

AALNC Pittsburgh Chapter LiNC

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“The Link Between Healthcare and the Legal Profession”

From Our President Tiffany Tomkowitz, BS, BSN, RN

What were you doing in 1989? A time of shoulder pads, big hair, and men with mustaches... Maybe you were starting your first nursing job, or perhaps you were at home raising children? Maybe you were just born, or not even in school yet. I won't mention what stage of my life I was at during 1989, but as I sit and reflect on that year one thing is for sure: I am so grateful that Sondra Fandray founded the AALNC Pittsburgh Chapter.

For the past 30 years, this chapter has given a home to the legal nurse consultants of Pittsburgh. Whether you're an independent expert, an in-house LNC, or a nurse exploring a new career, the AALNC Pittsburgh Chapter has been THE hub of support for legal nurses. I can't help but feel the pride bubble up inside knowing 30 years later our association is *still* going strong.

To celebrate our 30th year, we have a few fun things planned. A new 30-year logo is being designed. We would also like to highlight the past Presidents during our August Networking meeting and we are open to new ideas on how to do it – let's find a way to show our appreciation for their service!!

This year's conference "Mind Your Own Business: Success Strategies for the Legal and Healthcare Professional" will be held at Duquesne University on Saturday, November 2nd. Mark your calendars, you won't want to miss it! Julie Fagan, President-elect and the conference chairman has been busy planning for the big day. To get the word out, we will be handing out "Save the Date" cards at the national forum in Louisville.

On behalf of the 2019 Board of Directors, I'd like to say "thank you" for 30 years of legal nurse consulting excellence. Whether this is your first year as an AALNC member or your 30th, each person contributes to the success of our group. We could not be here without you. Now let's celebrate (without the shoulder pads, big hair, and mustaches)!

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AALNC– Pittsburgh Chapter's Biennial Conference

Will be held on Saturday, November 2, 2019 at Duquesne University. Please save the date for this wonderful opportunity to enhance your education and network with fellow healthcare and legal professionals. A wide variety of topics will be discussed targeted to clinical practitioners, legal nurse consultants of all experience, risk managers, students and more. Breakfast and lunch will be provided as well as the chance to shop for related products and services as you visit with our vendors and sponsors. Attendees will be awarded 5.5 nursing contact hours.

Please contact Conference Chairperson, Julie Fagan at juliefagan23@gmail.com to be added to our invitation list.

Meet Our Newly Elected 2019 Board of Directors

Julie Fagan, BSN, RN, CIC: President-Elect Julie Fagan has over 30 years of nursing experience, having graduated in the first ASN class of the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford (UPB), and then again in the first BSN class of UPB in 1993. Her nursing career began in Medical-Surgical, but continued with a 20- year journey in Long Term Care. There, she held the positions of RN supervisor, Charge Nurse, and then went on to become the Staff Development Coordinator, Assistant Director of Nursing, the Regional Director of Infection Prevention, and Director of Nursing. She moved to Pittsburgh in 2010, and began working at Children's Hospital in Enterostomal Therapy, earning a certification in WOCN (Wound, Ostomy, Continence Nurse). Because of the many years spent in LTC as an ADON, which combined the worlds of wound care and infection prevention, she has worked on many quality improvement projects to improve the care of patients in both skilled nursing facilities and in the hospital setting. She is currently the Manager of Infection Prevention at 2 UPMC hospitals. She has been a member of the AALNC and the Pittsburgh Chapter for over 3 years, and is currently President-Elect. Julie is excited to be a part of this passionate group of professionals and is looking forward to an opportunity to contribute to the continued success of our local AALNC chapter.

Beverly Andreoletti, RN: Treasurer Beverly is a Diploma Graduate from St. Margaret Memorial Hospital with 41 years of experience in various areas of nursing, including Operating Room Management, Quality Improvement, Hemodialysis, Medical-Surgical, Orthopedics, Neurology, Dermatology, Home Health and Radiology. Since 2001, Beverly has worked as an independent Legal Nurse Consultant. She had been an active member of the South Florida Chapter AALNC serving as the President of the Chapter 2007-2008 and Membership Chair for 7 years. She relocated back to Pittsburgh in 2009, became an active member of the Pittsburgh Chapter AALNC and has served on the Board of Directors for the past 9 years in the capacity of Director-at-Large, Treasurer and Secretary.

Audrey Lalli, RN, BSN, CRRN: Director at Large Audrey graduated from WVU School of Nursing with a BSN and began her nursing career in May of 1978 working in Medical-Surgical. Enjoying the experiences nursing can expose one to, she then switched to working Cardiac Care/Step Down, Orthopedics, substitute School Nursing, Home Care and finally Rehabilitation Nursing. She has remained in Rehabilitation for 28 years, obtaining her CRRN. She was the Nurse Manager of a unit specializing in Spinal Cord Injury, taking patients with all other diagnoses as well. She has had other management roles during her years at HealthSouth Harmarville such as Interim Chief Nursing Officer for several months and as an active participant in helping to establish policies and procedures based on best practices. She is currently the Director of Quality and Risk Management. Her consulting career began in 2011. She reviews both plaintiff and defense cases and has been deposed approximately 6 times and to trial once. She finds this very interesting and rewarding and this actually makes her primary job more tolerable at times! She served on the Board of Directors of the Pittsburgh Chapter from 2014 to 2017, being a past president in 2016. She was honored to be nominated for the

board then and is honored to serve again.

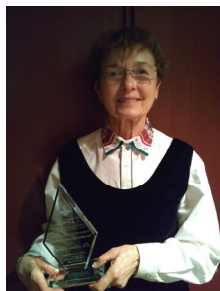
Kelly Campbell, RN, BSN, CP, CLNC, CLCP: Director at Large Kelly Campbell RN, BSN , CP, CLNC, CLCP serves as CEO for Cardinal LifeCare Consulting. She is also a member of the Board of Directors for Visiting Nurses of Western PA and Senior Lutheran Life. She served as Editor and Co-Editor of the Journal of Nurse Life Care Planning. Kelly has multiple publications in the Journal of Nurse Life Care Planning, Journal of Life Care Planning and Perfusion Journal. Kelly is a chapter author and peer reviewer for AALNC Principles and Practice textbook. She was an associate editor for the first drafts for six chapters in this text and is also the author of the upcoming edition of Core Curriculum Nurse Life Care Planning Text. She is the Co-Host for Legal Nurse Business Podcast with Pat Iyer.

Kelly has served as a clinical mentor for Duquesne Graduate School of Forensic Nursing. She is an accomplished speaker who has presented at national conferences in several fields of medicine, including Texas Heart 25th anniversary honoring pioneer heart surgeon Dr Denton Cooley. She has the honor of being the clinical specialist for assisting Dr. OZ with the first robotic heart surgery in the United States. She then participated in the first robotic heart surgery in several states such as Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, California and Ohio to only name a few. Her career also included working with corporations to assist in bringing medical devices to market.

Sue Blackhurst, RN, BSN, LNCC: Director at Large Sue Blackhurst, B.S.N., R.N., LNCC, is a Registered Nurse with nearly 14 years of clinical experience in the areas of adult medical and surgical critical care, cardiac care and stepdown, operating room, and post-anesthesia recovery. She has been a Legal Nurse Consultant for 21 years, currently with the law firm of Davies, McFarland and Carroll, LLC, Pittsburgh, PA, since 2006. In her capacity as a Legal Nurse Consultant, Sue works with attorneys in the defense of insurance companies and their insureds in the areas of medical malpractice and personal injury. Prior to her present position, she worked for Steptoe & Johnson, PLLC, a large defense law firm in West Virginia, from 1996 to 2006. Sue graduated from West Virginia University School of Nursing in 1981.

In 2005, Sue achieved the status of Legal Nurse Consultant Certified (LNCC), after successfully meeting the requirements through examination and other means that validate qualifications, knowledge and practice in the field of legal nurse consulting. Sue was a founding member of the WV Upper Ohio Valley Chapter AALNC from 2000 to 2017, and served in all Board positions at one time or another, including President. Sue is also a founding member of the WV Bar Association LNC Section. Since 2017, she has been a member of the Pittsburgh Chapter AALNC. She lives in Canonsburg, PA and is married to Jeff Blackhurst, a CRNA. They have a son, Jonathan, and a daughter, Hilary.

AALNC- Pittsburgh Chapter's Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient



Dr. Linda Fowler

In the spirit of Nurse's Week, we honor a most distinguished member of our Chapter, who has so selflessly given to the profession of nursing, the legal nurse consulting community and our organization throughout her career spanning over 5 decades.

Dr. Fowler began her career in organizational management in 1965, achieving the titles of supervisor, director, consultant, instructor and administrator. As a healthcare executive for over 35 years with a specialty in long-term care, she earned her Doctorate of Public Health in 1997 and remains licensed in Pennsylvania as a Registered Nurse and Nursing Home Administrator. She is an accomplished speaker and author, maintains affiliations with many professional organizations and is currently an active volunteer with HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital and the Veterans Administration.

Dr. Fowler began her career as a legal nurse consultant in 1991 and has since remained a most valued member of the Pittsburgh Chapter. She has served an extensive tenure on the Board of Directors, including two terms as President and continues to lend her time, knowledge and expertise to the members of our organization. It was the Pittsburgh Chapter's great privilege to present her with the distinguished honor of the Lifetime Achievement Award for her countless years of dedication to leadership, education and mentorship.

*Happy Nurses Week!
May 6th-12th, 2019*



The American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants—Pittsburgh Chapter would like to wish all nurses a Happy Nurses Week. In honor of legal nurse consulting's founding profession, we celebrate all of our members' heritage, education, background, experience and milestones of their career of caring and dedication to patients.

"To save one life, you're a hero, to save a hundred lives, you're a nurse."

-Unknown

Ask Linda...

As both new and experienced LNC's, we have all had our share of questions and continue to experience times in our practice when we need a simple, straight-forward approach that she can offer.

Dear Linda,

I am a new LNC who has yet to land my first case. What advice can you give me to get my foot in the door?

Linda says...

1. Have business cards.
2. Attend the National Conference... a lot of networking goes on.
3. Attend meetings to network with all LNCs. Volunteer to assist with "little" tasks within the chapter (this demonstrates your willingness to be involved, your work ethic to complete tasks, etc...) There are in-house LNCs who are looking for experts daily. You will become more than just a name.
4. Bring several copies of your CV with you to our meetings (MUST be perfect and free from typos) and offer to any working LNCs We have all been in your shoes.
5. Respond to the emails of attorneys looking for an expert. Do not be afraid to say...this is my first case; the attorney also had a "first" case...not just yesterday.
6. Do not be afraid to ask us...other LNCs...for the "template of standard language" that must be in every report, certificate of merit, affidavit...you supply the content...no one can help with that part.

Please send your Dear Linda questions to Stephanie Kress at sakress@verizon.net so that she may share her advice and experience with you.

What's New With Our Members

Director at Large, **Audrey Lalli** has become the Director of Quality and Risk Management for Harmarville HealthSouth.

Nadia Lowe retired from the VA Health System in Pittsburgh after 25 years of dedicated service. She is currently working as a part-time in-house LNC for Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Goggin.

Director at Large, **Holly Castello** has accepted a position as an in-house LNC for Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote.

Carrie Codelka and her family welcomed son, Benjamin James on October 13th.

Kim Roderick welcomed granddaughter Tessa Grace born on February 9th. She is currently planning a wedding in July for her youngest daughter, Becca.

The AALNC—Pittsburgh Chapter celebrates all of our members' milestones, achievements and joyous life's events. Please send your good news to Editor, Stephanie Kress at sakress@verizon.net so that we may share in your joy.

How Much Do You Know About Flo?

Florence Nightingale is one of those historical figures who needs no introduction. We all know who she was and what she did, but did you know that Flo's life was perhaps the most well-documented of any Victorian woman in history? See how much you know about Flo.

1. Before training as a nurse, Florence Nightingale was:

- A. A surgeon's daughter
- B. A wealthy socialite
- C. A Catholic nun
- D. A governess

Answer :B. She was born into a distinguished, upper-class family of wealth and privilege. Named after the city of her birth, her father was a well-educated landowner and mother was the daughter of a Member of Parliament, an abolitionist and social reformer.

2. Flo did not believe that nurses should:

- A. Consider nursing a religious calling
- B. Receive retirement pay
- C. Follow doctor's orders
- D. Take public examinations and become registered

Answer :D. Flo took an avid interest in the progress of student nurses. She adamantly believed that nursing was the work of God. However, professional non-secular nurses had been unleashed and she was worried about the increasing use of the word "profession" in nursing and that advances such as examinations would test only knowledge, but not the essence of nursing.



Florence Nightingale, circa 1850

*"When you're a nurse, you know that every day you will touch a life or a life will touch yours."
- Anonymous*

Nursing Trivia

Test your knowledge with these fun facts:

1. Why was Joe Hogan denied admission to nursing school at Mississippi University in 1979?

- A. He was African American applying to a southern, all-white college
- B. He didn't have a high school diploma
- C. He was male and applying to an all-female school**
- D. The college trustees did not believe men should be nurses

Joe Hogan was denied admission because he was male and the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the university's policy was unconstitutional, forcing change to allow admission of qualified males.

2. Which statement is true about the history of Nurses Week?

- A. National Nurses Day was invented by the Hallmark Corporation in 1975
- B. President Eisenhower created Nurses Week to honor his nurse, Anna Mae McCabe during his hospital stay in 1956
- C. President Reagan proclaimed May 6th as National Recognition Day for Nurses Day while in the hospital recovering from a gunshot wound in 1981
- D. The American Nurses Association designated May 6-12 as a permanent National Nurses Week in 1993**

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National Nurses Day was designated as May 6 by President Reagan in 1982 and in 1993, the ANA expanded this day to a week. The date of May 12 was chosen to honor Florence Nightingale's birthday. Hallmark did not invent Nurses Day or Nurses week but was the first greeting card company to create cards specifically for National Nurses Day in 1992.

Meet Our Newest Members

Melissa Choma, RN, LNCC

Melissa Choma is currently working as an in-house legal nurse consultant for the law firm of Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Goggin. She works in the medical malpractice division of this large defense firm. She obtained her Diploma in Nursing from the Ohio Valley Hospital School of Nursing (now the Trinity Health System School of Nursing) in Steubenville, OH in 1989. She began her nursing career at the Ohio Valley Hospital in Steubenville, working on ICU, CCU, and Telemetry Stepdown units. In September 1997 she became a travel nurse, staying mainly on the east coast, working on various units, including open-heart stepdown. She “landed” at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore, MD as part of a travel assignment, working on the abdominal transplant floor. She made the decision to stop traveling in 2003 and remained at UMMC on the transplant floor, caring for patients who had undergone liver, pancreas, and kidney transplants. While there, she also served as charge nurse and preceptor to many new nurses. She returned to Western Pennsylvania in July of 2007, taking a position at the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute of UPMC as a Clinical Transplant Coordinator, caring for a large caseload of patients who had received kidney transplants., at which time she completed a home study course for legal nurse consulting. She transitioned to Cigna Healthcare as a Transplant Case Manager in October 2014 but never forgot her love of legal nursing. In March of 2014, she became the in-house LNC for the Pittsburgh office of MDWCG. She obtained her LNCC in October of 2017. She joined the Pittsburgh Chapter of AALNC to begin networking with other nurses who have taken the journey into this wonderful specialty.



Donna Falcone, DNP, MSN, MS, FNP-BC, CRNP

Donna began her professional career after graduating from California University of Pa with a master's degree in counseling as a Family therapist, providing individual and group therapy to children and adults in both mental health and drug and alcohol outpatient and in-home settings. With a life changing event, the birth of her twin sons, she wanted to focus on a position that would allow her the opportunity to work closer to home, and thus her second career began as a bereavement counselor for Fayette Homecare and Hospice. Within that role, she developed educational training for staff and area community organizations on grief, loss, and bereavement, increasing communication skills and development of strong team processes. Fascinated by all areas of health, she also began to work with bariatric patients as they prepared for bariatric surgery at a support group she helped to start at FHC. She was so blessed to have been befriended by the administrator of FHC who encouraged her to return to school and obtain her nursing degree. At the time, she was also teaching at WCCC in the area of psychology and was so unsure if she could excel in that role. With the help of her dear friend and children, she successfully completed the Second Degree Nursing Program at Duquesne University. Her passion for helping and providing evidence-based care to patients and their families prompted her to continue her education to obtain her master's degree in Nurse Education from Waynesburg University, doctoral degree from Chatham University and her FNP through Franciscan University of Steuben-

ville. She is board certified through ANCC in Family Medicine and continues to teach nursing students as an adjunct faculty member at Wheeling Jesuit University, focusing on preparing nurses for their nursing careers. For the past ten years she has been employed in homecare and hospice through Family Home Health Three Rivers Hospice, which surprisingly makes her career in this field span 25 plus years! In addition, to promote adequate care for the mental health population, she maintains a mental health private practice providing psychiatric evaluations and medication management to the adult population. She continues to be a guest speaker at local bariatric support groups, focusing on healthy mind and body. She is currently studying to become a certified hospice and palliative nurse practitioner and is so grateful for the opportunity to become involved in legal nurse consulting with thanks to her new mentor and friend, Diane Meade for this amazing opportunity. Her interest in the legal field has been since birth, with her father being a retired police officer and her sons currently in law enforcement. Her passion for this field stems from her strong belief in accountability and being an advocate for evidence-based practice. She is very excited to have joined this amazing group and to learn about becoming a legal nurse consultant. Donna's challenges in this new area begin with the not the “why” but the “how” question and she looks forward to becoming actively involved in this organization and to learn from each of you!



Reminders

Please don't forget to take advantage of your full benefits of AALNC National membership:

- (4) free webinars
- Electronic copy of the Journal of Legal Nurse Consulting

Upcoming Events

- Organizational and Planning Dinner for Past Presidents and current Board members on June 12, 2019 at Lidia's Restaurant in the Strip District
- Networking Dinner for all members and guests on August 14, 2019 at LeMont Restaurant in Mount Washington

Our Chapter

This year, our organization is celebrating its 30-year anniversary. Since 1989, the AALNC–Pittsburgh Chapter has been helping nurses enter into the LNC profession, advance their practice and establish successful businesses by providing guidance, education and networking. By the tireless work of our Board of Directors and members, we have grown to be the largest chapter in our nation.

We invite you to join us for monthly meetings, social events and our biennial conference. We meet the second Wednesday of the month January-May, September and October at 5:30 pm in the Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote board room at Two PPG Place and host a variety of speakers throughout the year. Contact Kathy Seapker at kesrehab@comcast.net to receive meeting and event notices.

Please visit our website for more information about our organization and how to join at aalncpittsburgh.org.

Don't forget to check us out on LinkedIn and Facebook!

Our Latest Social

On Monday, December 3, 2018, the AALNC–Pittsburgh Chapter hosted our Annual Holiday Dinner at LeMont Restaurant. Past President, Stephanie Kress introduced our new President, Tiffany Tomkowitz and together they welcomed the 2019 Board of Directors, along with a recap of our prosperous year, milestones, news of upcoming events and next year's goals and strategies. With a skyline view of our gorgeous city, our members and Board enjoyed a five-star dinner and an evening of networking, fellowship and comradery.

