

South Carolina Nurses Practitioners Lead with Excellence at AANP 2025 in San Diego

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The 2025 American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) National Conference held in San Diego, California, was a resounding success and an outstanding platform for nursing research, professional development, advocacy, and scholarly exchange. This year, the South Carolina nursing community was proudly represented by several distinguished leaders and practitioners whose presence and contributions elevated the conference experience for attendees nationwide.

This year, South Carolina was proudly represented by a dynamic group of nurse leaders and practitioners whose presence and contributions significantly enriched the conference experience for attendees nationwide. Several members of the South Carolina Nurses Association (SCNA) served as featured speakers during the event. Among them were Dr. Nakita Barnes, SCNA President-Elect, Dr. Laura Herbert, Dr. Sheryl Mitchell, and Dr. Nikki Smith, each of whom shared valuable insights and clinical expertise in sessions that addressed critical issues in patient care, health equity, and advanced nursing practice.

A major highlight of the conference was the recognition of Dr. Nikki Smith as the recipient of the 2025 AANP State Award for Outstanding Contributions.

This prestigious award honors nurse practitioners who demonstrate excellence in clinical practice, leadership, and contributions to the advancement of the profession in the community. Dr. Smith's achievement underscores her dedication to high-quality patient care and advocacy for nursing excellence.

The conference also served as a strategic opportunity for policy dialogue. Nakita Barnes, Dwayne Alleyne (Legislative Committee Member), and Nikita Pete, SCNA APRN Chapter-at-Large and Melissa Felder and South Carolina State Liaison for AANP met with representatives from AANP State Government Affairs to engage in a productive conversation focused on advancing full practice authority for nurse practitioners in South Carolina. The meeting highlighted shared goals to remove practice barriers and enhance access to care across the state.

One of the most valuable aspects of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) national conference is its vibrant networking environment. Each year, attendees have the chance to reconnect with former colleagues, forge new professional relationships, and exchange ideas that often lead to scholarships, career opportunities, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. These interactions also provide insight into the full spectrum of

nurse practitioner specialties, deepening participants' understanding of the profession and expanding their professional horizons. Participation in national conferences like AANP not only empowers individual practitioners but also strengthens the collective voice of South Carolina's nursing workforce. The SCNA commends all members who represented our state with distinction at AANP 2025 and looks forward to continued momentum in leadership, advocacy, and excellence in clinical practice. ■



Dr. Nikki Smith receiving the 2025 AANP State Award for Outstanding Contributions.



SCNA Calendar for Meetings and Event

Be informed with what is going on at SCNA by checking the calendar often.

https://www.scnurses.org/events/event_list.asp or use the QR code.

