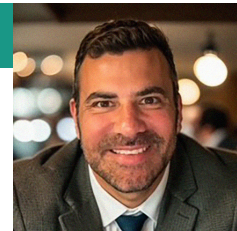


PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Summer of Progress for Florida Nurses



Colleagues,

This has been a summer of tangible wins for Florida's nurses, and I want to take this message to walk through what your Association has accomplished on your behalf, in the bargaining room, in leadership, in Tallahassee, and at the bedside.

On June 2, we welcomed Keisa Heard as FNA's first-ever LPN Director. This is not a symbolic appointment. It is the direct result of the bylaws amendment you approved at our 2025 Membership Assembly, which formally brought Licensed Practical Nurse membership into this Association for the first time in our history. A bylaws change on paper only matters if it becomes representation in practice, and with Keisa now at the table, it has. Every level of nursing practice in Florida now has a seat in shaping the direction of this Association.

The 2026 Legislative Session closed on March 13, but your Association's work in Tallahassee did not end there. We have continued publishing regular legislative updates through the summer, most recently on July 2, to keep you informed as bills we tracked move through interim committees, rulemaking, and the groundwork for the next session. Our Legislative Ac-

tion Team Boot Camp remains available on demand year-round, and I'd encourage any member who wants a working understanding of how policy is actually made in this state to take it. Advocacy is not a once-a-year event for us. It is a year-round discipline.

On June 6, we held our Early Career Conference at Hotel Indigo Celebration Pointe in Gainesville, giving another cohort of nurses in their first years of practice a full day of hands-on clinical scenarios, leadership development, and honest conversation about the realities of early practice. Watching these nurses walk in unsure and walk out with real tools and real connections is one of the more quietly important things we do as an Association. The workforce challenges Florida faces over the next decade will be met, in large part, by the nurses who came through rooms like this one.

All of this builds toward our 2026 Membership Assembly, September 2-4 at the Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park. Early-bird registration remained open through July 13, and I hope many of you took advantage of it. The Florida Nurses Foundation received a record number of scholarship and grant applications for the 2026 cycle, with awards set to distribute in early September. The Foundation has also distributed several Nurses in Need grants throughout 2026, which is another demonstration of how this organization puts real resources behind Florida's nurses, not just words.

Taken together, these past two months are a good measure of what this Association is for: building leadership structures that reflect every level of practice, staying engaged in policy long after the legislative session ends, and investing in the nurses who will carry this profession forward. None of it happens without you. I look forward to seeing many of you in St. Petersburg this September to keep building on it. ■

*With gratitude and determination,
Marcos Gayol, EdD, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC
President, Florida Nurses Association*

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