

Florida Nurses Bring Their Voices to Washington at the ANA Membership Assembly and Capitol Hill Day

Florida nurses had a strong presence in Washington, D.C., this summer as representatives from the Florida Nurses Association (FNA) participated in the American Nurses Association (ANA) Membership Assembly and Capitol Hill Day. The annual event brings nurse leaders from across the country together to shape the future of the profession while advocating for policies that strengthen nursing and improve healthcare.

Leading the Florida delegation were FNA President Dr. Marc Gayol and President-Elect Dr. Valerie Morrison. They were joined by Florida's elected ANA Membership Assembly representatives Marie O. Etienne, Melba Jamison, and Maritess Quinto, along with FNA Executive Director Willa Fuller. Dr. Patricia Messmer also participated as an official observer.

One of the highlights of the week was ANA's Hill Day, where the delegation met with members of Congress and their staff to discuss issues that directly affect nurses and the patients they serve. Conversations focused on several federal priorities, including protecting healthcare workers from workplace violence, expanding federal loan limits by recognizing graduate nursing degrees as professional degrees, and supporting continued funding for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs.



Nurses from Florida advocate for the profession in Washington, DC during ANA Hill Day

At the Membership Assembly, Florida's representatives joined colleagues from across the nation in voting on important issues that will help shape the future of nursing. Among the most significant actions was the approval of expanding ANA membership eligibility to include Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs)—an important step toward strengthening and unifying the nursing profession.

The week also provided an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of Florida nurses on the national stage.

Longtime FNA member Barbara Russell was inducted into the ANA Hall of Fame, one of the association's highest honors. The recognition celebrates her decades of leadership in infection prevention and her lasting contributions to public health.

Dr. Susan Fowler was recognized with the 2026 ANA Leadership in Ethics Award, honoring her exceptional commitment to ethical nursing practice, leadership, and mentorship.



Barbara Russell, ANA Hall of Fame Inductee 2026



Dr. Susan Fowler, Recipient of 2026 ANA Leadership in Ethics Award

The FNA recognizes Dr. Ed Briggs as he concludes his service on the ANA Board of Directors. His years of leadership and advocacy have helped strengthen the nursing profession at both the national and state levels, and we extend our sincere appreciation for his many contributions.

From advocating on Capitol Hill to helping shape national policy and celebrating the accomplishments of Florida nurses, this year's ANA Membership Assembly showcased the important role Florida continues to play in advancing the nursing profession. We are grateful to the leaders who represented our members so well and proud of the many ways they continue to elevate the voice of nursing—both in Florida and across the nation. ■