

2026, Vol. 3

IN FOCUS

A PUBLICATION OF  NCSBN

Built *by* Nursing
Regulators *for*
Nursing Regulators



Meridians
NCSBN Learning Hub



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2026, Vol. 3

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Empowering and supporting nursing regulators across the world in their mandate to protect the public, NCSBN is an independent, not-for-profit organization. As a global leader in regulatory excellence, NCSBN champions regulatory solutions to borderless health care delivery, agile regulatory systems and nurses practicing to the full scope of their education, experience and expertise. A world leader in test development and administration, NCSBN's NCLEX Exams are internationally recognized as preeminent nursing examinations.

NCSBN's membership is comprised of the nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories. There are nine exam user members and 21 associate members that are either NRBs or empowered regulatory authorities from other countries or territories.

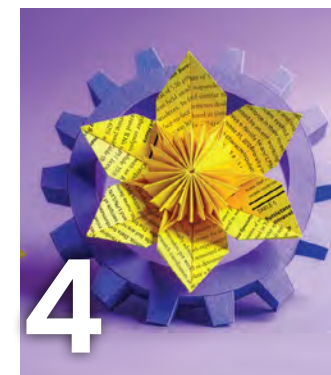
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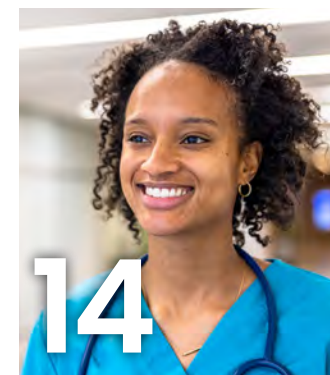
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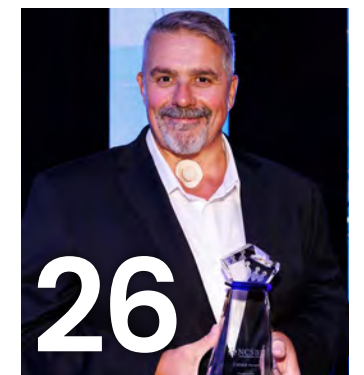
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Recipients**



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EVIDENCE IN ACTION

2026 NCSBN Annual Meeting
Aug. 19–21, 2026 • Chicago



Highlights of the 2026 NCSBN Annual Meeting

The 2026 NCSBN Annual Meeting was held in Chicago Aug. 19-21, giving attendees the opportunity to meet and network with nursing regulators from all over the country and across the world.

President Phyllis Polk Johnson, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, FNAP, executive director, Mississippi Board of Nursing, [kicked off her final Annual Meeting](#) as NCSBN Board President. “I look out at this room and I think, we sure have been through something special together, haven’t we?” she said. Pointing to the NCSBN president’s chair she had transported from the NCSBN boardroom to the Swissôtel ballroom, Johnson continued, “For a little girl from Mississippi to have sat in that chair has been one of the greatest privileges of my professional career. I do not say that lightly. I say it with full appreciation of what it means, and full gratitude to every single one of you that has helped me experience it.”

NCSBN CEO Phil Dickison, PhD, RN, in [his address](#), spoke of “A vision that sees beyond the moment. Integrity that does not bend under pressure. Courage to act when acting is hard. Humility to listen when you already know. And the discipline to let evidence, not emotions, guide your decisions.”

Chris Edwards, JD, Attorney, Ward and Smith, P.A., [shared practical takeaways](#) from a recent case during his session. “My presentation covered the distinction between professional speech and professional conduct and how state regulators can regulate one and not the other,” said Edwards. “We talked about a recent case decided in March of this year, called Chiles v. Salazar, and discussed what that case means for regulators and how they should think about regulating their profession moving forward.”

On day two, in his session titled, “Regulatory Priority-Setting and Problem Solving: Data-Driven, Risk-Based, Right-Touch,” Cary Coglianese, PhD, JD, Edward B. Shils professor of law, and director of the Penn Program on Regulation at University of Pennsylvania, took a [deep dive into regulatory excellence](#). “The work regulators do is some of the hardest work of any kind of professional endeavor, especially in a world today that is so changing vastly with technology and innovation in medical delivery. Regulation, I often like to say, is not a noun, but a verb actually. Regulatory excellence is ultimately people excellence.”

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All photos featured in this article by Mark Campbell Productions. To view more photos from the event visit our [Flickr page](#).

NCSBN Education Director, Cheryl Pulec, EdD, introduced attendees to the new NCSBN learning hub, Meridians, designed to help regulators learn at their own pace, develop role-specific knowledge and provide opportunities for networking. “Whether you’re new to regulation or you bring years of experience to the profession, Meridians is designed to support your continued growth and development,” said Pulec.

NCSBN Director, Member Outreach, Member Engagement, Jason Schwartz, MS, provided an overview of the different ways NCSBN members can connect through the three pillars of membership: communication, mentoring and networking. “A week like this gives you a great chance to connect with each other, but what about the other 51 weeks?” said Schwartz. “We support One NCSBN by connecting you to the organization, its resources, its people and – more and more – each other.” Schwartz also discussed the recent launch of the Loop, NCSBN’s new platform built to help members connect with colleagues, share knowledge and collaborate more effectively via NCSBN knowledge networks and committees.

On Thursday evening, members gathered for the annual NCSBN Awards ceremony and dinner.

On the final day of NCSBN’s 2026 Annual Meeting, John Quiñones, journalist and creator of the television news magazine show “What Would You Do?” shared insights on his career journey and lessons on ethics and human behavior during his keynote speech.

Significant actions approved include:

- Adopted revisions to the Model Act and Model Rules.
- Set the NCLEX Examination Fee at \$350 in the U.S. and Australia and \$570 (CAD) in Canada, effective February 2027.

Members also elected new members of the NCSBN Board of Directors. Those elected include:

President

Lori Scheidt, MBA-HCM, executive director, Missouri State Board of Nursing

President-Elect

Barbara Blozen, EdD, MA, RN-BC, CNL, board president, New Jersey Board of Nursing

Director-at-Large

Kelly Jenkins, MSN, RN, executive director, Kentucky Board of Nursing

Director-at-Large

Ann Oertwich, PhD, RN, executive director, Nebraska Board of Nursing

Director-at-Large

Missy Poortenga, MHA, RN, executive officer, Montana Board of Nursing

Director-at-Large

John Whitcomb, PhD, RN, CCRN, FCCM, board member, South Carolina Board of Nursing

NCSBN delegates also elected members of the Leadership Succession Committee (LSC):

Area II Member

Michael Payne, JD, General Counsel, West Virginia Board of Registered Nurses

Area IV Member

Cathy Borris-Hale, MHA, RN Nurse Specialist for Discipline & Practice, District of Columbia Board of Nursing

“It’s been a phenomenal experience serving as NCSBN president, one I will cherish for the rest of my life,” said Phyllis Johnson. “We build each other up; we make each other better when we do that. That’s what One NCSBN is all about. It’s protecting the citizens we serve in each of our jurisdictions to make sure that their public health and safety are of the utmost importance, and the licensees we govern are able to provide that.”

Save the date for next year’s Annual Meeting, which will be held in Chicago Aug. 18–20, 2027. 🌐



Congratulations to Our Annual Award Recipients

NCSBN recognized its dedicated and exceptional membership and guests at its annual awards ceremony. Specific award recipients included:



Joey Ridenour, MN, RN, FAAN, executive director, Arizona State Board of Nursing, received the Founders Award. This prestigious award is given only upon occasion that an individual with ethics, integrity and sincerity has demonstrated the highest regard for the ideals and beliefs upon which NCSBN was founded.



The **Mississippi Board of Nursing** received the **NCSBN Regulatory Achievement Award** that recognizes the member board or associate member that has made an identifiable, significant contribution to the mission and vision of NCSBN in promoting public policy related to the safe and effective practice of nursing in the interest of public welfare.

All photos featured in this article by Mark Campbell Productions. To view more photos from the event visit our [Flickr page](#).



Danette Schloeder, DNP, RNC-OB, C-EFM, C-ONQS, board chair, Alaska Board of Nursing, was honored with the **Elaine Ellibee Award**, granted to a member who has served as a president and who has made significant contributions to NCSBN.



Crystal Tillman, DNP, RN, CPNP, PMHN-BC, FRE, chief executive officer, North Carolina Board of Nursing, received the **Meritorious Service Award**, which is granted to a member for significant contributions to the mission and vision of NCSBN.



Priscilla Burks, PhD, RN, director of practical nursing education, Mississippi Board of Nursing, received the **Exceptional Contribution Award**, which is given for significant contribution by a member who is not a president or executive officer and has demonstrated support of NCSBN's mission..

 **NCSBN**
AWARDS

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Kyle Martin, director of operations, North Dakota Board of Nursing, received the **Nova Award**, which recognizes emerging nursing regulatory leaders and is given to an individual who is a member with less than five years tenure in nursing regulation or in their role.



Peggy Sellers Benson, MSN, MSHA, RN, NE-BC, executive officer (retired), Alabama Board of Nursing, was honored with the **Catalyst Award**. This award is given to an individual who sparks change and transformation in nursing regulation and is given for significant contributions to nursing regulation at any level.

NCSBN AWARDS

Every day, nursing regulators work behind the scenes to protect the public and elevate the profession. The NCSBN Awards Program gives you the opportunity to celebrate those individuals and organizations making an impact. Every nomination tells a story of distinction, resilience and inspiration.

Visit the [Awards Program webpage](#) (NCSBN member login required) for informative tools and guidance on preparing a compelling awards nomination, and the chance to watch videos of previous awardees.

Nominate Today

Award Submission Deadline:
March 22, 2027

Service awards were given to the following executive officers of nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs):



Five year executive officer service awardees (left to right) Nicki Chopski, Brad Wojciechowski, Sherry Richardson, Sheila Boni, Jenny Barnhouse and Kelly Jenkins. Not pictured: Laura Lynn Jackson.



Ten year executive officer service awardees (left to right): Ann Oertwich, Sue Ann Painter and Michelle L. Chapman. Not pictured: Cathy Dinauer, JoAnne Graham and Dawn Rix-Moore.



Pictured above, left to right: 20 year executive officer service awardee, Michelle Bromberg and 25 year executive officer service awardee, Lori Scheidt.

Five Years

- **Jenny Barnhouse**, DNP, RN, executive director, Oklahoma Board of Nursing
- **Shiela Boni**, MSN, RN, executive officer, Vermont State Board of Nursing
- **Nicki Chopski**, PharmD, executive director, Idaho Board of Nursing
- **Laura Lynn Jackson**, MSc, RN, RM, chief nursing officer, Bermuda Nursing and Midwifery Council
- **Kelly Jenkins**, MSN, RN, NE-BC, executive director, Kentucky Board of Nursing
- **Sherry Richardson**, MSN, RN, executive director, Tennessee State Board of Nursing
- **Brad Wojciechowski**, executive director, Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services

Ten Years

- **Michelle L. Chapman**, MSN, MBA/HCM, RNBC, executive director, West Virginia Board of Examiners for Licensed Practical Nurses
- **Cathy Dinauer**, MSN, RN, executive director, Nevada State Board of Nursing
- **JoAnne Graham**, LPN, executive director/ Registrar, College of Nursing of New Brunswick
- **Ann Oertwich**, PhD, RN, executive director, Nebraska Board of Nursing
- **Sue Ann Painter**, DNP, RN, executive director, West Virginia Board of Registered Nurses
- **Dawn Rix-Moore**, chief operating officer, Prince Edward Island College of Nursing and Midwifery (previously executive director, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Prince Edward Island)

15 Years (not pictured)

- **Jennifer Breton**, RN, LPN, executive director, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba
- **Laura Panteluk**, RPN, registrar and chief executive officer, College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba

20 Years

- **Michele Bromberg**, MSN, RN, nursing coordinator, Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

25 Years

- **Lori Scheidt**, MBA-HCM, executive director, Missouri State Board of Nursing

Get to Know a New EO

Learn more about **Joshua Barnes**, MSN, RN, Executive Director, Delaware Board of Nursing.

When did you start as Executive Director?

June of 2025

What is a challenge you face and how are you addressing it?

One of the biggest challenges as a new executive officer is that I had such an excellent predecessor. The board and staff naturally make comparisons and I must realize that Dr. Zickafoose and I are different people with different styles. It will take time to build trust and I can be rather impatient.

What do you like best about your job?

The variety. Every day is different and there is so much to learn. It is never boring.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I have two dogs that I adore. I also love working in the garden and travel. 🌍

Joshua Barnes MSN, RN
Executive Director, Delaware Board of Nursing

JOURNAL
OF NURSING
REGULATION

Call for Papers

JNR Special Issue: “Evolving Expectations: Pushing the Boundaries of Nursing Education and Regulation”

Publication Date: April 2027

Manuscript Submission Deadline: Dec. 15, 2026

Rapid changes in healthcare delivery, technological advances, and shifting population needs have affected how nurses are educated and how competence and practice readiness are assessed. This special issue of the *Journal of Nursing Regulation* will advance dialogue and evidence for regulators seeking to maintain consistent standards while supporting innovations that uphold public protection. Submissions may include:

- Approaches to regulating simulation, virtual learning, alternative clinical experiences, or accelerated pathways, including lessons learned and evidence informing approval decisions.
- Collaboration among regulators, educators and practitioners to ensure practice readiness for new nurses.
- Ways regulators can collaborate to facilitate program creativity and innovation.
- Regulatory impacts of AI and emerging technologies on prelicensure and graduate nursing education learning, clinical preparedness, and clinical judgment and reasoning.
- The role of regulators and educators in continuing competence, assessment, and quality assurance, including the evolving continuing competence models.

We welcome original quantitative or qualitative research manuscripts, literature reviews, and other academic analyses, as well as case studies that provide strategies and solutions in the context of regulation and nursing education.



Submission Guidelines

Visit *JNR*’s Guide for Authors or ncsbn.org/jnr

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ONWard:

New Workforce Initiative Strengthens the Future of Healthcare in Mississippi

In July, the [Mississippi Board of Nursing \(MSBON\)](#) announced a new outreach initiative to strengthen and grow the state's nursing workforce by connecting students, nurses, educators and employers with resources and opportunities.

As part of the initiative, the Office of Nursing Workforce will use a new public-facing brand—[ONWard](#)—to clearly communicate the program's role. The effort is designed to encourage student interest in Mississippi nursing programs and support career advancement for current nurses, according to MSBON Executive Director Phyllis Polk Johnson DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, FNAP.

"The Mississippi legislature brought the Office of Nursing Workforce under the purview of MSBON in 2016 and since that time it has grown exponentially," says Johnson. "But with the workforce changing, we need to ensure we are reaching who we need to reach. The ONWard brand provides a recognizable, engaging identity. It reflects progress, growth and opportunity while making it easier for students, nurses and partners to connect with our workforce initiatives."

"Our goal is to attract more students into nursing and support working nurses as they advance professionally," said Lacey T. Gentry, DNP, RN, CNE, MSBON board member, chair of the Office of Nursing Workforce Committee and professor at William Carey University. "We provide guidance, resources, and scholarship opportunities to enhance their success at every stage."

Johnson adds that the [Nursing Success NCLEX Scholarship Program \(NSSP\)](#) empowers aspiring nurses across Mississippi by removing financial barriers to licensure by covering the NCLEX® exam fee for eligible first-time Mississippi test-takers. To date, two cohorts have received support through the NSSP. Collectively,

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§ 73-15-18: Nursing Workforce Program

DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Mississippi Board of Nursing

Responsible for the administration and supervision of the Nursing Workforce Program to promote a strong educational infrastructure between practice and education.

The Five Interdependent Components



Educational Infrastructure

Facilitate programs for nursing educators regarding health care delivery system changes and curriculum impact.



Continuing Education

Determine needs and facilitate coursework through state universities and community colleges.



Degree Advancement

Promote opportunities for Associate and Bachelor degree nurses to obtain higher academic degrees.



Grant Administration

Apply for and manage public and private grants for program development and implementation.



Workforce Supply & Forecasting

Establish systems to ensure adequate nurse supply. Includes gathering dependable data on capacities and forecasting future requirements for annual reports to the Legislature.

[continued from page 14](#)

these cohorts have achieved a current first-time NCLEX pass rate of 89.4%, demonstrating positive licensure outcomes among scholarship recipients. Another key initiative is the [Nursing Student Retention Scholarship Program \(NSRSP\)](#). Of the 24 recipients in the most recent cohort, 17 have successfully completed the program (70.8%), with seven remaining active. All 17 completers have remained in Mississippi and are currently practicing as nurses. “That’s the kind of return on investment we see in launching this program,” says Johnson.

ONWard recently completed a comprehensive review of its communications, including its website and past outreach efforts. The updated strategy focuses on engaging key audiences—students and parents, current and prospective nurses, healthcare professionals, and workforce stakeholders across the state.

ONWard is rolling out in four phases. “Phase 1 is complete; that involved introducing the initiative,” says Johnson. “In Phase 2, we’re generating awareness across the state through outreach, media coverage and participation in conferences and meetings. In Phase 3, we will expand the utilization of ONward programs and strengthen those workforce partnerships that are so important across Mississippi. We’ll do that by maintaining the information on

the website, scholarship information, and educational opportunities. We’ve developed Canvas courses and information about nursing programs in the state. Phase 4 is sustainability and continuous improvement. We want to sustain long-term engagement, evaluate those outcomes, and continuously improve ONWard initiatives.”

Under the new brand, ONWard will continue building connections between nursing education and clinical practice to ensure Mississippi’s healthcare system has a well-trained and highly skilled workforce.

“As Mississippi continues to lead in economic development and job creation, we must meet that growth with a workforce that is strong, skilled and healthy” says Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves. “This effort by ONWard is exactly the kind of smart investment our state is making that helps us reinforce the healthcare foundation that keeps our economy growing. When we invest in education and training, we invest in Mississippi’s long-term prosperity.”

“ONWard plays a critical role in uniting educators, healthcare providers, and policymakers,” says Johnson. “Together, we are strengthening the future of healthcare in Mississippi.” 🌐



[Learn More](#)



Built *by* Nursing Regulators *for* Nursing Regulators



Meridians
NCSBN Learning Hub

People become nursing regulators from a variety of entry points. Some are chief nursing officers or in other nursing management positions at health care facilities; others hail from military or business careers. But surprisingly, none enter the profession with a graduate degree in nursing regulation — because no such degree exists.

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So how do regulators learn how to be regulators? The answer is as complex as regulation itself. Regulators do come to their positions with education, experience and expertise that forms a firm foundation from which to build, but there is not always a set course to follow. They are able to seek the guidance of seasoned nurse regulators and explore the resources that NCSBN offers.

Experienced regulators — who have learned by doing, and by being actively involved in NCSBN — have helped to mentor those entering regulation as a profession.



Martin

“We often say at the North Dakota Board of Nursing that nursing regulation is something you largely learn on the job. There really isn’t a college degree in nursing regulation,” comments

Meridians Education Advisory Group Member, Kyle Martin, director of operations, North Dakota Board of Nursing. “You may come into a nursing regulatory body (NRB) with tremendous expertise in nursing, law, education, administration or another field, but regulation itself is a very specialized world.”

Both those at the beginning of their regulatory journey, as well as long-established leaders, have expressed the need for skills that will further strengthen their ability to protect the public.

One such invaluable resource is Meridians, the newly launched NCSBN learning hub.

NCSBN has always provided its members with unique learning opportunities through networking, seminars, webinars and the International Center for Regulatory Scholarship (ICRS). Meridians is a step forward in providing nursing regulators with the means to help them to better protect the public and the trust in nursing. It offers approachable learning experiences built for the real world of regulation.

As the precursor to Meridians, ICRS offered online and blended courses designed to cultivate and elevate nursing leaders and policymakers around the world. More than 105 individuals have graduated from the ICRS certificate program with an additional 35 people due to graduate in 2027. Participants praised the experiences they had and the networking alliances they made. However, the length of the courses, the time needed to

complete them and scheduling conflicts were often a barrier to those who wanted to access them.



Pulec

Cheryl Pulec, EdD, NCSBN director of education, comments, “ICRS was a great program and the courses provided essential support, but it just wasn’t aligned properly to what members need now.”

Responding to these concerns, NCSBN took a different approach in designing Meridians. Rather than creating something it believed members wanted, they asked them to help build it. NCSBN surveyed more than 1,600 members across the U.S. and Canada to learn not only the type of content they preferred but how they wanted to access and experience it.

Pulec remarks “One of the strongest themes that emerged from the survey was a desire for a stronger foundation in regulation, governance and policy. Members want courses to help them understand not just what regulators do, but why regulatory systems work the way that they do.”

Members indicated they need convenient and flexible courses with shorter self-paced experiences that can be accessed when scheduling allows. Additionally, they seek courses that support different roles and levels of experience.

The survey proved to be an excellent reference point, but both Pulec and NCSBN Chief Officer, Policy, Research & Education, Jim Cleghorn, MA, felt that forming a member-based education advisory group was non-negotiable in designing a program that would best serve the membership.

From the very first meeting, the Education Advisory Group was dedicated to ensuring that the voices from the survey were represented

“Members want courses to help them understand not just what regulators do, but why regulatory systems work the way that they do.”

— Cheryl Pulec



and that Meridians would align with their wants and needs.

“We initially spent two days talking about what this program should look like, how it could work the most efficiently for staff, for executive leaders and for board members,” Pulec says.

The group identified universal regulator competencies, which will form the basis for all learning experiences, including what they termed a *Foundations of Nursing Regulation Learning Journey*. NCSBN staff also contributed their subject matter expertise.

“It was an amazing experience to be a part of, because it brought together people from different roles and different states and provinces, making it really representative of every area of the membership,” Pulec says.



“We often say at the North Dakota Board of Nursing that nursing regulation is something you largely learn on the job. There really isn’t a college degree in nursing regulation.”
— Kyle Martin

“ While someone might start at a more junior position and eventually become an EO, some of the most invaluable people at an NRB are the ‘go to’ experts on licensure or discipline. People are leaders from positions they hold right now, and we want to help them develop that even further.

— Cheryl Pulec

”



Belcourt

Commenting on her experience being part of this inaugural gathering, Education Advisory Group member Terri Belcourt, MHS, RN, director, practice & education, College of

Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan, said, “I really enjoyed building off each person’s thoughts. The whole process was so well laid out and expertly supported; I am honored to be a part of it.”

The newly launched Meridians emphasizes learning that is authentic, actionable and relevant to the work being done every day. It is designed to accommodate someone who might need to take a single course to address an immediate challenge. It also recognizes that a more structured path that helps build the knowledge and skills required is also necessary.

The *Foundations of Nursing Regulation Learning Journey* is intended to establish universal knowledge that regulators need regardless of whether they work in executive leadership, licensing, investigations or any another regulatory function. It covers the nature of regulation, the specific purposes of nursing regulation, the regulator’s role and the shared mission of protecting the public. Its goal is to give regulators a common foundation so that later role-specific development can build on shared language, understanding and purpose.

This learning journey defines a structured, competency-driven foundation for NRB staff and board members. It organizes essential knowledge from public protection and legal authority to governance, workflows and supporting systems into a cohesive learning experience. By the end of the journey, learners have a clear, shared understanding of how regulation works.

Martin states, “Meridians gives NRB members the opportunity to learn from people who have actually done this work — professionals who have encountered these situations firsthand and worked across a wide range of regulatory environments.”

What really sets Meridians apart from anything that NCSBN has offered before, is not only that the courses are built by members for members, but also that the courses will be more inclusive of everyone who works at an NRB.

“Not everyone’s career trajectory is going to lead to being an executive officer,” Pulec notes. “While someone might start at a more junior position and eventually become an EO, some of the most invaluable people at an NRB are the ‘go to’ experts on licensure or discipline. People are leaders from positions they hold *right now*, and we want to help them develop that even further. Everyone can be an irreplaceable component of upholding public protection and Meridians is designed to inspire the professional growth that will support that goal.”

The first few courses of the seven for the *Foundations of Nursing Regulation Learning Journey* will be available starting in early November. The rest will launch before the end of 2026.

The foundations course is just the first rung on the Merdians’ learning ladder. Journeys will also be developed for emerging, advanced and mastery level learners. “The goal is to support the members at every step of their professional growth,” Pulec remarks.

These learning tracks will indicate what the proficiency level of the courses is; not to exclude or dissuade anyone from taking them, but rather to provide a better description of what the content covers so they can assess their own level of readiness for it.

“Meridians has the potential to become the place many of us probably wish existed when we first entered this profession,” comments Martin.

[continued on page 24](#)



“ I see Meridians **meeting the needs of members** by providing **fresh new courses** that align with input from members about **what they want to learn**

— Terri Belcourt

”

Meridians will be constantly evolving to better serve the changing needs of the membership as nursing regulation continues to transform. Part of that evolution will be ongoing assessment of the learning journeys.

Pulec states, “We’re going to look at feedback from the courses people take and the surveys they fill out for us at the end of each course. We’ll ask for comments at NCSBN’s Midyear and Annual Meetings. This feedback loop will inform all of the decisions that we make moving forward. I’m excited because that’s something Meridians will have that ICRS didn’t.”

Belcourt adds, “I see Meridians meeting the needs of members by providing fresh new courses that align with input from members about what they want to learn. I would like to see Meridians become a space for connection through discussion boards in addition to offering relevant and engaging courses for regulators.”

“I think one of the most exciting things about Meridians is that it is still in its infancy, so I would hesitate to limit it by saying I want it to move in one particular direction. There is tremendous opportunity for the platform to continue evolving — whether that means cohort-based learning, video, written content, interactive learning or approaches we probably haven’t even imagined yet,” Martin says.

While the core of Meridians is “under construction” the essence of what made ICRS valuable to participants has been retained. “We have transitioned ICRS certificate program courses into a self-paced format so that anybody can access them at any time and get the information they need,” Pulec notes. “Members can go through the whole entire course in sequence or they can just skip to the topic or topics that apply to what they need. It’s a way to support our members as we’re building the new content.”

Twelve classic courses featuring topics ranging from “Presentations and Public Speaking” to “Protecting the Public: Navigating Regulatory Investigations” are available on-demand free of charge to NCSBN members.

Just like the courses it will provide, Meridians will be on a journey to transform and grow with its members. It is also important to tap the regulatory experts at NRBs to facilitate workshops and pass along their knowledge and expertise.

“Ultimately, we want Meridians to offer learners the chance for personal and professional growth,” Pulec asserts. “We hope that members will be inspired to give back to their fellow regulators through mentorship or by serving on the education advisory group. We also hope these learning experiences will serve as a springboard for future involvement with NCSBN, whether that is committee work or on the *Journal of Regulation* editorial advisory group.”

“I would encourage members to explore the course catalog because nursing regulation really is a journey rather than a destination. The landscape is constantly changing. We encounter new laws, new rules, new technology, new situations and new challenges all the time,” Martin recommends. “At the same time, NRBs are being asked to operate more efficiently, often doing more with fewer resources. Having access to clear, concise and trustworthy education becomes incredibly important.”

For more information about [Meridians](#), visit the new website and [sign up for email updates](#) to stay informed about upcoming courses. 🌐



Approachable learning experiences built for the real world of regulation, to help you succeed today and excel tomorrow.

[Start Learning Today](#)



Your Research Can Lead to Better Nursing

The **NCSBN Grant Program** provides funding for scientific research projects that advance the science of nursing regulation.

All projects must be completed within 24 months following the project start date.

DEADLINE: APRIL 2, 2027

[APPLY TODAY](#)

[NCSBN.ORG/GRANT](https://www.ncsbn.org/grant)





Leading with Kindness and Curiosity

Douglas Bungay Reflects on Receiving NCSBN's 2025 Catalyst Award

A career in nursing wasn't on Douglas Bungay's radar until the summer of 1985 when at age 19 he got a summer job working in a local hospital gift shop.

"I saw people coming and going in various states of emergency, and I got to engage with a lot of nurses and other healthcare providers and began to ask them questions," he recalls. "They suggested reaching out to schools in the area. The schools responded and told me they were filled for September and suggested I apply for the following year."

But then in August, a program director called and told him they had a vacancy starting in seven days. "They asked if I was interested in applying," Bungay says. "I knew nothing about the program, knew nothing about where I was going to be living, knew nothing about the profession. I said, 'sure, I'll do that.' It soon became clear to me that nursing made sense, in a way nothing else had — before and ever since."

In 2025, NCSBN presented Douglas Bungay, MN, RN, with its inaugural Catalyst Award. A catalyst sparks transformation and Bungay was honored for his commitment to principle-based innovation to promote regulatory excellence and efficiency. In Bungay's nomination, colleagues described a supportive and inspiring leader with a sense of humor and a passionate commitment to nursing regulation. At the time, he had recently become CEO and registrar of the Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN). In June 2026 NSCN and the Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia amalgamated to create the new

multi-profession Nova Scotia Nursing and Midwifery Regulator (NSNMR) under the province's Regulated Health Professions Act.

Early in his career, Bungay practiced as a licensed practical nurse (LPN), then as a registered nurse (RN), which has helped him bring a valuable perspective to both scopes of practice. His career path has been a journey of discovery, trying new roles, and seeking or happening upon a variety of experiences.

"I got through the LPN program and very quickly realized I wanted to be an RN. I really wanted to have a little bit more engagement with the physicians," he says. "I wanted to do more, particularly if I was going to work in the emergency department, which by the way I never did in my 40-year career. I went in *intending* to do that and I ended up doing everything *but* that, which I don't regret at all."

[continued on page 28](#)

Once an RN, Bungay quickly knew he wanted to teach. “I enjoyed working with students. I enjoyed working with other faculty and other nurses. I enjoyed working with new hires, new graduates. I began looking for opportunities where I could work as a bit of an educator. Along that way, I ended up in a role where I was responsible for making sure RNs understood their scope of practice, and were applying it and their standards, code and competencies in the clinical areas. That triggered pretty much a career-long trajectory for me.”

Bungay worked for 17 years in the U.S. and says he became very fascinated with the overlap of the role and scope of the RN and the LPN, and where there were differences and similarities. “I spent most of my time in the U.S. working in some sort of role around practice,” he explains.

He expresses that he has always believed that the greatest gains within the nursing profession are made when nurses at every level of practice understand their scope of practice, where they overlap and where they’re distinct. “I think we focus a lot on how we are the same, but it is in the differences in the scopes

of practice where client safety really lives. I’ve been in a never-ending state of curiosity about how nurses can work together collaboratively within that autonomous relationship to do the right things, the right way, the right time.

There’s enough work for everybody and collaboration is the only way we’re going to get through it.”

Bungay jokes that he was “the world’s most unsuccessful nurse manager” for about 18 months. “Then I found another role where I was doing similar work here in Canada, where the role of the LPN was not quite as involved as it was in the U.S., and I had the opportunity to help teams move through that role and scope and model of care. I was already on a regulation pathway because it was always about: *What are the needs of the client? What are the needs of the system? What are the needs of the nurse?* It was always about public protection.”

His regulatory leadership journey took him to the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia where he initially served as director

of professional practice and policy. Upon the creation of Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN), he was appointed director of standards, guidance and customer service. He became the senior director of legislated services and deputy registrar in 2019, then CEO and registrar in 2025.



Watch Bungay’s award nomination video.

“ I think we focus a lot on how we are the same, but it is in the differences in the scopes of practice where client safety really lives...

— Douglas Bungay ”

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— Douglas Bungay ”



Among his accomplishments, Bungay identified an opportunity to embrace right touch regulation (RTR) and set forth an action plan, empowering staff and decision-makers to make consistent, principled choices to meet the complex and changing needs of the public. He drove development of a series of regulatory guiding principles that more fully define what RTR means. This has driven development of staff workshops, options papers, and innovative public and stakeholder consultations. Detailed guidance was developed to serve as a roadmap for risk tolerance, problem-solving and decision-making approaches, and areas of focus for regulatory intervention. The new principles have changed the way NSNMR regulates — both at a policy level and on a case-by-case basis — and its scalability ensures alignment across all levels of the organization. A large-scale Regulatory Impact Assessment of the organization’s complaints process is shaping a modern, innovative approach to professional discipline.

“We’ve been implementing RTR, in one way, shape or form, for quite a while here,” says Bungay. It’s really about determining the

minimal force of regulatory intervention to get a desired outcome. We’ve been trying to apply those guiding principles to all of our regulatory processes for a couple reasons. One, it’s the right thing to do for the public and the individuals involved in the process. Two, it ensures we’re positioned to deal with whatever the issue is. Nursing regulation has existed in this province since 1910. We were very interested in looking at our regulatory processes and modernizing them in a way that didn’t just update how we’ve been doing things all along.”

Bungay continues, “RTR and those principles help us take a step back and ask: *What have we been doing that falls within that right touch approach? What could we do in the future to be able to manage this so that desired outcomes are achieved, but the processes put in place to do so were the right processes by the right people at the right time?* One of our challenges is that we’re often not the best agency to handle an issue first. For example, a complaint may be best managed by the employer -- with a remediation plan, with

“

Awards like this are an opportunity to **celebrate things that people have done, innovative good work to protect the public...**

— Douglas Bungay

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 **Learn more about the Catalyst Award**

reorientation, with monitoring and evaluation. If that doesn't work, then we should be engaged. That's been a learning journey for us, because historically our role has been to engage first. The principles help us look at things a little bit differently and ensure that we're still getting to where we need to be, but in a way that makes sense organizationally, system-wide and for the public."

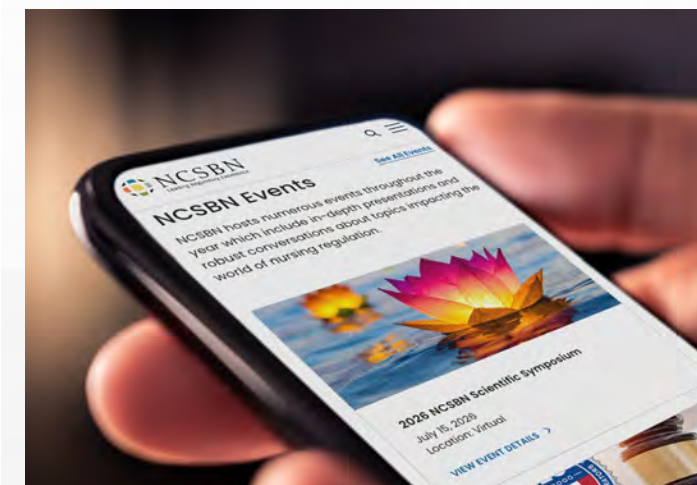
Bungay says NSNMR staff are adapting to changes. "It's going quite well. One of the things we keep working through is deciding on the right amount of regulation required to achieve a desired outcome. Sometimes there might be differences of opinion on where that is on the continuum. So we're working together as a group to get really comfortable with where we're going to be with particular cases. The team has done a lot of reflection and great work. It's difficult to move away from things that have been in place for a long time. But the nature of what people are doing in the conduct arena is so different now and it requires us to have a different approach."

Bungay was also recognized by peers for seeing that a fast and predictable pathway to licensure was needed to meet the demand for nurses in Nova Scotia. Using an equity lens, he initiated and oversaw the development of the Direct International Registration and Licensing project which launched in 2023. This expedited registration and licensure model applies to nurses who demonstrate good standing and good character and are licensed in one of seven countries. This approach to registration and licensure led to the registration of an additional 4,000 qualified nurses.

Bungay received the Catalyst Award in the company of colleagues and regulators from around the world at NCSBN's 2025 Award Ceremony in Chicago. "Awards like this are an opportunity to celebrate things that people have done, innovative good work to protect the public," he said at the time. "Sometimes you feel like you're doing this work in a vacuum. Sometimes it's hard to know what other people are doing, what problems other people are seeing, and what great work is coming out of other areas."

While the Catalyst Award honors an individual, Bungay emphasizes that the successes he was celebrated for were not his alone. "As an individual, I'm quite flattered and humbled. I would like to express my gratitude to NCSBN as well as my team at NSNMR for considering me and honoring me with this award. I'm grateful on multiple levels – this was a life-changing moment for me. I'm proud to accept it because it represents the opportunities I've had to work in collaboration with amazing, intelligent people over the last 40 years."

Bungay adds that being a nurse is fundamental to who he is. "I just want to be a good nurse, and I haven't done any of this work on my own. This is work that has been done with and on behalf of many other people. I just want to do a good job, and I want to make sure others around me have what they need to do a good job. I get a lot of personal joy and satisfaction helping other people be successful. The biggest accomplishment in my life is the people who say I've led with kindness and curiosity." 



SAVE THE DATE 2027 NCSBN EVENTS

Mark your calendar for these 2027 events, and visit our [Events page](#) to view upcoming and past events and view recent event presentations.

NLC Midyear Meeting

March 8, 2027 • Kansas City, Missouri

Midyear Meeting

March 9–11, 2027 • Kansas City, Missouri

APRN Roundtable

April 28, 2027 • Virtual

Discipline Case Management (DCM) Conference

May 19–20, 2027 • Dallas

Executive Officer Summit

June 8–10, 2027 • Location TBD

NLC Annual Meeting

Aug. 16, 2027 • Chicago

Annual Meeting

Aug. 17–20, 2027 • Chicago

NCLEX® Conference

Sept. 9, 2027 • Virtual

Visit NCSBN Events



Your Perspective Matters: Help Shape Understanding of AI in Nursing!

NCSBN is collaborating with leading nurse scientists from Duke University School of Nursing to conduct a survey exploring nurses' use of artificial intelligence (AI) in clinical settings.

Researchers are seeking a better understanding of how AI is influencing nursing practice and patient care.

About the 2026 Survey:

- A random sampling of nurses from across the U.S. will be asked to review their experiences with AI so that researchers can determine what gaps in understanding exist and what recourse nurses have when AI suggests one direction of care when a nurse believes another is better based on clinical judgment, experience and ethical considerations.
- Nurses receiving the survey via email are encouraged to offer their perspectives on AI regardless of whether they are currently using it. Their insights will help shape how AI is implemented effectively and ethically in nursing practice and healthcare.
- The findings will inform nursing practice and regulatory considerations, workforce readiness for AI-enabled care, and continuing education to support safe and responsible AI use.





Kansas State Board of Nursing Receives State IT Innovation of the Year Award

The Kansas State Board of Nursing (KSBN) Evoke Investigative / Discipline Case Management System was selected for an IT Innovation of the Year in StateScoop Magazine's [StateScoop 50 Awards](#). These awards honor the best and the brightest who make state government more efficient and effective, and acknowledge efforts to make a positive impact in the government IT community and public service.

KSBN was recognized for [modernizing investigative and disciplinary operations](#) with Evoke. The project improved case visibility, standardized workflows, and enhanced KSBN's ability to manage cases efficiently and generate accurate reports in support of its public protection mission.

"This national recognition is a tremendous source of pride for us," said KSBN Director of Operations Adrian Guerrero, CPM. "It demonstrates how innovation in nursing regulation can strengthen public protection, support the nursing profession, and help shape the future of regulatory excellence."



Kentucky Board of Nursing President Audria Denker Inducted into American Academy of Nursing 2026 Class of Fellows

The Kentucky Board of Nursing (KBN) congratulates KBN Board President and Galen College of Nursing Chief Clinical, Integration and Experience Officer Audria Denker, DNP, RN, FAADN, ANEF, on her induction into the American Academy of Nursing's [2026 Class of Fellows](#).

This prestigious honor recognizes nurse leaders whose work is advancing healthcare, nursing education, research and policy on a national and global scale. Throughout her career, Denker has been a champion for nursing education and a driving force behind the preparation of future nurses. Her journey, from first-generation college student to nationally recognized nursing leader, is a testament to the power of perseverance, purpose and servant leadership!



New Executive Director/CEO Joins Louisiana State Board of Nursing

The Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) announced the appointment of Shawn Wolkart, MSN, RN, as its new executive director/CEO.

Wolkart brings 27 years of nursing experience to the role, with a career that spans direct patient care, executive leadership and regulatory practice. Her work has been consistently guided by a commitment to quality, patient safety and the systems that support safe, competent care. Wolkart is deeply committed to building meaningful relationships within the nursing community and advancing forward-thinking regulatory leadership at both the state and national levels.



Pictured above: PEICNM staff (left to right): Director of Professional Practice Debra Smith, CEO and Registrar Melissa Panton, Director of Conduct Mark MacKenzie, Director of Regulatory Performance and Informatics & Deputy Registrar Kimberley Jay, Chief Operating Officer & Secretary to Council Dawn Rix-Moore, Director of Registration Services & Deputy Registrar Jillian Mosher.

Prince Edward Island College of Nursing and Midwifery Formally Established

The [PEI College of Nursing and Midwifery](#) (PEICNM) was formally established as a body corporate through legislation on April 1, 2026. PEICNM builds on the strong foundations of its legacy organizations: the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of PEI and the College of Registered Nurses and Midwives of PEI. The Councils of CLPNPEI and CRNMPEI, in keeping with their respective mandates to act in the public interest, made the voluntary decision to proceed with the creation of one nursing and midwifery regulator for the province of Prince Edward Island to enable both Colleges to join together to strengthen their commitment to Prince Edward Islanders through an enhanced, consistent, efficient and collaborative approach to nursing and midwifery regulation.

This followed an inclusive and extensive public consultation process. The collected input from nurses, midwives, key healthcare partners and providers, other valued and interested organizations, and members of the public across PEI provided

in-depth feedback and ensured a wide range of perspectives were considered throughout the process.

The move to establish a single, well-resourced regulatory body will strengthen the organization's ability to remain agile and responsive to the opportunities and challenges of an evolving health ecosystem. Over the next year, PEICNM will develop a strategic plan that outlines its key priorities and guides the organization's work moving forward.



Bucher Receives Alumni Achievement Award

In March, Donald H. Bucher, DNP, CRNP, vice chair, [Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing](#), received the Alumni Achievement Award from the Ross and Carol Neese College of Nursing's Alumni Society Board at the University of Pennsylvania.

Bucher is vice chair of advanced practice in the Department of Medicine at Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, an assistant professor at Penn State College of Medicine, and a 2025 graduate of the Ross and Carol Neese College of Nursing's Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner certificate program.

The Alumni Achievement Award is the college's most distinguished alumni honor and it recognizes [Bucher's service to nursing](#) through his leadership, advocacy and mentorship. 🏆

News & Notes highlights NCSBN Member achievements and updates as well as individual leadership and staff accomplishments.

Have news to share? Send your News & Notes submissions via [email](#).





Speed Round

Get to know NCSBN staff:

Cary Lin, PhD, MS, MA

Manager, Measurement & Testing, Examinations

What do you do at NCSBN?

I serve as the manager of measurement & testing in the Examinations Department, leading a team of psychometricians to support the full range of operational statistical activities for the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examination programs. Our responsibilities range from conducting complex quantitative analyses to producing quarterly and annual reports for stakeholders and the public. We collaborate closely with the Test Development and Content Development teams to help ensure that NCLEX scores and the resulting pass/fail decisions are reliable, valid and aligned with professional testing standards.

What are the best and most challenging aspects of your job?

As a testing professional, one of the most rewarding aspects of my job is working on one of the world's largest and most complex computer adaptive testing programs. The technical complexity of maintaining the NCLEX programs also makes it one of the most challenging. On a regular basis, I work closely with Test Development and Content Development managers to balance competing priorities and identify practical solutions that help ensure the continued quality and integrity of the NCLEX.

If you weren't working at NCSBN, what would your dream job be?

My dream job would be to become an organic farmer, specializing in locally grown, seasonal fruits and vegetables. I was inspired by my mother-in-law and her farmer friends in Japan, who have built a largely self-sustaining lifestyle through the food they grow all year round. Seeing how closely they are connected to the land and to one another has given me a deep appreciation for farming, as well as the simple and rewarding lifestyle it offers. 🌱

NOW AVAILABLE

Special Collection: Substance Use Disorder Spotlight

The Journal of Nursing Regulation (JNR) Substance Use Disorder Spotlight is a special collection of recent articles from NCSBN's quarterly, peer-reviewed, academic and professional journal. These curated articles are accessible to anyone interested in learning more about effective approaches for nurses experiencing SUD while enacting nursing's mandate to protect the public.

Available **free of charge** through
Dec. 31, 2026.

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