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and care touch lives every day.*



33RD ANNUAL

Nursing Celebration

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2025



Welcome

President's Message

Good evening distinguished honorees, colleagues, and cherished guests,

It is both an honor and a joy to welcome you to the 33rd Annual Texas Nurses Association, District 9 Celebration Gala. Each year, this gathering serves as a heartfelt tribute to the remarkable nurses who form the backbone of our healthcare community. This event is more than a ceremony, it is a reflection of our shared dedication to uplifting and celebrating the nursing profession. Since its inception, the Celebration Gala has proudly honored more than 680 exceptional registered nurses from every area of practice. Each honoree represents the compassion, skill, and resilience that define nursing at its very best.

Over the years, nurses across Houston and the surrounding areas have faced unprecedented challenges from public health crises to natural disasters and have continued to stand strong, providing unwavering care and leadership. Their courage and commitment have upheld the reputation of our local hospitals and medical centers as among the best in the nation.

This evening's celebration would not be possible without the steadfast support of our sponsors, donors, and community partners. Your contributions enable TNA District 9 to fund scholarships, research grants, and professional development opportunities that strengthen nursing practice and advance the future of our profession. To those who took the time to nominate tonight's honorees, we also extend our gratitude. Your recognition of excellence ensures that outstanding nurses receive the acknowledgment they so richly deserve.

A special expression of thanks goes to Mr. Shawn Vaughan, an esteemed leader in our business community, for his ongoing commitment to recognizing nurses who go above and beyond in service. Through his generosity, we are honored to present the Noble Nurse Award for Selfless Community Service. This is an award that highlights nurses who extend their healing reach beyond hospital walls and into the broader community. We are deeply thankful for Mr. Vaughan's vision and his dedication to shining a light on the extraordinary work of nurses.

Tonight is a time for reflection, connection, and celebration. Whether you are a past honoree, a first-time guest, or a long-time supporter, your presence here affirms the spirit of unity that defines TNA District 9. As we enjoy this evening together, let us also look ahead with renewed commitment—to continue advocating for, supporting, and empowering the nurses who care for us all. We invite you to join us in sustaining this mission by making a contribution of any size to support TNA District 9's ongoing programs. Together, we can ensure that nursing excellence continues to thrive for generations to come.

Thank you, and enjoy this wonderful evening of recognition and celebration.

Angie Rangel

Angie Rangel, PhD, DNP, RN, NPD-BC, LNC

President

Texas Nurses Association, District 9



TEXAS NURSES DISTRICT 9 FOUNDATION

Program

5PM Registration, Silent Auction, and Cash Bar

6PM Dinner and Awards Ceremony

EMCEE

Amy K. McCarthy DNP, RNC-MNN, NE-BC, CENP



Dr. McCarthy is the Chief Nursing Officer at Hippocratic AI, where she leads efforts in leveraging generative AI to enhance access to healthcare. A passionate advocate for transformational, heart-led leadership, McCarthy is dedicated to creating innovative, patient-centered, and nurse-supportive environments through cutting-edge technology and policy influence. Dr. McCarthy currently serves as President of the Texas Nurses Association and previously held a Director-at-Large position on the American Nurses Association Board of Directors, where she worked to address critical issues such as safe staffing, workplace violence prevention, and racial equity in nursing.

WELCOME

Dr. Angie Rangel, President, Texas Nurses Association, District 9

RECOGNITION OF SPONSORS

Karee Carter, Chair, Corporate Sponsors

Dr. Angie Rangel, President

Dr. Edtrina Moss, President-Elect

Dr. Emily Weber, Director

PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT'S AWARD

PRESENTATION OF CATALYST AWARD

PRESENTATION OF DOROTHY OTTO LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. Angie Rangel, President

PRESENTATION OF OUTSTANDING NURSE AWARDS

Dr. Terry Throckmorton, Chair, Nominating Committee

Dr. Pamela Windle, Co-Chair, Nominating Committee

PRESENTATION OF NOBLE NURSE AWARD

Mike Gorbet, Mike Calvert Toyota

Dr. Angie Rangel, President, Texas Nurses Association, District 9

PRESENTATION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANTS

Dr. Brenda Binder-Sylvester, Chair, Scholarship and Grant Committee

Dr. Lucindra Campbell-Law, Co-Chair, Scholarship and Grant Committee

Dr. Pamela Windle, Co-Chair, Scholarship and Grant Committee

CLOSING COMMENTS

Dr. Amy K. McCarthy, President, Texas Nurses Association

Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Diana Blair, BS, MSHCA, BSN, RN, OCN, CHPN, MEDSURG-BC

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital

Ms. Blair has received the UTMB School of Nursing Clinical Excellence Award, Hospital, 2nd Place Crowning Achievement in Nursing Award, and the I CARE Award from her institution. She is the chair of the shared governance Infection Prevention No Harm Council and is involved in all policies related to infection prevention such as preventing CLABSI, CAUTI, and C. Diff and those related to oncology nursing. Currently, she is working on creating a pathway for developing inpatient chemotherapy/immunotherapy credentialed nurses. She is a board member of the WOW chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society, a member of Sigma, ANA/TNA, the Hospice and Palliative Care Nurses Association (HPNA); and the American Organization of Nursing Leadership (AONL). She is a role model for all staff nurses and mentors them for leadership in nursing organizations. She is active in advocacy attending Nurse Day at the Capitol and her experience in Austin was featured in the Texas Nursing Magazine.



Jacqueline Brock, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, CCHP, CPHQ, LSSGB, FNAP

Harris Health

Dr. Brock is a transformational leader mentoring her leaders through numerous educational opportunities including monthly in-services to leadership groups on succession planning, climate versus culture, zoom in/zoom out, executive presence, productivity hacks, managing conflict, High Reliability Organization, psychological safety, accountability, and managing happiness. As the Executive Vice President & Chief Nurse Executive, she is responsible for approving over 400 policies and procedures that impact clinical/nursing practice across the system. She sponsored the Ambulatory Opioid project for 3 clinics in collaboration with Harris County, assisted the Harris Health Food Bank and the LBJ Garden to support food for patients in need within the system. She has served as co-investigator or investigator for several research studies and has developed numerous QI projects including CAUTI and CLABSI bundles, a system wide Fall Reduction program, and as Executive sponsor for DVT/PE reduction. Dr. Brock is currently leading an initiative to increase electronic incident reporting to support good catches and near misses to improve patient safety and take a proactive approach to risk management. She is an active member of numerous professional associations and has presented at the associated conferences. She is a strong leader fostering staff retention, staff/patient safety and improving outcomes.



Ben Castillo, BSN, RN, CMSRN

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Ben Castillo is a Nurse Clinician in Diagnostic Imaging at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, who demonstrates dedication to mentorship as well as improving patient safety and outcomes. Ben served as a United States Army combat medic and participated in several medical missions across Central America. He currently serves as a Captain in the Texas State Guard medical unit and volunteers his time for the medical teams at Wings Over Texas and the MS 150, as well as other Houston running and triathlon events. His commitment to patient safety is demonstrated by his initiative to improve the process and streamline the workflow for patients requiring sedation before MRI procedures. Ben serves on the Nursing Practice Congress at his institution and is also involved in the local chapters of the Oncology Nursing Society, previously serving as President and currently as Director at Large of the Way Out West Chapter, and member of the Houston and Galveston Bay Area Chapters. He exhibits excellence in mentoring new nurses as a Certified Clinical Coach, especially male nurses who are traditionally underrepresented in the field, demonstrating professionalism and compassion, and emphasizing the importance of fiscal responsibility and financial literacy to his peers.

Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Janie Connor, MSN, RN, OCN

BAYER Pharmaceuticals

Janie Connor, a nurse educator, certified as an oncology nurse, has a green belt in Six Sigma, and is certified in Value-Based Health Care. She has PROSCI (Pride, Caring, Respect, Accountability, Flexibility, Teamwork) Change Management Certification. Received the 2021 President's Award, 2020 NAM Recognition Award, and the Network Nurse Excellence Committee Award in Leadership. She has served as a captain and participant in Relay for Life Teams, volunteered to support/work free cancer screenings annually (skin and oral cancer screening), an American Cancer Society team organizer, fund raiser and booth worker, a Hospice annual fundraiser, volunteer for St Luke's Hospice, and Zero Team volunteer & fundraiser for prostate cancer. Ms. Connor directed regional office development and earned CHAP certification through evidence-based infection control and quality assurance measures. She served on the Oncology Care Model Development Team and created a Community of Practice (CoP) for oncology nurses. She is a member of ONS, HCONS, Southern Nursing Research Society, Texas Nurses Association, and Association of Oncology and Patient Navigators.



Nick Escobedo, DNP, RN, OCN, NE-BC

Houston Methodist Cypress Hospital

Dr. Nick Escobedo is the Associate Chief Nursing Officer at Houston Methodist Cypress Hospital. He is a transformative nurse executive driving policy changes and protocol development across multiple institutions. In his current role, he was the pioneer who helped to create the Houston Methodist Cypress Neil Cancer Center service line implementing the SDOH screening aligned with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging goals. He actively participates in institutional initiatives, including widespread technology integrations (IV pump interoperability, EPIC optimization), stewardship programs with cost saving measures and reduction in length of stay inpatient, process improvements and research translation by co-leading prevention strategies reducing CLABSI and CAUTI rates annually and expanding infusion capacity improving patient access. He is recognized locally and nationally through his leadership roles serving as President of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation, Board Member of the American Organization for Nursing Leadership, and President of the Houston Organization for Nursing Leadership. He engages others to pursue leadership roles and advance certification, bridging practice, policy and education through all his professional presentations nationally and internationally. He is deeply committed to equitable health care and access to all, elevating the nursing profession, and stewardship through policy leadership, patient advocacy and professional mentorship.



Aleza Gabriel Espinosa, MBA-HCM, BSN, RN, CVRN-BC

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

As an experienced Clinical Nurse Manager, Aleza Gabriel Espinosa exemplifies the very essence of nursing excellence, leadership, and community service. As a recipient of the Outstanding Filipino Nurse Award, she stands as a shining example of professionalism, compassion, and dedication to the highest standards of patient care. Tenured in highly reputable institutions within the Texas Medical Center, Aleza demonstrated extensive nursing leadership and clinical expertise in complex healthcare environments with significant contributions to quality improvement initiatives, focused on increasing vaccination rates among vulnerable populations. Her visionary leadership has consistently advanced patient care excellence, achieved exemplary satisfaction metrics while reducing healthcare-associated infections. As the Immediate Past President of the PNAMH, Aleza had strong partnerships with diverse organizations, elevated visibility of the nursing profession and an increase in membership. Her distinguished career has been marked by passionate advocacy and improvement for community health, education and outcomes as she led numerous community efforts, initiating health awareness educational series for adults and seniors to promote disease prevention and wellness. Aleza's enduring service, leadership, unwavering dedication to community and compassion truly embody what it means to be a distinguished, tenured leader, a role model whose impact continues to inspire colleagues and uplift the profession.

Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Monica Herrera, DNP, RN, MEDSURG-BC, CNML

Harris Health - Ben Taub Hospital

Dr. Monica Herrera is a Medical Surgical Director of Nursing at Ben Taub Hospital. Dr. Herrera is a nurse leader who has championed advocacy for policy updates and changes at Ben Taub Hospital, including guidelines for the administration of IV push medications, interdisciplinary assessment and reassessment of patients in the Observation Unit, patient identification, patient allergies, and Falls prevention policies. She demonstrates dedication to fostering professional and personal growth in others through her role as one of the facilitators in the Emerging Leaders Program which assists novice leaders or any staff aspiring to be in leadership roles in enhancing their clinical, critical thinking and leadership skills. Dr. Herrera's commitment to patient safety and quality care is exemplified in her active participation in several unit-based initiatives including HAPI Prevention, CAUTI Prevention, CLABSI Prevention, Restraints, and Fall Prevention through evidenced-based practices that are integrated into clinical care impacting patient outcomes positively. Embodying the heart of nursing through compassion, resilience, and mentoring with every opportunity, Dr. Herrera connects with patients, staff and colleagues professionally and personally.



Brittany Lloyd, BSN, RN, MEDSURG-BC

Memorial Hermann Greater Heights Hospital

Brittany Lloyd has been instrumental in advancing patient safety, quality outcomes, and professional nursing excellence across her organization. She serves as Chair of the Skin Integrity Committee and has been a driving force behind major patient safety and quality achievements including the AMSN Prism Award and the AACN Beacon Gold Award in Nursing Excellence. As Patient Experience Champion, Brittany helped guide FY25 Nursing Patient Satisfaction (NPS) scores toward target, with a strong rebound in the last quarter. She has sustained hand hygiene compliance above 90% for 11 out of 12 months, reflecting a culture of safety and accountability. She evaluates outcomes, promotes staff accountability, and reinforces evidence-based practices to meet NSI and other organizational metrics. She also serves as an active member of the organization's Employee Resource Groups BOLD (Black Organization for Leadership Development) and EMERGE (Emerging Leaders ERG), where she supports professional growth, mentorship, and advocacy. She is active in the community volunteering at the local YMCA, Houston Food Bank, and her neighborhood community resource center.



Deltra Muoki, PhD, APRN, AGNP-C, CMSRN, CNE, NE-BC, CPHQ

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital

Dr. Deltra Muoki is a Nurse Scientist at the Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital, where she has made significant contributions to nursing practice including the development of algorithms, documentation templates, program curriculum, and competencies. She chairs/co-chairs organization-level committees such as the Advancing Nursing Practice Shared Governance Council and the Research and Evidence-Based Practice Council; presents at local and national conferences; writes and reviews abstracts and articles; and serves as a mentor. She actively participates in professional organizations including the Texas Nurses Association District 9 and was appointed a Member of the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses Digital Content Committee; and served as an item reviewer for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and World Journal of Nursing Research, to name a few. She is also active in community projects including I CARE in Action for the Habitat for Humanity, Career Day 2022 Dr. Ronald McNair Junior High School and serves as a Houston Methodist-Sugar Land ambassador.

Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Oluchukwu Loveth Obiora, PhD, RN, EBP-C
Texas Woman's University

Dr. Oluchukwu Obiora is an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing at Texas Woman's University, where she continues to be a strong advocate for enhancing quality of healthcare for women through her research, clinical expertise, and education of future nurses. Dr. Obiora's interest and engagement have been in the areas of lactation, maternal weight gain in the third trimester of pregnancy, female genital mutilation and family planning practices which have been published in 15 peer-reviewed manuscripts and 3 book chapters. She also serves as a consultant for Veritas Health Innovation Ltd., an NGO located in Melbourne, Australia. Recently, Dr. Obiora participated in the Center for Health Equity Research (CHER) Summer Institute to further her research trajectory she had established during her Hillel Friedland Post Doctoral Fellowship at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. She was named Distinguished CHER Fellow in June 2025. Dr. Obiora strives to equip the future nurses in providing patient-centered care, bridging care gaps, and fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach to nursing practice.



Kelly O'Donnell, MSN, RN, OCN
University of Texas Medical Branch

Kelly O'Donnell is a Nurse Manager in Ambulatory Operations at the UTMB, where she has been instrumental in streamlining care delivery by creating standing order sets for labs and anticoagulant management. Together with a nurse practitioner, she designed a guideline for endocrine management for diabetic patients, allowing over 1200 patients to be redirected to their primary care providers for follow up, freeing space for new consults and reducing readmission rates. She facilitated the transition of pain procedures from the operating room to a Pain procedure suite, reducing institutional costs, expanding procedure capacity and increasing patient satisfaction scores, helping this clinic earn the Always Award for Patient Satisfaction. Kelly is a Daisy Award winner, leadership mentor for the UTMB Ambulatory Professional Practice, Policy and Standard Work Committee, and mentor to nursing students. She presented in services to the American Association of Medical Assistants and serves as the membership chair for the Galveston Bay Area Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society, as well as volunteering in her community on PTA and Little League Boards. She is a visible leader who exemplifies professionalism, collaboration, and continuous improvement, and guides emerging nurse leaders to understand how nursing practice connects to broader organizational goals and patient outcomes.



Amanda Ordonez, PhD, RN
UT Physicians

Dr. Amanda Ordonez has served as a mentor, educator, and role model for all nurses at all levels in her leadership roles as Dean of Academic Affairs at Chamberlain College of Nursing, Director of Nursing at College of the Mainland and currently, as the Senior Nurse Manager at UT Physicians. She continues to guide faculty and students fostering professional growth and excellence. Dr. Ordonez combines evidence-based practice with strategic leadership through her initiation of policy and practice improvements including the integration of the SBAR communication tool in patient portals enhancing interdisciplinary communication and patient outcomes. Dr. Ordonez secured numerous grants such as the Texas Workforce Commission JET Grant and Nursing Innovation Grant Program. She has been instrumental in transforming health care quality. She assisted UT Physicians earn the Internal Medicine Clinic recognition as Clinic of the Quarter demonstrated in improvements in patient satisfaction and performance metrics. Dr. Ordonez has an unwavering commitment to nursing through her continued mentoring, innovative vision, and guidance of those joining the workforce.

Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Mikela Pettigrew, BSN, RN, OCN

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Mikela Pettigrew is an Inpatient Leukemia Clinical Nurse and the Chair of the Nursing Practice Congress at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, where she has made significant contributions toward improving nursing policy and patient outcomes. Most notably, she created a project to improve patient confidentiality by adding a color identifier on the medical record of patients who wish to remain confidential, visible before opening the patient's medical record. Working with Nursing Informatics, she also began a patient safety initiative in which a new hazardous drug symbol is added on the patient list within EPIC, triggered by the patient's Medication Administration Record. Mikela serves on multiple hospital and unit committees, was nominated by her leadership team for the Rising Star Program, has mentored and precepted more than 15 new graduate nurses, and serves as the Houston Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society (HCONS) Secretary, all while working towards her MSN in Nursing Administration. She strives every day to improve patient care and the policies and procedures for nurses in her hospital and models the vital importance of committee involvement to make these changes.



Natalie Richards, MSN, RN, NPD-BC

Texas Children's Hospital

Natalie Richards is an Accredited Provider Program Director and co-Director of the Graduate Nurse Residency program at Texas Children's Hospital. Ms. Richards holds certifications as a nursing professional development specialist and a health profession education specialist. As a nurse leader, she plays a pivotal role in championing policy changes in nursing continuing education and has been instrumental in fostering a culture of continuous learning and excellence in patient care. Ms. Richards is also an adjunct faculty at the University of Texas Arlington College of Nursing. Natalie is an active member of Texas Nurses Association, several State and local nursing organizations and on the board of the Houston Chapter of the Association of Nursing Professional Development as the Treasurer and Community Outreach Director. She is a passionate advocate for patients, students, nursing staff in promoting a patient and family-centered approach to care. Her co-workers and peers admire her dedication and remarked that she is an inspiration to the nursing profession and consistently works towards excellence and producing remarkable outcomes.



Patricia Schrader, PhD, RN, CMSRN

University of Houston

Dr. Schrader is the Clinical Associate Professor and Associate Dean at the University of Houston. She has received numerous awards including Teaching Excellence Group Award, University of Houston, a feature in the Houston Chronicle, "UH College of Nursing Salutes Professor Set to Expand Katy," Clinical Practice Award, Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses, and Good Samaritan Bronze and Silver Awards for Nursing Education. Dr. Schrader has served for 10 years in various leadership positions of the Phi Chi Chapter of Sigma. She is an academic who freely shares her time with both fellow faculty and students. Dr. Schrader formally mentors the new members on the administrative team at the College of Nursing. She provides education, mentoring, and employee training to all faculty. She shares her knowledge with students at onboarding orientation and throughout their program. Dr. Schrader serves on numerous university committees, has presented at the local, state, and national levels on such topics as implicit bias, interprofessional education, and high-fidelity simulation, and has numerous publications. She is an excellent role model for faculty and students.

Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Maregina "Gina" Shankar, PhD, RN, AMB-BC

Harris Health - Ben Taub Hospital (Retired)

Dr. Shankar exemplifies excellence in nursing leadership, education, clinical practice, and humanitarian service. With more than 34 years of dedicated service to Harris Health System and continued impact through professional organizations and international outreach, she embodies the highest standards of the nursing profession. Dr. Shankar has demonstrated expertise in advancing clinical practice, opening state-of-the-art specialty clinics, leading evidence-based practice initiatives, and sustaining exceptional patient outcomes. She has served as a professional role model through her leadership in Ben Taub Hospital and Philippine Nurses Association of Metro Houston, serving as past president, mentoring countless nurses, and committed to providing quality Nursing care. She has been awarded the Outstanding Filipino Nurse, Knights of Rizal, recognized as one of the Houston Chronicle Top 15 Nurses, and Outstanding Alumni of the Year at Southern Islands Hospital. Her community engagement spans both Houston and underserved global populations, where she has organized and led humanitarian medical-surgical missions benefiting thousands. She obtained assistance from local politicians, local hospitals, surgeons, nurses and other resources to have three successful medical mission trips to underserved areas of the Philippines. Her lifelong commitment to professional excellence, patient advocacy, and the advancement of nursing is her true success.



Rosario Suico, MSN, RNC, ACM-RN, NPD-BC

Harris Health - Ben Taub Hospital

Rosario Suico (Rose) is a Case Manager at Ben Taub Hospital. In her entire nursing career, she has made significant contributions to nursing practice and research, development/revisions of policies and protocols related to Nursing Clinician IV, CIRP; abstract applications, exemplify EBP to solidify nursing practice, and innovative in implementing best practices. Rose has authored/co-authored multiple abstracts and EBP projects, presented in-services through posters, lectures, and podium presentations either within the organization and professional organization conferences, such as Sigma Theta Tau International, TWU Founders Day Conference, American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing, and American Case Management Association. She devoted and championed early ambulation for patients at the early stage of hospitalization. Her latest accomplishment and due to her diligent, incredible work: the Harris Health system change occurred in confirming the identity of the patient by asking the name of the month, and not the number associated with the month. She is an active member of several organizations including ACMA, STTI, ANPD, and PNAMH/PNAA. She continues to mentor staff nurses and always inspire other colleagues to provide the best effective and efficient practice. Rose was a recipient of the INSPIRE Research award and Houston Chronicle's TOP 15 Salute to Nurses.



Maria Vo, BS, BSN, RN, OCN

University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Ms. Vo is a Clinical Informatics Resource Nurse and certified as an Oncology Nurse. She has achieved Nursing Professional Advancement Model, Level 4, is a graduate of LEADing Self Discover, Exploring Leadership, and she has held Texas Educator Certification. As a graduate of the Leadership: Self Discover program she has received training which she shares with her peers. She serves as a Diversity Council Member sharing education on diversity law and programs, educates nurses on prevention of workplace violence, and on health and wellness in the workplace. In her role as a patient ambassador, she helps patients move more smoothly through the system to receive the best uninterrupted care. She also supports students as they work on the unit to facilitate their access to a variety of experiences. She mentors ONS chapter members in association leadership and regularly encourages them to serve on the board. Ms. Vo is a member of the Filipino Young Professionals, Board Member, McGown Elementary VIPS, Beauty of McGown liaison, McGown Elementary Active Parent volunteer, and is a Houston Children's Chorus, Parent Volunteer. She is a member of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology, ONS, and the Way-Out-West Chapter of ONS, serving as a board member.

Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Gail Vozzella, DNP, RN, NEA-BC
Houston Methodist Hospital

Dr. Vozzella is the Chief Nurse Executive at Houston Methodist Hospital. She is certified as a Nurse Executive and has completed the Wharton School of Nursing Leadership Program. She is active in the community as a board member of El Centro de Corazon, board member and quality committee member for Cenikor Foundation, board chair, Avondale House, chair, adult services committee, and fundraising committee member. She serves on advisory boards for Texas Christian University (Nursing Leadership Advisory Council), UT Health Cizik School of Nursing Leadership Advisory Council, and University of St. Thomas. Dr. Vozzella has spoken at conferences on topics such as the workforce shortage, working with the next generation, and maximizing engagement. She has initiated numerous practice improvements including strengthening of the arm of Houston Methodist Nursing Research in partnership with the Research Institute, a unique Nursing Fellowship Program allowing selected staff nurses to perform research or evidence-based quality initiatives for three months, without clinical responsibilities, partnered in the elimination of Emergency Center diversion, and expanded the Kangaroo Transport Team with state-of-the-art tracs and an ECMO transport program. Dr. Vozzella is an excellent leader and advocate for staff and patients.



Gayle Young, MSN, RN, NPD-BC
Texas Children's Hospital

Gayle Young is a Nursing Professional Development Specialist at Texas Children's Hospital. Gayle's focus on education supports continuing education and simulation-based learning across the system at Texas Children's including leading several initiatives: implementation of Rapid Cycle Deliberate Practice in PALS simulation training, hospital-wide roll out of Resuscitation Quality Improvement (RQI-BLS), and Zoll defibrillator conversion training. Committed to patient safety and lifelong learning throughout the hospital system, Gayle developed ambulatory emergency response training and standardized Patient Care Assistant workshops. She is recognized locally and nationally through numerous publications and presentations on professional development, patient safety, and evidence-based clinical practices. She is active in her community serving on the Project ADAM Advisory Board which brings CPR education to schools helping over 30 campuses be HeartSafe. Gayle is an ambassador for the nursing profession through her mentorship, leadership and dedication to professional development.

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President's Awardee

Kelsey R. Saddoris



Kelsey Saddoris is the Association Manager for the Texas Nurses Association, District 9. Though she isn't a nurse, nursing has always been close to her heart. Her grandmother, Carol Coats, was a beloved psychiatric nurse and the namesake of the TNA District 9 Carol Coats Scholarship, and her aunt, Melanie Truong, currently serves as Treasurer and previously as Association Manager. Having grown up around TNA, Kelsey has a lifelong admiration for the nursing community and is proud to continue her family's connection to the organization. Through her role, she helps bring TNA District 9's mission to life by coordinating events, communications, and member programs. Her dedication and behind-the-scenes leadership have earned her the 2025 President's Award.

Catalyst Awardee

Karee Carter, MSN-Ed, RN, MEDSURG-BC, CRRN, WTA



After an accomplished bedside nursing career at Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital, Karee Carter transitioned into academia as a faculty member with the College of the Mainland Nursing Program. She brings over 25 years of experience as a Physical Therapist Assistant and Certified Nursing Assistant, blending her deep clinical expertise with a passion for mentoring the next generation of nurses.

Karee is an active member of the Texas Nurses Association District 9 Board of Directors, where she serves as a Director, Chair of the Professional Development Committee, and member of the Annual Celebration Committee. Her commitment to excellence and professional growth has been recognized through multiple honors, including the 2024 Good Samaritan Bronze Award for Nursing Excellence and the Texas Nurses Association District 9 Top 20 Outstanding Nurse Award.

Dorothy Otto Lifetime Achievement Awardee

Pamela Windle, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CPAN, CAPA, FAAN, FASPAN



Dr. Pamela Windle is a distinguished nurse leader and adjunct faculty at the University of St. Thomas Peavy School of Nursing with extensive experience in clinical, organizational, and professional nursing leadership. Currently, she is the System Director of Nursing at Harris Health, overseeing over 200+ licensed nurses and was the Chair of the INSPIRE Research/EBP Committee for three years at Ben Taub Hospital. She has been very active with several nursing organizations, such as the PNAA/PNAMH, ASPAN/TAPAN, PNAMH Foundation, SUCNAAI, AAN, ONS, STTI, CSPA, ASPMN & AORN. Dr. Windle served as a board member for several terms and was a Past President of the Texas Nurses Association (TNA) District 9, and active with several committees with TNA District 9, especially with the annual Nursing Celebration. She is the co-chair of the Nomination Committee and Scholarship and Grants Committee.

As the Executive Director and Past President of the Philippine Nurses Association of Metro Houston, she volunteers with several health fairs locally and assist with the yearly medical missions. She is also a Eucharistic Minister at Holy Ghost Catholic Church. Throughout her career, she has had a long-term dedication to volunteerism over the decades. A past national President of the American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (ASPAN), Dr. Windle was instrumental in developing ASPAN's Evidence-Based Practice model, collaborated with John Hopkins in developing the ASPAN Safety guidelines, and Workplace Violence Policy. Pam has published several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and delivered numerous presentations nationally and internationally. Currently, she is the co-editor for the PeriAnesthesia Nursing Core Curriculum book, 2nd - 4th edition. Pam was also a previous Research columnist for the Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing.

Dr. Windle holds three certifications: two from ABPANC and one from ANCC, and has earned degrees from Silliman University in the Philippines (BSN), Texas Woman's University (MS in Nursing Administration), and UT Health Cizik School of Nursing (DNP in Nursing Administration & Leadership). Her exceptional contributions to nursing leadership, education, Research/EBP, and practice have earned her recognition as a Fellow for both the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN) and the American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (FASPAN). She is recognized for her role model, mentor and coach for nursing staff and colleagues.

Mike Calvert Toyota



Huey-Ming Tzeng, PhD, RN, FAAN

Dr. Huey-Ming Tzeng is a tenured Professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, serving in the School of Nursing's Ph.D. Program. She holds a leadership role in higher education and has received formal leadership training through the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS). She is also an appointed Senior Fellow at the Sealy Center on Aging. Dr. Tzeng's research interests center on quality of care and patient safety for older adults, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of individuals with dementia and their family caregivers. Her research fosters interdisciplinary collaboration among patient and caregiver partners, clinicians, policymakers, biostatisticians, geriatricians, rehabilitation specialists, health services researchers, and small industry partners to develop and evaluate user-friendly approaches utilizing emerging health technologies.

A prolific scholar, Dr. Tzeng has authored and co-authored numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and several book chapters. Her dedication to advancing quality patient care is further reflected in her leadership as principal investigator on multiple grants funded by the NIH and other prestigious organizations. Beyond her academic and research contributions, Dr. Tzeng is an active advocate within the professional and scientific community. She serves on a variety of local, state, national, and international committees, including the UTMB Grant Review and Oversight Committee; the Research, Education, and Community Health (REACH) Coalition; and the Southern Nursing Research Society (SNRS) as a Conference Abstract Reviewer and Scholarly Projects contributor. She has also served as an invited abstract reviewer for the Alzheimer's Association International Conference® (AAIC®) through the Scientific Program Committee and as a Board Member and Research Chair of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Alpha Delta Chapter.

Dr. Tzeng is widely recognized as a role model for colleagues across all levels of practice. She fosters a culture of mentorship and service, guiding emerging scholars and clinicians to advance the nursing profession. She is an active member of numerous scientific societies, professional organizations, and community associations such as the rotary club, Alzheimer's association, meals on wheels, consistently promoting evidence-based initiatives that enhance clinical outcomes for vulnerable patient populations.

Scholarships and Grant Recipients

TNA D9 Scholarship

Elijahkim Mabute, MSN-FNP, RN, RN-BC

Doctorate Nursing Practice (DNP)

University of Texas - Austin

Jasmine Perkins, MSN, RN

Doctor of Philosophy

Texas Woman's University

Pamela Windle Scholarship Recipient

Jacob Pate

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

University of Texas Medical Branch

D9 Grant Recipient

Faith Tissot, MSN, RN, CCRN

Texas Woman's University

Title of Study (Dissertation): Reflections Unveiled:

A Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Mirror Viewing in Young Adults Aging Out of Foster Care

History of Scholarships and Grants

The Texas Nurses Association District-9 (TNA D9) has a long-standing commitment to advancing nursing education and professional development through its history of scholarships and grants. For decades, TNA D9 has supported nursing students and practicing nurses across the Texas D9 districts by funding educational opportunities and research initiatives. These scholarships and grants help ensure a strong, well-prepared nursing workforce dedicated to improving health outcomes and promoting excellence in nursing practice. In addition, these investments reflect TNA's unwavering belief that supporting nurses today strengthens the health and well-being of communities for years to come.

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Pass the CCRN Exam with Danielle Hardin, MSN, RN, ACNP-BC, CNS, CCRN



I work full-time as a PRN Nurse Practitioner, and I started Grit Nursing to help educate my colleagues and other nurses on critical care best practices. I partnered with Lindgren Media to produce the CCRN Exam Prep Series. Released in July 2025 it immerses participants in the critical care environment, preparing them for real-world challenges. Featuring 1,200 meticulously crafted quiz prep questions, detailed notes, and expert-verified answers. The course provides 19 contact hours accredited by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN), which can be obtained by viewing all lecture videos and passing the post-test with a score of 80% or better. Visit gritnursing.com.

ReferralZen by Capella



From fax to first visit in minutes, not hours. ReferralZen is an AI-driven document automation process that tracks every referral, verifies insurance requirements, manages authorizations, and populates your EHR, all while your team stays in control. Book patients 75% faster, reduce denials by 40%, and keep referring providers informed. Most importantly, patients get care faster.

Capella Solutions' experienced professionals utilize cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence (AI) and software development to assist healthcare organizations in managing and analyzing their data and documentation more efficiently. Popular tools include Referral Zen, which reduces fax referral review times; Nurse Note Helper, which provides real-time quality improvement audits; and Performance Data Summary, which offers real-time quality metrics. Select QR code for more information.

Faces of Nursing by LINDGREN MEDIA



Faces of Nursing is a documentary project with initial development by TNA District 9 volunteers that identified eight areas of focus to help better define nursing's unique history throughout Houston and surrounding areas. This regional nursing history conveys nursing roles in community, education, research contributions, technology, diversity, disaster relief, military, politics, and The Texas Medical Center. Visit facesofnursing.org

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GREAT JOB, EVERYONE.

Harris Health values the roles our nurses play as skilled caregivers and visionary leaders. They have helped us earn numerous awards for quality care, nursing excellence and innovative programs.

Tonight, it's their turn. We celebrate our nurses for their well-deserved honors at the Texas Nursing Association, District 9, 33rd Annual Nursing Celebration Gala.

Thank you, team. And congratulations to all of tonight's honorees.

2025 Outstanding Nurse Honorees



Jacqueline Brock



Monica Herrera



Maregina Shankar
(Retired)



Rosario Suico

Dorothy Otto
Lifetime
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Award



Pamela Windle



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CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Patricia Schrader



*For educating the
future of nursing!*

TEXAS NURSES DISTRICT 9 FOUNDATION



Philippine Nurses Association of Metro Houston (PNAMH)

proudly extends its sincerest congratulations to four outstanding members for their remarkable achievement.



Lifetime Achievement Awardee
Pamela Windle, DNP, NE-BC, CPAN,
CAPA, FAAN, FASPAN
PNAMH Executive Director
Past President



Top 20 Houston Nurses
Gina Shankar, PhD, RN, Amb-BC
PNAMH Executive Director
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Top 20 Houston Nurses
Aleza Espinosa MBA-HCM, BSN,
CVRN-BC
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Top 20 Houston Nurses
Rose Suico MSN, RNC, ACM-
RN, NPD-BC
PNAMH Member

33RD ANNUAL NURSING CELEBRATION

TEXAS NURSES ASSOCIATION
DISTRICT 9

2025 OUTSTANDING NURSE



DELTRA MUOKI

PhD, APRN, AGNP-C, CMSRN, CNE, NE-BC, CPHQ

Honored as one of the 2025 Outstanding Nurses for excellence, leadership, and dedication to advancing nursing practice and patient care.

“Believe in your purpose, trust your path, and honor those who lifted you.

Your journey is the light that inspires others to rise.”

Celebrating Excellence in Nursing Leadership and Education



WE CELEBRATE OUR NURSES

Congratulations to our Houston Methodist nurses who have been honored for excellence in nursing!

Our dedicated team of nurses provides the highest quality of care to every patient, every day. We proudly recognize their commitment, sacrifice and selflessness and for the difference they make to our patients and our community.

Thank you, Houston Methodist nurses. We honor your excellence in service to our community and for being nominated for this illustrious award:

Diane Blair

Nick Escobedo

Deltra Muoki

Gail Vozzella



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Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

Provide primary care for patients of all ages.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

Deliver evidence-based mental health care for individuals and families.



For Working Nurses

Most students keep their jobs while they finish. Some courses include limited on-campus labs or simulations to strengthen clinical skills.



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TEXAS NURSES DISTRICT 9 FOUNDATION

Congratulations!

Celebrating Excellence in Nursing



Dr. Oluchukwu Loveth Obiora, PhD, RN, EBP-C
Assistant Professor, College of Nursing
Texas Woman's University

We proudly honor your achievement as one of the **Top 20 Outstanding Nurses of 2025**, recognized by the **Texas Nurses Association District 9**. Your dedication, leadership, and commitment to advancing healthcare inspire us all.

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!

Special Thanks to our Sponsors



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Joylyn Estrella
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Kristin Johnson
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TNA D9 Board

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CATALYST AWARD

Angie Rangel

DOROTHY OTTO LIFETIME

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

& MIKE CALVERT NOMINATIONS

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GIFT CARD TREE/HEADS OR TAILS

Serena Tobar, *Chair*
Nursing Students

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Karee Carter, *Chair*
TNA D9 Board

VIDEOGRAPHY

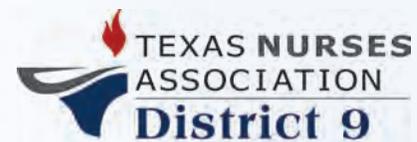
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*Best Wishes To
Texas Nurses District 9 Foundation
On Your
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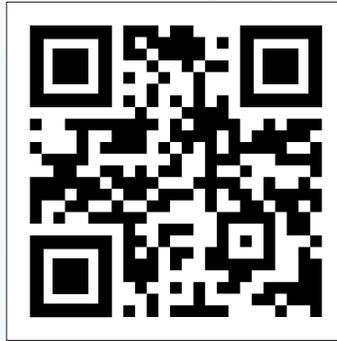
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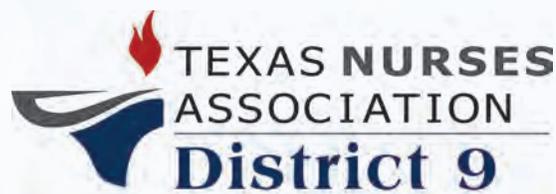
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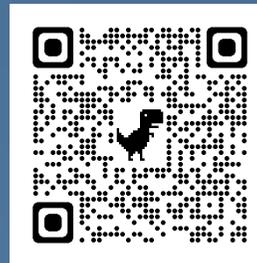
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