

SWPONL Chair Elect Candidates



Camellia Herisko, DNP, MSN, RN, PMHCNS-BC, CRNP

Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Operations and Patient Care Services
UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital

I have found tremendous value in being a SWPONL member over the years. I enjoy networking with peers, meeting new professional contacts and attending exceptional educational events. These educational activities and conferences also support my work life balance and I find them stimulating. It is also invigorating to be around a group of diverse nurses who can support each other through shared challenges and who share the passion for nursing. It helps to maintain my resiliency which is very important in these positions.

I think that it is important for more behavioral health nurses to become involved in SWPONL so that together we can support the care of behavioral health patients and begin to tackle mental health stigma. This stigma prevents people from accessing much needed mental health services. As a psychiatric nurse leader, I hope to be a role model through an expanded role within SWPONL. I am always excited to share my behavioral health knowledge and skills with my peers to educate and make the behavioral health patient experience better in all settings.

I believe a future goal of SWPONL should be to continue focus on the use of technology in practice and promoting nursing innovation. These are all very important areas for the practice of nursing. The value that nurses bring to the clinical team will be more evident than in prior years since nursing continues to expand into roles outside of the traditional inpatient setting and practice to the fullest scope of their license and educational preparation.



Lynn Kosar, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Chief Nursing Officer
AHN, Forbes Hospital

I would like to have the opportunity to serve as Chair-elect to have an integral role in not only leading the organization but in providing education, information and resources to our nursing leaders. As we encounter changes that are on the horizon for health care, I believe that by equipping our leaders with the insight and knowledge regarding these changes, they will be in the best position to drive our healthcare environment in the right direction.

I have been a member of SWPONL for several years and the organization has assisted me with my professional development. I feel that with my leadership experience, I would be able to serve in a capacity that would help move the organization forward. I would actively participate in important decisions, ensure fiscal responsibility and engage in strategic, long range planning for the organization. I would like to continue the growth in the membership of SWPONL as well as members continued high rate of participation and engagement in leadership development and networking activities. I look forward to having the opportunity to uphold the mission of SWPONL as well leading SWPONL into the future. I would be honored to have your support as Chair- elect. Thank you.



Secretary/Treasurer Candidates



Heather Ambrose, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CENP, CPN
Clinical Director, Cardiac and Thoracic Services
UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside

Please consider me to continue to serve a second term as the Secretary/Treasurer for SWPONL. My name is Heather Ambrose and I have worked within UPMC for the past nineteen years at UPMC Children’s Hospital and recently, UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside. I received a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Thiel College and my master’s and doctorate of nursing practice degrees from Chatham University. I would be honored to have your support as a continuing member of the Board of Directors. As a member of the board, I will continue to actively engage in important decision-making for the growth, development, and advancement of SWPONL within the nursing leader community. I believe in the mission of SWPONL and am willing to continue my active engagement of nurse leaders in positively effecting nursing legislation, resolving issues related to nursing practice and leadership, and providing education. Understanding the changing health care environment and meeting the challenging needs of the future is important for today and tomorrow’s nurse leaders.

As the reelected Secretary/Treasurer, I will continue to uphold the essential job functions with a focus on growth and future sustainability of the organization. I would like to see SWPONL continue to invest in development of new leaders and support succession planning and mentorship. I value the strength and expertise of SWPONL’s nurse leaders. SWPONL is a conduit for nurse leaders, with varying practice experience, to network, consult, and collaborate. Information is shared through conferences, educational sessions, and meetings regarding current and relevant topics within health care.



Elizabeth R. Tedesco, DNP, RN, CEN, PHRN
Unit Director
UPMC Passavant

To be a member of an organization such as SWPONL is vital to any nurse leaders’ mission. Collaborative and innovative approaches at SWPONL allow the nurse leader to gain information on a broader scope and facilitate change by utilizing best practices shared. SWPONL’s vision of influencing nurse leaders in the future of healthcare within the southwest region of the state not only has local gains but national as well. I am a member of this organization to not only gain from the leaders and their experiences around me but to also share best practices that I have been able to experience and lead in my nursing career. I also find it beneficial to collaborate and network with those of your same professional makeup.

Nursing is an ever-changing field with new frequent challenges. This makes our profession unique but rewarding. We should stick together as leaders in our profession to help facilitate change and provide the optimal experience and outcome. I would like to have the opportunity to serve on the board of SWPONL not only to experience leadership at a regional level but to also help others that potentially could be experiencing professionally the same circumstances I could. The direction I would like to see the organization move to and also be involved with would include more of a focus on young leaders leading young professionals and how we can grow with the changing climate of healthcare and those challenges.

SWPONL Board Member at Large Candidates



Lisa Bryan-Morris, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Vice President Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer
UPMC Passavant

My interests and expertise align closely with the strategic direction of SWPONL over the next few years, and I have demonstrated an exemplary track record of accomplishing strategic goals while working in diverse and interprofessional teams. I am a strong advocate in promoting exceptional nursing leaders at all levels through innovative and highly engaging learning experiences; I have been instrumental in creating a diverse and inclusive workforce; and, I strongly support the role of nurses to advocate to shape the future of healthcare by getting involved in local or national campaigns on behalf of nursing or patient care. To build on these strategic initiatives, I believe we must improve healthcare equality experiences of our patients in clinical settings; and, I have a strong background in creating healthy work cultures in which nurses can thrive.

As a member of the Board of Directors At-Large, I would bring innovative ideas and creative problem-solving skills to the table for consideration and will partner with members of the Board to build consensus and champion those priorities agreed upon for the good of the membership. My professional networks span across the southwestern PA region and beyond, and I am considered a highly influential leader during times of rapid change and disruption. I consider membership in SWPONL to be a significant part of my formation as an emerging and now executive leader in nursing, and I am eager to help recruit new and emerging leaders from my own team and beyond.



Michele Carlson, MSN, RN, CPN, NEA-BC

Director, Acute Clinical Services
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

I respectfully submit for consideration my nomination for the Director-at-Large position for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders Board of Directors. My current role is the Director of Acute/Clinical Services at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. I have been a nurse for 34 years and leadership has been my passion for the past 25 years. Having a reliable leadership network has been a constant throughout my career and I believe strongly in the support and the comradery provided by SWPONL.

For the past two years I have had the privilege to serve as the SWPONL Membership Chair. This role has provided opportunities for collaborating with nurse leaders from the region as we try to meet a common goal of increasing our membership. The SWPONL region continues to be the region with the largest membership in the PONL organization! As the role of the nurse leader continues to have increased demands, the leadership educational offerings provided by SWPONL are always so welcoming and refreshing! If elected as a Director-at-Large, I am committed to the ongoing work of increasing membership diversity and inclusivity. I also believe leadership mentoring is an opportunity for SWPONL to explore in the future. Thank you for your consideration.

SWPONL Board Member at Large Candidates (continued)



Paula Eicker, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Senior Director
Hepatology, Intestinal Care, Transplant Services
Hematology/Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant
Neurodiagnostics
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

There are many organizations that focus on a specialized patient populations or nursing skills, but none are as beneficial as the leadership forum of SWPONL. Being a member of SWPONL has allowed me to network with fellow nurse leaders and receive current news regarding the scope of nursing practice within the same legislative law and practice guidelines of the state of Pennsylvania. I would enjoy serving on the board to not only develop stronger relationships with peers but also have the opportunity to improve my skills as a leader in a collegial setting.

I would like to see sharing of best practices as well as increasing the diversity of the group to yield a wide variety of ideas generated for improving the nursing practice, patient care and patient outcomes. One of the ideas I have would be to have a brief presentation (5-8 minutes each) of some of the outstanding posters that are awarded since many attendees may have viewed to poster but not have the opportunity for questions or remember the poster topic. I think my experience serving on a national board of directors helps in the collaboration and participation in additional boards. Increasing membership is key to sustainability but also in bringing forth additional ideas and topics of discussion. Over the next three years I would focus on nurses newer to the professional who are on the leadership track and want to succeed.

SWPONL Board Member at Large Candidates (continued)



Traci Fick, DNP, RN, NEA-BC

Vice President, Patient Care Services

Excelsa Health

Westmoreland & Frick Hospitals & Magnet Program Director

Membership provides access to a network of diverse nurse leader advocates from a variety of work settings; provides a wide range of resources to guide the decision making in nursing practice; and a collective nursing voice to influence the legislative decisions. Having a strong network of leaders to share solutions and to work together to advocate for nursing practice is invaluable. The resource links to the network of nurse leaders, legislative updates, specialty and focused educational events, as well as networking events to learn from each other is priceless.

Serving on the Board of Directors will provide me the opportunity to represent nurse leaders in a formal role. My progressive leadership experience provides me a foundation of knowledge and advanced leadership skills to utilize as an advocate for nursing practice. I have been a mentor for nurse leaders, and my recent work focused on the identification process of future nurse leaders. I would be able to contribute to the decision making in support of the mission focusing on the development of nurse leaders. I am a proponent and an example of life-long learning and have an interest in mentoring others while increasing levels of competency.

Increasing the opportunities for nurse leaders to collaborate while supporting professional development must be a continued focus. Expanding member diversity from non-traditional nurse leader roles will support dynamic information sharing. Mentoring through a succession planning process will strengthen the organization to remain a strong advocate for continued nursing education and the development of nursing leaders.

SWPONL Board Member at Large Candidates (continued)



Latasha Kast MSN, RN, CCRN, CNL

Clinician
UPMC Presbyterian

In accordance to my nursing philosophy, I believe that a successful leader contributes to the achievements of their peers. Through my experience at the bedside and within professional organizations, I believe my passion for nursing fuels my desire to serve and develop our professional nursing organization. SWPONL is a premier organization within Pennsylvania for all nurses. The Board of Directors continuously demonstrates the mission and vision of SWPONL to shape the future of healthcare through leadership, advocacy, and education.

As a member of SWPONL, the excitement and passion validated by 2019 Annual Education Conference attendees demonstrates the future of our organization. We have the opportunity to serve at the forefront of nursing practice change as leaders in healthcare. Membership in the SWPONL is a valuable experience, as it allows the sharing of knowledge and networking to enhance our profession locally and throughout the nation. I joined SWPONL as I transitioned into my formal leadership position. Becoming a member of SWPONL has taught me that a nurse is a leader, no matter the position or title. This attribute is a goal to enhance upon as we continue to grow our membership.

By serving on the SWPONL Board of Directors, I aim to build my leadership and advocacy skill through shared opportunities with our membership. SWPONL is uniquely positioned to support the future of nursing through the development of our members and networks. We can strive to provide events that best suit the needs of our membership through educational and advocacy opportunities.

SWPONL Board Member at Large Candidates (continued)



Jennifer D. Schroeter, DNP, MS, MLHR, RN

Director, Nursing Innovation and Performance Development
Allegheny Health Network

As a recent transplant to Pittsburgh, PA, I have had the opportunity to attend various nursing conferences (including the SWPONL 40th Anniversary conference) and I have been astounded by the passion and involvement of my new colleagues in professional organizations.

Up to this point in my career my primary focus was on advancing through work experience and achieving educational milestones. Now my goal is to expand my focus to the practice of nursing through service which includes an active role in professional organizations that promote innovation, education and personal and professional development.

I believe that the practice of nursing will only continue to advance as a vital profession in healthcare if we, the practitioners, continually grow our knowledge base, remain open to new concepts and practices, and retain a high level of excellence. One way to achieve this is through open communication and collaboration, even among competing organizations. As nurses, our focus is on high quality, evidence-based, innovative practice and how we can support each other in these endeavors. It is through professional organizations, such as SWPONL that nurses can collaborate and advance our practice.

Therefore, in order to grow professionally, further my goals and support my fellow nurses in reaching their own development goals, I respectfully submit my nomination for the Director-at-Large position on the SWPONL board. I would like to learn from those leaders currently guiding the board and contribute as a new member with a passion for the practice of nursing.



Jennifer Shoup MSN, RN, CCM

Manager Care Management, Clinical Training and Development
UPMC Health Plan

I dream of a world of health equity and treating humans with dignity and respect regardless of their diagnosis, geographic location, color of their skins, or gender/sexual identity. I feel that we need to be advocates for the nursing profession and for the people we serve in whatever capacity required.

As nurses, we need to continue learning and sharing what we learn to influence others and encourage people to “be the change you want to see in the world”. I believe as nurses, in greater numbers, we can make a difference on the issues our healthcare system is facing, even if it is one issue at a time. One of the ways we can help others within our profession is providing great leadership and mentorship, lead by example! I feel SWPONL is a great platform to accomplish change and to assist in transforming nursing practice to meet future demands in our ever challenging and evolving healthcare system.