

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 26, 2019

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This release is available online at aaacn.org/news

American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing Marks Highest Attended Conference in its History

Pitman, NJ – Reflecting the growth of health care delivery in outpatient settings, the recent [American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing \(AAACN\) 44th Annual Conference](#) in Palm Springs, CA, was the highest-attended national conference in the association's history. Nearly 1,300 nurses convened at the event to learn the latest practice advances from industry experts and network with their colleagues.

"These are exciting times for our specialty. The continuing growth of the conference, as well as AAACN's membership, shows that ambulatory care nurses are being recognized for their leadership and growing influence on patient care," AAACN President Kristene Grayem, MSN, CNS, PPCNP-BC, RN-BC, said. "AAACN is being called to collaborate with several nursing organizations and nursing leaders at the highest levels. Our voices are being heard. There is no better time to be an ambulatory care nurse!"

The conference drew nurses from all 50 states and internationally who attended a wide slate of education sessions. The courses were organized in three tracks that represent key areas of the [ambulatory care nursing specialty](#): [Care Coordination and Transition Management \(CCTM\)](#), [Leadership](#), and [Telehealth](#).

Those three areas have helped fuel tremendous growth in the ambulatory care specialty, as health care delivery continues to shift from inpatient facilities to more ambulatory care settings. This growth has been so significant that AAACN leaders presented at the conference a ["Year in Review" infographic](#) to celebrate AAACN's 2018 successes and achievements.

Other thriving areas of ambulatory care nursing include Patient/Staff Education, Pediatrics, Tri-Service Military, and Veterans Affairs. Each of these practice arenas are represented and served by AAACN's [Special Interest Groups \(SIGs\)](#). During the conference each year, the SIGs sponsor their own sessions and invite all new members and attendees.

In addition to the education sessions and SIG gatherings, conference attendees enjoyed special events, spoke with industry representatives in an interactive exhibit hall, and toured Palm Springs.

Conference Highlights

Outgoing AAACN President Kathy Mertens, DNP, MPH, RN, opened the conference on Wednesday, May 8, with the official "Welcome and President's Address." Foster's keynote presentation followed. The concurrent and general sessions continued through Friday, May 10.

During the conference, attendees also viewed 130 posters with innovations, case studies, and best practices presented by their nurse colleagues.

As in previous years, AAACN held a Silent Auction to help support members with scholarships, grants and awards. This year, the auction raised \$4,400, which included a generous donation from Shield Healthcare and the company's Houston Territory Representative, Laura Williams.

AAACN also debuted the new [Core Curriculum for Ambulatory Care Nursing, 4th Edition](#), and held a presale of the latest edition of the *Care Coordination and Transition Management (CCTM) Core Curriculum* (pre-orders will be taken on the [AAACN website](#) in July). Both books brought in record-breaking sale amounts.

The conference closed Saturday, May 11, with the [Ambulatory Care Nursing Certification Review Course](#) post-conference workshop.

New Officers Inducted



The AAACN Board of Directors (from left) CEO Linda Alexander, Treasurer Quanna Batiste-Brown, Secretary Christine Ruygrok, Director CMDR Assanatu (Sana) Savage, Immediate Past President Kathy Mertens, President-Elect Anne Jessie, Director Deena

Grayem, who is Vice President of Population Health at Akron Children's Hospital, Akron, OH, was inducted during the conference as AAACN 2019-20 president for a 1-year term. In this role, she will lead the AAACN Board of Directors (BOD) in fulfilling the association's strategic plan and steering the direction and vision of AAACN.

[Read more about Grayem](#)

Also inducted to the BOD as directors were Deena Gilland DNP, RN, NEA-BC, of Covington, GA; Christine Ruygrok, MBA, RN-BC, of Tujunga, CA; and CMDR Assanatu (Sana) I. Savage, PhD, DNP, FNP-BC, RN-BC, of Silverdale, WA.

[View current AAACN BOD](#)

Scholarships and Awards

At the conference, AAACN announced the new **Carol Rutenberg Telephone Triage Research/EBP Project Award** in honor of Carol Rutenberg, RN-BC, C-TNP, MNsc, a longtime, dedicated AAACN member. The award will be given annually to a member who works in a telehealth position for research in telephone triage. This award recognizes Rutenberg's contributions to AAACN and honors her work educating ambulatory and telehealth nurses. An online application for the award will be posted online in July 2019.

As in previous years, AAACN presented scholarships and awards to members during the conference. The 2019 award recipients are as follows:

- **President's Above and Beyond Award** (highest award to AAACN member(s) who exceeded the expectations of their volunteer roles):

- Stephanie Witwer, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, Pine Island, MN, was recognized for outstanding contributions to AAACN since joining in 2007. Witwer has made a significant impact in many roles that include serving as column editor and reviewer for *ViewPoint*, and speaker and poster presenter at AAACN conferences. Witwer helped create the *Care Coordination and Transition Management Core Curriculum*, serving as an author, reviewer, and expert panel member, and she co-chaired the RN Position Paper Revision Task Force. She served as co-editor of the *Core Curriculum for Ambulatory Care Nursing, 4th Edition*, and is currently editor of the *Ambulatory Care Nursing Review Questions, 5th Edition*. Witwer is also an active member of the Academic-Practice Partnerships Guidelines Task Force.
- Carol Rutenberg, RN-BC, C-TNP, MNSc, Hot Springs, AR, was recognized for outstanding contributions to AAACN since joining in 1997. Rutenberg has served in many volunteer positions, including contributor to the AAACN *Scope and Standards of Practice for Professional Telehealth Nursing*, *Core Curriculum for Ambulatory Care Nursing*, and *Care Coordination and Transition Management Core Curriculum*, as a member of the Nominating Committee, and as a conference presenter. Recently, Rutenberg gifted the content of her popular telephone triage course to AAACN. AAACN will develop its own online telephone triage nursing course based on the content of Rutenberg's proven education.
- **Research Grant (\$500):** Amy Ellertsen, MN, RN-BC, Hanover, NH. Grant will be used for research study, "The Effect of Daily Safety Huddle Attendance Frequency on Measures of a Culture of Safety in Internal Medicine Clinic."
- **Conference Scholarship** (members in nursing 2+ years): Elizabeth "Libby" Barton, RN-BC, Belton, TX.
- **Conference Scholarship** (new RNs in nursing 2 years or less): Victoria Billings, RN, Jacksonville, FL.
- **Education Scholarship:** Karen Mastrolonardo, BA, RN-BC, Mount Prospect, IL.
- **Clinical Excellence Award** (sponsored by the Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc. *Nursing Economic\$* Foundation, given to a AAACN member who personifies clinical excellence in ambulatory care; \$500): Amy Fulwood, BSN, RN-BC, VHA-CM, Hernando, FL.
- **Administrative Excellence Award:** (sponsored by the Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc. *Nursing Economic\$* Foundation, given to a AAACN member who personifies administrative excellence in ambulatory care; \$500): Stephanie Witwer, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, Pine Island, MN.
- **2019 ViewPoint Writer's Award** (given for an outstanding article published in the association's official newsletter, *ViewPoint*): Amy O'Dell, DNP, APRN, AGPCNP-BC, Advanced Practice Provider, Geriatric Rounding Service, Carle Physician Group LLC, Urbana, IL, for the article, *RN Training Toolkit Development for Value-Based Care Models*, November/December 2018.

[View Scholarship and Award Recipients](#)

[Learn more about AAACN Scholarships and Awards](#)

Online Library

Nurses who attended the full conference have access to an extensive source of CNE contact hours in the [AAACN Online Library](#), which can be used for certification and licensure requirements. For more information about accessing conference content, visit library.aaacn.org/aaacn

2020 Conference

The [AAACN 45th Annual Conference](#) will be held April 15-18, 2020, at the Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL. Poster abstracts are being accepted through December 15, 2019.

For more information about AAACN, visit www.aaacn.org; call: 1-800-AMB-NURS (1-800-262-6877) or email: aaacn@aaacn.org.

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*The American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing (AAACN) is a welcoming, unifying community
for registered nurses in all ambulatory care settings.*