

President's Message

Connie J. Perkins, PhD, RN, CNE



What a busy end of 2025 it was! Our annual conference at the TWA Hotel proved to be a wonderful setting to catch up with colleagues, meet new friends, and leave with many important takeaways to "Ignite Your Nursing Passion". Kudos to the ANA-NY team for another well-done event and thank you to all presenters who chose us as their dissemination avenue. It wasn't long after my return from this event that my networks and inboxes became flooded with emerging information that the government is declassifying nursing as a profession. Whenever something so radical gets my attention, pausing before reacting is my tactic. With my PhD pants on, I prepared to jump down the rabbit hole, researching the roots of this unbelievable statement. Here is what I found. This was an unintended interpretation of the Department of Education's Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Committee's rulemaking as they try to come up with solutions to control college loan debt in our country. The problem wasn't that nursing was being declassified, it just didn't make the list of "professional degrees" who will have access to higher graduate loan amounts in the future. By interpretation, nursing not being on the list of professional degrees translated to: nursing is now not a profession. While I know that isn't true, this is still a problem because capping graduate loans for nurses who want to attend graduate school just adds another barrier that we simply can't afford. This barrier won't help create more faculty to create more nurses, which will further fuel the nursing shortage. This barrier won't encourage nurses to become nurse practitioners or certified registered anesthetologists. This barrier won't help universities stay open by having less applicants in our graduate programs. We, as a profession, have to get on the "professional degrees"

list! This isn't just to prevent worsening the nursing shortage or making a point, but to properly learn from our past. Remember when STEM became a household name? That designation came with funding, which nursing didn't tap into because it wasn't (and still isn't) a listed STEM profession. Coming from ten years on night shift in a critical access hospital, I beg to differ. There were few nights that I didn't need to use each piece of this acronym to creatively solve problems with limited resources. Additionally, loan forgiveness programs traditionally forgive federal loans rather than personal loans. If we limit the amount of federal loans nurses have access to, they will have to turn to personal loans which have not been forgiven for working in rural and underserved areas. Rural and underserved areas certainly don't need any additional barriers to accessing nurses. While none of us know how this will play out yet since nothing will go into effect until July 2026, I do know that nurses aren't standing on the sidelines. Since November when ANA made its first public comment on this issue, over 1700 media mentions and 4.9 billion impressions resulted. Now that's the Power of Nurses™. As of December 11, 2025, 237,024 people (not just nurses) signed the petition on RNAction.org asking for nursing to be added to the "professional degree" list. Additionally, 1,330 phone calls were made, 14,900 letters were sent to members of Congress, and nurses have submitted 710 stories expressing just how these graduate loan caps would affect the nursing profession. Several other countries reached out in support of ANA's effort, which reaffirms our global identity recently added to the *Code of Ethics* as provision 10. On December 12, 2025, a letter signed by 140 members of Congress was sent to the Department of Education expressing

concern over the exclusion of nursing as a "professional degree". This shows that the Nursing Caucus is listening and working with us and for us. If you don't get email alerts when your voice is needed, go to RNAction.org and sign up or make sure you follow one of ANA-NY's social media channels since we share vital ANA content like this with each of you. This is how we can and should get involved to move the needle. Thank you to those who signed the petition, encouraged a friend (non-nurses too) to sign the petition, contacted Congress, or shared a story. For those who missed out on this vital advocacy opportunity, I hope you help next time.

The year rounded out with a powerful ANA Leadership Summit for Jeanine and I. 42 states and the individual membership division gathered in-person to hear from key leaders on topics like legal issues, foundation development, foresight strategies, misinformation, NextGen engagement, leadership pipeline, branding, equity, and artificial intelligence. It was a packed three days planned by ANA's Leadership Council Executive Committee. While there were many things to take away, here are some nuggets that will continue to resonate with me well into 2026:

- We don't have to shout misinformation, but we do have to outlast it. When you see it, you should only engage if it impacts your mission or demands a correction or clarification. If not, let it go. Facts inform, empathy transforms.
- Advocacy brings us to the table, diplomacy keeps us there. ANA has been a good example of that with its response to the graduate loan caps.
- Stop gap heroism is not a staffing model. While we can't leave our patients with no nurses, continuing to burn ourselves out working overtime can no longer be the answer to the nursing shortage.

- We need to embrace “ambiguity” because ambiguity will continue in our profession. All we can do is remain agile to deal with it.
- The Architects of AI was named as Time’s 2025 Person of the Year (Jacobs, 2025)!
- “People are amazed by what nurses and computers accomplish. Yet, most individuals struggle to articulate how either nurses or computers work, or what they do” (Beaudet, 2025). Artificial Intelligence should be codesigned

with nurses and we need to be vigilant about how it is used to ensure that while it takes burdens off our plates, we don’t give permission to backfill the removed burdens with other things...like more patients.

- AI clinical decision-making tools are not much different than carbon copy physician order sets. If the order set doesn’t match what our patient needs or how they present, we don’t carry them out, we get clarification. ■

References

- Beaudet, O. (2025, February 13). What do nursing and AI have in common? No one understands them. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/one-understands-nursing-artificial-intelligence-beaudet-dnp-rm-faan-259xe>
- Jacobs, S. (2025, December 11). Why the architects of AI are TIME’s 2025 person of the year. <https://time.com/7339621/person-of-the-year-2025-ai-architects-choice/>

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Jeanine Santelli, PhD, RN, AGPCNP-BC, FAAN, Faith Community Nurse



Who remembers the Future of Nursing report? Okay, you can put your hands down. Did you realize that there have been two reports? Now who remembers the charges from those reports? I see fewer hands go up...well, let’s recap.

The most recent report, The Future of Nursing 2020-2030, highlights key trends and shifts in:

- Technology and Innovation
 - Telehealth
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI)
 - Robotics
 - Nursing Informatics
- Did you know that ANA-NY has:
 - An Advances in Nursing Technology special interest group?
 - A white paper on AI in Healthcare?
- Expanded roles and leadership
 - Advanced practice
 - Leadership
 - Policy and advocacy
- Did you know that ANA-NY has:
 - Lobbied in support of the NYS Nurse Practitioner Reauthorization Act and is requesting the removal of the sunset clause?
 - Lobbied in support of recognition of certified registered nurse anesthetists in NYS by providing scope of practice in NY?
 - Representation on the Nurses on Boards coalition? Do you serve on a Board? Get counted <https://www.nursesonboardscoalition.org/be-counted/> Do you know that ANA-NY has drafted a bill to require a nurse on every hospital Board in the state and the bill has support in both

chambers?

- A fellowship for RN to BS students with a stipend for their leadership project?
- An award recognizing graduating pre-licensure students as Future Nurse Leaders?
- A young professional’s special interest group?
- A speakers’ bureau of members who you can invite to your facility or group to speak on a variety of topics?
- A policy and advocacy special interest group?
- A political action committee (PAC)?
- Patient-centered and equitable care
 - Health equity
 - Diverse populations
 - Person-centered care
- Did you know that ANA-NY has:
 - A climate and health special interest group?
 - A variety of issues related to attaining health equity that we have weighed in on at both state and federal levels <https://anany.org/policy-and-advocacy/legislative-priorities-and-positions/>?
- Nursing education
 - Higher education
 - Residency training
 - Adaptation
- Did you know that ANA-NY has:
 - A white paper on nurse residency programs?
 - An open-source scholarly journal, JANANY, highlighting members’ research and evidence-based work?

I knew, did you? ■