

Constituent Association Nurses Furthering Knowledge

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The Nurses Furthering Knowledge (NFK) August Board Meeting set the direction for activities for 2026-27. Our September meeting discussed scholarship fundraising opportunities at the CNA Annual Conference held September 24 and resolutions, bylaw changes and business to be presented at the Colorado Nurses Association (CNA) Membership Assembly Meeting held September 26.

Congratulations to Kathryn (Kathy) Crisler, MS, RN who was inducted into the Colorado Nursing Hall of Fame for her participation in a multidisciplinary research team that developed and tested outcome measures for use in evaluating the quality of home care. Kathy served as the Clinical Leader in demonstration projects which led to implementation of the model for all Medicare-certified home health agencies in the US.

Kudos to Annette Cannon PhD, MA, RN, MSN, CCDI, D-ABMDI, DF-AFN who was the 2026 NFK Nurse of the Year. Annette was selected for her outreach to community nursing associations, legislative involvement, promotion of nurses working in forensics, and

her monthly President's Messages published in the NFK Newsblast and posted on the CNA website. Most recently Annette had Jefferson County Coroner's Office, where she serves as coroner, officially designated as a clinical site for capstone students and forensic nursing students to address the clinical site shortage in Colorado. Nurses interested in forensics nursing can join her on Death Investigation through the Academy of Forensic Nurses. Annette can be reached at Annette2006@msn.

Our October meeting presenter was Dr. Angela Whiteacre DNP, RN, CCRN, TNCC, an Assistant Professor at Regis University, Loretta Heights School of Nursing. Angela presented on her DNP project "Disruptive Behaviors and Incivility in Nursing Education: Enhancing Learning Through Faculty Empowerment". Her presentation explored disruptive and uncivil behaviors in nursing education, and the challenges faculty may face when transitioning from clinical practice into the academic environment. The discussion introduced Nurse Shield, a faculty-development approach focused on

proactive classroom expectations, professional communication, cognitive rehearsal, de-escalation, and consistent responses to challenging student behaviors. The presentation introduced practical strategies to support novice faculty confidence, protect the learning environment, and strengthen professional accountability.

Amanda Skenadore, the award-winning author of historical fiction who presented at the CNA Annual Convention in 2025, had her newest book, "When No One Else Will," released in May 2026. A grant to NFK from Colorado Nurses Foundation helped sponsor Amanda's presentation. The book is based on a true story of an illegal women's clinic at the center of a high-profile trial in 1940s Chicago. NFK readers agree it is a thought-provoking, powerfully timely novel of courage, sisterhood and women's healthcare, as Amanda describes her book.

Information on NFK meetings and activities are posted on the CNA website. ■

Stigma—A Barrier for Seeking and Providing Substance Use Treatment

Dana Murphy-Parker, MS, PMHNP-BC, CARN-AP, FIAAN and Ruby Martinez, CNS, RxN, PhD, PMHCNS-BC

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) cost about \$4 billion a year in the United States. SUDs include alcohol, prescription medications, illicit drug use, tobacco, and substances such as heroin, methamphetamine, and other synthetic substances. Fentanyl is the most lethal drug epidemic in human history, and since the 1990's the opioid crisis has taken over 100,000 lives a year in the U.S. SUDs are associated with healthcare expenditures, accidents from motor vehi-

cles, falls, drownings, lost productivity in the workplace, and criminal justice actions among a number of other costs to society.

With the morbidity and mortality associated with addictions, the need to expand the knowledge base of the nursing workforce is needed more than ever. Addiction is a health care disorder established as a chronic brain disorder since the 1990's. Yet today, those who have an addiction continue to be misunderstood

and stigmatized. The nursing workforce can play a key role and significantly contribute to decreasing stigma associated with SUDs.

Stigma is more than a negative attitude. It is a social process in which people are labeled as different, associated with negative stereotypes, separated into "us" and "them," and experience status loss or discrimination within a context of unequal power. Substance use disorders

continue to be associated with beliefs about personal responsibility, morality, dangerousness, and trustworthiness. People with SUDs may be viewed through a moral lens, labeled as “drug seeking,” blamed for their illness because of their weakness, or perceived as more difficult or less deserving of care. These attitudes can influence communication, therapeutic relationships, clinical decision-making, and whether evidence-based treatment is offered. Experiences of judgment, discrimination, and mistreatment can undermine trust, discourage disclosure of substance use, and contribute to delaying or avoiding healthcare and addiction treatment.

In a systematic review, Livingston et al (2011), evaluated interventions designed to reduce stigma related to SUDs. This review identifies three types of stigmas associated with SUD: Social-stigma, Structured-stigma, and Self-stigma.

Social-stigma relates to the general public. This is stigma that an individual has because of their own experiences

of knowing someone; a relative, family friend, or any relationship they may have experienced with someone who has an addiction. Social-stigma can be decreased by communicating positive stories about those who have a SUDs.

Structured-stigma is related to health care professionals, and health care students. Structured-stigma can be decreased by providing didactic education, clinical experiences and contact with those who have SUDs.

Self-stigma is stigma that the person with the SUD has about themselves. They may feel that something is terribly wrong with them, that they themselves are weak and without willpower; or they may seek help only to feel poorly judged by the person to whom they have gone for help. Self-stigma can be decreased by a person experiencing therapeutic interventions and evidenced-based education about addictions.

Nurses have regular contact with people who have addictions. We strive to de-

liver evidence-based care, to have empathy, and to offer hope to people who have illness that can be treated. This is certainly a framework and a practice that all nurses can deliver when working with those with addictions.

Self Reflection:

What are your attitudes toward people with SUD?

What can nurses do to identify and decrease stigma in the healthcare setting? ■

Livingston, J.D, Milne, T., Fang, M.L. & Amari, E. (2011). The effectiveness of intervention for reducing stigma related to substance use disorders: A systematic review. *Addiction*, (107),39-50.

The CO Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses (CAPPN) meet virtually the first Wednesday of each month, at 6:30 PM. See the CNA website to receive the link.

Nine Things to Know When Applying for APRN Jobs

Krista Estes, DNP, FNP-BC

Applying for jobs can be stressful. They take time and commitment, and you want to make sure you're applying for a job that fits you and your skillset. But where do you begin? What are employers looking for? Dr. Krista Estes, the Assistant Dean of Master's Programs (MSN) at the University of Colorado Anschutz College of Nursing, explains what you should know as you start looking at roles to advance your nursing career.

Know When to Start Looking for Jobs

You should start looking for jobs about six to nine months before you graduate. Look at what's available and what catches your eye, then start applying about four to six months before graduation.

It's a Lengthy Process

Keep in mind that the hiring timeline can be lengthy, with multiple interviews, credentialing, and other steps. Every single interaction you have with an employer is part of the interview.

And you can get hired before your certification. We've had students secure positions, but it's contingent on graduation, passing their certification exam, obtaining their state license, and obtaining prescriptive authority. Some organizations recruit students before they graduate, so you must communicate your timelines with your potential employer.

Start Networking Now

The entire time you're in school is networking time. Every interaction with faculty,

peers, and your preceptors at clinical rotations is considered networking because they provide you with connections.

Your clinical rotations are almost like interviews. I've had people call me years after a student graduated to say, 'I had this student, and now we have an opening, they were really impressive, and we'd love to have them apply.' And, since many CU Anschutz Nursing faculty work clinically, potential employment opportunities can come through us.

You can also network through professional organizations (nursing or non-nursing) or by attending conferences. LinkedIn profiles are important: make sure you keep your profile up to date and highlight your clinical interests and scholarly work.