

Meet the 2025–2027 FNA Board of Directors

The Florida Nurses Association proudly welcomes its 2025–2027 Board of Directors — a team of accomplished professionals representing diverse specialties, experiences, and regions across the state. Each member brings leadership, passion, and a shared commitment to advancing nursing practice, advocacy, and education for all Floridians.

President – Marcos Gayol, EdD, MSN, MPH, MBA, APRN, FNP-BC, CNE



Dr. Marc Gayol, Dean of Nursing at Samuel Merritt University, has more than 30 years of experience in clinical practice and academic leadership. As FNA President, he plans to promote workforce development, inclusion, and science-based advocacy to strengthen public trust and professional excellence in nursing.

President-Elect – Valerie Morrison, DBA, MSM, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, SHRM-SCP



A retired U.S. Navy Captain, Dr. Valerie Morrison brings over three decades of distinguished military and nursing leadership. Now Director of Student Health Services at the University of North Florida, she is committed to advancing leadership, equity, and excellence in healthcare and education.

Vice President – Meghan Moroney, MPH, BSN, RN



After two meaningful terms as the West Central Region Director, Meghan Moroney is honored to continue serving the Florida Nurses Association as Vice President. She is passionate about advancing FNA's mission to strengthen the nursing profession and promote a healthier Florida.

Treasurer – George Peraza-Smith, DNP, A-GNP-C, GNP-BC, GS-C, CNE, FAANP



Dr. George Peraza-Smith is a past president of the Florida Nurses Association and a trustee of the Gerontology Nursing Certification Commission. With more than a decade of academic leadership experience, he is dedicated to advancing gerontological nursing and excellence in education.

Secretary – Deborah Hogan, BSN, RN, MPH



With more than 40 years of experience as a public health nurse, Debbie Hogan is devoted to health promotion and disease prevention. She continues to champion FNA's mission to ensure quality healthcare for all Floridians and to safeguard nursing practice statewide.

Northwest Region Director – Aminah Johnson, MSN, BSHA, RN



Aminah Johnson served two terms as FNA's Early Career Director, where she helped launch the organization's first Early Career Nurse Bootcamp. With a strong background in critical care and progressive care, she remains dedicated to mentoring and empowering prelicensure and early-career nurses.

North Central Region Director – Denise Schentrup, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAANP



Dr. Denise Schentrup serves as Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs at the University of Florida College of Nursing. A practicing family nurse practitioner and rural health advocate, she works to expand access and improve care quality in underserved communities.

Northeast Region Director – Amber Johnson, DNP, MSN, APRN, AG-CNS



Amber Johnson, Clinical Nurse Specialist at Mayo Clinic Florida, blends expertise in neurocritical care and lifestyle medicine. Serving her second term as the Northeast Region Director, she advocates for wellness, professional growth, and holistic health integration in clinical care.

East Central Region Director – Melba Jamison, MSN, BSN, RN



Serving her second term on the board, Melba Jamison is a nursing leader with a background in oncology and service in the U.S. Army. She is passionate about advancing patient outcomes and empowering nurses through advocacy, mentorship, and culturally responsive education.

West Central Region Director – Robert Neff, MSN, BA, RN, PMH-BC, EMT-D



Robert Neff is honored to serve his first term on the board as the West Central Region Director. A psychiatric nurse with firsthand experience addressing workplace violence, he is committed to advocating for safer environments and stronger protections for nurses and bedside professionals across Florida.

Southwest Region Director – Anthony Silva, MSN, RN, CNOR-ORTHO, AMB-BC, ROT



Anthony Silva works in orthopedic surgery and serves as an adjunct faculty member. He is dedicated to uniting the nursing voice across Florida and advancing professional advocacy for nurses and the patients they serve.

Southeast Region Director – Lisa Rivera, MSN, RN



Lisa Rivera, MSN, RN, Dean of Nursing at Fortis Institute in Port St. Lucie, is dedicated to educational excellence and faculty development. Her leadership centers on empowering nurse educators and advancing professional standards across Florida.

South Region Director – Guillermo Valdes, DNP, MSN-HCS, PGC-NEd., MEDSURG-BC, RN



Serving his second term as South Region Director, Dr. Guillermo Valdes has nearly 40 years of clinical, academic, and leadership experience. His focus includes promoting professional excellence, mentorship, and safe, consistent healthcare delivery.

LERC Liaison – Marsha Martin, RN



Marsha Martin has served for decades as a critical care nurse at Shands. She is deeply committed to advocating for nurses and protecting their workplace rights through her role as the FNA Labor and Employment Relations Council (LERC) Liaison.

Director of Early Career Nurses – MacKenzie Simmons, BSN, RN



MacKenzie Simmons represents the next generation of nurse leaders. Having previously served on the Board of Directors for the National Student Nurses Association, she champions innovation, well-being, and mentorship for early-career nurses.

What's on the Agenda for the 2026 Legislative Session?

In the 2026 Florida Legislative Session, scheduled to run from January 13 - March 13, the Florida Nurses Association will continue advocating for policies that protect nurses' work environments, education, and ability to practice. FNA will also continue educating lawmakers on evidence-based issues that impact the health and safety of Florida's citizens.

Protection from Surgical Smoke

Once again, surgical smoke is on the docket — and this year, FNA is hopeful that legislation will finally pass to require surgical centers to implement effective smoke evacuation systems in operating rooms. Exposure to surgical smoke poses serious health risks to surgical teams and patients, and FNA remains committed to ensuring safer working conditions for all healthcare professionals. The 2026 **Protection from Surgical Smoke** bills are **SB 162**, sponsored by **Senator Davis**, and **HB 93**, sponsored by **Representative Woodson**.

Strengthening Nursing Education

FNA will also support legislation aimed at improving approval standards for nursing education programs and placing program oversight under the **Florida Board of**

Nursing. Strengthening these standards will help ensure that nursing programs across the state maintain high-quality education and prepare competent, safe practitioners for the future nursing workforce — ultimately protecting the health and safety of all Floridians.

Patient-Directed Medical Orders

Another focus for 2026 is supporting the implementation of **Patient-Directed Medical Orders (PDMOs)** in Florida. PDMOs ensure that patients' healthcare treatment preferences are clearly documented and honored across all care settings. PDMOs provide a standardized, legally recognized process that helps uphold patient autonomy, improve continuity of care, and reduce confusion during medical emergencies.

The 2026 PDMO bills are HB 369 by Representative Plasencia and SB 312 by Senator Rodriguez.

Expanding the Agenda - Topics Identified by Members

A core part of FNA's grassroots legislative program is to educate lawmakers about issues that affect the health and well-being of Florida's citizens. During the **2025 FNA Membership Assembly**, members

identified several key topics to add or expand within the 2026 Legislative Agenda. These include:

- The importance of **Medicaid and CHIP** in providing healthcare coverage
- **Workplace violence prevention** and the need for stronger protections for healthcare workers
- Advocacy for **optimal staffing to enhance patient safety**
- Protection for **vulnerable populations**, including individuals experiencing homelessness
- Continued emphasis on **vaccine-preventable disease protection** and public health education

FNA's legislative priorities reflect the collective voice of Florida's nurses — professionals dedicated to promoting safe, equitable, and evidence-based healthcare for all.

If you'd like to learn more about how you can get involved in FNA's Legislative Grassroots Program, go to www.floridanurse.org/Advocacy. ■