

President's Message

Dr. Stephanie J. McClellan, DNP, MBA, RN, CMSRN, NE-BC



One year has passed since I assumed the role of President of our amazing nursing association. It has been a year full of progress, excitement, work of various magnitude, and together we have embarked on a new journey. Looking back on this year, it was my goal to have a renewed focus on the membership body. It was important to me that we take the time to listen to the voices of our members and enhance the magic of what makes our hearts sing. In addition to providing a variety of ways for the membership to be involved, the association has grown its presence across Delaware. The association hosted several inaugural events in 2023, including a leadership luncheon, a day at legislative hall, a Delaware DAISY Gala, and a roundtable panel discussion highlighting the work of nurses who are trailblazers for change and advocacy. It's an amazing honor to see and be a part of the passion our nurses have and how that passion translates into their daily work.

On October 20, 2023, myself and Executive Director, Christopher Otto, were inducted into the 2024 Honorary Commanders cohort at the Dover Air Force Base (DAFB). The program was established in 1992 as a community outreach effort to build and strengthen the

relationship between local civic leaders and personnel at DAFB. As a team, we are paired with Lieutenant Colonel John Batka. Lt. Col. Batka is the 436th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron Commander. In this role at DAFB, Lt. Col. Batka is responsible for a large team of diverse medical professionals to ensure the health and readiness of the 436th Wing's 3,600 active-duty personnel. In addition, Lt. Col. oversees preventive health services by bioenvironmental engineering and public health to safeguard the health of the systems 11,197 total force members. With a 20-year-background as a psychologist, Lt. Col. brings a wealth of knowledge into his role. Through this program, Chris and I aim to educate ourselves about the base, its functions, medical staff/community, and identify how Delaware Nurses can get connected and support our service members. Since the induction ceremony, we have been able to learn additional information about the base, goals for the coming year, plans for expansion, and opportunities for community involvement.

In November, the association held its fall membership assembly. It was an exciting time to hear from Dr. Deb Zimmerman, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, who serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the internationally known The DAISY Foundation™. Dr. Zimmerman shared insights and stories of inspiration that speak directly to the profound impact nurses have on patients, families, and the entire health care system. Her message was one of vision and encouragement towards a brighter future than we have ever imagined for nurses and healthcare. After hearing from Dr. Zimmerman, the Healthy Nurse Healthy Delaware™ program was unveiled. What an exciting opportunity for nurses to get involved, speaking directly to their needs, and influ-

ence the development of the program for the betterment of our profession and our state. Be sure to look for more information about this program in early 2024. Lastly, I am pleased to announce the election of Dr. Kathleen Neal PhD, RN, as DNA's next President-Elect. Dr. Neal will serve one year as President-Elect and begin her term as President at the end of 2024. Help me Congratulate Dr. Neal on her election and service to the association!

This year was rounded out by attending the American Nurses Association (ANA) Leadership Summit with representatives from across our nation. The ANA Board of Directors and Presidents and Chief Staff Officers of ANA's constituent/state nursing associations attended. We had three full days delving into work happening in various states and on the national level to advance our entire profession. Topics included racism in nursing, nursing innovation, overcoming threats to the profession, and more. On day two, I had the privilege of co-presenting with Dr. Benita Chatmon PhD, RN, President of the Louisiana State Nursing Association, on our work with the ANA Project Millennial and Gen Z (MZ) Advisory Group. This body of work focuses on strategically engaging the next generation of nurses with our association's mission and vision, growing membership in a meaningful way. The goal of Project MZ is to enhance our membership through "authentic focus" that not only invites our younger generation in, but provides a seat, a voice, and the ability to be active in the future work of our profession.

On day three, we heard from North Carolina Nurses Association and Texas Nurses Association on their compelling work to address racism in nursing. As states shared, leaders around the room were moved to tears. Hearing many compelling voices share their own ex-



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periences is another reminder that we still have work to do. We, together, have an amazing opportunity to address the earned distrust in our profession and stand up to ensure that racism ends. We all have a part in relentless inclusion.

To say this year was full is an understatement. As your President, I worked to compel nursing forward at every opportunity. I am proud of the work we have accomplished, and I am proud of the direction we are moving in. With so many exciting initia-

tives and work coming, it is my hope that you will join us at the table this year. It's my hope that together we will continue to empower nurses and shape a stronger and brighter future for nursing and healthcare across Delaware. ■