

AALNC Pittsburgh Chapter LiNC

“The Link Between Healthcare and
the Legal Profession”

Summer, 2020
Volume 26, Issue 1

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As I begin my term as President of the AALNC Pittsburgh Chapter, I can't help but think about the Past Presidents and Board members and how their dedication and perseverance have led to the success which we enjoy today. In 2019, we celebrated 30 years as an AALNC Chapter and were honored to have many of our Past Presidents attend. So first I would like to send a huge "Thank you!" to all who have contributed to our chapter over the years.

Our chapter continues to be very active by holding monthly meetings with interesting speakers and topics, and hosting our annual Holiday and Networking dinners. In 2019, we held a very successful conference entitled "Mind Your Own Business: Success Strategies for Legal and Healthcare Professionals". Speakers and attendees came from near and far to make this conference beneficial to all.

As I write this, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether you are a nurse on the front lines providing patient care or your work is in other areas of healthcare, we rise to the challenge of our profession. In this very difficult time, we put our fears behind us and do what we do best – we take care of people. We take care of our patients, our co-workers, our families and our friends. Please don't forget to take care of yourselves as well. Take

Becoming a Member of AALNC– Pittsburgh Chapter

As a member of both the nursing and legal communities, our chapter relies on referrals of our friends, partners and colleagues to sustain our strength, continue to grow and to provide new opportunities for our associates.

As a member, you can expand your professional network, learn new skills and stay up to date on medical and legal trends and issues.

Member benefits include free access to monthly meetings and nursing contact hours, member rates for social events and conferences and inclusion in our business directory for those seeking expert witnesses.

For more info, please contact
Stephanie Kress at
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time to rest and rejuvenate. While we are practicing social distancing, we can still go outside and enjoy a walk and see the signs of spring. These signs of spring also bring us signs of hope, that soon this will all be behind us and we can go back to our normal lives. What will your new normal look like?



The AALNC– Pittsburgh Chapter would like to thank the following business and organizations for their generosity and contributions to our 2019 Biennial Conference:

Duquesne University School of Nursing– *Mary Ellen Glasgow, Dean*

Bethany Hospice– *Diane Mead, CEO*

Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote, P.C.

Avanti Architecture– *Sandie Colatrella*

California University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing– *Dr. Mary O'Connor*

Chatham University Center for Women's Entrepreneurship– *Anne Schlicht, Director*

CARDINAL LifeCare Consulting, LLC– *Kelly Campbell, Founder*

RN Patient Advocates– *Karen Mercereaux*

National Nurses in Business Association– *Michelle Podlesni*

PNC Bank, Seven Fields Branch

Advance Talent– *Jennifer Minks*

Julian Gray Associates

Precise, Inc.– *Sean Dennin*

Costantini Rehab, Inc.– *Patty Costantini*

R.N. Consulting, LLC– *Mary Jane Smith*

Empowered Nurses– *Lorie Brown*

VNA– Western Pennsylvania– *Margie Walsh*

AALNC– National Chapter, *Elizabeth Murray, Past President*

Sabika Jewelry– *Angela Eustis*

Rodan and Fields– *Megan Szymanski*

Maple Lane Farms– *Janie Deemer*

QRM Consulting, LLC– *Wendy Mildner*

Retriev-It– *Steve Wasserman*

LaPomponnee` Spa

It's Personal– *Diane McDonald*

Trader Joe's

The Patient Test Results Act: PA Act 112

Submitted by Melissa Choma, RN, LNCC

On October 24, 2018, PA Governor Tom Wolf signed into law The Patient Test Results Information Act, Act 112. This Act became effective on December 23, 2018, however, enforcement of the Act did not begin until December 23, 2019. The Act requires that when, “in the judgement of the entity performing the diagnostic imaging service, a significant abnormality may exist, the entity performing the diagnostic imaging service shall directly notify the patient or the patient’s designee by providing notice that the entity has completed a review of the test performed and has sent results to the health care practitioner who ordered the diagnostic imaging service.” The Act defined diagnostic imaging service as a “medical imaging test performed on a patient that is intended to diagnose the presence or absence of a disease, including, but not limited to, a malignancy”. A significant abnormality is defined as a “finding that would cause a reasonably prudent person to seek additional or follow up medical care within three months. The following statements included in the notification are: --“You are receiving this notice as a result of a determination by your diagnostic imaging service that further discussions of your test results are warranted and would be beneficial to you.” --“The complete results of your test or tests have been or will be sent to the health care practitioner that ordered the test or tests. It is recommended that you contact your health care practitioner to discuss your results as soon as possible.” Facilities will need to provide this notification no later than 20 calendar days after the date the results are sent to the ordering health care practitioner. Per the Act, communication methods can include US mail, email, automatic alerts to patient healthcare portals, or fax. If the patient is notified at the time of the service, the patient must sign an acknowledgement of having received the notice. Exceptions to the Act included routine obstetrical ultrasounds used to monitor the development of a fetus, diagnostic imaging services performed on a patient being treated on an inpatient basis or in an Emergency Room, and diagnostic radiographs (2D imaging). Breast mammography results are exempt from the notification requirements of Act

112. However, federal and state standards of notification for mammography results remain unchanged. This Act brings radiologists directly into the patient care team. It can mitigate liability and offers a shared responsibility to notify patients of abnormal diagnostic results. However, this Act has met with opposition. The PA Chapter American College of Cardiology has called for the repeal of the Act, along with other physicians. It is felt that the Act puts physicians/radiologists in a situation where they must notify patients of potentially serious findings with no real knowledge of the patient’s clinical picture and their ability to process information received and can perhaps cause confusion regarding what is considered a “significant abnormality”. There is concern that the Act creates a risk of exposure when a provider considers a finding significant and the diagnostic imaging service entity did not report it to the patient, or vice versa. On December 2, 2019 House Bill 2103 was introduced and proposed to remove the “significant abnormality” language. It would require the entity performing the diagnostic imaging service provide written notice directly to the patient or designee at the time of service that the entity will complete a review of the test performed and send the results to the practitioner who ordered the service. The Bill also expands the exemptions to include diagnostic imaging services performed for chronic conditions if the patient has previously been notified of these unless imaging reveals a clinically actionable change and all noninvasive cardiovascular testing. This Bill was referred to the Committee on Health and is listed as “in the committee” for the 2019-2020 session. LNCs who review cases in the state of PA need to be aware of Act 112 and the current requirements for the hospital/entity performing the testing regarding notification policies. It will need to be determined if potential plaintiffs alleging a failure to diagnose or a delay in diagnosing a malignancy received written or verbal communication from the entity who performed the test. It will also need to be verified that defendant hospitals/entities can prove that they were compliant with all reporting requirements of the Act.

The Silver Lining of the Coronavirus

We have all found or even re-found appreciations and ways to be happy since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Here's some proof of the silver lining. "Since this experience with coronavirus, I have come to appreciate..."

Julie Fagan: "In my work as an Infection Preventionist, I have put in many long hours at the hospital, so I have come to appreciate being home even more."

Tiffany Tomkowitz: "I have learned to appreciate TECHNOLOGY. The kids are still learning with iPads, I can FaceTime with my family, order groceries online, watch Netflix and do expert work with phones, email and digital drop boxes."

Beverly Andreoletti: "I have learned to appreciate quality time with my husband, even if it's just quiet time."

Stephanie Kress: "I have enjoyed unrushed dinner with my family and having true uninterrupted family time with picnics and bonfires."

Kelly Campbell: "I have enjoyed watching the kindness and generosity of others. I appreciate the giving spirit of humanity. We have all been forced to hit the pause button. I love reading the news about the examples from all over the country and from all generations of endless generosity. I do think my favorite videos are seeing the appreciation and 7pm pause for the medical teams and first responders with the simple gesture of yelling "thank you," clapping, clanging on pots and pans. This is going on in NY, Italy— all the major areas hardest hit... something to be said for the sincerity and appreciation!"

"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away"
- William Shakespeare



The American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants— Pittsburgh Chapter would like to thank all members of the healthcare team for your tireless work and countless sacrifices to treat patients in the perilous environment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, a touch that never hurts."
- Charles Dickens

Covid Facts You May Not Know

- ⇒ Covid-19 is zoonotic in nature and is believed to have originated from bats infecting caged animals at open markets in Wuhan, China, although it cannot be ruled out that it was spread by an infected person.
- ⇒ There have been documented cases of Covid-19 in domestic animals, with the greatest number to date being in felines. There is no current evidence that pets can spread Covid-19 to people or that they might be a source of infection.
- ⇒ Although cough, fever and shortness of breath are the most common symptoms, many people also experience loss of appetite, diarrhea, vomiting and abdominal pain.
- ⇒ Just as many children get Covid-19 as adults do but because their symptoms tend to be mild to asymptomatic or mimic other viruses, it is much less documented.
- ⇒ If children are symptomatic, only 35% will have a fever. A cough demonstrates the greatest percentage of symptoms for this population of those infected.
- ⇒ A recent study showed that 30% of people who tested positive said that loss of smell (anosmia) and taste (ageusia) were their first major symptoms.
- ⇒ Researchers have found that the virus can live up to 24 hours on cardboard and 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel.
- ⇒ Genomic studies of patients from China, Italy and Spain showed a higher risk of developing Covid-related respiratory failure in those with type A blood.
- ⇒ Named by the World Health Organization, Covid-19 stands for coronavirus disease; 19 is for 2019, the year the disease first appeared in China.

Tricks of the Trade

LNC's use the internet to research demographics, journal articles and medical conditions. It is also an important instrument to check medical and nursing licensure and to find case law and other experts. Here are some useful free sites and search engines for your reference:

For medical research:

- ◆ PubMed
- ◆ Google Scholar
- ◆ OpenMD
- ◆ Directory of Open Access Journals
- ◆ Trip Database

To verify a license or check for disciplinary action in PA:

- ◆ www.dos.pa.gov/Professional/Licensing

To research court cases in PA for individuals or entities:

- ◆ Pa.courts.us/public-records-court-case-information

To research laws, statutes, and regulations (Pennsylvania Code):

- ◆ www.legis.state.pa.us

*Title 28— Health and Safety includes all laws in Pennsylvania pertaining to individual practice and facility regulations.

Please email your tips, tricks or hints to Stephanie Kress at sakress@verizon.net so that we may share with our members.

Pandemic Self-Care for the LNC

By Stephanie Kress, BSN, RN, CMSRN

Burnout is a real problem for all high-stress jobs, but especially for LNC's, who commonly juggle a day job or work in-house at a law firm where caseload and trial demands can be overwhelming. It's so easy to slip into habits that put your long term health at risk. With many working from home during the pandemic, the partition from work and personal life begins to erase and we find ourselves giving up the work/life balance that contributes to our joy. Here are some signs of burnout:

1. **Insomnia**— the root of all other signs. If your brain is unable to shut down because you're too consumed with tasks and problems, the first to suffer is your sleep. Lacking the physical and mental energy to complete tasks and make wise decisions will only compound issues with burnout. Deciding to get more sleep is the first step to accomplishing it. Our bodies are creatures of habit and we become accustomed to going to bed at a certain time. Turning the clock back takes nightly dedication. Think of how better you would feel with just an extra 30 minutes of sleep each night.
2. **Fatigue**— Working too many hours and not giving your body and brain enough time to recover could result in severe fatigue, where your body shuts down and refuses you to continue a cycle of physical and mental torture. In addition to getting better sleep, working fewer hours, allowing yourself time and giving yourself permission to play daily will prevent even coming close to a shutdown.
3. **Procrastination**— When the very things that used to give you energy now drain you, you'll find yourself losing focus and putting off tasks until later instead of prioritizing and accomplishing. Combatting procrastination begins with taking a guilt-free day to rest, envisioning how much better you will feel with less on your plate and working on being satisfied with what you've accomplished in your day.
4. **Changes in Appetite**— We all fall into one of two categories: those who eat more or those who eat less when under stress. Neither extreme is good for your body and no matter what your pattern is, most often stress equals increased caffeine and alcohol. Recognizing your pattern, thinking about what or how much you're eating and taking time to eat and digest helps maintain your mental clarity.
5. **Anxiety**— Stress-induced anxiety can manifest in many strange phenomena and physical symptoms. Picture your body as a house. Chronic anxiety affects every room in the house: bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living room. From changes in sleep and bathroom habits and how you eat to not being able to enjoy relaxing and interacting with those around you are signs that anxiety has a major grip on your life.

Now, if I could only take my own advice. I say that with a smile. We've all been there and most times not of our own fault, but hopefully this article made you pause, reflect and vow to be better to, most importantly...you.

AALNC- Pittsburgh Chapter 2019 Conference Memories



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

- Please join us for our August Networking Dinner on Wednesday, August 12, 2019 30 at LeMont Restaurant on Mount Washington, Pittsburgh. All current members and guests are welcome! Contact Kathy Seapker at kesrehab@comcast.net to be put on our RSVP and event update list. Details to follow.

Our Chapter

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. *We have recently modified meetings to a Zoom Meeting platform, which can easily be accessed on any computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone, in order to guarantee the safety of our attendees and adhere to the current Covid-19 guidelines.* Contact Kathy Seapker at kesrehab@comcast.net to receive meeting and event notices and updates.

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!

Editor Stephanie Kress would like to thank Audrey Lalli, Melissa Choma, and Tiffany Tomkowitz for their wonderful contributions to this edition of the LINC.

Our Latest Social

On Wednesday, December 11, 2019, the AALNC– Pittsburgh Chapter hosted our Annual Holiday Dinner at Monterey Bay Fish Grotto. At the apex of excitement for our 30-year anniversary and the success of our most recent conference, an outstanding blend of valued members and guests celebrated an epic year in our Chapter's history. Our new 2020 President, Julie Fagan was welcomed by Past President, Tiffany Tomkowitz and the Board of Directors to begin a new year of milestones.

