

THE WISCONSIN LEAGUE FOR NURSING COMMUNIQUE

WINTER/SPRING 2025

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE...

2025 Spring Conference
WLN Committee Updates
Scholarship Information
& *MUCH MORE!*



OUR MISSION

Impacting the lifelong learning of nurses in diverse healthcare environments.

WHO WE ARE

We are nurses, nursing students, agencies and individuals interested in fostering the development and improvement in nursing care in a variety of collaborative healthcare environments.

WHAT WE DO

Provide collaborative educational opportunities. Promote professional development. Support writing and research. Disburse scholarship funds for nursing education.

WHO WE SERVE

Diverse populations in the state of Wisconsin.

HOW WE DO IT

Conferences, Workshops, Networking, Scholarships, Mentoring, "Communique", the WLN Professional Nursing Journal, & Community Alliances.

Caring

Promoting health, healing, and hope through the process of supporting nurse educators in the education of nurses



Integrity

Mutual respect, acknowledgment of different viewpoints, and a focus on excellence in nursing education to promote a just culture



Diversity

Affirming the uniqueness of and differences among persons, ideas, values, and ethnicities



Excellence

Fostering high standards in nursing education reflective of evidenced-based teaching/learning strategies; promoting a spirit of equity to assure quality and safety in patient-centered care

THE COMMUNIQUE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Marijo Rommelfaenger, PhD, RN, CNE

Welcome to the 2025 Winter/Spring edition of The Communique! As we continue to impact the lifelong learning of nurses in Wisconsin and beyond, we're excited to share updates on our professional development efforts, programs, and upcoming events.

At WLN, our mission is to support the professional growth of nurses in diverse healthcare environments. This year's theme, Nurse Strong: Supporting and Embracing Professional Nurses, reflects our commitment to empowering nurses with the knowledge and tools they need to thrive.

We've had an exciting year so far! Our Fall Conference, hosted by Froedtert Health System in Milwaukee, was a success, and we're incredibly grateful for their continued support. As winter and spring unfold, we look forward to more great events:

- Spring Conference: April 12, Eau Claire, WI (Holiday Inn South) – Join us to learn, network, and explore the beauty of Western Wisconsin.
- NCLEX Prep Session: April 5 (Virtual) – A FREE session to help nursing students prepare for the NCLEX exam. We typically see students from across the country join us for this great review session offered through a partnership with Higher Learning Technologies.
- Annual Election Period: April 1-8 – Your opportunity to help shape the future of WLN.

We support nursing students with twice-yearly NCLEX prep sessions. I again had the honor of attending as their guest, the Wisconsin Student Nurses Association Annual Convention in February, where I witnessed the excitement of our future nurses. It's inspiring to see so many passionate individuals ready to join the nursing profession!

As we head into spring, remember to prioritize your own health and wellness. Just as nature begins its renewal, take this time to refresh and recharge. We hope to see you at our upcoming events and look forward to another successful year of learning and growth.

Thank you to our dedicated board members, committee members, and the fantastic team at Wisconsin Association Management, especially Kristin Houte, our account executive, for their continued hard work. Your contributions make WLN a truly vibrant and impactful organization.

Take care, and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Best always!



Marijo Rommelfaenger, PhD RN CNE
WLN President

WLN Annual Election & Committee Recruitment

Share Your Expertise!

It's that time of year again where the WLN is holding our annual election and recruitment for serving on committees.

The Nominations Committee will be contacting all WLN members for interest in serving and supporting the WLN leadership team. You do NOT have to be a Wisconsin licensed nurse to serve in any leadership capacity. The only requirement to serve on the board of directors or a committee is active WLN membership.

We have a few board position open and offer lots of support and training. If you have any inkling of wanting to learn more or become part of a growing statewide professional nursing organization, say YES and we'll get you connected!

Committee work is also a great way to connect with like-minded nurses and nurse educators. Often the work of committees are time-limited and give you the opportunity to have a say in the direction of the WLN.

Look for a phone call and/or an email from one of the Nomination Committee members.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Katie Weis, DNP, RN, AGCNS-BC

The Wisconsin League for Nursing ending its 2024 fiscal year with total net income (surplus) of \$24,750. The organization had an "operations" surplus of about \$7,500 and the value of its investment portfolio increased by about \$17,250 giving the organization its overall total surplus for the year.

To start 2025 the organization has total net assets of just over \$123,000 (about \$32,000 in its bank account with the value of its investment portfolio about \$91,000). With an approved 2025 expense budget of about \$62,000...the organization holds almost 2 full years of its expense budget in net assets/reserves...and is thus in a very strong overall financial position relative to its budget size.

Respectfully,
Katie Weis





PEER SUPPORT FOR SUBSTANCE USE

You are NOT Alone

Weekly - Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7pm cst
Every 1st and 3rd Monday at 12 noon cst
Free, Confidential, Virtual Peer Support Group

For nurses who are evaluating their relationship to
substances, who are in a monitoring program, or who
just need support.

Contact WisPAN at wispan2021@gmail.com
for the meeting link or call 414-376-7002



REGISTRATION OPEN

2025 SPRING CONFERENCE

“Nurse Strong: Supporting and Empowering Professional Nurses”

Saturday, April 12, 2025

7:30am - 4:00pm

Holiday Inn - Eau Claire

4751 Owen Ayres Court

Speakers

Keith Rischer - Keynote, *KeithRN*

Pennie Sempell - *StressPal*

Kristin Waite-Labbott - *WisPAN*



**Wisconsin
League for Nursing**

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER



Keynote Speaker:

Keith Rischer, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN
Founder/CEO, KeithRN

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of January 2025 WLN has **195 members!** We are grateful to be growing our community throughout the past several years! Thank you to all of our members continued support to our organization.

January 2024 - 147 Members

January 2023 - 145 Members

January 2022 - 111 Members



Spring Into Renewal



Spring into Renewal: A Fresh Start for Nurse Educators!

As the world awakens with the energy of spring, let's embrace this season of renewal in both our professional and personal lives. Spring cleaning isn't just about tidying up our spaces—it's about refreshing our minds, refining our teaching strategies, and reigniting our passion for nursing education.

Clear the Clutter: Whether it's outdated lesson plans or digital files, make room for innovation and evidence-based practices that enhance student learning.

Renew Your Energy: Prioritize self-care and well-being. A rejuvenated educator inspires future nurses!

Revitalize Your Approach: Explore new teaching methods, integrate fresh clinical insights, and foster a dynamic learning environment that empowers the next generation of nurses.

This spring, let's declutter, refresh, and refocus—because the future of healthcare begins with inspired educators like YOU!

Register Today!

Virtual NCLEX-RN® Prep Session
April 5th, 2025 | 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Cost: Free!

Instructor: Catherine Cantrell, MSN, RN, *brings over two decades of experience to her role as a nursing content strategist and educator. Her background spans diverse specialized areas, including oncology, pulmonology, progressive care, intensive care, medical-surgical nursing, and hospice.*

Unlock Your NCLEX Success with NCLEX-RN® Mastery

Join us and elevate your NCLEX journey with NCLEX-RN® Mastery, where we redefine exam preparation tailored to empower your success.

PRESENTED BY:



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A Very Special Thank You to Our

2024 Fall Conference Generous Sponsors & Exhibitors

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WLN Partners



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UPDATES CONTINUED...

Scholarships and Grants

The Wisconsin League for Nursing (WLN) Scholarships and Grants Committee remains committed to our mission, which is impacting the lifelong learning of nurses in diverse environments. To achieve this, the dedicated members of the Scholarships and Grants Committee actively seeks grants which provide scholarship support for Wisconsin nursing students.

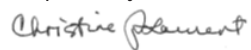
Our scholarships have different eligibility criteria, clearly communicated in the application. To begin with, the applicant must be a Wisconsin student currently enrolled in a Wisconsin school of nursing. The Scholarships and Grants Committee screen the submitted applications to be sure the criteria are met, and then reviews them to select one that best addresses the specific details of the scholarship. The scholarship winners are announced and presented at the WLN fall conference, and are awarded as monies are available. Currently we will offer seven scholarships provided by the very generous and long-time support of the Deaconess Alumni Association. The application criteria vary for each scholarship and are available for every level of nursing education. The Deaconess Alumni Association has recently agreed to raise the amount of each of their scholarships from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

In addition, we are pleased to provide two additional scholarships each year. One is entitled "The Ruth Seris Gresley Scholarship." It honors the memory of Ruth Seris Gresley who was a beloved and influential nurse educator for over 45 years. This scholarship is sponsored by John Gresley, and others who loved and respected Ruth with a current balance of \$14, 276.43. The Ruth Seris Gresley fund is managed by the Waukesha County Community Foundation (WCCF). Finally, the WLN sponsors the "Nursing Heroes Scholarship" to honor Wisconsin nurses who died due to COVID-19. This fund is also managed by the WCCF and is actively seeking donations to help it become self-sustaining. Currently the "Nursing Heroes Scholarship" has a balance of \$4,583,09. Melissa Baxter, President of the WCCF attended our January WLN Board meeting to summarize activity in the two accounts managed for us.

We start accepting scholarship applications in August. If you are interested (or know someone who might be interested) please access the WLN website and look for the Scholarships area. Here you will find scholarship criteria, updates, and opportunities. Online applications are made directly through a link found on the WLN website. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Christine Laurent at cpl Laurent58@marianuniversity.edu.

We have submitted our grant application for Bader Philanthropies, Inc. In addition, we are exploring other grant opportunities for which to apply.

Respectfully submitted,



Christine P. Laurent, PhD, RNC-OB, CNE
WLN Scholarships and Grants Director



MARKETING UPDATE

Nurses Day at the Capital at the Capital was a success. 1,300 Nurses and students were present. Lots of activity at the WLN booth with students who demonstrated great interest in the NCLEX preparation course. Many of the vendors said that they were planning to come to our spring conference. Some noting schedule conflicts.

Facebook – followers has grown by 36 followers in the last 2 weeks, following a push out.

Action Items In-progress: Instagram is still a work in progress.

Best,
Lynn Murphy DNP, APRN, APNP, CPNP-PC, Bellin College

2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS!

Deaconess Joyce Ball Memorial

Scholarship awarded to a rural student or single mother.

Jodi Dean

Madison Area Technical College

Deaconess LaVerne Foster Memorial

LaVerne Foster Memorial Scholarship for a high school graduate or first-semester nursing student.

Brandon Witz

Madison Area Technical College

Deaconess Russell Seager Memorial

In memory of Captain Russell Seager, NP, MSN, RN, APRN-BC (Seager memorial information) for an enrolled graduate program nurse focus on Mental Health Nursing.

Doris Richardson

UW-Milwaukee

Deaconess Pre Licensure ADN

Scholarships awarded to ADN students.

Abigail Callahan

Moraine Park Technical College

Deaconess Pre Licensure BSN

Two scholarships awarded for BSN students.

Elaine Teynor

Viterbo

Abigail Heim

Marian University

Ruth Seris Gresley

Scholarship awarded to a nurse enrolled in or accepted into a graduate nursing program.

Eligible applicants must plan to practice as a nurse educator in Wisconsin for at least 1 year after graduation.

Mary Theisen

UW-Milwaukee

Deaconess Karen Vuillemin Memorial

In memory of Karen Vuillemin, class of 1964. Karen was editor of Deaconess School of Nursing's Alumni Association's newsletter for many years. Scholarship awarded to pre-ADN student.

Madelyn Kathryn Olson

Wisconsin Lutheran College

WLN Nursing Heroes

Scholarship awarded to a pre-licensure ADN or BSN nursing student or graduate level nurse currently enrolled in an accredited school of nursing.

Shelby Siverton

UW-Eau Claire



DAISY UPDATES

Over the past year, the Wisconsin League for Nursing (WLN) has continued to recognize outstanding contributions in nursing education through The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurse Educators. In January 2024, the award evolved to honor not just nursing faculty but all nurse educators, acknowledging their significant impact across academic, clinical, and community settings. This past fall, the WLN awarded four exceptional nurse educators who demonstrated excellence in both informal and formal clinical education settings. These honorees were celebrated for their leadership, dedication, and innovation in shaping the next generation of nurses through clinical practice and education.

The nomination process for the DAISY Award® is designed to identify educators who go above and beyond in creating supportive, compassionate, and enriching learning environments for nurses and nursing students. Nominees are selected based on their exemplary teaching, mentoring, and leadership skills, as well as their ability to inspire and empower the future of nursing. Looking ahead, the WLN will continue to provide these prestigious awards for exceptional clinical nurse leaders at the state level, furthering its commitment to recognizing and supporting the invaluable work of nurse educators who work in clinical settings. The WLN will also continue to collaborate with other state nursing leagues, including those in New Jersey, Arizona, and Ohio, to ensure that the award receives state-level recognition and highlights the contributions of nurse educators across the country. The WLN aims to expand awareness of the DAISY Award® in the coming year, fostering deeper engagement within the nursing community and increasing nominations for those making a lasting impact in clinical education.

Moving forward, the WLN will continue to provide these prestigious awards at the state level, recognizing the invaluable role of nurse educators in fostering a skilled, compassionate, and well-prepared nursing workforce. Awards will be given at the annual Fall Conference.

Finally, we would like to take a moment to thank Brenda Ulmen PhD, RN for her dedicated contributions as co-chair over the past year. Her leadership and commitment to the DAISY Award® have been invaluable. Brenda resigned from her position in January 2025, and we are deeply grateful for all she has done to support and enhance this important initiative.

Mary McMahon Bullis, PhD, RN, CCRN
Chair WLN DAISY Committee

DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurse Educators (DAENE)

2024 WINNERS



Stephanie Pawlowski, BSN, RN
Aurora West Allis Medical Center (West Allis, WI)



Janet Letter MSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM
Bellin Health System (Green Bay, WI)



Amanda Goberman, BSN, RN, CEN
Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital (Menomonee Falls, WI)



Lindsey Fouth, MSN, RN
Clement J Zablocki VA Medical Center (Milwaukee, WI)



HONORING NURSES INTERNATIONALLY
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK SHAWNEE





HONORING NURSES INTERNATIONALLY
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

DAISY AWARD FOR EXTRAORDINARY NURSE EDUCATORS (DAENE)

2024 Nominees

Kimberly Ostrowski

Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin

Amanda Fank

Waukesha County Technical College

Jaime Uecker

Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital

Melissa Ratzmer

Froedtert

Deborah Hallada-Haase

Froedtert Health

Megan Wetzel

84S ASC

Sara Esselman

*Ascension Columbia St. Mary's
Milwaukee and Ozaukee*

Kristen Roohr

84S Ambulatory Surgery Center

Jennifer Stacy

Ascension

Jeri Smith

Aurora Burlington Medical Center

Lea Jopke

Aurora West Allis Medical Center

Molly Young

Chippewa Valley Technical College

Amy Penkivich

Aurora BayCare Medical Center

Dawn Barone

Chippewa Valley Technical College

Christine Miller

Herzing University

Stephanie Gore

Aurora West Allis Medical Center

Shannon Schubel

Aurora West Allis Medical Center

Kate Martinez

Aurora West Allis Medical Center

Erica Benitez

Clement J. Zablocki VA

Kelsey Cao

Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Meredith McGuffey

Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Kaitlin Lorge

Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Lindsay Pederson

Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Tiffany Pilliow

Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Brook Weiss

Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Mikayla Landowski

Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Gean Swiatko-Klee

Was Mt. Mary University

Deanna Simcakoski-Carleton

Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

Chelsea Rolain

Aurora BayCare Medical Center

Jaime Uecker

Froedtert Health

Melissa Reuter

Froedtert Hospital

Kristen Peterson

Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

Heather Leonovicz

Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

Barbara Damico

Columbia St. Mary's Milwaukee

Jill Cudnoski

*Clement J. Zablocki Milwaukee VA Medical
Center*

Susan Hopkinson

University of Wisconsin Green Bay



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UPDATES CONTINUED...

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

We recognize that nurses in academia and those in professional development roles within healthcare systems often share similar responsibilities. Both groups play a crucial role in advancing the knowledge and skills of nurses, ensuring that they stay informed and effective in their practice. Whether it's developing curricula, providing training, or creating educational resources, these nurses are at the forefront of fostering lifelong learning in the nursing profession.

Through our programming, we address the professional development needs of nurses working in both academic and healthcare settings. Our conferences and webinars are designed to provide valuable, up-to-date information, empowering nurses to lead the way in achieving excellence across the profession. Our Fall Conference was held on November 16 and hosted by the Froedtert Health System in Milwaukee as our Platinum Sponsor. Partnering with Froedtert Health System met one of our goals of collaborating with our nurses working in healthcare facilities. Froedtert went to great lengths to ensure that the WLN and our conference attendees and exhibitors had a high-quality experience. We remain very grateful to Froedtert for their continuing support of the WLN.

The fall conference theme was Leveraging Technology to Guide Nursing Practice, Education, and Professional Development: Simulation Priorities and Possibilities and focused on the use of simulation in nursing and healthcare environments.

We brought together renowned pioneers and leaders in simulation for a day of exceptional learning and networking. Pamela Jeffries, Kristina Thomas Dreifuerst, Katie McDermott, and Amy Cowperthwait shared their passion for nursing and discussed the evolution of simulation in nursing education through the lens of 'How We Got There, Where We Are Now, and Where We Are Headed,' highlighting how simulation is advancing educational excellence.

In February Amy Cowperthwait, RN, MSN, CNS, CHSE-A, Founder and CEO of Avkin, a successful simulation innovator and nurse entrepreneur joined us for our Lunch and Learn Webinar. Amy addressed a lively group of nurses with the focus Achieving Radical Change When it Feels Like Your Hands are Tied. Many thanks to Amy and Avkin for providing this timely webinar as simulation programs continue to grow.

We are committed to supporting nursing students as they work toward their goal of joining the nursing workforce. In December, we partnered with Higher Learning Technologies and NCLEX RN Mastery to provide a comprehensive NCLEX Prep workshop led by Catherine Cantrell and Kimberly Nielsen. Over 150 participants attended live, with an additional 450 registrants from across the country receiving the recorded session, which focused on key strategies for passing the NCLEX exam. Thanks to our continued partnership with NCLEX RN Mastery, we will continue offering these prep sessions each fall and spring.

CALL FOR POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

SUBMIT YOURS TODAY!

2025 SPRING CONFERENCE

Nurse Strong
Supporting & Empowering Professional Nurses

April 12, 2025
Holiday Inn - Eau Claire, WI

 Wisconsin
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STRATEGIC PLANNING



The WLN Board of Directors has worked diligently on our strategic planning, and we remain committed to the priorities and principles that have guided us for decades. We’ve adopted new bylaws in January following our separation from the NLN Constituent League affiliation, and later this year in June we’ll be updating our policies, board position descriptions, and strengthening our committee structure to further solidify our path forward. We

hold a leadership retreat at WAM offices in Milwaukee for the past few years, and this year we are scheduled to meet on June 3. Any interested member is more than welcome to attend this exciting meeting and add your input to shape the WLN.

Exciting Changes and Collaborations

You’ll notice a refreshed logo and an exciting new partnership with The Alliance of State Leagues for Nursing—a newly formed alliance of nursing leagues. This collaboration, which includes the NLN and many state leagues of nursing as alliance partners, will enhance the collective work of individual state leagues and increase opportunities for shared insights and best practices. I’m proud to represent the WLN as one of the at-large board members on this alliance, which meets quarterly to share updates and ideas.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT
Marijo Rommelfaenger

PRESIDENT ELECT
Open

TREASURER/SECRETARY
Katie Weis

DIRECTOR: MEMBERSHIP
Liesette Rendell

DIRECTOR: PROGRAMS 1
Open

DIRECTOR: PROGRAMS 2 (POSTER PRESENTATIONS)
Catherine Schmitt

DIRECTOR: SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS
Christine Laurent

DIRECTOR: MARKETING
Lynn Murphy

DIRECTOR: ANEW REPRESENTATIVE
Teri Kaul

DIRECTOR:
Karen Roberts

DIRECTOR:
April Folgert

DIRECTOR: DAISY CHAIR
Mary McMahon Bullis

STUDENT NURSES REP
Open

CALL FOR SPONSORSHIP!

2025 SPRING CONFERENCE

“Nurse Strong: Supporting and Empowering Professional Nurses”

Saturday, April 12, 2025

7:30am - 4:00pm

Holiday Inn - Eau Claire

4751 Owen Ayres Court



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Speakers

Keith Rischer - Keynote, KeithRN
Pennie Sempell - StressPal
Kristin Waite-Labbott - WisPAN

Keynote Speaker:
Keith Rischer, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN
Founder/CEO, KeithRN



COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Marijo Rommelfaenger, President
Katie Weis, Treasurer/Secretary

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Karen Roberts, Chair
Serina Johnson
Breana Sutfin
Lisa Schmidt

DAISY COMMITTEE

Brenda Ulmen, Co-Chair
Mary McMahan-Bullis, Co-Chair
Katie Weis, Academic Partner
Marijo Rommelfaenger, Academic Partner
Erika Janssen, Academic Partner
Lisa Schmidt, Clinical Justice Partner
Brenda Ulmen, Academic Partner

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Katie Weis, Chair
Norman Brooks

SCHOLARSHIP & GRANTS COMMITTEE

Christine Laurent, Chair
Jim Bumby
Catherine Schmitt
Kari Steinbeck

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Megan Holz
Katie Weis
Catherine Schmitt - Poster Presentations
Heidi Monroe
Karen Roberts
LaRee Savlan
Sireen Jaber
Nancy Noble - WSNA advisor/liaison
Susan Poppele
Vicki Swaney
Lynn Murphy
Terri Kaul
Lisa Schmidt
April Folgert

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Marijo Rommelfaenger, Interim Chair
Teri Kaul
Norman Brooks
Lynn Murphy, Marketing Director
Liesette Rendell, Membership Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Questions and comments for the next newsletter can be submitted [HERE!](#)