# Maryland Nurses Association Celebrates 123 Years of Nursing Leadership at Annual Convention

Debra K. Jorae, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, MNA 123RD Annual Convention Committee Chairperson

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) 123RD Annual Convention brought together nurses, educators, healthcare leaders, students, and healthcare partners from across the state on October 8 and 9 at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, Maryland. Guided by the theme, "The Power of Maryland Nurses: Advancing Health, Honoring Service, Celebrating America 250," the convention provided two days of education, inspiration, networking, and celebration of the nursing profession's enduring contributions to the health and well-being of Maryland communities.

Throughout the convention, attendees participated in educational sessions, research presentations, leadership discussions, and networking opportunities designed to advance nursing practice and strengthen the profession. The event highlighted the vital role nurses play in shaping healthcare policy, driving innovation, improving patient outcomes, and advocating for healthier communities across Maryland.

## Inspiring Keynote Presentations

The convention featured an outstanding lineup of speakers who addressed timely and important issues impacting nursing and healthcare.

A highlight of the first day was the presentation, "The Role of Navy APRNs from Stateside to Sea," delivered by Lt. Cmdr. Alainna Crotty and three fellow Navy Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) officers. The panel shared firsthand perspectives on military nursing practice, showcasing the diverse clinical, leadership, and operational roles that APRNs fulfill within the United States Navy. Attendees gained valuable insight into the challenges and rewards of serving in military healthcare settings both in the United States and abroad.

Also on October 8, Dr. Christie Simon-Waterman presented "Climate Action Starts with Nurses," encouraging attendees to recognize the connection between environmental health and patient well-being. Her presentation emphasized the influential role nurses can play in advocating for sustainable practices, addressing the health impacts of climate change, and leading efforts that promote healthier communities.

The second day featured a keynote address by Jennifer Mensik Kennedy, President of the American Nurses Association, entitled "How Nurses Build Power, Shape Policy, and Lead What's Next." Her presentation inspired attendees to embrace their collective voice, engage in policy advocacy, and advance nursing leadership at the local, state, and national levels.

Attendees also heard from Laura Clary, who delivered "A Trauma-Informed Response to Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking." Her session explored evidence-based approaches for identifying and supporting survivors, emphasizing the critical role healthcare professionals play in providing compassionate, trauma-informed care and connecting individuals with appropriate resources and services.

## Recognition from Maryland's State Leadership

A special highlight of the convention occurred on October 9 when Aruna Miller, Lieutenant (Lt.) Governor of Maryland, addressed attendees and recognized the extraordinary contributions nurses make to the health and well-being of Maryland residents.

During her remarks, Lt. Governor Miller presented the Maryland Nurses Association with a formal letter of recognition signed by Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Aruna Miller. The letter commemorated the Association's 123 years of service, advocacy, and leadership on behalf of nurses and healthcare throughout the State of Maryland.

This recognition honored more than a century of dedication by the Maryland Nurses Association to advancing the nursing profession, promoting excellence in patient care, influencing healthcare policy, and serving as a trusted voice for nurses across the state.

## Building Connections and Advancing the Profession

In addition to the keynote presentations, convention participants engaged in podium and poster presentations, visited exhibitors, explored emerging healthcare innovations, and connected with colleagues from a wide range of specialties and practice settings. These interactions fostered collaboration, professional growth, and the exchange of ideas while strengthening the nursing community throughout Maryland.

As Maryland's largest annual gathering of nurses, the MNA Annual Convention continues to serve as a premier forum for professional development, leadership advancement, and celebration of the profession. The 123rd Annual Convention not only showcased the accomplishments of today's nursing workforce but also honored the rich legacy of an organization that has championed nursing excellence for more than a century.

The convention concluded with a renewed commitment to advancing health, honoring service, and empowering nurses to lead the future of healthcare. The recognition from Maryland's

state leaders, combined with the expertise and inspiration shared by distinguished presenters, reinforced the power of nurses to influence policy, improve outcomes, and transform healthcare for generations to come.

## About the Maryland Nurses Association

The Maryland Nurses Association is a professional organization representing registered nurses throughout Maryland. For 123 years, MNA has advanced the nursing profession through advocacy, leadership development, continuing education, and efforts to improve healthcare for all Maryland residents. Its Annual Convention remains a cornerstone event that brings together nursing professionals to learn, connect, and celebrate the impact of nursing across the state. ■

# 2026 Election Results

**President-elect**
Jennifer F. Bierbaum, DNP, RN, APRN CNS, AGCNS BC, CENP, CPHQ, GERO BC, FCNS

**Treasurer**
Sherry B. Perkins, PhD, RN, ACC, FAAN

**Secretary**
Debra K. Jorae, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

**Director-at-Large**
Cathy Gibson, BSN, RNC-Ob, RNC-MNN, IBCLC, C-EFM
Sadie Parker, RN, AA, BS, MSN
Rebecca F. Wiseman, Ph.D., MSN, RN

**Representative to the ANA Membership Assembly**
Nwamaka Oparaoji, DNP, RN, MS
Debra K. Jorae, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

**Committee on Nominations**
Rebecca F. Wiseman, Ph.D., MSN, RN

Positions begin January 1, 2027.

# The Maryland Nurses Association would like to extend a special "thank you" to our exhibitors who joined us at the 123rd Annual Convention.

Centurion Health
Comm-Tronics
FAMI-MD
Health Quality Innovators
Johns Hopkins Health System
Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
The MedServ Group
MedStar Health
NIH Federal Credit Union
NurseAmerica
NP Certification Academy
University of Maryland School of Nursing (UMSON)
UMSON Institute for Educators
UMSON Maryland Nursing Workforce Center
Washington Adventist University
Western Governors University

During the MNA 123RD Annual Convention, MNA awarded members four Lifetime Membership Awards, and seven honor awards; and, the Legislator of the Year Award to Delegate Steve Johnson. Also, the Nursing Foundation of Maryland (NFM) awarded 14 nursing student scholarships and two inaugural doctoral nursing research grants. For a full list of recipients, visit the MNA website at MarylandRN.org and the NFM website at NursingFoundationOfMaryland.org. Congratulations to our awardees.