



2025 Annual WONL Conference

The Power of Storytelling in Leadership



Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders (WONL) Annual Conference
September 17-19, 2025
The Ingleside Hotel
Pewaukee, WI

Who Should Attend

Nurse executives, nurse managers and anyone else with responsibility for leading nurses. You do not need to be a nurse or a member of WONL to attend this event.

Conference Information

Conference Cancellation Policy

Cancellations received in writing up to 15 business days prior to an event will be given a full refund. No refunds will be given for cancellations received less than 15 business days prior and day-of-program no-shows. Substitutions are accepted.

Special Needs

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders seeks to make this conference accessible to all. If you require any special accommodations or have any dietary restrictions or food allergies, please email your needs to WHA Education at education@wha.org.

Lodging Information

The Ingleside Hotel, 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, WI 53072

A block of rooms has been reserved. Attendees must secure their own hotel room reservation. Room rate is \$149/night plus taxes and fees. To make a hotel reservation, please call 262-547-0201 and identify yourself as being a part of the Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders Conference OR use link here [Ingleside Hotel Reservation Link for WONL Conference](#). This block of rooms will be released at the end of the day on August 24, if not sold out prior to that date.

In the event that the hotel room block sells out, we also have a room block at the following property:

Avid hotel Milwaukee West - Waukesha
2101 Meadow Lane
Pewaukee, WI 53072

To make a reservation, please click [here](#). Room rate is \$99/night, plus taxes and fees. Room block will be released at the end of the day on August 18.

Registration Information

2025 Registration Options and Fees:

- WONL member, full convention: \$400 per person
- Non-member, full convention: \$450 per person
- Student*: \$350 per person
(Including Masters and doctoral students)
*Proof of student status may be requested.
- WONL member poster presenter: \$250
- Non-WONL poster presenter: \$300

Planning Committee Members

- Lori Cardinal, MSN, RN
- Loraine Carley, BSN, RN-EFM
- Jen Drayton, MSH, RN, CENP
- Amy Hermes, MSN, BSN, RN
- Dennise Lavrenz, MBA, RN, CENP
- Sarah Kolbe, BSN, RN
- Ann Zenk, MHA, BSN, RN
- Leigh Ann S. Larson, BS

EMAIL [EDUCATION@WHA.ORG](mailto:education@wha.org) TO
REGISTER.

Registration Deadline: September 10, 2025

Agenda

Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2025

- 12:00 - 2:00 pm **WONL Board Meeting**
Location: Lapham1
- 3:00 - 8:00 pm Poster Showcase
Exhibitor Set-up
Conference Registration
- 6:00 - 8:00 pm Welcome Reception
(Heavy appetizers, cash bar)

Thursday, Sept. 18, 2025

- 6:00 - 7:30 am Exhibitor Set-up (*continued*)
- 7:30 - 8:30 am Conference Registration / Visit
Exhibitors and Posters
- 8:30 - 8:45 am **Convention Welcome**
Dennise Lavrenz, MBA, WONL President
- 8:45 - 10:15 am **Criminalizing Errors**
RaDonda Vaught

RaDonda Vaught will share her profoundly personal story. Ms. Vaught's case made headlines in March 2022 when a jury found her guilty of criminally negligent homicide and gross neglect of an impaired adult in the death of a patient to whom she accidentally gave the wrong medication. She will speak firsthand on the impact this sentinel event has had on her life and her profession, along with the implications of the legal actions that followed. A passionate advocate for safety and improvement, her story will be one that is not easily forgotten.

- 10:15 - 10:45 am Break / Visit Exhibitors and Posters
- 10:45 - 11:45 am **Leading with Purpose: How Nurse Leaders Shape What Matters Most**
Deb Zimmermann, DNP, RN
AONL President, CEO Daisy Award

In this session, Deb Zimmermann, President of the American Organization for Nursing Leadership and CEO of The DAISY Foundation, will explore how nurse leaders make a lasting difference within their organizations, across the profession, and in the lives of those they serve. Drawing on national insights and frontline experiences, she will highlight how purposeful leadership grounded in compassion, connection, and courage fuels innovation, drives outcomes, and shapes the future of healthcare. Attendees will leave with renewed inspiration and practical strategies to lead with meaning and make what matters most truly visible.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe how nurse leaders can leverage purpose-driven leadership to influence outcomes, inspire teams, and shape organizational culture.
2. Identify strategies that strengthen human connection, recognition, and visibility of nursing's impact across healthcare systems.

- 11:45 am - 1:15 pm **Luncheon, Business Meeting and Presentation**
Business Meeting: 12-12:15 pm
Caring for WI Caregivers 12:15-1:15
Dr. Michael Stadler, Medical College of WI
Dennise Lavrenz, MBA, RN, CENP,
WONL President
Ann Zenk, RN, BSN, MHA, Wisconsin
Hospital Association (WHA)
Jill Lindwahl, RN, Quality Director, WHA
Dr. Lorna Breen Ambassadors:
Kristin Waite-Labott and Chris Wojnar

- 1:15 - 2:15 pm **Wisconsin Legislative Update**
Ann Zenk, RN, BSN, MHA

Hear up-to-date information on workforce trends and policy challenges facing Wisconsin hospitals, health systems and health care organizations. Attendees will come away with a better understanding of workforce, regulatory and legislative issues that impact nurses, nursing practice and nurse leaders; and recommendations to improve our state's health care workforce.

- 2:15 - 2:30 pm Break / Visit Exhibitors and Posters

- 2:30 - 3:45 pm **Empowering Change: How Nurse Leaders Drive Innovation Through Strategic Storytelling**
Christine Gall, DrPH, MS, BSN
Chief Nursing Officer, Collette Health

The healthcare industry is rich with innovative solutions and presents exciting opportunities to enhance implementation and adoption approaches. Often the key to success isn't related to technology, but to compelling narratives that inspire nursing teams to act. This presentation provides a roadmap for leveraging nursing leadership to drive meaningful change through strategic storytelling to implement and scale nurse-driven programs across multiple hospital settings and foster sustainable improvements through proven change management principles.

- 3:45 - 5:00pm **The Power of "Magic" in Leading High Performing Teams**
Jackie Gaines, MS, RN, Principal
Huron Consulting Group

In today's environment, leaders are challenged each day to perform at the top of their license or professional credentials to position organizations for success. High performance occurs when we find the magic combination of skill, purpose and passion in our teams. In other words, "Meaning, Autonomy, Growth, Impact, and Connection." This session will offer leading practices for finding and leveraging the power of magic for high performance.

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the impact of four years of crisis leadership due to COVID and how leaders solidify their foundation for future viability
2. Enhance leadership skills in navigating uncertainty
3. Discuss the essential leadership skills and practices of a high performing team
4. Know how to turn strategic priorities into results

Agenda (continued)

- 5:00 - 5:30 pm

Visit Exhibitors and Posters
- 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Awards Dinner with presentation of WONL Nurse Leader of the Year awards
- 8:00 - 9:00 pm

Informal Gathering
Join us at Didi's Supper Club and Bar, at the Ingleside Hotel, for an informal social and network gathering. Grab a complimentary beverage and meet our generous sponsor, Amergis.

Friday, Sept. 19, 2025

- 7:30 - 8:30 am

Breakfast / Visit Exhibitors and Posters
- 8:30 - 9:45 am

Tell It Like a Leader: The Art and Anatomy of Stories That Stay
April Hanson, MSN, RN
Group President, Aya Healthcare

A tactical storytelling session for nurse leaders who want to connect more deeply, lead with clarity, and inspire action that lasts. By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Break down the essential elements of a compelling leadership story, including emotion, character, detail, and a defining moment.
- Construct a leadership or impact story that aligns with their role as a nurse leader and resonates across teams, disciplines, and levels.
- Apply storytelling techniques to common leadership situations including mentoring, navigating change, and influencing up.
- Identify common storytelling pitfalls that reduce clarity and connection and apply strategies to avoid them.

- 9:45 - 10:15 am

Breakfast / Visit Exhibitors, Posters
- 10:15 - 11:30 am

We All Have a Story
Amelie Karam

Through time, different generations have experienced traumatic national events as well as personal stories that shaped them. Today is no different. This talk enlightens the audience on how these unique stories, both those experienced publicly as well as privately, shape individuals of all generations. This knowledge and understanding helps individuals in the organization gain sympathy and empathy for each other, which helps create a healthier culture, a greater sense of teamwork, and ultimately a more successful and resilient organization.

- 11:30 am - 12:00 pm

Prize Drawings
Raffles and Silent Auction
- 12:00 pm

Convention Closing
Dennise Lavrenz, WONL

THANK YOU to our conference sponsors and exhibitors!

We appreciate your support of nurse leadership in Wisconsin.

For the most up to date list of sponsors and exhibitors, click [here](#).

Sponsors



Exhibitors

The support of our exhibitors is greatly appreciated! Plan on seeing these organizations at the conference!

- Abbott
- Amergis Staffing
- Bellin College
- Carroll University
- CEC/Beacon
- Collette Health
- EasyShifts
- Fresenius-Kabi
- Gateway Health
- Grand Canyon University
- Hellocare.ai
- Herzing University
- Kahuna Workforce
- Lineus Medical
- Live Data
- M7 Health
- Mayo Health System
- MedaSource
- Molnlycke
- MSSJ
- Outset Medical
- Psychiatric Medical Care
- Qualivis
- SpaceLabs
- Stryker Medical
- The Morel Company
- Valley Medical Staffing
- Weiland Healthcare
- Western Governors University
- WHA Quality
- WI Center for Nursing and Advancing a Healthier WI
- WisPan
- WONL License Plate
- WONL Membership
- WONL Merchandise

Featured Presenters

Jackie Gaines, M.S., R.N., Principal, Huron Consulting Group

Jackie Gaines, M.S., R.N., is a high-performing senior executive, national speaker, and best-selling author with a progressive career encompassing more than 40 years of sustained leadership and accomplishments with major health systems and organizations. She has dedicated most of her career to the advancement of quality healthcare programs throughout the United States, particularly those focused on the care of the poor and underserved. Jackie travels all over the country, telling her story and sharing the leadership lessons learned throughout her career. She also continues to give back to the community by serving on numerous boards and task forces



Christine Gall, DrPH, MS, BSN, Collette Health Chief Nursing Officer



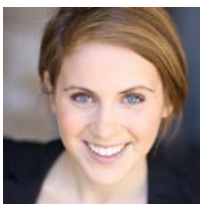
Dr. Christine Gall DrPH, MS, BSN is a distinguished healthcare visionary with over three decades of experience in Virtual Care, Patient Safety, Quality, and Public Health. Her clinical expertise spans med-surg, pediatric clinical/critical care, oncology, and blood and marrow transplant across multiple care settings. As Collette Health's Chief Nursing Officer, she drives clinical innovation, integrating virtual care solutions into caregiver workflows. Dr. Gall collaborates with clients and leads teams in applying human-centered AI to enhance workflows and reduce care costs. Her leadership enables proactive interventions that measurably improve patient safety and extend the capabilities of local care teams.

April Hanson, MSN, RN, Group President, Aya Healthcare

As Group President of Aya Healthcare, April led the company to an unprecedented 27x revenue growth over six years, culminating in \$11B in annual revenue in 2022. A Top 100 Workforce Leader, TEDx Speaker, Serial Entrepreneur, Nurse, and Recognized Business and Personal Growth Expert, April has been featured in the New York Times, The Washington Post, Forbes' 40 Under 40, CBS, CNBC, and many others. April motivates leaders and teams to infuse adaptability into their core, driving growth, innovation, and change. Her Growth Game Plan™ keynote and framework helps individuals thrive in the chaos of change and become personal agents of growth.



Amelie Karam



After studying at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Richmond University in London, and finishing her degree in Performance and Film Studies from Loyola University in New Orleans, Amelie Karam recognized that people in her Gen Y age group, known as "Millennials," view the world differently than do previous generations. The great divide between Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y piqued Amelie's interest. Amelie is passionate about bridging generational gaps. She speaks and consults both nationally and internationally about how organizations can better work together to attract and retain the Millennial generation to ultimately bridge generational gaps. Through her Millennial perspective and rich research, along with her background in theatre, film, health, and

wellness, Amelie brings an entertaining and informative voice to this important and highly sought-after topic of bridging generational gaps.

Dennise Lavrenz, MBA, RN, CENP, WONL President

Dennise Lavrenz has been an active member of AONL/WONL for the past 15 years and a board member for the last 6 years. She is the current WONL President. Her prior service includes chairperson of the Bylaws Committee, co-chair of the Program Planning Committee (9 years) and Scholarship Committee member (4 years). Dennise is among the first generation of nurse managers to adopt modern quality management methods to improve the overall quality and safety to clinical care. As a nurse leader and senior consultant with NICHE, a national nurse-led geriatric care program, she has made a substantial impact toward changing the landscape of older adult population health across the nation for the last 25 years. Dennise supports senior nurse managers to more effectively implement large scale transformative changes in clinical practice that leverage best practices, quality improvement tools and theories of planned organizational change.



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Featured Presenters (continued)

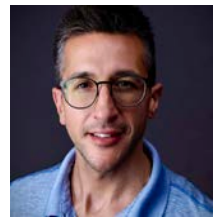
RaDonda Vaught



RaDonda Vaught was the subject of one of the highest profile healthcare criminal cases in recent years. She holds a BSN and a Certificate in Leadership from Western Kentucky University. While working as a BSN prepared registered nurse, Mrs. Vaught committed a medication error that ended the life of a patient in 2017. She was charged under administrative law by the Tennessee Department of Health, leading to the revocation of her nursing license by the Tennessee Board of Nursing in a July 2021 hearing. Additionally, she was charged under criminal law and found guilty by jury trial of two felony charges in March of 2022: Negligent Homicide, and Abuse of an Impaired Adult, with placement on an Elder Abuse registry in the state of Tennessee. Mrs. Vaught is uniquely qualified to speak first hand on the impact this sentinel event has had on her life and her profession, along with the implications of the legal actions that followed. A passionate advocate for safety and improvement, her story will be one that is not easily forgotten.

Christopher Wojnar, MSN, APNP, PMHNP-BC, Ambassador, Dr. Lorna Breen Foundation

Christopher Wojnar is a psychiatric nurse practitioner, international speaker, and suicide prevention strategist. As an Ambassador for the Dr. Lorna Breen Foundation and Vice President of United Suicide Survivors International, he integrates lived experience into systems design, policy, and practice. His work advances evidence-based health worker well-being beyond engagement, focusing on Zero Suicide-informed strategies, structured workplace postvention, psychological safety, and confidential pathways that make help-seeking safe, equitable, and routine for nurses and health workers.



Ann Zenk, RN, MHA, Sr. Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice, Wisconsin Hospital Association



Ann has served the Wisconsin Hospital Association as Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice since June 2017. As a member of WHA's Government Relations (GR) team, Ann acts as the lead staff person in the critical areas of workforce development and clinical practice. This position also functions within the GR advocacy team to educate and inform WHA staff and members about health care and hospital related issues. Prior to joining WHA, Ann's greater than 30+ years' experience in health care included patient care and leadership roles across hospitals, clinics, and long-term care--including nursing, quality improvement, risk management, and utilization review. Ann holds Bachelor's degree in Nursing from Viterbo University and a Masters in Health Administration from Ohio University.

Deb Zimmerman, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, CEO DAISY Foundation

Deb Zimmermann, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, is the Chief Executive Officer for the DAISY Foundation, the worldwide leader in the meaningful recognition of nurses. Before joining DAISY, Deb served in the United States Army Nurse Corps, practiced as a nurse practitioner, and served in chief nursing officer positions in New York and Virginia. She is the president of the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) and a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Deb is dedicated to strengthening the education and influence of nurses, creating collaborative, thriving, interprofessional care environments, and quantifying the contribution of nurses in improving health outcomes.

