

The SCNA Women and Children’s Health Chapter hosted a webinar with Lindey Spurgeon, the CEO of NeoHERO Foundation®, in January.

Information provided by the SCNA Women and Children’s Health Chapter

The NeoHERO Foundation® is a purpose-driven nonprofit dedicated to transforming neonatal care outside hospital walls. Founded in 2025 and based in South Carolina, NeoHERO exists to address a critical and often overlooked gap in emergency medical care: the training, preparedness, and resources needed to save the lives of newborns before they reach the hospital. For too long, emergency responders have gone into prehospital calls without the specific knowledge, tools, and confidence required to perform effective neonatal resuscitation — a situation that can mean the difference between life and death in the first crucial minutes of a newborn’s life.

At its core, the NeoHERO mission is simple but powerful — to improve neonatal health by providing expert guidance, specialized resources, equipment, and education to EMS and other prehospital responders. This mission grew out of real-world experience: the foundation’s founder, Board-Certified Neonatal Nurse Practitioner Lindsay Spurgeon, witnessed firsthand how a lack of neonatal training and appropriate equipment hampered emergency responders during a critical delivery. That experience sparked a vision to close the gap between hospital-based neonatal expertise and the reality of out-of-hospital emergencies.

Mission in Action: Training, Resources, and Preparedness

NeoHERO’s work centers on education and practical preparedness. While standard certifications such as Basic Life Support (BLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) are common among EMS

personnel, the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) — the gold standard for newborn resuscitation training — has not traditionally been a requirement for prehospital providers. Without this specialized education, providers may lack confidence in ventilating newborns effectively or performing coordinated resuscitation steps when seconds matter most.

To directly address this gap, NeoHERO offers NRP training and is actively recruiting instructors who are passionate about improving neonatal outcomes. These instructors deliver engaging, evidence-based, hands-on training that equips first responders with the skills and confidence to act decisively during a neonatal emergency. Whether volunteers or compensated, instructors play a vital role in expanding the reach of this life-saving education and reinforcing best practices tailored to the prehospital environment.

Beyond training, NeoHERO understands that knowledge alone isn’t enough without the right tools. Standard EMS equipment often lacks the size-appropriate devices needed to safely manage a tiny newborn’s airway, ventilation, and thermoregulation. To overcome this, NeoHERO has developed and distributes specialized NeoPACKS™ — neonatal prehospital care kits that include properly sized masks, resuscitation tools, thermoregulation supplies, and other critical equipment so responders are ready to intervene confidently and effectively.

Strategic Vision: Building a National Standard

NeoHERO’s strategic vision goes well be-

yond individual courses and equipment kits. The foundation is committed to building a comprehensive neonatal education ecosystem for emergency responders, including advanced classroom instruction, high-fidelity simulation training, and immersive mock codes that strengthen teamwork, communication, and crisis performance under pressure.

A centerpiece of this strategic expansion is the NeoMASTER COURSE™, a training program designed by EMS professionals for EMS professionals. This course aims to become a national standard for excellence in prehospital neonatal care education, with ongoing efforts to achieve formal review and recognition from national continuing education bodies.

By investing in advanced education, hands-on practice, and appropriate equipment, NeoHERO seeks to make neonatal resuscitation competency as expected and routine for prehospital providers as it is for hospital clinicians. This systemic approach not only elevates individual caregiver performance but also fosters a broader culture of preparedness and excellence in neonatal care across emergency medical systems.

Proven Impact and Community Recognition

In a short time, the NeoHERO Foundation has already begun to make a measurable impact. The organization and its leadership have received recognition through community awards and nominations that underscore its commitment to quality education and service innovation. These

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Outcomes, Less Debt) Loan Repayment Program. This program directly supports recruitment and retention of nursing faculty by reducing the financial burden associated with advanced nursing education.

Sustained investment in BOLD makes it more attainable for nurses to return to school, complete graduate education with less debt, and ultimately serve as faculty within our state's nursing programs. Strengthening the nursing faculty pipeline is one of the most effective long-term strategies to address workforce shortages, expand student enrollment capacity, and ensure the future strength of South Carolina's healthcare system.

Continued legislative commitment to BOLD funding represents a forward-thinking investment, one that benefits nurses, students, academic institutions, and the patients who rely on a well-prepared nursing workforce.

Access to Medical Cannabis

Patients deserve access to safe, evidence-informed treatment options under the guidance of authorized healthcare providers, including medical cannabis. Advancing access requires both thoughtful policy and cultural understanding. Even language matters: referring to this therapy by its scientific name, cannabis, helps move away from stigmatized terminology rooted in racist and classist history (Engvik, 2023).

Policy progress in this area represents compassion, science, and patient-centered care working together. As cannabis has been moved from a schedule I to a schedule III medication, we believe that there will be increased traction on moving this initiative forward this legislative session.

Removing Barriers to Health Insurance Coverage

Approximately 83,000 adults in South Carolina remain in the health insurance coverage gap—earning too much for Medicaid eligibility but too little to afford marketplace or private coverage. Many are working in essential industries, while others are students, caregivers, or individuals living with disabilities. Notably, 52% of those in the coverage gap are people of color, contributing to persistent health disparities (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2024).

Closing this gap would improve health outcomes, expand access to preventive and primary care, reduce uncompensated care costs, and help sustain rural hospitals, strengthening the entire healthcare ecosystem of our state.

The Power of Nursing Advocacy

The SCNA remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing safe, effective, and equitable healthcare by elevating nursing voices in policy and practice. Our legislative agenda serves as a roadmap, but true transformation happens when every nurse recognizes their power as a policy advocate.

Nurses are not only caregivers, but we are also educators, innova-

tors, leaders, and trusted voices within every community. We are the drivers of healthcare, and meaningful change cannot occur without our engagement in the policymaking process.

The 2026 legislative session presents real opportunity. Together, through advocacy, collaboration, and courageous leadership, we can shape a healthier future for South Carolina. ■

Thank you for standing in this work.

Now, let's advocate.

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