

# ENACConnection

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# 20<sup>under</sup>FORTY



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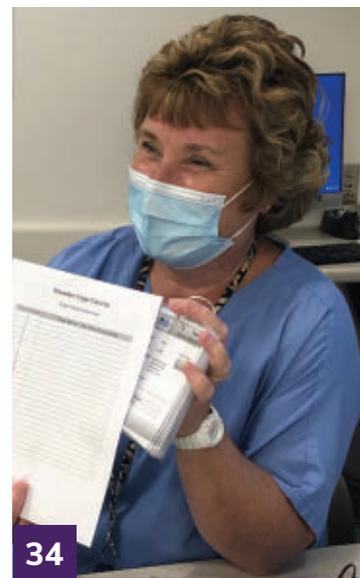
ENA Connection presents its second annual 20 Under 40 class, highlighting 20 up-and-coming emergency nurses poised to brighten the future of the specialty. Each profile will help you get to know these extraordinary nurses, their accomplishments and their motivation to elevate their careers, their communities and health care in general by working to improve the world in specific areas that include driver safety, veteran health care, pediatric readiness, supporting the hearing impaired and helping fellow nurses with their mental health. These emergency care professionals are also devoted spouses, partners, parents and co-workers



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# Cherish the Advice from Mentors

By Dustin Bass, MHA, BSN, RN, CEN, NEA-BC  
ENA Board Member

Last year, I was humbled and honored to be a member of ENA Connection's inaugural 20 Under 40 class, so I was excited to find out I was scheduled to write this month's column for Board Writes.

My thoughts immediately went to congratulating the new class, and I look forward to what the future will hold for these 20 individuals and the emergency nursing specialty. I also began to reflect on my own career thus far.

During my reflection, I realized I never would have gotten to where I am today without my mentors. I can confidently assume that is the same for most, if not all, of us.

Throughout my career, I can clearly visualize the people who mentored me along the way, and I am genuinely grateful for their input. I

challenge you to reflect on who those individuals were for you and, if you feel inclined, to express gratitude to them.

Showing gratitude helps us feel more positive and makes us think more positively. Regular gratitude journaling or intentional thought has been shown to offer measurable increases in optimism and mood — meaning that the more we think about what we are grateful for, the more we are grateful for.

**“Everything you do should be patient-centric. Your complete focus should be on those for which you're caring. Every little distraction can potentially skew that focus. A good work-life balance is crucial. That balance makes it easier for you to check your personal baggage at the ED door on the way into work while protecting those you love from bearing the brunt of a nasty post-shift decompression when you get home.”**

— Jack Rodgers, MBA, BSN, RN, CEN, EMT-P, FAEN

It is a phenomenal experience on both sides and often can lead to reconnecting with

**“Don't be afraid to ask for help or a second opinion.”**

— Cheryl Randolph, MSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, CCRN, FNP-BC, TCRN, FAEN

**“You are building on your career, and your leadership journey might be beginning, or you may be building on your leadership skills. This reflective practice applies to leadership, so pause and reflect on your achievements. Set new goals at regular intervals to keep your motivation and check in on your path.”**

— Vanessa Gorman, MSN, RN, CCRN, FAEN

someone we may have lost touch with. If you can't, for one reason or another, connect and express your gratitude in real life, pause to do so in your head and your heart.

Terms like mentorship, mentors and mentees can sound really formal and even cause people to shy away from the idea. However, the basic definition of mentor is simply “to advise or train.” Advice can come in all forms, usually from someone we respect or admire. Preceptorship, formal teaching, discussion, insight, opinion, quotes and many

more things can be considered “advice,” but for this article, I wanted to share advice from a group of people I respect.

Some of these names

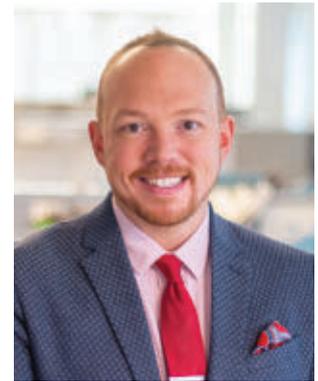
may be familiar, but all are nurses with more than 10 years of experience.

I asked each one to send me one piece of advice they would go back and share with themselves earlier in their career if they could. I'm happy to share them here.

The advice I would give was also shared by a mentor: Be self-aware, continually self-reflect and frequently assess and identify our strengths and weaknesses.

**“Emergency nursing is both an art and a science; you should continuously work on honing your craft to be a better nurse for your patients and team.”**

— Kimberly Langley, MSN, RN, CEN



Additionally, surround yourself with people who complement your weaknesses. It is never about one entity but the team that comes together to complete the work. People usually don't consciously think about individual strengths and weaknesses, so regularly evaluate your and your team's strengths and weaknesses.

I encourage you to take time to connect and learn from those around you each day and support each other along the way. Working together across generations and levels of experience to learn and grow from one another will prove crucial to our continued success and the advancement of emergency nursing. ●

**“Two words: Be bold. Opportunities, advocacy and learning do not flourish in a meek environment.”**

— Patricia Baise, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE

**“Mahatma Gandhi said that the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”**

— Ryan Oglesby, PhD, MHA, RN, CEN, CFRN, NEA-BC

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Matt Dominis, Assistant Managing Editor, Sept. 20, 2022

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# ENA Connection's 20 under FORTY

ENA Connection is proud to present its second 20 Under 40 class, highlighting up-and-coming emergency nurses under the age of 40.

In this issue, you'll meet an extraordinary group of nurses — emergency department leaders, researchers, editors, forensic nurse examiners, flight nurses, nurse educators, community volunteers and advocates. As you read these profiles of the 2022 class, you'll see how each contributed to their workplaces, their communities and the emergency nursing specialty.

From March 28 to April 28, we promoted the recognition program, asking for nominees and applicants for the 2022 class. To be eligible, applicants needed to be an ENA member in good standing, currently working in the emergency care field and born after 1981.

We were pleased with this year's response: 44 nurses were nominated by their peers, and a total of 70 submitted applications, which asked questions about their accomplishments professionally and in their community, their contributions to emergency nursing and how they might shape the future of the specialty.

We gave the blinded applications to a panel of 21 volunteer reviewers — ENA members and staff. They rated and scored the applications and selected the 20 candidates.

We tallied the reviewers' choices and the results are in these pages. We hope you enjoy reading about ENA Connection's 20 Under 40 Class of 2022 as much as we enjoyed finding them.

— Matt Dominis, Assistant Managing Editor

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# Aaron Salinas

DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC, NRP

## Driven to Help his Community in 'Best Job in the World'

As a teenager, Aaron Salinas wanted nothing to do with health care. He laughs when he thinks of what his teenage self might think of his career today.

Throughout his south Texas community, Salinas cares for the most vulnerable patients in pediatric and general urgent care, student care and outreach. He is the BSN coordinator at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Nursing and a nurse practitioner at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Student Health Center and Brownsville Kiddie Health Center in Brownsville, Texas.

"It's the best job in the world," he said.

But Salinas didn't always feel this way. When Salinas was 13, his father died, leaving Salinas to connect this loss with the medical professionals who couldn't save his dad. The last thing he thought he would be doing today, he said,

would be working as a nurse.

After high school, Salinas trained to be an emergency medical technician. It was this early experience, he said, that set him on his current path. Today, Salinas works in the community where he was born, in the southernmost part of Texas, where health and education resources are often

limited. He's driven to deliver and advocate for health care for the culture and people in the region.

"I'm all about my people. I'm all about my community," he said. "And that is where my heart is."

His reach here goes far beyond nursing, with his work as president of the Kiwanis Club of Edinburg and as chair of the Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District Student Health Advisory Council.

Salinas, who has been an active member of ENA since 2014, believes wholeheartedly in the mission of ENA and has benefited from numerous scholarships and grants, which paid for his doctoral education in full. He served as the 2021 president of the Rio Bravo Chachalacas chapter, the 2022 Texas ENA state director and other roles.

"ENA has changed my life," he said. "They believed in me. They've invested in me."

His ultimate goal, he said, is to become a fellow in the Academy of Emergency Nursing and continue to build on his research, which focuses on challenges and needs of pediatric mental health and behavioral emergency issues in emergency departments.

But he hopes his impact goes beyond research and the ED.

"What I care about is showing other kids that might have the same upbringing that I did that it's possible and it can be done," he said. And, calling out the area code for Texas' Rio Grande Valley, he added: "I want people to say this kid made it, he was from the 956 and he had a big impact in what he did." ●



Aaron Salinas, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC, NRP, delivers doughnuts and thank you cards during an event to support his EMS colleagues

Salinas brings Easter baskets to low-income families living in Edinburg Housing Authority in Edinburg, Texas





# Marie Williams Dawkins

DNP, RN, MHA, CEN, CNEcl

## An ED Career that ‘Was All Meant to Be’

Marie Williams Dawkins had always wanted to work in the neonatal intensive care unit. She accepted a position in one upon graduating in 2005 from the nursing school at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, which she attended on a full scholarship.

However, she had a change of heart at the 11th hour. “At the last minute, I applied to the ER,” she said. “They had one of their other new grads drop out, and I was able to get in. So, it was all meant to be from the beginning.”

Dawkins found her passion in the emergency department. Now, 17 years into her career, Dawkins is an ED staff nurse and former nurse educator at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst, North Carolina, and an assistant clinical professor at her alma mater.

Dawkins is no stranger to recognition. In May 2012, she received the North Carolina Nurses Association Scholarship, and in September 2021, she received a scholarship provided by the ENA Foundation. She was nominated in 2019 for UNC Wilmington’s School of Nursing Outstanding Alumni and recognized in 2021 for a CARE Award nomination as a clinical support person at FirstHealth of the Carolinas.

She’s also had her fair share of professional experiences and leadership roles, from serving as president of her local ENA chapter, to working alongside the U.S. Army for mass casualty training events, to being part of the North Carolina State Medical Assistance Team to prepare for local and national disasters.

But Dawkins considers her role as an educator to be her greatest contribution to emergency nursing.

In addition to starting a full-time assistant clinical professor position in 2022, Dawkins established several educational programs at FirstHealth, including a new graduate program for ED nurses and a Trauma Nursing Core Course program, and became an ENA faculty member.

When she’s not working, Dawkins loves to spend time with her husband and her two dogs, who she collectively calls her “heart and soul.” She also loves to travel; her adventures have taken her around the world, from the glaciers of Alaska to climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge in Sydney, Australia. She’s also looking forward to finally taking a honeymoon with her husband — they got married two weeks before COVID-19 shut down the world.

No matter where in the world she is, though, Dawkins is dedicated to emergency nursing and honored to be recognized for her achievements.

“It’s very humbling,” she said. “I feel like I’ve just gone to work and done my job. I mean, I love emergency nursing.” ●



Marie Dawkins, DNP, RN, MHA, CEN, CNEcl, with her husband and family on her wedding day



Dawkins (center) and other nurses at her hospital who worked in COVID-19 units serve as grand marshals during a local Christmas parade

# Brett Pickens

DNP, RN, CEN, CPEN, CNE

## Passionate Advocate for the Hearing Impaired

It's not hard to find emergency nurse Brett Pickens working to better bridge the gap between deaf patients and hearing nurses. Or he might be guiding tomorrow's nurses and striving to be the best nurse he can be. Or he may be scheduling time for fishing, reading and traveling.

Pickens has been an advocate for Deaf people since he was about 14, when he learned sign language to communicate with one of his longtime friends who is Deaf.

"I saw how people treated her and how people got so nervous with communication," Pickens said. "I want to ensure Deaf patients have the same access to information as hearing people."

Pickens drew attention to the topic in a thoughtful letter to the editor in the *Journal of Emergency Nursing* about communicating with patients using sign language. The article, which Pickens described as one of his greatest contributions to emergency nursing so far, explored what he called "an important concept that emergency care providers often overlook."



Pickens with his catch after a deep sea fishing trip in Destin, Florida

Before Pickens became a nurse, he was an interpreter for Deaf people. He was able to see firsthand the way Deaf individuals are often treated when seeking any kind of service.

"While the federal government classifies those individuals as being handicapped, I

learned they do not classify themselves as being 'broken,'" Pickens said. "It is my goal to advocate for that vulnerable population to ensure they receive the same respect and care as someone without this 'disability.'"

Pickens, a registered nurse at Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation in northern Mississippi, is scheduled to speak about caring for people with hearing impairments at Emergency Nursing 2022.

"I don't believe the general public understands the perception of the Deaf community on the way they are treated," Pickens said. "It is my belief that education about the deaf culture and language will be a way to improve the communication with those patients."

Pickens — who is now helping build a nursing school program at Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, Mississippi — said he learned best while in the emergency department for a couple of shifts, observing how nurses' actions directly affect patients. That's why he advocates for nursing schools to allow students to experience emergency nursing.

Pickens continues to work as an emergency nurse and prefers to work night shift, hours frequently staffed with nurses who have little experience. He said he wants to be "an active participant on the treatment team" to provide high quality care for patients and families. He sees lifelong learning and critical thinking as essential attributes for an emergency nurse.

"We should not simply wait for an order to follow. I try to instill that in the nurses I train and the students I teach," Pickens said. "There may be a day when you are the person in the department with the most emergency experience, and that day may be sooner rather than later." ●



Brett Pickens, DNP, RN, CEN, CPEN, CNE, with friends during Emergency Nursing 2019 in Austin

# Chelsea Collins

DNP, RN, APNP, C-APN, ACCNS-AG, CEN, SANE-A

## Advocate for Improved Care and Patient Safety

Chelsea Collins wears many hats. A trained clinical nurse specialist and a current travel nurse, she's also a clinical associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, a forensic nurse examiner in Denver and a tireless advocate for legislation to improve the health care system in every place she works.

After graduating from nursing school, Collins leveraged a connection she made through the National Student Nurses' Association to land a job in a Denver emergency department. And, while she also covered the ICU, the ED felt like home to her.

As she rose through the ranks, Collins realized that just as important to her as patient care is advocacy work. She earned a doctor of nursing practice from Johns Hopkins University and her advanced degree has enabled her to engage more deeply with subjects that speak to her.

"I think a clinical nurse specialist has a very challenging role in that we represent change, but I very much enjoy being able to advocate for safe practices and safe care," Collins said. She also feels her role is to bridge the gap between bedside patient care and research.

Collins (right) with her senior nursing student, Jenny Folley



Chelsea Collins DNP, RN, APNP, C-APN, ACCNS-AG, CEN, SANE-A, with Colorado State Rep. Susan Lontine

As a clinical nurse specialist, Collins supports five EDs and four urgent care centers. Initially, the staff at those facilities had little experience with boarded patients and lacked practice guidelines and resources, Collins said. With input from ED and inpatient unit staff members, Collins developed guidelines and created a "brain sheet" with tasks that ED nurses could complete.

Collins got involved in ENA leadership as soon as she graduated, becoming a delegate shortly after joining and serving on the Resolutions Committee. She makes it a point to know her legislators so she can effectively lobby for change. While volunteering at the Colorado capitol as a policy fellow for the House Committee on Health and Insurance, she regularly attended meetings to offer input on the impact of health care legislation in a hospital setting. She also wrote policy briefs and responded to constituent emails.

"During the beginning of the pandemic, I was able to update the (Colorado) legislators regularly on what we were seeing in the hospitals, as many people throughout the state reached out to me to give me insight," she said. "I was able to give them a health care nursing perspective."

As a more recent resident of Wisconsin, she's determined to continue building similar connections.

Collins' commitment to improving the state of health care means she's got a lot on her plate. She flies back to Denver regularly for her stints as a forensic nurse, but her drive is just part of who she is.

"I've always been a total Ravenclaw," she said, referring to the "Harry Potter" students known for brains, creativity and curiosity. "If you don't do something to fix a problem, you can no longer continue to complain about it." ●

# James Thomas

DNP, RN, CEN



## The Art of Building the Plane While Flying

James Thomas had “the moment” while he was still a nursing student, when an elderly man came into the emergency department with a bleeding dialysis fistula. The team immediately began resuscitation, and Thomas was asked to apply pressure to control the bleeding.

Thomas was terrified, but he held pressure all the way to the operating room. That was the moment he knew he loved ED work. It was the adrenaline and saving lives, of course. But the bigger thrill was being part of a team.

“What other team can respond to a mass casualty with a minute’s notice or meet a global pandemic head-on?” Thomas asked. “I am certain ED nurses will forever be the most capable and flexible specialty.”

Early in his career, Thomas noticed there were ED processes that could be better for patients and staff. He felt he could lead a team that would tackle those problems. That meant a change of pace.

“We triage and fix things quickly; they don’t stay long in the ED,” Thomas said. “When you come into a leadership role, there are still patients and problems, but they aren’t going to be fixed in a four-hour block. They are going to take weeks or even years.”

Thomas, nurse manager for emergency services and emergency department access at Nemours Children’s Hospital in Delaware, is responsible for building and guiding a team of 120 full-time staff members. He loves mentoring the staff — which explains why, when asked to name his greatest professional accomplishment,

he listed the ENA Lantern Award his department earned in 2019 for exceptional and innovative performance. The department’s honor was his greatest personal reward.

Thomas needed that camaraderie when COVID-19 arrived. The cliché of building the plane while it was flying doesn’t do justice to the challenge; his team was learning what a plane was at 10,000 feet. With the risks still unknown, the ED had to admit patients and develop flowthrough day by day.

“We had to say: It is what it is. Let’s do this together,” he said.

Together, they made it work, and the ED earned the hospital’s inaugural “Team of the Year” award. His department’s success has led Thomas to other teams as well. He is a member of the Emergency Medical Services for Children program, working with EDs across the state to assess their preparedness for pediatric patients. He also currently serves on the ENA Emergency Department Operations Committee.

Helping sick and injured children can be stressful. Sometimes it can even be hard for his team members to see that their “routine” day-to-day work is actually exceptional. That’s why, in July, Thomas couldn’t wait to tell his team some more good news: They had earned their second Lantern Award.

“You need everyone to come together,” he said. “In the EDs I’ve worked in, that’s the way it’s always been.” ●

James Thomas, DNP, RN, CEN, on vacation with his wife, Julianne, and children Hailey, Lily and Jack



# Cassie Mueller

MSN, RN, PCCN, CNML, SANE-A, TCRN

## Drawn to the Energy of Emergency Nursing

Cassie Mueller started her career with her sights set on the inpatient setting. Fortunately, her first leadership position was as an inpatient nurse manager in a small community hospital. The teamwork there was palpable, and departments shared resources and supported each other, especially during critical patient events.

"There were multiple times when the emergency department had a critical event and I was asked to help out," she said.

Mueller helped with critical ED patients awaiting flight transfers and with clinical care and family reunification after a bus crash, she said. When she was later offered the position of nurse manager in the ED of a Level I trauma center, she accepted.

During the week, Mueller performed her nurse manager duties. On weekends, she signed up for clinical shifts so she could learn as much as possible about emergency nursing.

"I can't manage a department that I can't work in," she recalled thinking. "It's a totally different style of nursing."



Mueller and her family during a beach vacation this year

Now the director of nursing, emergency services, at Prisma Health Greenville Memorial Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina, Mueller is passionate about her job.

"I love everything about emergency nursing," she said, citing the variety of patients she sees and the ability to directly make a difference in people's lives.



Cassie Mueller, MSN, RN, PCCN, CNML, SANE-A, TCRN, with the ED team who worked on an operational throughput project with her

She's received multiple industry awards, including the 2020 Leader of the Year from the South Carolina ENA State Council and the Greenville Memorial Hospital Nursing Leadership Award the same year.

Mueller has been an integral part of her ED's effort to invest in and retain quality nurses.

When she arrived, the department had faced a significant staff vacancy rate, and Mueller was an integral part of the ED's focus on hiring, investing in and retaining quality nurses. Under her leadership, the department began a certification voucher program through the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing and has seen its percentage of certified nurses rise more than 40 percent.

Outside her official duties, Mueller is also a sexual assault nurse examiner. Citing a higher-than-average rate of sexual assaults in her area, Mueller feels it's critical to be aware of this issue because so many victims come to the ED. She emphasized the importance of having certified nurses who can offer trauma-informed care to patients.

For fun and stress relief, Mueller volunteers with a local horse show association. She began riding when she was 8 and now takes great pleasure in her children showing and riding horses.

Although she adores her current job, Mueller isn't ruling out anything when it comes to her future. Asked where she sees herself in five to 10 years, she is not making small plans.

"I could see myself going back to school, potentially, and getting a doctorate," she said. ●

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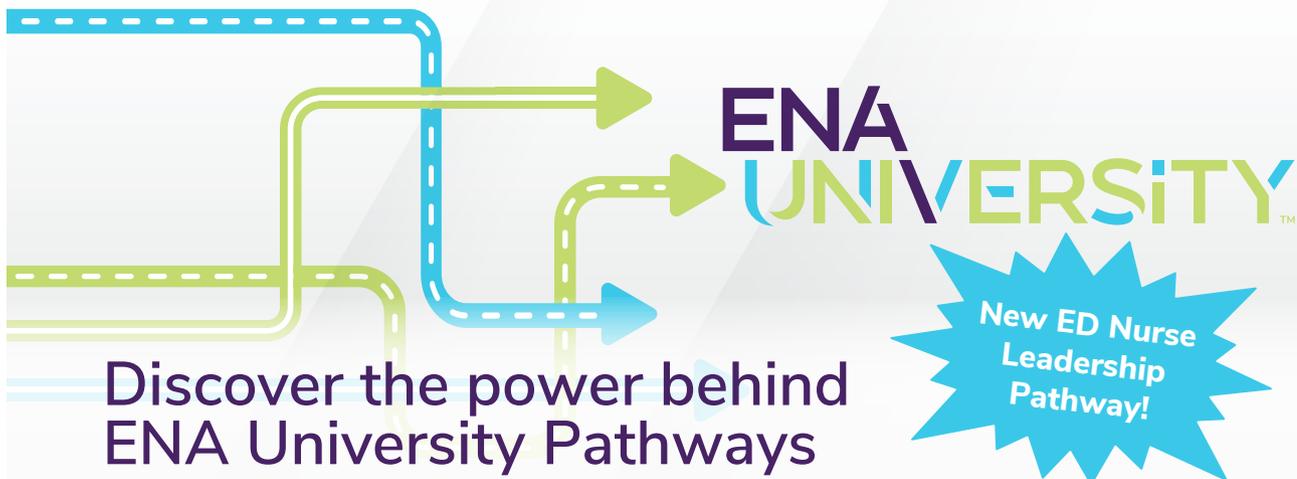
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# Amber Adams



DNP, RN, CEN

## ‘This Is Where I Belong’

**A** combative hypoxic patient. Working in the ambulance bay with a burn trauma victim. This was some of what Amber Adams’ first emergency department shift included.

Back then, Adams was an unlicensed nursing assistant who normally worked in the medical-surgical unit. But at the end of that ED shift, she felt she’d found her niche.

“I was very intimidated during the shift and very overwhelmed,” she said. “After the shift ended, I remember thinking, ‘This is where I belong.’”

Adams went on to achieve a vocational nursing certificate in 2010 and then just kept learning, earning her doctorate in nursing practice by 2019.

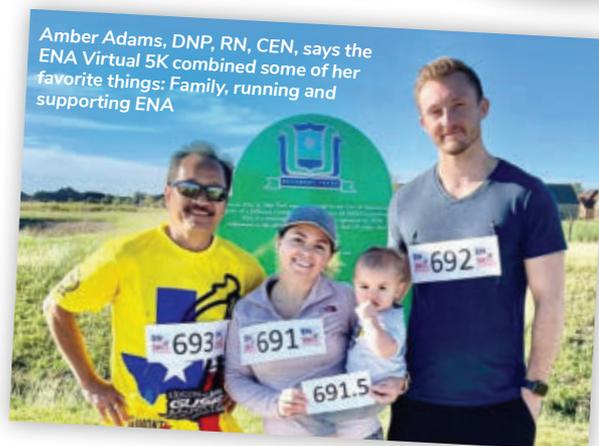
“I obtained four nursing degrees while working full time,” she said.

Today, Adams has more than a decade of experience as a bedside nurse, as well as serving as a nurse educator at Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas-Beaumont. Since 2017, she’s been part of the nursing faculty at Lamar University.

“I absolutely love the environment of emergency nursing. I now work primarily in education and teaching critical care to create future ED nurses, although I still work as needed in the ED setting,” she said.

Compassion and resilience have propelled her forward and enabled her to succeed in her education and career, Adams said. Knowing how important resilience has been in her own life, she has conducted research on methods to improve nursing morale among emergency nurses and decrease burnout.

She published her findings in the *Journal of Emergency Nursing* in 2019 and then shared it with her peers at Emergency Nursing 2019.



With that knowledge, she developed the Cultural Change Toolkit, which provides interventions for ED teams that are designed to decrease burnout, improve morale and reduce turnover.

Adams is a section editor for *JEN*, which involves working on manuscripts that provide insight on bedside practice standards and techniques for good patient care and outcomes.

Adams’ volunteer service includes academic tutoring and mentoring young people seeking emergency care for patients who are in unsafe living conditions, as well as conducting health screenings for low-income patients participating in Texas-based Gift of Life program.

She described her mentorship of new generations of nurses as one of her greatest nursing accomplishments.

“As a nurse educator in both the hospital and academic settings, I take pride in offering guidance to nurses as they transition into practice,” she said, adding she sees the work as returning the gifts she’s received.

“I have been blessed in my career to be surrounded by experienced and compassionate peers who have invested time and energy into both my nursing practice and me personally,” she said.

“This has greatly impacted my bedside practice and my research endeavors that I hope will make an impact on others.” ●

# Chelsey Simoni

MSN, RN, RNCM, FP-C



## Improving Veteran Health Through Research-Based Guidelines

Chelsey Simoni was serving in a medical platoon in an aviation regiment of the U.S. Army when she realized she had an uncommon knack for being relaxed and calm in chaotic situations.

"I knew emergency medicine was something I needed to do," Simoni said.

Simoni had enlisted in the Army during the height of the conflict in Afghanistan and served from 2010 to 2018.

Simoni, an ENA member since 2016, saw her Army career cut short after a severe spinal injury and subsequent surgeries. She attended nursing school during her recovery and currently works as lead clinical nurse researcher for Rhode Island Hospital's infectious diseases department and an emergency and trauma registered nurse at Steward Medical Group.

But it was after meeting her husband, Kyle, an Iraq war veteran, that Simoni began work on a research initiative that resonated with her on a personal level.

Simoni's husband described how numerous members of his team had died from cancers and rare illnesses that were extremely uncommon for their ages. After further research, Simoni discovered only a few studies existed on the topic and there was no system to help identify occupational exposures. In 2018, she formed the HunterSeven Foundation, which conducts medical

research, clinical education and supports post-9/11 military veterans who have cancer and other illnesses from their exposure to burn pits and other toxins.

**Simoni with President Joe Biden after the signing of a bill she worked on to better identify cancers in female veterans**

"I had made it my mission to improve veteran health through research-evidence-based findings and clinical practice guidelines through means of emergency nursing to identify at-risk veteran patients early," Simoni said.

Simoni said the foundation has already made great headway. Her work has been recognized by U.S. lawmakers and she has been invited to speak before Congress on issues related to health care, cancer prevention and military veterans.

The foundation has raised more than \$500,000, hosted 10 educational symposiums, published five research papers and helped about 200 post-9/11 veterans with cancer get the care they need and additional support for needs not covered by insurance.

"All while being volunteers and working full time in the emergency department during the pandemic," Simoni said.

Simoni also was honored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with a \$53,000 award to complete graduate school and conduct veteran-specific research.

Not only do 27 percent of post-9/11 veterans use Veteran Affairs for health care, but they are young, otherwise healthy and often overlooked as an at-risk population, Simoni said. Data trends show massive spikes in veteran cancers that are most often identified when they're in late or terminal stages. Simoni has dedicated herself to improving early detection, championing mandated screening protocols for veterans and educating clinicians about how to conduct veteran-specific, sensitive care.

"As nursing is the most trusted profession, studies show only 4 percent of civilian nurses are competent to provide veteran-centric care," Simoni said. "I'm intent on changing that." ●



**Chelsey Simoni, MSN, RN, RNCM, FP-C, served in a medical platoon in the U.S. Army**



# Gregory Zanone

BSN, RN, CFRN, PHRN

## Leading his State Council on Using Technology Better

For Gregory Zanone, the guiding principles of his nursing career are advocating for his patients and his fellow health care providers. He has been a longtime member of the New Jersey ENA State Council and he became president of the state council in January. He said his priorities as president include enhancing collaboration with outside agencies, promoting education and protecting safe practice.

Zanone currently works as a flight nurse, mobile intensive care nurse and critical care transport nurse at Atlantic Health System in Haskell, New Jersey.

He's particularly passionate about advocating for the rights of registered nurses working in the pre-hospital setting, which is part of standard practice in New Jersey. He has dedicated himself to supporting initiatives that protect the scope of practice of pre-hospital nurses and the New Jersey Board of Nursing. As the state council president, he is now working with state lawmakers to advance legislation that would enhance practice by modernizing advanced life support in the state.

As a lover of technology, he's been investing significant time in revamping the New Jersey ENA website and email system.

"It's important for being able to connect with our members," he said.

Members had previously conducted ENA business using their personal emails, which made it much more difficult to collaborate. The state council now has access

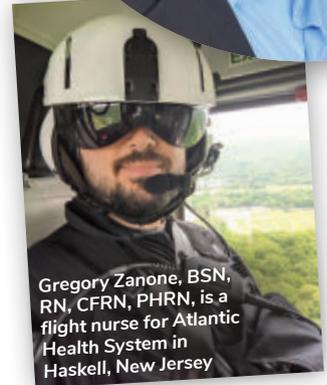
to cloud drive services, conference services, event calendars and other tools that have been essential for communicating with each other and the public.

In his spare time, Zanone enjoys traveling with his girlfriend, including a trip to Jamaica last year and Walt Disney World this summer, and he looks forward to a trip to Antigua later this year. He also enjoys hiking around New Jersey, with favorite spots including Pyramid Mountain and High Point State Park.

His love for helping others has guided him to expand his horizons even further, and he joined the National Disaster Medical Assistance Team. The program, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides regional support for state, local and other health care services at the direction of the HHS secretary and the Federal Emergency Management Agency during major catastrophic events.

Zanone is no stranger to disaster relief: He worked a 48-hour operational period as a ground transport nurse when Hurricane Sandy battered New Jersey in 2012. While Zanone hasn't yet joined any deployments, he was scheduled to undergo his first training exercise in August 2022. He feels this work allows him to help even more people.

"It expands the impact I can have to a higher level than even just the town or local level," he said. ●



Zanone gathers with three preceptors who have contributed significantly to his flight nurse career

# Sandra Schindler

MSN, APRN, CEN, CPEN, FNP-C, SANE-A



## Generation After Generation of Nursing Excellence

Sandra Schindler comes from a long line of nurses and is at least the third generation of women in her family to help others through nursing.

"My great-grandmother obtained her nursing license through the mail, and her large home was the first 'hospital' in Adrian, Minnesota," Schindler said. "My mother was also a nurse."

That set the precedent for Schindler to keep working to promote the world of emergency nursing, as a nurse and an advocate for safety and justice.

Schindler serves as government affairs chair for the ENA South Dakota State Council. Topics at the forefront of her advocacy efforts are legislation to help eliminate texting and driving, improve use of children's car booster seats and promote graduated drivers' licensing.

"Here in South Dakota, 14-year-olds are able to drive," Schindler said, "which is concerning because we see many young drivers in the ED as trauma patients."

Schindler is the 2017 recipient of the ENA Gail P. Lenehan Advocacy Award for her work in advocating for workplace violence felony legislation in South Dakota and sexual assault victim support legislation.

On another front, Schindler worked to improve South Dakota's hospital emergency response to sexual assault

patients. She helped promote a state law that changed the payment process for forensic sexual assault exams and protected sexual assault victims.

Schindler's legislative work in this area began following a conversation she had with her state representative. "I asked him to lunch at my hospital to discuss issues. He trusted me because I had provided care to his loved ones," she said. The legislator was shocked and appalled by the gaps between the national protocol and best practice recommendations versus South Dakota's laws and processes.

"We had a long list of gaps, and we worked on improving this together session after session," she said. The sexual assault bill became law in 2018, and Schindler attended the governor's signing ceremony.

Every year since, Schindler and the representative have brought more legislation to improve the response for victims of sexual assault. Last year, they worked on policy for 16- and 17-year-olds to consent for an exam following sexual assault. That bill, passed this year, changes a previous provision requiring prior permission from a parent or guardian.

"I was very proud about the passage of this bill, as it is something I brought up in my conversation with the state representative during that lunch at the hospital six years ago," she said.

Schindler said the highlight of her career has been authoring legislation, securing sponsors and testifying in state House and Senate committees.

"It makes my heart overflow knowing I impacted the lives of so many across the entire state — not just my own ED," Schindler said. ●

Schindler with then-Gov. Dennis Daugaard of South Dakota during a 2018 bill signing. The South Dakota law improved the way sexual assault medical forensic examinations are conducted





# Kimberly Mueller

BSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, TCRN

## Helping Every Way she Can

Kimberly Mueller spends her days working in the Unity Point-Allen Hospital emergency department in Waterloo, Iowa, and as an adjunct instructor at Hawkeye Community College. But on a recent day off, she didn't spend it relaxing. Instead, she was at a friend's house, helping her repaint some rooms. It's the kind of activity that "fills her cup."

"I just like spending time with other people and helping them however I can, even outside of work," she said. "It's kind of what I do."

In that case, Mueller's cup must be perpetually full. She serves on the school board at her sons' school and volunteers with her community and church, including with SportAbility of Iowa, an organization that provided adaptive sports and recreation programs for people with disabilities.

Then, of course, there's the work she does in the ED and for the specialty of emergency nursing. She spent several years working at a small-town hospital "where you do everything."

"I could be delivering a baby in OB, and then I could be in the ED with a trauma the next minute, and then I could be taking care of a 90-year-old with pneumonia on the floor a couple hours later," she said.

But when life changed, and the family moved to a new town — and a new job — she knew she wanted to spend her career focusing solely on emergency medicine. Almost immediately, she got involved with ENA, and made it her goal to become a certified emergency nurse and make connections within the community.

"It just kind of spiraled from there," she said. "You just make a couple connections and get involved in a couple things, and before you know it, you've developed an amazing network and you're very involved."

Since then, she's been an item reviewer for the Trauma Nursing Core Course updates; been part of the Lantern Award Review Committee; served as an alternative delegate to General Assembly; and will serve as president of the Iowa ENA State Council in 2023. She's also completing her master's degree in nursing education.

"Part of the reason I became so passionate about educating is because I know I've directly impacted a lot of patients' lives, but I know ... how many more people I can impact by growing new, good nurses through teaching," she said.

When she's not doing things for her friends, family and community, Mueller loves spending time with her husband (whom she called her "cheerleader"), two young sons and their dog. They spend time outside most days, even during cold Iowa winters and they also simply hang out together or play board games.

As for nursing, it was always her path.

"I just have a heart for helping other people, so nursing seemed the natural choice," she said. ●



Kimberly Mueller, BSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, TCRN, with her husband, Curt, and sons Isaac and Elijah

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# Kristen Cline

BSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, CFRN, CTRN, CCRN, TCRN

## An Advocate for Nurse Mental Wellness

Kristen Cline's nursing career didn't start in the emergency department, but her hospital at the time asked for nurses to cross-train there. When she saw how the ED nurses demonstrated calm and competence in the heat of the moment, she knew that's what she wanted to be.

"I wanted to know exactly how to help someone, no matter what they might need," she said.

Over the years, she has come to realize how the stress and trauma of the ED environment affects patients and staff alike. This in combination with her own experiences led her to embark on a journey of education and advocacy to help her fellow nurses improve.

When the COVID-19 pandemic set in, and as it dragged on, mental health became a front-and-center issue, and Cline stepped up to help her fellow nurses cope. She served as a facilitator in ENA's Nurses Together initiative, a series of virtual meetings that enabled nurses to talk about the pandemic or anything else on their mind. She said that sometimes it was just her and one or two other people, but having that connection was priceless at a time when she and so many others felt isolated and alone.

Seeing how this benefited so many, herself included, Cline independently started The Trauma Informed Nurse, a community on social media where nurses can support each other regularly. The community provides a safe space for



Kristen Cline, BSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, CFRN, CTRN, CCRN, TCRN, attends ENA's Day on the Hill in 2019

nurses to discuss mental health and trauma and share wellness-promoting resources. Her efforts culminated in the launch of a brand-new seminar, which she oversaw for the first time in May on an eight-night Alaskan cruise. The seminar explores the origins of traumatization in society, the effects of acute and chronic trauma on health and wellness, and how nurses can make positive change.

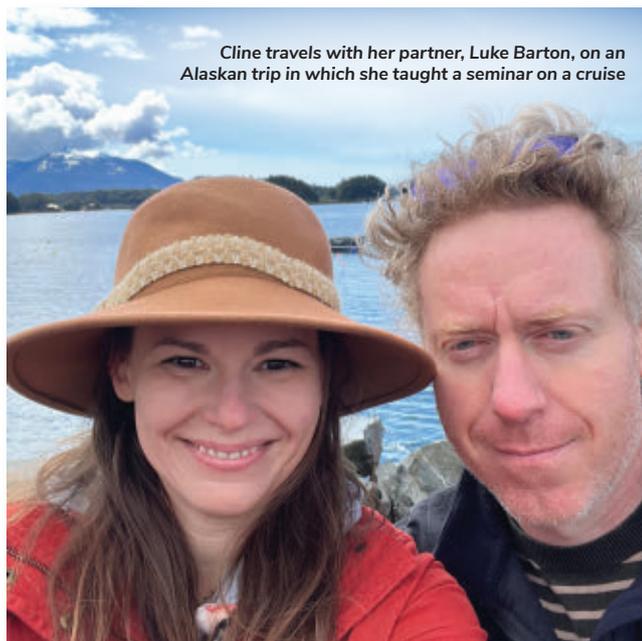
Cline's career has seen her take on roles such as emergency nurse, ICU nurse and critical care transport nurse. She is now a speaker and author for Solheim Enterprises, a legal nurse consultant, and the trauma program manager at Sutter Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley, California.

Cline also had the opportunity to effect change during her three years on the ENA board of directors. "I really learned the value of visionary thinking and strategic thinking," she said.

She joined the board prior to the pandemic and served through 2021, striving to represent the voice of the

bedside nurse at a time when their lives became much more difficult. Being on the board also gave her the opportunity to travel, forming close relationships with leaders at the state level.

"For me to be a young woman in that leadership position, it made others realize they could do it too," she said. ●



Cline travels with her partner, Luke Barton, on an Alaskan trip in which she taught a seminar on a cruise

# Candace Pineda

MBA, BSN, RN, TCRN

## Helping the Community Help Injured Patients

Of all the achievements Candace Pineda has had in 18 years as a nurse, she's most proud of her efforts to launch Stop the Bleed training in South Florida.

"Bleeding is the number one cause of death in injured patients," Pineda said. "To be able to make a community impact and have the lay public participate in lifesaving skills while waiting for medical help to arrive is such a privilege."

Pineda taught Stop the Bleed to many emergency nurses, pre-hospital EMTs and paramedics and helped support efforts in training more than 175 schools in her county.

Within a year, she and her colleagues trained more than 9,100 teachers, staff and community members. Pineda also helped deliver bleeding control kits to public buildings.

"To provide simple and impactful knowledge to our community to learn hemorrhage control is a way for more patients to make it alive to our EDs, and is something I'm truly grateful for," Pineda said.

Pineda, now a trauma program director for Memorial Regional Hospital and Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, Florida, said she was exposed to emergency nursing when she floated one shift from the intensive care

unit to the emergency department.

The emergency nursing field is special to her, and she values the knowledge and experience needed to provide care for patients of all ages and disease processes. She sees that knowledge as a foundation to sharpen critical thinking skills and manage changes under pressure.

"I have grown and developed in the avenue of trauma nursing and program management from my emergency nursing start," Pineda said.

Pineda has facilitated many classes as an ENA course director and hopes to continue spreading knowledge, passion and tools the association shares with emergency nursing colleagues. She encourages all nurses to take advantage of ENA's forums, conferences and tools, on top of continuing education, using them to become advocates, get involved in legislation and publications and "make a difference beyond the bedside care."

When talking with nurses, Pineda often points out the importance of emergency nursing care in the patient's journey.

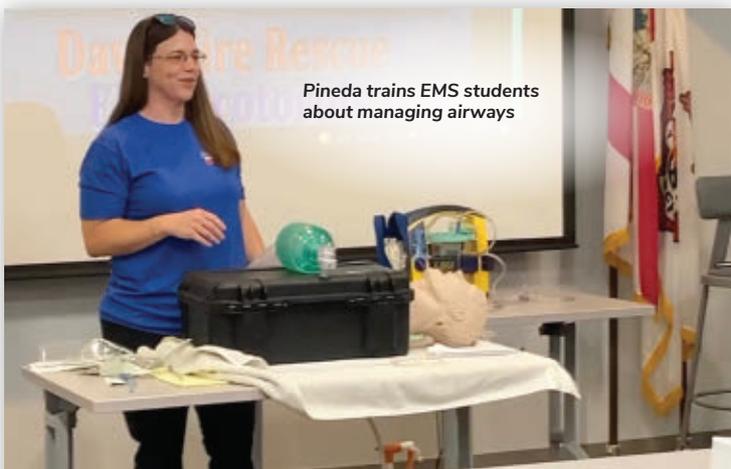
"Although the total time of patient stay may be short, emergency nursing care has a crucial impact on how the rest of the care continuum takes shape," Pineda said. "I am passionate about emergency nursing and trauma care and hope my passion and teaching has been felt and passed on through those who come to my courses."

Pineda said she would tell her younger self that the only thing you can control is your own actions, feelings and self.

"Stay humble and grateful always." ●



Candace Pineda, MBA, BSN, RN, TCRN, and her teammates practice at Gordo Jiu Jitsu in Weston, Florida



Pineda trains EMS students about managing airways

# Sarah Dunstan

MSN, RN-BC, ACNPC-AG, AGACNP-BC, CEN, TCRN, CCRN, SCRN

## Jumping in to Help Fellow Nurses when COVID-19 Arrived

When the full fury of the COVID-19 pandemic struck New York City hospitals in 2020, a volunteer team of nurses and other clinicians from Upstate New York flew down to help.

Sarah Dunstan, an advanced practice registered nurse who was part of the University of Rochester Medical Center team, considers the aid she provided her fellow nurses as one of the biggest contributions she's made to emergency nursing in her almost decade-long career.

"With only a few days' notice during a very frightening time and in the true spirit of nursing, I volunteered to assist in the ED, a 48-bed COVID and intensive care unit, and participated in responding to calls on the hospital's rapid response team," Dunstan said.

As a new graduate in 2012, Dunstan knew she wanted to work in Rochester, the same emergency department where she did her nursing school capstone. However, the ED wasn't hiring after she graduated. Six months later, a position finally opened — but the nurses interviewing her didn't think she was cut out for emergency nursing.

"I interviewed again and finally convinced them otherwise," Dunstan said. "Now, nine years later, I sit on the interview committee as a leadership member in the same ED."

Dunstan, an ENA member since 2014, helped teach Stop the Bleed in Rochester in January. Previous volunteer efforts took her to Kanjaansi Health Center in Kampala, Uganda, in 2016, and the

Free Clinic Centro de Salud in Sumpango, Guatemala, in 2015.

"I hope to become a mentor to other nurses, both to help others to get involved professionally and to contribute to nursing having a collective voice to be heard on important nursing issues through legislative initiatives," Dunstan said.

These days, Dunstan is working on her doctor of nursing practice degree, expecting to graduate in May. She credited her current workplace for the opportunity to do so.

"Through the support of the chief nursing officer, my nursing director and [nursing school] faculty, I have received endless encouragement to continue my education so that I can be the best nurse I can be," Dunstan said.

"This support has enabled me to juggle both school and work full time in order to graduate this spring with my doctorate fully paid for through the university's DNP fellowship program."

As a new nurse, Dunstan said she was overwhelmed by the vast number of things she didn't know.

"I think I would tell my younger self to have patience because you will never know it all," Dunstan said. "And that when or if you think you do know it all, that is the real problem — because there is always something more to learn." ●



*Sarah Dunstan, MSN, RN-BC, ACNPC-AG, AGACNP-BC, CEN, TCRN, CCRN, SCRN, dons her personal protective equipment while helping with COVID-19 outbreaks in 2020 in New York City*



*Dunstan administers a vaccine while volunteering in 2016 in Kampala, Uganda*

# Rachael Smith

MSN, RN, CNE, CEN, CCRN, CPEN, TCRN

## Constantly Learning on the Job

For years, Rachael Smith has been an educator, a passionate advocate for emergency nursing and an important contributor to ENA conferences. But when she started her career, she didn't think she could make it in the emergency department.

"I became an EMT my senior year of high school and quickly realized there was so much to know," she said. "I couldn't imagine myself in the scenario of knowing what to do in an emergency situation."

Smith worked a few years in medical/surgical and in a medical stepdown unit. While she enjoyed it, she was "craving a new environment that didn't consist almost entirely of pneumonia or UTI treatment."

After a dull 12-hour shift, Smith decided on a whim to email the ED nurse manager and ask if she could shadow them. She interviewed the following week.

"I haven't looked back since," she said.

Even after 11 years, Smith is constantly learning and growing as an emergency nurse in Connecticut. She's a nurse at Middlesex Health Shoreline Medical Center in Westbrook, part of the nursing faculty for Charter Oak State College and an associate professor at Three Rivers Community College.

She appreciates that the specialty is always changing.

"I love that the environment is predictably unpredictable in that you don't know what may come through the doors — but chest pain patients will all get a similar workup," Smith said. "Most importantly, I like

comforting and treating patients and families that may be experiencing the worst day of their lives in hopes of making their experience as positive as possible."

Smith considers her greatest contributions to emergency nursing being her board certifications — those that show she knows how to provide evidence-based, safe care to her patients, and also the certifications in areas she had been unfamiliar with.

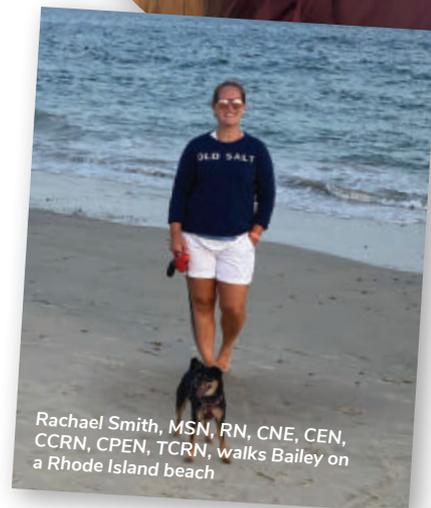
For example, Smith acknowledged that she's uncomfortable and nervous caring for children. She resolved to develop herself in that area, taking the Pediatric Emergency Nursing Certification exam to immerse herself in care for pediatric patients.

"I now feel more confident when a sick kiddo presents to the department, even if I still don't really enjoy it," Smith said.

Smith led the Connecticut ENA State Council as its 2020 president and served in numerous other roles for the state. Since 2018, she's served as chair of its government affairs committee. She joined ENA's Conference Education Planning Committee in 2018 and was its co-chair in 2021 when the association delivered its second-ever fully virtual annual conference. She's become a familiar presenter at recent Emergency Nursing conferences.

During Emergency Nursing 2022 in Denver, she was set to launch a new "Back to Basics" track of sessions to teach or reinforce basic or common ED practices and skills.

"I want to make sure that ED nurses are armed with the knowledge to make appropriate clinical decisions and help them feel empowered to admit when they are unsure," Smith said. ●



Rachael Smith, MSN, RN, CNE, CEN, CCRN, CPEN, TCRN, walks Bailey on a Rhode Island beach



Smith snaps a selfie at her students' 2022 graduation at Three Rivers Community College

# Rebecca Basso

DNP, RN, CEN, CPEN, HN-BC, NEA-BC

## Called to Volunteer, from 9/11 to Ukraine Crisis

**B**y the time Rebecca Basso entered high school in September 2001 as a 13-year-old freshman, the practice of volunteering and helping others in simple ways was already ingrained.

Which is why it wasn't surprising that on Sept. 11, 2001, Basso immediately felt compelled to travel 40 miles into Manhattan so she could help with rescue and recovery efforts.

Although Basso was too young to be allowed to lend her support, the tragedy of 9/11 would have a lasting impression.

"Three years later I was old enough to join my local volunteer ambulance corps and made a choice to dedicate my life to emergency nursing," Basso said.

At 17, Basso entered nursing school and was already on her way to becoming an emergency medical technician.

Upon receiving her bachelor's degree, Basso started her first emergency department job as a resident nurse. She has since earned a master's degree in administrative science with concentrations in emergency management administration, global security and terrorism, and school

security and safety administration. She also obtained a doctor of nursing practice.

Volunteering continues to be a significant priority for Basso. Most recently, she helped organize collections to help support Ukraine in its conflict against Russia, from donating medical and personal hygiene supplies personally to reaching out to her ED colleagues for additional donations. Since then, she partnered with her department's outreach team to collect expired and unused medical supplies throughout their health care system.

"We have since donated more than five pallets of medical supplies," she said.

Basso is an inductee of the Omicron Sigma Sigma Emergency Management Honor Society and belongs to a disaster medical assistance team, which is part of the National Disaster Medical System. She is a nominee for the 2022 BCEN Distinguished CEN Award and has led her department through two successful Lantern Award terms. Basso has presented posters at state and national ENA conferences and participated in a panel at the 2019 national conference.

Today, Basso leads nurses as director of the emergency department and emergency services within the organization where she started as a resident nurse: The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, New Jersey. She said she cares for "the people who care for our patients" and remains focused on "cultivating a safe, supportive and invigorating environment where our emergency nurses flourish."

"I recognize this is an environment where friendships form, possibly with a future spouse, and many people make lifelong friends," she said, alluding to her meeting her own husband in the ED. "I want our people to have the same kind of environment as I did while I was still a staff nurse." ●



*Rebecca Basso, DNP, RN, CEN, CPEN, HN-BC, NEA-BC, and her Valley Hospital ED colleagues celebrate receiving the ENA Exemplary Emergency Department Lantern Award in 2022*



*Basso and her husband, Mike, celebrate William's first birthday in 2021 in Westwood, New Jersey*

# Lisa Scott

BSN, RN, CEN, CFRN



*Lisa Scott, BSN, RN, CEN, CFRN, received this pin last year when she flew her 1,000th patient*

## Flying High and Saving Lives

As a member of the 32-person Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance Flight Team at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia, flight nurse Lisa Scott might find herself flying four patient trips in a single shift. Nevertheless, she describes what she does as “the best job ever.”

“You get this great feeling of being able to care for someone at their worst time,” Scott said.

For Scott, flying into the unknown in a helicopter with just a pilot and a flight paramedic is a thrill. It is the constantly changing environment and the autonomy to care for patients in new ways that excites her.

“My scope of practice is a lot bigger in the flight environment than in the hospital environment, and I love that,” she said.

Scott and her Nightingale team are responsible for transporting patients in a 125-mile flight region from the team’s homebase at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. To date, Scott has flown more than 1,300 patient flights. One of her most memorable recent flights was in March 2020, when Scott and her crew flew with one of the first COVID-19 positive patients in their region.

“It was unlike anything we’d done before,” she said.

Scott was drawn to hospitals from an early age, when she first worked as a candy striper. Fast forward to her time in nursing school at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, where she worked in the emergency department as a tech. Right away, she knew she had found her home.

“It hooked me because I loved being able to have all of this knowledge about all of these different things,” she said.

After graduation, Scott worked at a community hospital ED in Chesapeake, Virginia. Within her first year of working there, she met members of the Nightingale flight nurse crew. She set her goal then: She would become a flight nurse.

A few years later she landed a job at Sentara’s ED, the home of the Nightingale team. In 2013, after nine years in the ED there, she took her dream job as a flight nurse.

When she’s not flying, Scott serves as the 2022 Virginia ENA State Council president and is pursuing her master’s degree in nursing administration and leadership at Capella University.

“I love what I do, and I really just want to continue doing it,” she said. “I had this dream of being a flight nurse, and here I am living it. And sometimes it’s so hard to even comprehend that I’m doing what I love.” ●



*When Scott’s Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance Flight Team participated in a post-accident incident plan drill, she took a moment to sit up front*



# Brittany Punches

PHD, RN, CEN, FAEN



## Constantly Searching for the Answers

**B**rittany Punches is currently leading a study on acute pain management in the emergency department. The study was funded when Punches secured a five-year, \$955,000 grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

As principal investigator, Punches hopes the study will help identify decisions in the ED that are leading to acute-care opioid use. The study was scored in the top 1 percent by a scientific review panel — a rare honor for nursing and emergency care.

While the work is impressive in scale and sure to have an impact, Punches doesn't always describe it as research in conversation, preferring to call it "a project." And Punches — an associate professor in the College of Nursing in the Department of Emergency Medicine for The Ohio State University — doesn't usually introduce herself a scientist.

"One thing I've learned is people are really intimidated by the words 'research' and 'science,'" she said. "When explaining what I do to others, I say I just have questions I want answers to."

Punches started her emergency nursing career when a college friend connected her with an internship registering patients in the ED. She loved being part of a team helping people.

After a few years at the University of Cincinnati, she noticed some patients repeatedly returning to the ED for the same issues. She was sure the ED could play a role in breaking that cycle. She kept asking questions of staff and mentors. They told her that sounded like a great research project.

As much as she loved the bedside work, once she went down the research rabbit hole, she was hooked. Her research projects focus on the impact that trauma and emergency care can have on patients and how the ED can be an environment that sets patients on a path to avoid addiction.

Her dissertation was recognized on a list of "20 Most-Cited Manuscripts Since 2018," and she is the only emergency nurse on the editorial board for the Journal of American College of Emergency Physicians.



Brittany Punches, PHD, RN, CEN, FAEN, with husband, Nick, and children Edie, Grant and Audrey

She has a lot on her plate, including three young kids, but the work fuels her. She knows other ED nurses can look for answers the way she does.

"Nurses see problems all the time, and they're usually doing very ingenious things to fix them," she said. "If they just collect the data around it, that's a project." ●

# Sarah Wells

MSN, RN, CEN, CNL



## On a Mission to Help Distribute PPE

When Sarah Wells was in high school in southern Georgia, she shadowed an emergency department nurse in a local hospital during a high school program called “Be a Nurse for a Day.” She recalled the hospital being a bit quiet at the time.

Suddenly, there was a rush of activity, the bay doors burst open and a patient covered in blood was rolled into the ED, Wells recalled. From that moment, she was hooked. She’s more than a decade into her nursing career, but she vividly recalled how that day helped her discover her career.

“I was just so blown away,” Wells said. “This was my first exposure to emergency nursing and, from then on, I couldn’t get enough of it.”

Wells — president of California ENA’s East Bay chapter and recently the secretary of the California ENA State Council — is now a radiology nurse at UCSF Health in San Francisco and in September began a new role at the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.

In 2020, when nurses worldwide saw a national shortage in personal protective equipment, Wells felt compelled to act and organized the PPE Care Package Project, which uses volunteers and donors to deliver respirator masks, surgical masks and eye protection to front-line health care workers in need.

“I collected funds, procured PPE and sent out over 7,800 PPE items to more than 240 individuals and organizations in 37 states and Mexico,” Wells said.

Wells’ efforts were recognized as she received the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses’ Circle of Excellence Award in 2021 and was nominated for the American Academy of Nursing Courage Award in Innovation in 2020.

“I was just doing what I could to protect my emergency nursing and other colleagues,” Wells said.

Wells, who also founded New Thing Nurse in Oakland, California, maintained that emergency nurses need support, education and resources to have sustainable and successful careers now more than ever. She wants to create more mentorship and support opportunities for new and experienced ED nurses, as well as work to create and deliver education on a range of clinical topics.

For Wells, life as an emergency nurse means being always on the go, managing an often chaotic environment and enjoying a career that appeals to people who thrive on the adrenaline.

But of course it comes with downsides — Wells said she has struggled with mental health at times. She recalled years of being so anxious she couldn’t sleep for days and, on the flip side, days where she couldn’t even get out of bed.

“We’re seeing people on the worst days of their lives, and that takes a huge toll on you as a health care professional,” she said.

If Wells could talk to her younger self, she would tell her to invest in self-care and a therapist early on, because “mental wellness is key to being a successful health care provider.” ●



Sarah Wells, MSN, RN, CEN, CNL, in full PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic



Wells at the First There, First Care Conference in 2022 where she spoke about nurses taking care of themselves mentally and physically

# Stephanie Suzadail

MSN, MA, RN, PHRN, CEN, CFRN, CPEN, CTRN, TCRN

## Training the Next Generation of Nurses, EMTs

Stephanie Suzadail grew up with emergency medical services, started working as an emergency medical technician and firefighter at age 16, and helped teach the next generation's EMS providers. But things swerved in a different direction for her at age 23 when she was treated and flown for a stroke.

Suzadail was in her junior year of nursing school at the time and recalls how the emergency department and flight staff impressed her.

"I loved their proficiency, urgency and compassion," she said.

Now, Suzadail has eight years of nursing experience and 16 years in prehospital emergency medicine. She became the 51st nurse in the world to obtain all five BCEN certifications.

"I love the ability to critically think for a wide demographic of patients," Suzadail said. "I love the ability to be calm in chaos. I moved on from ED nursing to flight nursing, where I could bring the calm collection of an ED to the rural settings."

Suzadail, who hails from Pennsylvania, is now a travel emergency nurse at Trusted Health and a nurse with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. On top of being a paramedic with Penn State University and flight nurse at Life Flight in Geisinger, she also is a non-credit EMT instructor at Pennsylvania College of Technology.

"I came from this realm and continue to give my talents to the community," Suzadail said of her continuing EMS experience.

Suzadail also wants to help students focus more on their studies, so she founded and donated to two scholarships for nursing students facing obstacles, such as financial difficulties, divorce or being a single parent.



Suzadail (right) and a SWAT medic take part in a technical austere medical evacuation class in the summer of 2020

people to continue to filter in," she said. "As such, I hope to leave a lasting legacy of my love for emergency nursing so those people may also shine their love on the generation after them." ●



Stephanie Suzadail, MSN, MA, RN, PHRN, CEN, CFRN, CPEN, CTRN, TCRN, and fellow first responders load a helicopter for pediatric trauma transport

# Revisiting Resuscitation

## ENPC Sixth Edition Goes a Step Beyond PALS

By Shelly Strom and Katie Finlon

ENA CONNECTION CONTRIBUTORS

**E**NA this month is set to release the sixth edition of its flagship Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course. The new curriculum adds resuscitation training and will be more focused on hands-on application.

ENA Educational Content Director Katrina Ceci, MSN, RN, TCRN, CPEN, NPD-BC, CEN, said the course update is meant to be a nod to the Pediatric Advanced Life Support class. ENPC's goal has generally been to avoid resuscitation in younger patients, Ceci said, and this new edition of ENPC will augment PALS.



**Katrina Ceci, MSN, RN, TCRN, CPEN, NPD-BC, CEN**

“We’ve focused on catching the kid before they get so sick that you need to do CPR,” Ceci said. “ENPC helps you look at those subtle things that say, ‘Hey, this kid doesn’t look good. I want to intervene before we need to

go to that measure.’ But the reality is that kids come in when it’s too late. Our goal is to prevent the need for resuscitation but knowing that it does happen.”

Additionally, the language in this sixth edition evolved to be more representative of diverse communities and ethnicities, noted Lisa Jamerson, DNP, RN, CNE, CPEN, NRP, assistant nursing professor at University of Lynchburg in Virginia and a member of the work team for the new edition.

“Historically we’ve used language such as ‘The patient’s skin is pink, warm and dry,’ but that’s not for everybody or every skin tone,” Jamerson said. “More inclusive language will be used.”

The new edition also will use more gender-neutral language, Ceci said.

“It can be a teaching scenario, a teaching point that you can’t assume the patient’s gender and there’s a value in

introducing yourself with what you like to be called,” Ceci said.

The edition continues to provide core-level pediatrics knowledge and emphasizes decision-making for responding to the chief complaints of a pediatric patient in emergency scenarios.

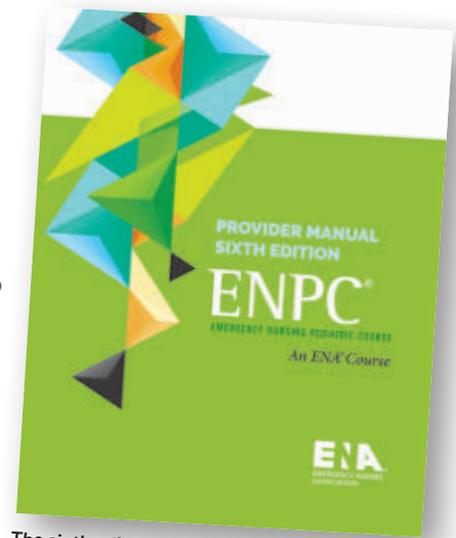
“Traditionally the course was about body-system emergencies — shock, cardiovascular complaints and signs of deterioration,” said Justin Milici, MSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, CPN, TCRN, CCRN, FAEN, a member of the ENPC Review Committee and a clinical editor and content expert at Elsevier.

The latest edition of ENPC has the updated pediatric emergency nursing practice recommendations and teaches systematic assessment and application of care. The course also will be more practical and hands-on than previous editions.

“It’s more application,” Ceci said. “It’s not lecturing to the content; it’s having them apply the content.”

The ninth edition of the Trauma Nursing Core Course is due in April. Both are hybrid courses presented online and in-person as part of ENA Delivered Courses.

“No one will ever regret spending the time to take this two-day intensive course,” Cam Brandt, MS, RN, CEN, CPEN, chair of ENA’s ENPC Review Committee, said of ENPC. “Instead, what I hear from students is, ‘I wish I’d had this information a week ago when a pediatric patient presented.’” ●



*The sixth edition of the Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course comes out this month*

# ‘Being Part of Something

# Bigger’



Kevin McFarlane, MSN, RN, CEN, TCRN, NE-BC, NP-BC, hosting his podcast, “The Art of Emergency Nursing”

## Three Nurses Inducted into Academy of Emergency Nursing 2022 Class

**Jeff Zagoudis**

ENA CONNECTION CONTRIBUTOR

**A**n emergency nursing podcaster and a longtime advocate for forensic nursing have been inducted into the 2022 class of Fellows for the Academy of Emergency Nursing. A third nurse, known for promoting the advanced treatment of burn care, will be inducted posthumously.

The Academy announced the inductions in June and the three were set to be formally inducted at Emergency Nursing 2022. Academy Fellows are recognized for their outstanding contributions to the field of emergency nursing, explained Academy Chairperson Nick Chmielewski, DNP, RN, CEN, CENP, NEA-BC, FAEN.

“It’s the pinnacle recognition for any emergency nurse,” Chmielewski said. “I’m thrilled to welcome these great emergency nurses into the Academy.”

Inductee Angie Alexander, MSN, RN, CEN, SANE-A, SANE-P, AFN-BC, said she was honored by the recognition.

“It’s like being a part of something bigger than yourself that speaks to your career as an emergency nurse,” she said.

### **Kevin McFarlane, MSN, RN, CEN, TCRN, NE-BC, NP-BC**

McFarlane is the creator and host of the podcast “Art of Emergency Nursing,” which has aired more than 100 episodes with an average of 1,000 downloads per episode.

Episodes feature a conversation with a prominent member of the emergency nursing community, discussing everything from certification exams to burnout to lessons learned on the job.

The podcast has logged more than 132,000 downloads in 44 countries — a feat McFarlane says might not be possible in another medium.

“It’s an incredible way to build a community and have like-minded people share information,” he said.

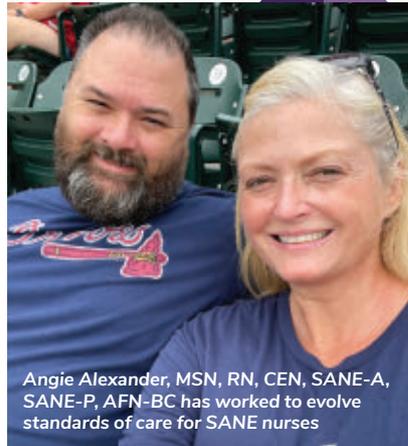
He thought about doing a podcast before he even got into emergency nursing, but the idea crystallized after an ENA meeting several years ago. He realized the colleagues he met from all over the country shared similar experiences that others could learn from. When a listener described him as a gateway between newer nurses and more experienced veterans in the field, McFarlane decided he wanted to seek membership in the academy.

“It’s such an honor to be included in such a prestigious group of folks,” McFarlane said.

### **Angie Alexander, MSN, RN, CEN, SANE-A, SANE-P, AFN-BC**

Alexander is known for her dedication to the advancement of forensic nursing, where she shows her passion for helping some of the most vulnerable patients.

In 2021, she was part of Operation Carolina Homecoming, a joint effort between her employer Atrium Health and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, which rescued more than 150 missing or runaway minors over six months.



Angie Alexander, MSN, RN, CEN, SANE-A, SANE-P, AFN-BC has worked to evolve standards of care for SANE nurses

Alexander helped develop trauma-informed care plans for each patient, calling it “a once-in-a-lifetime rewarding experience.”

She recognizes how much the standards of care for SANE nurses have evolved over her career, an evolution she has helped encourage. Alexander helped launch the SANE program at Atrium Health, where she currently works as the forensic program coordinator and domestic violence health care project manager.

“Joining the Academy feels like a validation of all the things that you’ve done,” she said.



**Michael Carmine Buffalo, DNP, RN, ACPNP, CCRN (posthumous)**

The Academy is posthumously inducting Buffalo, a nurse known for his contributions to the advancement of emergency burn care all over the world.

Serving in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in Vietnam was the beginning of his overseas work. He remained with the Army Reserve until 2002, when he retired as a major. He also volunteered for the U.S. Department

of Defense, going on 39 missions with the Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute. He served as the commander of the National Disaster Medical System’s Burn Specialty Team No. 3.

Buffalo drew on his experiences to be an author of or contributor to numerous articles and manuals related to burn care, including the Advanced Burn Life Support manual. He is credited with bringing ABLS course programs to Mexico and Trinidad, as well as starting a burn care program in Italy.

Buffalo died on April 26, 2020.

“Not only was Michael dedicated to providing education to emergency nurses, but he was committed to ensuring there were enough instructors coming behind him to keep the pipeline full and continue the good work he started,” said Sally Snow, BSN, CPEN, FAEN, who nominated Buffalo. ●

## Applying to the Academy

Leaders of the Academy of Emergency Nursing encourage those interested in becoming a Fellow to give themselves at least one year to prepare the process. Applicants may find it helpful to look at the path to Fellowship as a journey that requires extensive preparation before success.

Start by reading the Fellowship Application Manual, which contains crucial information about the application process, including induction criteria, they advised. It’s available online at <https://www.ena.org/about/faen>.

There are three primary criteria candidates must meet, starting with showing enduring and substantial contributions that had a significant impact on the advancement of the emergency nursing specialty. This can be on the local, state, regional, national and/or international level, and it can affect one or more of five pillar areas — education, practice, research, leadership or policy.

Candidates must describe a plan for ongoing contributions to the academy and the emergency nursing specialty. They also must be a member at the time they apply and be a voting-eligible ENA member for three consecutive calendar years before applying.

AEN has created a “shared mental model” to help clarify some of the definitions in the criteria, particularly the meaning of enduring and substantial contributions, explained Academy Immediate Past Chair Garrett Chan, PhD, APRN, CNS, CEN, FAEN, FAAN. These are contributions to the specialty that demonstrate outstanding leadership beyond ENA roles and responsibilities.

“Contributions should have a broad influence and impact that is wide-reaching, clearly articulated and leaves a legacy for the applicant,” he said.

The other critical part of a successful application is selecting an Academy Fellow sponsor to help evaluate your application. The directory of Fellows on the AEN website can help applicants find a sponsor whose interests align with their own.

**Getting started**

The application cycle for the 2023 fellowship class will open in December 2022. Visit <https://www.ena.org/about/faen> to learn more.



# The Best of *JEN*

Recently Published Articles Highlight Efficiencies in Pediatric ED Admissions, Association of Substance Use and Intimate Partner Violence, and Assessment of Supraventricular Tachycardia

ENA is proud to offer what has consistently been ranked one of the top benefits to membership for decades — the *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, the association's official scholarly journal. *ENA Connection* is equally proud to provide its readers a glimpse into the pages of *JEN* with a sampling of the best clinical, research and practice improvement articles ENA's flagship publication has to offer.

The full-length articles and case studies highlighted in this section are summarized from the most topical and interesting original works presented in the latest issue of *JEN* or from the "Articles in Press" section on <https://www.jenonline.org>. These summaries will often include analysis from the *JEN* editors who review, accept and publish some of the best research in emergency nursing today.

*JEN* is published bimonthly and offers many article types, including full-length research, case studies and editorials, as well as regular focused articles on the key topics that make up the multidisciplinary emergency nursing specialty. Many *JEN* articles offer continuing education credits for eligible readers who complete designated CE tests.

## From the September Issue

### Improving Timeliness of Pediatric Emergency Department Admissions

Sean Elwell, MSN, RN, NE-BC, TCRN, EMT; Elizabeth Johnson-Salerno, MSN, RN, PCNS-BC, CPEN; James Thomas, MSN, RN, CEN; Catherine Haut, DNP, CPNP, CCRN, FAANP, FAAN; Laura Alfonsi, MSN, RN

In a high-volume, high-acuity, fast-paced care environment such as an emergency department, multiple competing processes can easily obstruct patient flow. ED patients who can't progress to their admission location are often held in the ED, leading to problems for patients and providers alike.

Elwell and his colleagues, working in an East Coast health system with a Level I pediatric ED, described their efforts to improve movement of pediatric patients from the ED to inpatient care.

The ED and participating departments identified steps where they could potentially make the process more efficient, from the decision to admit the patient, the bed assignment, readying the patient for admission, the

nurse-to-nurse handoff report and moving the patient to the accepting floor. They implemented a nurse-initiated "pull process," created set reservation times for transfers and used coordinated handoffs.

After implementing the new admission process, patients admitted to a short-stay pediatric unit from the ED saw a mean wait of less than 83 minutes from the decision to admit to the actual admission. In 2019, that average wait time was about 107 minutes.

### Association of Cannabis Use and At-Risk Alcohol Use with Intimate Partner Violence in an Urban ED Sample

Carol B. Cunradi, MPH, PhD; Raul Caetano, MD, PhD; Harrison J. Alter, MD, MS; and William R. Ponicki, MA

Cunradi and her colleagues examined how rates of intimate partner violence (perpetration and victimization) might differ among patients who report at-risk levels of alcohol use, cannabis use, or both types of substance abuse. They collected data from 1,037 surveys of married or partnered patients who visited an urban ED in northern California.

Their analysis suggested the rates of intimate partner violence differed significantly based on the types of substance use behavior, and the rates were highest among those who reported both at-risk drinking and cannabis use.

Women who indicated at-risk drinking, cannabis use or both experienced higher odds of intimate partner violence compared to women who indicated neither type of substance use. Among the men surveyed — 47 percent of the total respondents — at-risk drinking and cannabis use wasn't associated with increased odds of IPV.

The authors concluded screening patients' at-risk alcohol use and cannabis use might help identify patients at a higher risk for IPV, and those patients could be prioritized for preventive counseling and referrals.

## Articles in Press

### A Multicenter Retrospective Evaluation of Specialized Laboratory Investigations in the Workup of Pediatric Patients with New-Onset Supraventricular Tachycardia

Kodi M. Endres, BS; Krista Kierys, MSN, CRNP-AC/PC; Yimeng Shang, MS; Shouhao Zhou, PhD; Gary D. Ceneviva, MD; Neal J. Thomas, MD; Conrad Krawiec, MD

Hospitals treating pediatric patients with supraventricular tachycardia typically order cardiac-specific and noncardiac lab testing. Yet the utility of testing for this dysrhythmia is unknown.

The researchers conducted a retrospective study of 621 pediatric subjects, of which 15 percent had laboratory tests such as thyroid or cardiovascular studies. Abnormal results were found in less than a quarter of subjects.

Pediatric patients presenting to the ED with SVT should receive early recognition and treatment. The authors suggest, however, that after stabilization those patients may not need extensive diagnostic testing. The authors noted that quality improvement initiatives could be conducted to change practice toward ordering of lab tests based on clinical indication, potentially creating a framework for better evidence-based care for pediatric SVT patients.

### Emergency Department Nurses' Perceptions of Patient Substance Use, Impact on Sexual Assault Care, and Access to Follow-Up Behavioral Health Resources

M. Kathryn Allison, PhD, MPH; Hannah M. Henderson, Geoffrey M. Curran, PhD; and Melissa J. Zielinski, PhD,

Patients presenting to the emergency department after a sexual assault may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Naturally, the ED staff will offer these patients the best possible care — but clinicians may not be prepared to meet their unique needs.

Researchers in Little Rock, Arkansas, interviewed 15 emergency nurses as they sought to understand current resources provided to sexual assault patients and the referrals the patients received. The study also explored the nurses' attitudes toward patient substance abuse and looked at nurses' perceptions of adjunct mobile health interventions for follow-up behavioral health care.

Many of the nurses interviewed said they weren't referring patients with substance use issues to behavioral health services after sexual assault care and said there were few local service providers.

The study participants generally supported having patients use a mobile device for follow-up behavioral health care, but that brought up issues of patient privacy and anonymity. The nurses also observed some patients had limited internet access. ●



# Getting Staffing Right

## *Grants Support Research on Pediatric Staffing Models, Oncology Emergencies*

By Elizabeth Stanton  
ENA CONNECTION CONTRIBUTOR

In March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Boston Children’s Hospital, Denise Downey, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CPEN, noticed right away that her emergency department faced a host of challenges: Staff shortages, nurse burnout, turnover and antiquated staffing models. She suspected her hospital was not alone, and she was right.

Colleagues at hospitals across the city reported the same problem to her: Their traditional staffing models couldn’t keep up with the new reality, either. So, she got to work designing a study that would look for answers to a staffing problem that was growing day by day.

Today, that work has earned Downey the prestigious 2022 ENA Foundation Sigma Research Grant award. This jointly funded grant provides up to \$6,000 annually to a nurse researcher focused on advancing the specialized practice of emergency nursing and patient care.

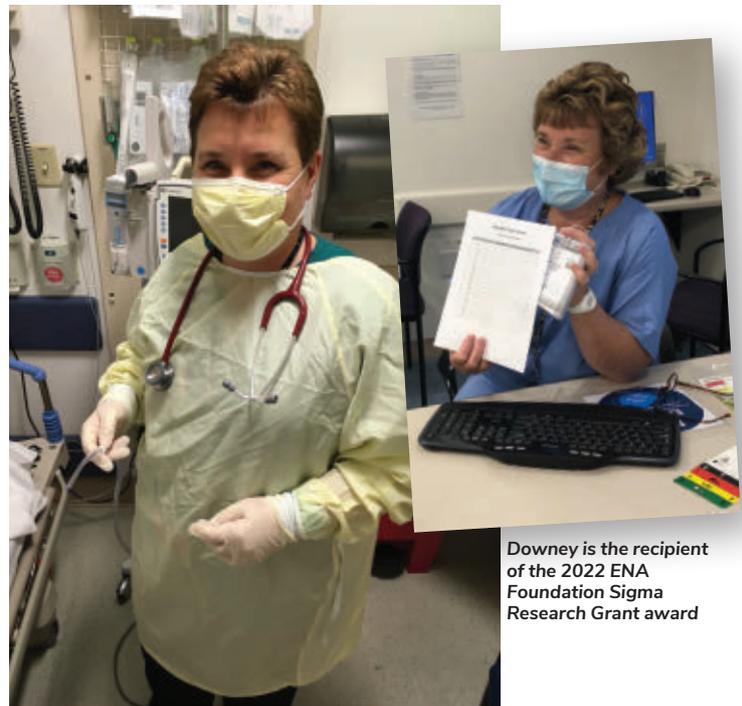


**Denise Downey, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CPEN**

Downey’s study, “Describing Pediatric ED Staffing Models and Unit Characteristics,” will “explore and describe how pediatric ED nurse leaders across the United States are utilizing models of care delivery to inform and create optimal nurse staffing models to support the pediatric ED environment,” she wrote.

The study aims to “understand and describe staffing patterns that support excellent patient care, promote nurse retention and satisfaction, and ensure the institution’s fiscal accountability to guide the future development of evidence-based ED nurse staffing models,” Downey wrote with her co-investigators, Jean Connor, PhD, RN, CPNP, FAAN, and Deb Lajoie, JD, PhD, MSN, RN, Esq., of Boston Children’s Hospital.

The first of two phases of the study, utilizing descriptive qualitative inquiry and cross-sectional survey methodology, will focus on interviews with eight to 10 nurse leaders who are members of the Children’s Hospital Association and who operate freestanding children’s hospitals with pediatric EDs. Following these interviews, nurse leaders at the 38 freestanding institutions will be



**Downey is the recipient of the 2022 ENA Foundation Sigma Research Grant award**

invited to participate in a cross-sectional survey. The research will serve as the foundation for a more extensive study to outline improved nurse staffing models for pediatric emergency departments.

Downey, the nursing professional development specialist in emergency services at BCH, calls the research crucial to the future of nursing.

“There is a dire need in this post-pandemic climate to contribute to the development of an optimal nurse staffing model that integrates nursing workload and quality care metrics. In this time of ‘new normal,’ pediatric EDs must adapt to unforeseen challenges such as overcapacity constraints, surging patient volume and acuity, extensive infection control measures, and soaring nurse attrition,” Downey wrote in her proposal.

The grant will help fund the study — which is exciting to Downey, who said the value goes far beyond the funding.

“It’s not about having the money; it’s about having the endorsement of ENA that really solidifies this work, and it really brings my work to another level,” she said.

“I am thrilled to be able to continue this work supported by such an innovative and well-established organization.”

— **Rebecca Lash, PhD, RN, CEN**



In addition to the jointly funded grant awarded to Downey, the foundation awarded a standalone \$6,000 research grant to researcher Rebecca Lash, PhD, RN, CEN, an assistant professor at the Indiana University School of Nursing in Fort Wayne, for her study, “Evaluating the Oncology Related Education Needs of Emergency Nurses.”

For Lash, the research could mean a better future for the care for cancer patients in EDs around the world. She will examine how cancer patients are treated and experience the ED and what changes are needed to best train nurses.

Her study will evaluate the experiences of oncology patients and emergency care providers during an ED visit. According to Lash, ED nurses who care for cancer patients are often treating patients for a variety of reasons apart from cancer. Oncology patients frequently visit hospitals for different care, which can result in treatment gaps.

But education on oncologic emergencies for emergency nurses has been limited, and there is no standardized or formal training or certifications in this area.

While related literature is focused on topics such as neutropenic fever, tumor lysis syndrome and cancer pain management, those represent a small portion of the needs of cancer patients in the ED. This research is crucial, Lash outlines in her grant proposal, because approximately “4 percent of all adult emergency department visits in the U.S. are for cancer-related complaints” and “between 44–69 percent of cancer patients visited the ED within one year of diagnosis.”

For Lash, the ability to support the ED in optimizing care for this vulnerable population is important locally and globally.

“This is true both for large academic medical centers all the way to small and rural EDs,” Lash said.

Lash’s study will tackle problem identification and a targeted needs assessment by surveying a sample of ENA nurses. She will assess the current state of knowledge,

skills and attitudes toward key content areas among emergency nurses, with a goal of surveying 250 nurses. The survey will examine areas such as knowledge of hematologic and oncologic emergencies, cancer treatment, side effects and symptoms management.

With the survey results in hand, Lash and her co-investigator, Sorayah Bourenane, MSN, RN, CEN, CNL, of MD Anderson Cancer Center, will generate goals and objectives for creating a cancer-related education and training curriculum for emergency nurses to enhance nurse education and patient care.

Lash said receiving ENA’s support to pursue the work has been important to her.

“I am thrilled to be able to continue this work supported by such an innovative and well-established organization,” she said.

ENA Foundation Chair Jeff Solheim, MSN, RN, CEN, CFRN, TCRN, FAEN, FAAN, said Downey and Lash and their studies embody the spirit of the foundation and its continued commitment to fund research.



**Jeff Solheim, MSN, RN, CEN, CFRN, TCRN, FAEN, FAAN**

“To see two researchers with really great ideas receive these grants, it fits so much in our push this year to increase the awareness and visibility of our support of research,” he said.

This year, Solheim created a temporary work group to propose ways to find interest and applications for foundation research grants, which he hopes will result in even more research grants.

“It’s my belief, and the belief of our board, that research really is what’s going to ultimately make some of the biggest differences in the future of our profession and the care we give,” he said. ●



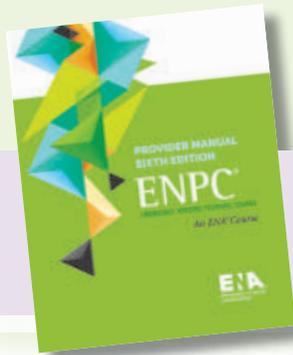
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The research-informed program also focuses on supportive roles including the program director, instructors, preceptors and coaches. And most importantly, **the program helps to transition new ED nurses to becoming competent ED nurses.**

Learn more at [ena.org/ENRP](http://ena.org/ENRP)





# LIGHTING THE WAY:

## Scripps La Jolla Develops Nurse-Led Resuscitation Center

By Shelly Strom  
ENA CONNECTION CONTRIBUTOR

**D**uring a period in which the COVID-19 pandemic placed grueling new demands on emergency nurses, the Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla Emergency Department has managed to make improvements in care. And their care already was top-notch.

The ED in La Jolla, California, promotes a culture of continuous improvement that includes all staff and encourages new ideas and collaboration on process improvement for patient care, said Jeana Jones, RN, the ED patient care manager. The department's 65-person nursing staff is being recognized with a 2022 ENA Lantern Award.

"Everyone really came together and made sure we are providing the best care during the most challenging time that health care has ever seen," Jones said.

Jones said the greatest accomplishment of the 110-person ED team is development of a nurse-led resuscitation center involving five new offerings to care for patients presenting with shock. The crown jewel is the ability to provide mechanical CPR and venous arterial ECMO upon arrival.

"We designated a population called 'too vital to die,' aged 14 to 70 years old, with witnessed arrest, poor-to-moderate return of spontaneous circulation and capable of undertaking cardiopulmonary bypass within 60 minutes of arrest," Jones said.

Another crucial piece of the redesigned protocol is that the ED physician, nurse and technician meet the patient in the ambulance and begin mechanical CPR. The patient is transferred within the ED to a resuscitation suite equipped with VA ECMO cannulation, where each care provider has a specific job.

"We empower nurses to deliver code care and enable precision experience by physicians and technicians to perform procedures, further reducing the window of



Emergency department clinical staff at Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla in La Jolla, California

inadequate perfusion," she said. These changes have improved La Jolla's neurologically intact shock survivor group to 30 percent.

ED nurses at La Jolla also spearheaded the effort to achieve Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation for their department, as well as the health system's three other EDs.

La Jolla's ED is experiencing a growing proportion of older adults among their patients, and Scripps set a goal to reduce Medicare readmissions among this population.

"We did not have processes oriented for older adults and recognized a need to provide these patients with education and tools for successful self-care at home," Jones said.

ED leadership and Scripps executives want to make visits more comfortable and provide an increased wrap-around service for older adults, she said. A multidisciplinary team led the work, which took more than two years.

These are just a few of the team's many great accomplishments over the past couple of years.

"Earning the Lantern Award is an important reminder for our staff and our community of the exceptional work done at Scripps La Jolla Emergency Department," Jones said. ●

# Faster Flow

## *New Jersey ED Speeds Treatment for STEMI, Stroke Patients*

By Shelly Strom

ENA CONNECTION CONTRIBUTOR

**N**urses at the Chilton Medical Center Emergency Department outside Newark, New Jersey, are dedicated to achieving the highest standards of care. This is evidenced in the relentless attention to detail the ED's staff nurses and nurse educators demonstrate in improving care.

Just one area where the Lantern Award-recognized ED is delivering exceptional care is in reduced times for door-to-EKG and stroke walk-ins-to-tPA administration.

As rapid delivery of perfusion is crucial for ST-elevation myocardial infarction patients, the door-to-EKG time is a crucial metric. The Chilton staff is proud to beat the American Heart Association's 10-minute standard for door-to-EKG time for these patients. The hospital's ED nurses have helped lead the way in designing highly efficient workflows for patients with chest pain. In 2018, Chilton's average time for door-to-EKG was a bit over nine minutes. And in 2021, they reduced that average to around six minutes.

"We continually analyze data around flow for patients presenting with chest pain and recognized that, during periods of high volume, our times lagged," said Tania Cutone, MSN, RN-C, director, Emergency Services/ Pediatrics/Clinical & Nursing Informatics. Chilton ED, with 35 beds, sees approximately 40,000 patients a year.

The nursing team, patient care techs and ED leaders worked together to improve the treatment flow. Now, all ED personnel have walkie-talkies to announce when a patient presents with chest pain. The charge nurse prioritizes assigning the patient a room and ensuring they immediately receive an EKG. In addition, a stretcher is located in triage for a comfortable, private place for the EKG.

On another metric, the team implemented a flow that gets CT scans faster for people who show up on their own and present with stroke symptoms. The triage nurse summons a



The emergency department team at Chilton Medical Center in northern New Jersey

physician to evaluate the patient in the triage area. If a stroke is determined, the patient is taken directly to CT scan.

"We are doing the most urgent thing first instead of spending time rooming and the associated work," Cutone said.

The reoriented protocol has decreased door-to-triage-time by four minutes, door-to-doctor time by two minutes, and reduced time to orders and a CT table — and it's just a fraction of the hospital's 30 minute goal for administering tPA. It's also involved health care partners in the community.

"EMTs call ahead identifying a possible stroke, alerting the ED team to be ready to assess arrival at the ambulance bay to be taken directly to CT," Cutone said. ●

ENA's Lantern Award® recognizes EDs that exemplify exceptional and innovative performance in leadership, practice, education, advocacy and research. EDs receiving the Lantern Award demonstrate a commitment to quality, safety, a healthy work environment and innovation in nursing practice and emergency care.



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