

2026 MONA Election Candidates

The future of MONA is shaped by the nurses who step forward to lead. We are proud to present the candidates for the Missouri Nurses Association Board of Directors. Each candidate has shared a photo and position statement outlining their professional background, leadership experience, and priorities for the association. We encourage members to take time to get to know these dedicated nurse leaders and cast their vote in support of MONA's continued growth, advocacy, and impact throughout Missouri.

BOARD LEADERSHIP FELLOW



Gary E. Hicks Clayton, DNP, RN, CNP, AGPCNP BC, CRRN

Nursing has given me the opportunity to serve as a clinician, educator, mentor, and advocate, and I believe our profession is strongest when nurses use their voices to

lead meaningful change. Throughout my career, I have been passionate about developing future nurse leaders, advancing equitable and compassionate care, and fostering environments where nurses feel empowered to grow professionally. My interest in board leadership stems from a desire to further advocate for nurses across Missouri while contributing to conversations that shape education, workforce development, leadership, and patient outcomes. I believe deeply in mentorship, collaboration, and servant leadership, and I would be honored to support MONA's mission while continuing to learn and grow as a nursing leader.



Katie L. Jett, DNP, RN, MSN, FNP-BC

I am a passionate advocate for nursing, deeply committed to advancing our profession through leadership, education, and policy. As a Dean and current leader within Missouri nursing organizations,

I bring a systems-level perspective on the challenges facing our workforce, including access to education, faculty shortages, and student success. My career has focused on developing innovative solutions that strengthen pathways into nursing and improve outcomes for both students and patients. I am seeking this leadership role to further amplify the voice of nurses across Missouri, contribute to meaningful change, and support a strong, sustainable future for our profession.



Megan Pohlmann, PhD, RN, CPN

I believe we each have a responsibility to lead by example and a duty to share our experiences in order to foster belonging and confidence in others. Leaders should rely on the collective experiences of

nurses (not just their own) to understand the challenges we are facing and to develop innovative solutions to solving current issues. I am applying for the fellow position to listen and learn from others in order to understand current issues and gain experience that will help me to lead in future leadership roles. My lived experience as a neurodivergent nurse, as well as my research on neurodiversity in the nursing population will ground me in leading through advocacy, example, growth and perspective.



Sarah Wright, DNP, RN

As a nurse leader in my current setting, my staff know servant leadership underpins my personal mantra, and giving them the resources to provide patients with the best possible care is my number one priority. As a vocation, nursing has the potential to change the lives of those you interact with, both as a frontline staff member and as a nurse leader, so leadership should be celebrated, supported, and grown whenever possible. I recently completed my terminal nursing degree and would like to become an active participant in shaping the future of nursing at the local, state, and national levels.

BYLAWS CHAIR



Sarah B. Gonzalez, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CCRN-K

As a nurse leader with more than 20 years of experience across bedside care, executive leadership, and healthcare operations, I am passionate about

advancing the nursing profession through strong governance, advocacy, and collaboration. I believe nurses should have a meaningful voice in shaping healthcare policy, professional standards, and the future of patient care in Missouri. My leadership style is transparent, solutions-focused, and grounded in service to both nurses and the communities we care for. As ByLaws Chair, I would bring thoughtful leadership,

organizational expertise, and a commitment to ensuring MONA's governance remains strong, inclusive, and forward-thinking.

EAST REGION DIRECTOR



Rhonda Newberry, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CCRN-K

I would be an excellent candidate for Director of the East Region at MONA because I can translate MONA's mission—legislative advocacy, membership

growth, and championing nursing issues—into clear regional priorities and consistent execution. I bring a strong understanding of the policy and practice issues impacting nurses, along with the ability to build relationships with frontline nurses, nurse leaders, legislators, and coalition partners. I lead with a member-focused approach, strengthening engagement through responsive communication, visible presence in the region, and practical opportunities for nurses to get involved.

PRACTICE DIRECTOR



Katherine Burgess, MBA-HA, BSN, RN, NE-BC, CCM

With over 30 years of nursing experience, I am deeply committed to advancing the profession and supporting nurses across all practice settings. Throughout

my career, I have advocated for evidence-based practice, professional development, and policies that strengthen nursing's voice in healthcare. I am seeking this leadership role to serve the nurses of Missouri by promoting excellence, addressing practice challenges, and helping shape the future of nursing. I am dedicated to collaboration, innovation, and ensuring nurses are empowered to deliver high-quality, compassionate care.

Kerri Loncon, RN



I believe Nursing is the backbone of healthcare, and there are not enough of us. Nursing includes nursing students, Licensed Vocational Nurses, and Nurse Practitioners. We need to make sure everyone knows we will go nowhere. No

AI will ever take our place; they can't give the humane, caring, gut feeling we get when a patient goes south. AI will not sit with a patient when the patient needs to talk to someone. So, you see, we are expendable.



Laurie Sparr, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, PMHNP-BC

My clinical and leadership experience spans oncology, psychiatry, case management, home healthcare, primary care, school health, and outpatient

psychiatry. This breadth of experience has provided me with a broad understanding of the complexities of professional practice, including evolving care delivery models, scope of practice considerations, and the challenges faced by nurses across various specialties and roles. I am passionate about ensuring that nurses have a strong voice in shaping policies that impact both patient outcomes and the sustainability of the profession. I would work collaboratively to identify emerging practice issues, promote professional standards, and support policy initiatives that reflect the needs of nurses across Missouri.



SOUTH REGION DIRECTOR

Jessica C. Johns, MHA, BSN, RN, NE-BC

As a candidate for Director of the Missouri Nurses Association, I am committed to strengthening the voice of nurses throughout Missouri while

supporting professional growth, collaboration, and excellence within our profession. I believe nurses are uniquely positioned to influence positive changes in healthcare systems, public policy, and community health outcomes, and I am passionate about ensuring nurses have the support, representation, and resources necessary to succeed in those efforts.

If elected as Director, I will prioritize advocacy efforts that elevate the nursing profession and ensure nurses have a strong voice in healthcare policy decisions at both the state and local levels.



Jaime Renfro DNP, FNP-C, MPH, MBA

My name is Jaime Renfro. I have been a registered nurse in Missouri for 20 years and an APRN for 4 of them. I have spent most of my career in a Level I and Level III Trauma ER, ICU and Flight nurse. I have

served as an ICU and ER director. I am currently a nurse practitioner in a rural healthcare setting. My desire for public service started early in my life when I was active duty in the US Army. I want to continue this goal of community advocacy by engaging our nursing community in the Southern Region. I have served on various boards and committees. My experience has prepared me to lead.

VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS



Courtney Wilbanks, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

As a Family Nurse Practitioner with over 10 years of nursing experience, including leadership in quality assurance and palliative care, I am committed to advancing the nursing profession through evidence-based practice, education, and advocacy. My experience across home health, long-term care, and underserved populations has shaped my passion for improving access to high-quality, patient-centered care. I am passionate about advancing the role of nurses and nurse practitioners, expanding access to care, and strengthening our profession across Missouri. I would be honored to serve and represent the voice of nurses within MONA.

WEST REGION DIRECTOR

Shelby Duran, MSN, RN

As a candidate for Director of the Missouri Nurses Association,



I am committed to strengthening the voice of nurses throughout Missouri while supporting professional growth, collaboration, and excellence within our profession. I believe nurses are uniquely positioned to influence positive changes in healthcare systems, public policy,

and community health outcomes, and I am passionate about ensuring nurses have the s My name is Shelby Duran and I have been a nurse since 2018. I just finished up my Master's degree to be an adult gerontology acute care nurse practitioner and will be taking boards soon. I love advancing the nursing field and helping with nursing education. Helping others has always been a passion of mine, and I want to help others with that dream as well. Nursing is a career of heart, and remembering why we choose to work in this field is of the outmost importance. I have served in several leadership roles during nursing school and as a registered nurse. I want to provide support to nurses in the field and help provide the best care to our patients that we can.



Denise R. Norton, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, PCCN

I am passionate about the future of nursing and feel compelled to support MONA's mission and vision. In this role, I will advocate for the protection of our professional practice, identity, and professional development. While simultaneously promoting improvements in the healthcare work environment and access to quality healthcare services. 💡

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of Nursing Across America

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