

Oklahoma Nurses: Using our Power to Lead



Jane Nelson, CAE, CEO, Oklahoma Nurses Association

There is no question about the impact that nurses have on the lives of millions of people. Working on the frontline of healthcare, nurses encounter firsthand the struggles and needs of patients. This position gives nurses a unique perspective that allows them to identify areas of improvement and take meaningful action. Nurses are natural leaders, possessing a unique blend of clinical expertise, empathy, and communication skills that make them well-suited to influence change. This change can be made when nurses step into leadership roles.

When nurses lead, they advocate for better practices, support the well-being of their colleagues and patients, push for necessary changes in policies and procedures, develop nurse-led solutions, and drive innovation. When nurses lead, innovation follows.

This leadership is not just an option. It is a necessity. Nurses today are facing significant challenges that are putting a strain on their ability to perform their duties effectively. One of the most pressing issues for nurses in the US is the ongoing staffing shortages. This shortage is even higher in Oklahoma, with just 7.5 nurses per 1,000 residents, ranking 46th in the US for nurses per capita. This shortage leads to

increased workloads for nurses, potentially leading to burnout.

Given the challenges that nurses face, it is critical for them to step into leadership positions. Nurses are on our frontlines, with this direct involvement, they have a unique opportunity to see what works and what doesn't, something that decision-makers, legislators and other policymakers can't see.

Nursing is not easy but it is even tougher to be a nursing leader. In a new partnership between ONA and Oklahoma State University, the hard road may become a little bit easier. Set to launch in fall 2025, we will be offering two innovative learning opportunities to help nurses equip themselves with the skillset they need to step into leadership. The Nurse Empowerment Series, a micro-credential program, is designed to equip nurses with essential leadership skills ranging from administrative leadership to financial management and innovation.

The second program, the Nursing Leadership Graduate Certificate, offers a more in-depth experience and provides advanced leadership training. Bringing in the top experts in Oklahoma, these programs consolidate the best leadership practices into a single streamlined program. With a goal of equipping nurses with the skills needed to immediately create an impact, this program is for you.

Nurses have countless opportunities to step into their power and make a meaningful impact. Whether you're interested in mentoring the next generation of nurses or beginning your journey toward leadership, ONA provides a wide range of opportunities to get involved and engage at a leadership level within the association and create an impact on the future of healthcare. Here are other ways you can create an impact on the future of healthcare:

- Submit for a board position or the Nominating Committee with ONA's Call for Leadership
- Submit a proposal for a poster or presentation at ONA's Annual Convention
- Sign up for ONA's Nurse of the Day program
- Write an article for the Oklahoma Nurse
- Attend ONA Region or Chapter events

Show the world the power of nurses every day, especially this year during Nurses Week! Hope you have a wonderful Nurses Week! ■



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