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A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

All the best to all of you and a Happy New Year! We are starting off the quarter with hope for a very productive and stimulating Winter Quarter. There are some exciting developments for students this quarter.

The three-year Balanced Stride MENP program will be admitting students in the Spring 2025. We welcome the new students and look forward to providing a slower pace for students who need to balance work, family and school. We will be starting a new study focusing on mindfulness and self compassion in the

Spring Quarter. We hope to have students learn how to manage stress and anxiety through meditation and self compassion. Watch for a recruitment email in March. I will be recruiting students in April 2025.

At the end of the Spring Quarter I will be stepping down as director. I will go back to the work that I love, teaching.

Quote on Perseverance: "It always seems impossible until it's done."
– Nelson Mandela (1918–2013), South African anti-apartheid leader

Dr. Kim Siarkowski Amer, PhD, RN



WELCOMING NEW FACULTY AND STAFF



The School of Nursing would like to offer a sincere welcome to all new faculty and staff members that have joined our community. Without the dedication and commitment our faculty and staff has to serving our students, our School would not be where it is today.

Thank you for joining DePaul University's School of Nursing! Here's to an amazing start to 2025 with our Winter Quarter!

Adjunct Faculty:	Tiffany Vandivier, Simulation Educator in the Simulation & Nursing Labs
Alcantara, Estela	
Steckbar, Kristen	
Lyskawka, Michael	
Cronin, Emmalynn	
Burke, Erin	
Carlisle, Sally	

WELCOMING NEW FULL-TIME FACULTY AND STAFF



The School of Nursing welcomes Madeleine Carter, BA; Data and Technology Specialist

I have recently joined DePaul as a Data & Technology Specialist. My background is in computer science; I just completed my undergraduate degree from Northwestern in June. I did not have any previous experience with nursing before joining the department, but I am passionate about academia and higher education, so I very much enjoy being able to work with students and faculty, as well as learning about a new discipline. I am also interested in pursuing my Master's in the near future, which is another reason I chose DePaul.





WELCOMING NEW FULL-TIME ACULTY AND STAFF, CONTINUED

The School of Nursing welcomes Melissa Budahazy, APN, MA, RN

Nursing is my second career after international relations. I was most inspired by the nurses I met while working on global health projects, and decided to attend the accelerated BSN program at Georgetown in 2010. I then started teaching while working on my Adult-Gerontology MSN at The Catholic University of America. At that time, I worked as a clinical instructor with veterans who were pursuing their BSN and a lab instructor for nursing assessment skills. After graduating in 2017, I worked for many years as a full time neurology APN at Rush then NorthShore University Health System (now Endeavor Health) specializing in migraine, dementia, and autonomies. Once the pandemic passed, I reflected on what I truly loved, and realized I missed teaching and the academic environment. In spring 2024, I joined DePaul's School of Nursing faculty. For the past four quarters I have taught Health Assessment and Health Assessment II. I'm excited to be part of a community with strong commitments to both science and faith.



Upcoming Events

NEWS, EVENTS, AND DAYS TO BE AWARE OF

For a comprehensive list of academic timelines and deadlines, you may view the [Academic Calendar](#).

- February 6: Spring Registration Begins. Check your email for your specific day/time!
- February 19: [Winter Networking Event](#) hosted by [DSNA](#) and [Sigma](#)
- March 19: National Certified Nurses Day!
- March 21: End of Winter Quarter
- May 21: Nursing White Coat Ceremony~ Save the date! This will be held at 6:30 PM at the Lincoln Park Student Center. More details will be sent out shortly!
- April 8: Student Nurse Political Action Day- [Conference with ANA-IL in Springfield, IL](#)
- April 17: Innovations in Clinical Inquiry Research Conference





CALL FOR A GUEST SPEAKER AT LINCOLN PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Lincoln Park High School is seeking black and/or brown nursing students or recent nursing graduates to come to their "Career Talks Series" to reflect on what it means to be a nurse. This opportunity is a chance for you to inspire and educate a younger

generation on any challenges that you've faced in the pursuit of your career, as well as informing them of key takeaways that you have from your learning experiences.

The career talks are held from 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM on the following dates: Feb 4th, 6th, and 11th; March 4th, 10th, 11th, and 13th. If you are interested in signing up to become a guest speaker, please contact Terence Young at: tryoung4@cps.edu and Dr. Ariel Sylvester at: asylves5@depaul.edu



NETWORKING EVENT BY DSNA AND SIGMA

Join DSNA, Sigma, faculty, students, and recent graduates for a chance to learn more about different nursing positions, current nurse residency programs at local hospitals, and the importance of having mentors in your nursing career.

This event will allow you to have a chance to hear from several recent MENP graduates working in different specialty areas. Light refreshments provided.

Register by February 14th [here](#) or using the QR code!

**WED,
FEB 19**

REGISTER HERE!



RSVP BY 2/14

**WINTER
NETWORKING
EVENT**



**MCGOWAN
SOUTH**

LINCOLN PARK CAMPUS
ROOM 104
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Sigma

Zeta Sigma Chapter





STUDENT NURSE POLITICAL ACTION DAY ON FEBRUARY 8TH

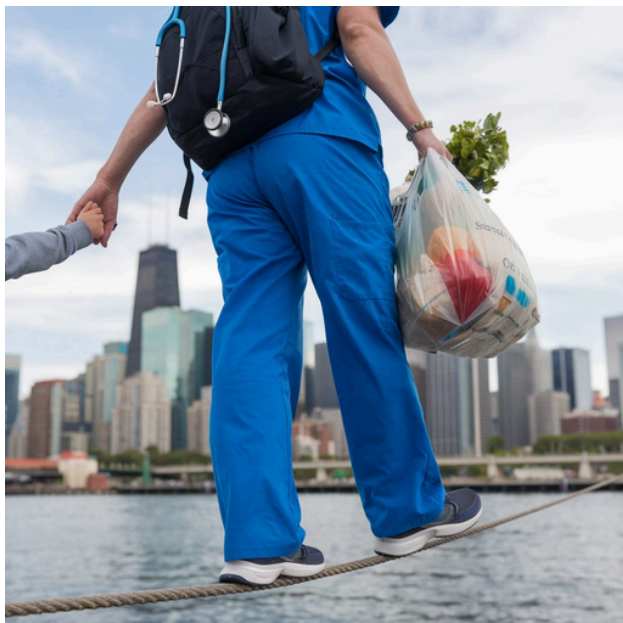


American
Nurses
Association
Illinois

The American Nurses Association is hosting their Student Nurse Political Action day on February 8th, from 7:30 AM – 2:30 PM with special Keynote Speaker RaDonda Vaught. Vaught's speech will highlight her personal story on how a medication error revealed to her systemic issues within medical facilities and the implications that can have for Nursing Practice and Healthcare Policies.

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY

Conversations to Remember is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to combating loneliness and isolation felt by older adults, including those living with dementia. Many of these older adults have been suffering from isolation, and you could really brighten their days just by speaking with them! Conversations to Remember offers virtual volunteering options, such as chatting with older adults, assisting with their social media, call support, and outreach. You can register to volunteer by filling out a volunteer interest form on [their website](#).



INTRODUCING: BALANCED STRIDE A 3 YEAR MENP TRACK

Our new Balanced Stride – Master's of Entry into Nursing Practice (MENP) program has launched!

What's the difference between the Balanced Stride track versus the standard MENP? Balanced Stride is suited for students who are seeking to go to school while also balancing their daily life (i.e. work, parenting, etc.) Balanced Stride encompasses the same courses as the standard MENP track; however, Balanced

Stride is completed over the course of 3 years, instead of 2 years per the standard MENP track. For more information, please view the [MENP Program Admission page](#).

You may view a side-by-side comparison of the standard MENP track versus the new Balanced Stride track [here](#).





INNOVATIONS IN CLINICAL INQUIRY RESEARCH CONFERENCE



On Thursday, April 17th, from 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Lurie Children's and Shirley Ryan AbilityLab will host their 7th Annual Nursing Research Conference, providing the nursing community a chance to "pursue their clinical questions through scholarship, clinical inquiry, research, innovation, pediatric evidence-based practice, and translational science (Lurie Children's)." There is also an open call for poster presenters! Professional and student work are both welcome. [You may register to be a poster presenter here.](#) [You may find more event and registration information here.](#)

Any questions regarding poster presenting may be sent to: NRC@luriechildrens.org

CZECH REPUBLIC: GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM STUDY ABROAD

The Graduate Nursing Program examines health care in the Czech Republic from a political, social, economic and ethical lens. Last quarter, our students had the incredible opportunity to learn with Czech medical and nursing faculty, students, and administrative policy makers about the contemporary changes in nursing science and practice in national and European contexts.

This experience abroad allowed students to draw parallels and contrasts to health care policies, practice and access in the United States. With rising global concerns regarding access and affordability of health care, the program helps DePaul students acquire knowledge of international responses to similar issues.

Throughout the program, students visited a variety of cultural landmarks in Prague, Strakonice, Ceske Krumlov, and Ceske Budejovice. These landmarks include castles, palaces, cathedrals, museums and historical sites.





POST-LICENSURE PROGRAMS LEADERSHIP CHANGES

An important update from Dr. Roxanne Spurlark regarding leadership changes for Post-Licensure programs...

*“Dear Students,
I hope this message finds you well. I’m excited to share important updates about leadership transitions and opportunities within the Post Licensure Programs, which include the DNP, RN to MSN Specialty, and Post-Graduate Certificate programs.*



Roxanne Spurlark
DNP, APRN-FPA, FNP-C

New Role Announcement

I am delighted to announce my transition into the role of

Senior Associate Director of Academics and

Engagement. In this position, I will collaborate closely with leadership, faculty, and support staff across all programs in the School of Nursing to enhance student engagement, strengthen academic support systems, and ensure your academic journey is supported at every step.

Associate Director Appointment

I am also pleased to introduce **Dr. Lisa Biancalana-Marsh** as the new **Associate Director** for the DNP, RN to MSN Specialty, and Post-Graduate Certificate programs. Dr. Biancalana-Marsh brings exceptional vision and dedication, and under her leadership, we anticipate exciting opportunities to enrich your educational experiences and foster innovation within these programs.

Continued Support of Current Leadership Team

Our leadership team remains strong and cohesive:

Dr. Julia Feczko will continue to serve as the Administrative Director for Endeavor Health and SRNA student oversight.

Dr. Ursula Canli remains the Assistant Director for the RN to MSN Specialty and Post-Graduate Certificate programs.

Monica Wojinicki will continue providing vital support as the Post Licensure Student Success Coordinator.

These leadership transitions position us to provide even greater support, innovation, and opportunities for you. Please be on the lookout for all the great things to come. Your dedication to your studies and the nursing profession inspires us to continuously improve and evolve. Wishing you continued success!”





CBSL - LITTLE BROTHERS - FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY

The School of Nursing's Community Based Service Learning (CbSL) MENP students joined Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) site last Quarter, in November of 2024.



Pictured left to right: MENP Students Raven Chung, Caitlin Kletzien, Ines Husnic and Morgan Smith.

LBFE serves the elderly community in a multitude of

ways, "...providing steadfast friendship to thousands of older adults who no longer have friends and family to rely on (LBFE)." Our MENP students were involved with planning and executing social events, offering community and companionship to the participants. They were also involved with food and meal deliveries.

Thank you, students, for giving back to our elderly community!



Pictured left to right: MENP Students Daniel Lee, Liam Higgins, Amara Onuagha, Suleman Hai and Matthew Wong.

CBSL - BE THE MATCH

Last quarter, the School of Nursing's Community Based Service Learning (CbSL) MENP students participated in The National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). "As a global nonprofit leader in cell therapy, [NMDP, formerly known as Be the Match] help[s] find cures and save lives for patients with blood cancers and disorders." NMDP

hosts blood donation drives, which our MENP students served at. Their work consisted of signing up, screening and registering potential donors.

A highlight of this experience occurred when a match came through one of those drives. Work such as this greatly impacts our community, teaching us all that our contributions matter.

Thank you, students, for your service!

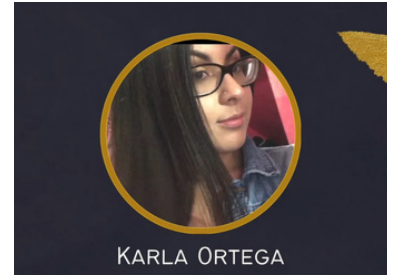




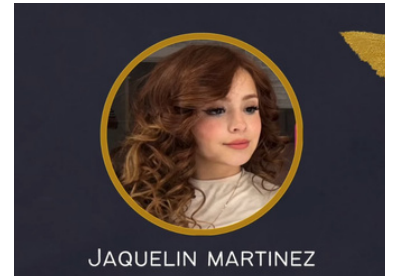
STUDENTS AWARDED NAHN SCHOLARSHIPS

Two Master's Entry into Nursing Practice (MENP) students, Karla Ortega and Jaquelin Martinez, were selected by the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) of Illinois to receive scholarships. This esteemed scholarship is only awarded to those who demonstrate volunteer commitment and academic excellence. NAHN describes the recipients as having the "potential to act as role models for aspiring nursing students."

Sincerest congratulations to both students for their achievements and excellence!



KARLA ORTEGA



JAQUELIN MARTINEZ



HEALTH FAIR VOLUNTEERS

Quarter 3 students (Murtada Issa-Yarrow, Kristy Urquiza, Murshid Issa-Yarrow, and Diana Vera Gonzalez) volunteered at "Fall Family Health Fair" with the National Association of Hispanic Nurses of Illinois. The Fair, hosted by Representative Will Guzzardi and Alderman Carlos Rosa,, provided the community with free flu shots, COVID-19 vaccines, blood pressure and HIV/STI screenings, and more! Thank you, students, for your service!

DR. HOULIHAN'S ABSTRACT ON INFORMAL CAREGIVER KNOWLEDGE

Assistant Professor Dr. Mary Clare Houlihan's, PhD, MS, RN, abstract, "The Role of Informal Caregiver Knowledge and Health Literacy in Home Hospice Pain Management, was chosen as a distinguished abstract for Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) 49th Annual Research Conference in March.

Congratulations Dr. Houlihan!





DR. BYRD PUBLISHED TWO ABSTRACTS

Dr. Stephanie Byrd recently had two publications accepted. The first focuses on educational intervention, titled, "Evaluating the Impact of Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss Educational Intervention for Primary Care Providers to Improve Patient Outcomes in ORL Head and Neck Nursing."

The second, titled "Nurses' self-efficacy and knowledge: A pre- and post- study on reeducation for patient self-management of Type 2 diabetes mellitus" demonstrated a link between T2DM management knowledge and DSME education programs for LTC nurses. To find out more information regarding the study's findings, please visit [SCIEDU's Peer Reviewed Online Journal](#).

Congratulations, Dr. Byrd!

DR. S. GONZALEZ, RECIPIENT OF THE NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Adjunct faculty Susana Gonzalez, MHA, MSN, RN, CNML, was 1 of 3 finalists for the Nurse of the Year Award by the Illinois Nurses Foundation on December 7, 2024. Dr. Gonzalez is known for being "...a trailblazer in nursing, [for] her leadership and commitment to health equity. As adjunct faculty at DePaul University, she has guided future nurse leaders, with one mentee earning the 2024 UsAgainstAlzheimer's Brain Health Equity Nurse Fellowship. A member of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses, Susana tirelessly addresses social determinants of health and advocates for policy change. Honored with the 2024 Daisy Award for Advancing Health Equity, she continues to inspire and impact patients, students, and colleagues (Illinois Nurses Foundation)."



Dr. Susana Gonzalez (left) and Dr. Jennifer Sandoval (right)





ATTENDANCE OF ANA-IL'S "PROFESSIONAL ISSUES CONFERENCE"



The American Nurses Association of Illinois "Professional Issues Conference" featured keynote speaker, RaDonda Vaught, who was the subject of one of the highest profile healthcare criminal cases in recent years. DePaul MENP Quarter 6 student, Alexa Perez, attended with Dr. Jennifer Sandoval. Among the group were fellow nurses from the National Association of Hispanic Nurses.

CLINICAL PRACTICE AWARD RECIPIENT DR. JENNIFER SANDOVAL

Jennifer Sandoval DNP, MSN, RN was awarded the Clinical Practice Award by the American Nurses Association (ANA) Illinois. This award "recognizes an exemplary nurse who provides evidence of a high level of skill in in-patient care through improving clinical practice and patient-centered outcomes (ANA-IL)."



Read more about Dr. Sandoval's accomplishment on [ANA-IL's article page](#).

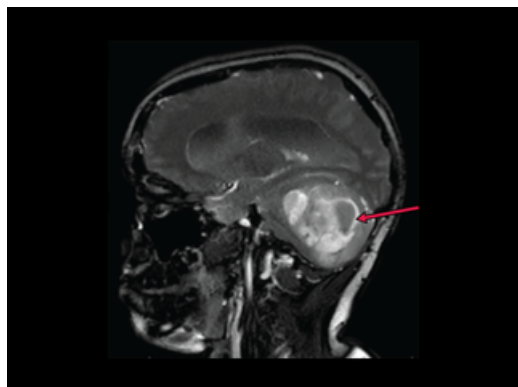


INNOVATION AMONG NURSES

Molly Netter PhD, MSN, APRN-FNP, BSN, BSC had her abstract "The Embodiment of Innovation Among Nurses" accepted for presentation at the June 2025 International Council of Nurses Congress in Helsinki, Finland! Dr. Netter states, "Prior to my involvement with Society of Nurse Scientists, Innovators and Leaders (SONSIEL) I had no idea that "nurse innovators" even existed. We conducted this research Last May, and I was impressed to interact with nurses from all over the globe, from the hub of global innovation- Silicon Valley to war torn Turkey. I am talking about life-changing ideas, by nurses. We should be proud of our profession."

Congratulations, Dr. Netter!





An MRI scan of a child with a low-grade glioma near the cerebellum.

Credit: *Pediatric Hematology Oncology Journal*. June 2023.

ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DePaul University 2018 Alum, Ash E. Walter (RN, MSN, CPEN), was the clinical scientist on the team to get a BRAF-Targeted Drug approved by the FDA.

The National Cancer Institute (NIH) published an article featuring Walter's accomplishment, stating that "On April 23, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted accelerated approval to Tovorafenib (Ojemda) for kids aged 6 months or older who have low-grade glioma, a type of brain tumor, with changes in a gene called BRAF. The approval applies to tumors that can't be completely removed with surgery or have come back after surgery. To receive Tovorafenib, children must also have already received one prior systemic treatment, such as chemotherapy, after surgery."

This accomplishment could not be possible without the clinical scientists involved who facilitated rigorous studies to track the effects for years prior to its approval.

To read more about Walter's work, you may visit [The National Cancer Institute's News and Event's page](#).

TUTORING AVAILABLE

Need some extra assistance? Tutoring is available to help with nursing skills you have learned throughout the program. Our simulation lab graduate assistants are here to assist you on your journey to becoming a nurse! They offer skills tutoring on the second floor at 990 W Fullerton, helping you review skills like wound care, starting IVs, tracheostomy care, head to toe assessments, and any other skills you have learned throughout the program. Students from ALL quarters are encouraged to sign up for skills review. It is good practice to review skills from previous quarters so that you are prepared if the opportunity to perform a skill arises during your clinicals. If you are interested in receiving tutoring, please set up an appointment with nursingtutoring@depaul.edu in Outlook.

You can also get in touch directly by emailing NursingTutoring@depaul.edu.





MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Need to talk to someone? DePaul's University Counseling & Psychological Services (UCAPS) offers several FREE counseling groups where you & your peers can work together with a mental health professional. [Visit UCAPS's website here](#) to view a comprehensive list of the counseling groups that they offer.

Receive 24/7 Access to Mental Health Support by dialing DePaul's Support Line at 773-325-CARE (2273), press option 1 when prompted.

In case of an urgent or life-threatening emergency, please call 911. If you are on campus, you may call Public Safety: 1-773-325-7777 (Lincoln Park) or 1-312-362-8400 (Loop)

WANT TO BE FEATURED IN THE NEWSLETTER?

We want to celebrate our community for all of their nursing accomplishments!

If you have something that you'd like to share in our next newsletter issuance, or even on our Instagram page, please reach out to our newsletter & social media editor, Sydni Henderson, at: shende31@depaul.edu!

STAY IN THE LOOP

Follow us on [Instagram @depaulnursing](#) to stay up to date regarding nursing news and events!

New Title IX Rules protecting pregnant, lactating & parenting students are here!



Have questions? Need support?
Contact DePaul's Office of Gender Equity
titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu
or Professor Dana Merk in the
School of Nursing dana.merk@depaul.edu

More information here

