Legendary Leaders

Carol O'Meara, RN, MS, Secretary, Colorado Nurses Foundation

As we continue the series of articles from the Colorado Nurses Foundation (CNF) honoring the legacy of nursing leaders who have defied racism and paved the way for underrepresented nurses, we recognize that groups as well as individuals have been Legendary Leaders. This quarter, we feature three organizations that provide leadership and support for underrepresented nurses in Colorado.

In May of 1973 a group of concerned Black nurses founded the Colorado Council of Black Nurses, Inc. (CCBN). For over 50 years, CCBN has worked to achieve their mission " to improve the health status of all people through empowering under-served communities to be equal contributors in the determination of healthcare standards by increasing the number of Black/African American professional nurses throughout the health care continuum, and by increasing college matriculation and successful graduation rates among Black and other underrepresented students in postsecondary education, thereby empowering under-served communities to not only be participants but active contributors to an equitable health care system in local, national, global, and space settlement arenas."In addition to initiatives to increase the number of Black and African American professional nurses, promote health equity, support underserved communities, and provide scholarships and mentoring for students, CCBN has a unique Aerospace Nursing Department that produces an Annual Space Expo. For more information, check out their website at https://ccbninc.org/.

The National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)-Denver Chapter promotes Hispanic nurses, addresses healthcare challenges and disparities in Latino communities, and advocates for culturally competent healthcare across the region. Originally founded as the Colorado Chapter of NAHN by Gloria Raigoza in 1992, the group later became the Denver Chapter of NAHN and partnered with the Southern Colorado Chapter to increase their impact in Colorado. NAHN is committed to advancing the health of Hispanic communities and to lead, promote and advocate for educational, professional, and leadership opportunities for Latino nurses. NAHN members work to improve health equity, increase literacy, promote education and influence policy.See https://www.hispanic-nurses-denverchapter.org to learn more.

Philippine Nurses Association of Colorado (PNANCO) is the local chapter of Philippine Nurses of America (PNAA). Founded in 2005 to support, unite, and elevate Filipino nurses in the Rocky Mountain Region. PNANCO strives to enhance professional growth, networking, and the welfare of Filipino American nurses, while also preserving Filipino care values. PNANCO participates in local events and community outreach including co-sponsoring annual multicultural health fairs with the Colorado Alliance for Health Equity and Practice and the Susan G. Komen Multicultural Conference on Breast Health, a free one-day conference. Go to https://www.pnaco.org to investigate further.

CNF is proud to support these three organizations by making them the benefactors of scholarship funds raised by the CNF Nurse License Plate Program. The program also supports the CNF Jeniffer Allen-Thomas Scholarship for Underrepresented Nurses. The scholarship was established by CNF to honor Jennifer's foundational work in establishing the License Plate Program. Find out more about how you can support these scholarships at **https://www.coloradonursesfoundation.com/nurses-license-plate1**. ■

Colorado APRNs Gather in Keystone to Discuss the Future of Nurse Practitioner Practice

Brandy Farrell, DNP, CPNP-AC/PC

KEYSTONE, Colo. — The Colorado Society of Advanced Practice Nurses (CSAPN) welcomed nurse practitioners and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) from across the state during its annual meeting held in conjunction with the National Nurse Practitioner Symposium (NNPS) in Keystone, Colorado. The event provided an opportunity for networking, professional engagement, and important discussions about the future of advanced practice nursing in Colorado.

CSAPN President Brandi Farrell, DNP, CPNP-AC/PC, and past-president Erica Plimpton, DNP, MPH, FNP-BC, attended the symposium and spent time connecting with Colorado APRNs and other NNPS participants throughout the conference. Their presence helped raise awareness of CSAPN's mission to advocate for and support advanced practice nurses across the state.

One of the highlights of the event was a popular Summer Fun Giveaway organized specifically for Colorado APRNs. The give-

away provided an enjoyable opportunity for members and prospective members to engage with CSAPN representatives while learning more about the organization's ongoing advocacy efforts and educational initiatives.

During the annual general membership meeting, attendees participated in an open and candid discussion regarding the future direction of CSAPN. Members shared their perspectives on the organization's purpose, priorities, and opportunities for growth. The conversation focused on how CSAPN can continue to serve as a strong voice for APRNs throughout Colorado while meeting the evolving needs of its membership.

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing Colorado's regulatory framework for nurses and advanced practice register registered nurses. Michele Wolf, DNP, FNP – BC, the Colorado Nurses Association (CNA) board member who represents CSAPN on the CNA board, led a discussion on the Colorado Nurse Practice Act. The NPA is scheduled for its next sunset review during the 2027 legislative session, presenting an important opportunity to evaluate and shape the future of APRN practice, licensure, and prescriptive authority in Colorado. Under the current NPA, APRN's must complete 750 hours of mentor prescribing experience to obtain full prescriptive authority.

Members expressed overwhelming support for maintaining and expanding nurse practitioner autonomy. Meeting participants affirmed their commitment to full practice authority and prescriptive authority without additional caveats, restrictions, or barriers, emphasizing the importance of allowing the APRN to practice to the full extent of their education, training, and clinical experience. Attendees noted that increased practice authority would improve healthcare access, particularly in rural and underserved communities throughout Colorado. CSAPN members will continue to work with CNA and their lobbying team to accomplish these goals.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for the board to share plans for the coming year. CSAPN has released it schedule of upcoming meetings and encouraged APRNs from across Colorado to participate.

Whether attending a single event or becoming a regular participant, members are invited to join colleagues for networking, advocacy, discussions, and professional development opportunities.

The board announced that one of its key goals for the coming year is to rotate meeting locations throughout Colorado. By expanding meeting sites beyond a single geographic area, CSAPN hopes to increase accessibility and involvement among APRNs statewide.

Upcoming meeting dates include:

- November 11, 2026
- January 13, 2027
- February 10, 2027
- April 14, 2027

CSAPN leaders encouraged all Colorado APRNs interested in advocacy, networking, leadership, and advancing the profession to become involved in CNA and CSAPN.

For more information about membership, upcoming meetings, or volunteer opportunities, APRNs may contact the CSAPN board at SIG30csapn@gmail.com. Healthcare professionals are also encouraged to follow and join the organization's Facebook community, Colorado Society of Advanced Practice Nurses, and the My CNA CSAPN group for updates, announcements, and future events. If you are not already a CNA and CSAPN member, contact Mark Longshore, CNA executive Director, Mark@coloradonurses.org.

As healthcare continues to evolve across Colorado, CNA and CSAPN remains committed to ensuring that APRNs have a strong voice and shaping policy, advancing practice, and improving access to quality patient care throughout the state. ■

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