

adult vaccination registry, which would benefit patients by giving them access to this information and public health officials tracking vaccine-preventable diseases. ANA-NY supports this legislation through the Let's Get Immunized Coalition. The Assembly passed this bill in April, and the Senate bill is in the Health Committee.

We are also supporting two other related immunization bills. S9599/A10710 (Senator Bailey, Assemblymember Dilan) would expand what vaccine recommendations can trigger insurance coverage to continue to allow existing reliance on recommendations from the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, while also taking into consideration recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American College of Physicians (ACP), and other na-

tionally or internationally recognized scientific organizations. This bill passed the Assembly and is on third reading in the Senate. Similarly, S9598/A10711 (Senator Stavisky, Assemblymember Paulin) would give the Department of Health authority to determine immunization requirements and standards related to school vaccine requirements, amends the definition of immunization by removing references to federal standards, and amends federal references for standing orders, newborn immunizations and childhood immunizations. This bill passed both houses in April.

Finally, we talked about our support for S845/A860 (Rosenthal, Salazar), which would prohibit drug, cannabis, or alcohol testing of a pregnant or postpartum individual and newborn without consent. Passing this legislation will codify clinical best practices to ensure pregnant and postpartum people are given an opportunity to consent to drug, cannabis, or alco-

hol testing as recommended by the New York State Commissioner of Health and help to ensure that health equity disparities are not perpetuated in the healthcare system. This bill is currently in the Health Committee in both houses.

For more information regarding ANA-NY's legislative priorities, please see the legislative priorities page on the ANA-NY website.

Finally, we would like to remind you that ANA-NY has a Political Action Committee (PAC). The ANA-NY PAC will be supporting candidates that support the profession and issues of importance to our members. We urge you to visit the ANA-NY PAC website and donate.

If you have any questions about the legislative process or the priorities of ANA-NY, please contact a member of the Legislative Committee. As always, we welcome your questions, thoughts, ideas or comments on legislation or the bill track. ■

## Creating a Sense of Belonging and Mentorship: ANA-NY's First Mentorship Program

By Emily Tricarico, BSN, RN and The Mentorship Subgroup Members

Mentorship plays a critical role in shaping the nursing profession, offering a bridge between experience and growth across all stages of a nurse's career. Over the past year, the American Nurses Association of New York (ANA-NY), with leadership from members of the Young Professionals Special Interest Group (SIG), have been developing a structured mentorship program designed to strengthen that bridge across its statewide community.

The initiative emerged from a clear and recurring need: nurses—both those entering the profession and those with years of experience—often seek guidance, connection, and professional support beyond what is available in their immediate work

environments. For newer nurses, this can mean navigating transition-to-practice challenges such as burnout, confidence gaps, and "transition shock." For more experienced nurses, it may involve identifying leadership pathways, staying connected to evolving practices, or re-engaging with professional organizations. For both, it could be finding a sense of belonging or finding a place and purpose amongst the community. As the mentorship subgroup and members of the Young Professionals SIG, we designed this program to address these needs, and to help individuals find their support system.

We have focused on building a structured framework that supports both men-

tors and mentees. The program emphasizes mutual growth: mentors are expected to provide guidance, share insights, and support goal-setting, while mentees are encouraged to take an active role in defining objectives, preparing for discussions, and tracking their progress. Both participants are expected to uphold professionalism, confidentiality, and the ANA Code of Ethics, reinforcing a foundation of trust and accountability. Many of us have been either mentors or mentees within our profession, whether it be through work, through school, or simply in the community. Our goal and vision for this program was to bring a sense of belonging and sup-

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port, and a way to find a purpose or path amongst the nursing community of New York State.

What we love about this program is that we are aiming to be open to both mentors and mentees of all experience. We believe that no matter where you are in your career, nursing is an ever-changing community, where there is so much growth and opportunity everywhere. So, whether you are someone who is looking to go back to school after being a bedside nurse for 15 years, or a new nurse pursuing a position in leadership, you can be a mentor or mentee at any stage. According to Merriam-Webster, a mentor is someone who is “a trusted counselor or guide.” A mentor is someone who is experienced, and offers guidance, support, and wisdom to a less experienced person in personal, academic, or professional growth.

Behind the scenes, much of the program’s development has been driven by a dedicated mentorship subgroup. This group is responsible not only for coordinating matches, but also for designing orientation materials, organizing programming, collecting feedback, and continuously refining the structure. Our role reflects an ongoing commitment to ensuring the program remains responsive to participant needs while aligning with ANA-NY’s broader mission.

The structure of the program reflects a balance between consistency and flexibility. We decided to implement a six-month cycle, scheduled from May through November, providing enough time for relationships to develop while remaining manageable for participants. This allows the opportunity for the pairs to meet up in person at the annual conference. Within that timeframe, mentor–mentee pairs are encouraged to meet regularly—typically on a monthly basis—while retaining the flexibility to adjust based on their schedules and goals.

A significant portion of the development process has centered on the matching system. To create more meaningful pairings, prospective mentors and mentees will

complete tailored applications designed to capture their goals, interests, and professional backgrounds. These applications will be reviewed by the mentorship subgroup, which will facilitate matches with an emphasis on compatibility and shared objectives. While no matching system can guarantee perfect alignment, the process has been intentionally designed to move beyond surface-level criteria and support more productive relationships.

In addition to one-on-one engagement, the program incorporates broader activities intended to enhance the experience. These include an orientation session to establish expectations, a halfway check-in to check progress and offer guidance, if need be, and end-of-program evaluations. We will also encourage and share virtual workshops and opportunities to engage with ANA-NY events, creating multiple entry points for professional development and community involvement.

Evaluation and sustainability have been key considerations throughout the planning process. The program includes a halfway check-in and a post-program survey to assess participant satisfaction, communication, goal progression, and overall impact. These insights will inform future iterations, allowing the program to evolve over time. In parallel, efforts to sustain the initiative—such as ongoing mentor recruitment, recognition of participants, and integration with ANA-NY communications and events—have been built into the framework from the onset. We know that this is the first mentorship program of ANA-NY, and the first wave, so all feedback is appreciated and will be taken into consideration to help better the program for the future.

At its core, the mentorship program represents more than a single initiative. It reflects a broader effort to foster professional growth, leadership development, and a more connected nursing community across New York State. By taking a structured, feedback-driven approach, ANA-NY is working to create a program that not only supports individual participants but also contributes to the long-term strength and engage-

ment of the profession as a whole. The national mentorship program helps build professional identity, but ANA-NY mentorship will help build local leadership, have a strong, local impact, and build a sense of belonging and likeness amongst New York State nurses. By establishing this program, ANA-NY affirms that nurses in New York are not just members — but part of a connected, supported, and empowered community. ■

## Mentorship Program Subgroup Members

This program would not be possible without the leadership and guidance of these members.

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