



Transitions and transformation

A thank-you to Marla Weston.

THE INDELIBLE MARK left behind by a transformational leader is as unique as a fingerprint. Marla J. Weston, PhD, RN, FAAN, who stepped down as chief executive officer (CEO) of the American Nurses Association (ANA) Enterprise on January 1, has indeed been a visionary, transformational leader. Over the past 8-plus years, she helped ANA weather turbulent times and courageously pursued our journey to become a contemporary organization dedicated to advancing nursing and improving health for all.

An association accomplishes its work through many individuals, not just one person. The CEO, however, is the one who guides the staff to implement the actions of the board, strive for excellence, be creative, and lead with new ideas. The strong collaboration and shared vision between the president, board, and CEO—coupled with the engagement of our members nationwide—is paramount to success. We've enjoyed that success as ANA continues to increase its influence and stature and enlarge its footprint shaping the future of nursing.

We look back to recognize just a few of the advances ANA achieved during Weston's tenure.

Advocacy and health

Political advocacy is a critical component of ANA, and with Weston's leadership our influence remained strong. For example, ANA was a key player in helping craft provisions in the landmark Affordable Care Act, and more recently, we ramped up our advocacy around continued access to affordable, quality health care for all.

ANA also raised its national profile by addressing quality measurement and reporting, advancing evidence linking nurse staffing and positive patient outcomes, protecting nurses' ethical practice, and supporting a culture of safety. The Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ Grand Challenge, launched with Weston's leadership, has successfully engaged individual nurses and organizations to take positive actions to improve nurses' health and wellness, and ultimately, the health of the nation. Answering *The Future of Nursing* report's call to increase the number of influential nurse leaders, she was instrumental in founding the Nurses on Boards Coalition ini-

tiative to expand RNs' presence on corporate, health-related, and other boards and panels.

Future-focused

Several years ago, the ANA board and CEO embraced bold new directions to take our professional association into the future. The goal was to ensure that the programs and services ANA offered—and the way nurses connect with us—are meaningful to new generations of RNs. This "race for relevance" to create a 21st-century association paid off in many ways. We increased our member engagement opportunities through professional issues panels that addressed fatigue, care coordination, and other vital issues, and we strengthened our ability to quickly respond to emerging policy and practice issues. One such critical issue involved the Ebola outbreak, during which ANA responded rapidly to address infection control and prevention through extensive education, traditional and social media, and advocating for policies and guidelines to protect nurses serving patients.

Unified and growing

Weston led the integration of ANA, the American Nurses Foundation, and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) into a cohesive, forward-focused enterprise. She then concentrated on maturing the enterprise to tackle ANA's bold strategic plan, which calls for using new avenues to engage more nurses with ANA, focusing on innovation, and connecting with consumers to influence health. Weston has guided a cultural transformation of the ANA staff, expanded the Foundation's donor base, and achieved sustained growth of ANCC credentialing programs. During her tenure, membership has grown through innovative pilot programs at a rate outpacing most membership associations. And the number of specialty nurse organizations affiliated with ANA increased from 23 to 38.

Soon ANA will hire its next CEO, one of the most consequential actions the board will make for continued success on our transformational journey. We thank Marla Weston, who has clearly left her mark on ANA. We thank her for her dedication to ANA and know that her impact and legacy will be realized as we fulfill the vision of a powerful integrated enterprise.



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