

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Answering “If Not Us, Who?”

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New calendar years bring opportunities for new beginnings, often aimed at accomplishing those personal resolutions made on January 1. But it is equally important for organizations to similarly consider what we want to accomplish in 2026, where to concentrate our efforts, and how we will evaluate successes and challenges at year's end.

As we move forward to reach new goals, it is worth spending a moment reflecting on the 2025 events of personal, professional, and national importance. As with all reflections, this entails carving out a few moments from our busy schedules to experience gratitude for our blessings, appreciate those in our lives who have made a difference, choose paths to new goals for the year ahead, and commit to finding ways to address growing social issues.

No one will be surprised when I begin by thanking all the amazing nurses who have contributed to the success of ANA-Ohio in 2025. In one short year we have grown to almost 3,000 members, transitioned from relying on an external management service to having our own full time Executive Director and in-house management of all our organizational functions, planned a second creative Boot Camp to help members learn the basics of political advocacy, and provided a wonderfully successful annual meeting, culminating with the announcement of the launch of the ANA-Ohio Foundation, thanks to the amazing generosity of Ella Kick.

As I reflect on these accomplishments, it strikes me that these very successes, while all help to fulfill our mission as an organization, lead directly to thinking about how we return and pay forward. As a nation, and as a profession committed to caring

for those in need, we are facing particularly challenging times. The ongoing debates about federal budgets, climate restrictions, international relations, and the myriad threats to support systems for meeting basic needs of all persons - all of these are calls to action. John F. Kennedy's often quoted question, "If not us, who? If not now, when?" comes to mind (Goodreads, n.d.).

Speaking on behalf of all of us, the American Nurses Association (ANA) has issued several important position statements and policy messages. Their "Health System Transformation" paper, asserting the critical importance of maintaining the supports provided through the Affordable Care Act, is one such statement (American Nurses Association, 2016). In July, the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) publicly expressed the profession's opposition to the proposed reduction in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding (American Academy of Nursing, 2025a). In October AAN joined the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in filing an amicus brief opposing a bill provision that would defund organizations and plans, including Planned Parenthood, that provide reproductive health care (American Academy of Nursing, 2025b). At the state level, ANA-Ohio has partnered with the Ohio Organization of Advanced Practice Nurses (OOAPN) to support Ohio House Bill 508, which proposes reducing the practice restrictions embedded in the current requirements for Standard Care Arrangements (OOAPN, 2025). The willingness of all our professional organizations to take a public stand, leveraging the power of numbers, is essential in living our values and fulfilling our responsibility to speak for

our patients and our profession.

As the new year progresses, my hope for 2026 is that we all take a moment to reflect and resolve to find ways to answer Kennedy's question. It doesn't matter if our contribution involves staying informed about upcoming elections, voting, volunteering at local community shelters, free clinics, or food banks, or writing letters and calling our congressmen to share our views. All of these actions count and fulfill our civic and professional responsibilities. As befits a "President's Message," choosing to participate in ANA-Ohio's programs, committees, and initiatives would be ideal! What truly matters is engagement and a commitment to shaping the future of Ohio nursing, our healthcare system, and the identity of our nation. ■

## References

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