the computer than to our patients. ■

Lee

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How to Start Connecting with Political Candidates

By: Nicole DiCroce, BSN, BS, RN

I've been a nurse for some time now. I love providing care for the people in my charge, and as a nurse leader, the people in my care are nurses and health professionals. Our political landscape is certainly a dynamic one, and it does affect our work. If you want to grow your reach in nursing advocacy, but are unsure where to start, here's a guide for how to begin engaging with political candidates.

Step One: Build Awareness

Knowledge is power! What are some issues you face in your profession as a nurse, and what are lawmakers addressing? If something is a pain point for you, it may be for your colleagues as well. Workplace safety and well-being, patient access to care, and staffing solutions may be good starting points. Educate yourself not only on key issues, but also how your healthcare industry works, if there are any relevant laws in our state, and how legislative structures impact us all.

What political offices touch your work? Learn who the political candidates are in your geographic area. Research their voting histories, learn their priorities related to healthcare, and discover the platforms shaping their campaigns.

Step Two: Become Comfortable with Advocacy

The NJSNA is a great launchpad for learning about issues affecting nurses in New Jersey. Joining professional organizations opens the door to colleagues you may have otherwise never met. Participate in these associations, particularly if they have an advocacy compo-

nent or group that can engage with political candidates or officers. NJSNA's political action committee, INPAC, was a great place to start for me! Subscribe to newsletters or attend seminars or workshops that teach political advocacy to nurses. As caregivers, we have innate familiarity with the concept of being an advocate; transitioning that to professional advocacy is a small pivot.

Practice talking points! Scripting, while awkward at first, can help your nerves when discussing the nursing profession's concerns with a candidate. Make it personal. We have moments that stick with us, that shaped our career paths. Use those when discussing policies to show how things affect your work and patient care to bring your concerns to life.

Step Three: Make Contact, Collaborate, and Stay Engaged

Attend public events, such as town halls, meet-and-greets, and fundraisers. Stick around after the event to introduce yourself, as a voter and as a nurse. Ask questions about any part of healthcare that interests you. Be direct, concise, respectful, and as non-partisan as possible. Patient care and nurse well-being should transcend party lines. Communicate and follow up, via email, on social media, or by requesting a meeting. Build the connection between yourself and the candidate. You may be able to educate them or provide insight into healthcare issues.

Bring a friend! For me, everything is more fun with a friend. Plus, it's a way to show political candidates that nurses are many and

our issues impact thousands. Engage with your employer for resources and support. Every nurse leader was once a novice nurse and may have advice to help you advocate. Perhaps your employer can host the candidate for more direct interactions or debates. Monitor the candidate's progress and stay in touch. Hold them accountable post-election; public officials work for us all! Stay bold, brave, and savvy, and then mentor those just stepping into the world of advocacy. ■



State of Protection panel discussion with Senator Andrew Zwicker, Fmr. Commissioner Heather Howard, Attorney General Matthew Platkin, and ACLU-NJ Director Amol Sinha.



Attending Steve Sweeney event with fellow INPAC member and Chair, Linda Hassler, and educator Stacey Rose.