

NOVEMBER 2023

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the PA Section of AWHONN

Hello PA AWHONN Members!

We had over 120 attendees at our PA AWHONN Fall Virtual conference. We had amazing speakers on trauma-informed care, finding joy in work, perinatal bereavement, infant skin care, intimate partner violence, and implementing Count the Kicks.

We are excited for our next event, our Spring In Person Conference on April 5th at the Gettysburg Hotel in Gettysburg PA. We will be holding a pre-conference on April 4th and a Cocktail Hour that evening for some fun and networking.

This issue:

Introduction & Convention Recap
PAGE 01

Section Chair's Corner
PAGE 02-04

Membership Updates & Call for Student Interns
PAGE 05

Chapter Updates
PAGE 06-07

Legislative Corner
PAGE 08-09

Save the Dates
PAGE 10

Contacts & Chapter Map
PAGE 11



PA AWHONN Spring Conference
LET'S GROW TOGETHER
Save the Date!
April 4th - 5th, 2024

ATTEND THE PA AWHONN SPRING CONFERENCE AT THE GETTYSBURG HOTEL!
1 LINCOLN SQUARE GETTYSBURG, PA 17325

APRIL 4TH PRE-CONFERENCE TIME TBD
APRIL 4TH 6-8P NETWORKING AND COCKTAIL HOUR
APRIL 5TH SPRING CONFERENCE 8 AM - 4:30 PM

Details will be forthcoming as we solidify the agenda.

Please MARK YOUR CALENDARS we hope to see you there!

Our Fall Conference was supported by **Relias OB**. **Relias OB** is personalized data-driven learning that enables high reliability.

Relias champion an adaptive approach to learning with assessment-driven personalized learning to reduce variation in care, increase critical thinking skills, and improve patient safety outcomes. <https://www.relias.com/get-started>

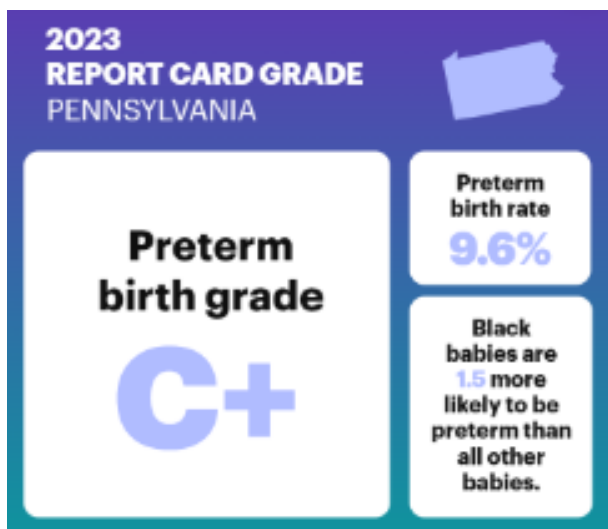
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Section Chair's Corner

BY ADRIANE BURGESS PHD, RNC-OB, CCE, C-ONQS, CPHQ, FAWHONN

With each newsletter, we aim to raise awareness and share information related to the most recent maternal, infant, or women's health-related awareness months. October was Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month and November is Prematurity Awareness Month.



The March of Dimes just issued their 2023 Prematurity report card, and the nation earned a D+, and Pennsylvania along with 6 other states earned a “C+” (Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Utah).

Although as a state we earned a C+, there are significant disparities in outcomes. The preterm birth rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.5x higher than the rate among all other babies.

The March of Dimes shares several other things you can do now to help in addressing Prematurity.

- Advocate for #BlanketChange by calling on legislators to pass The PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2023. Begin today at <https://p2a.co/wxg8qin>.
- Donate today to help fund lifesaving research and community programs that keep families healthy and strong at marchofdimes.org/donate-now.
- Partner with March of Dimes to bring greater awareness and resources to fight the maternal and infant health crisis at marchofdimes.org/partner.
- Share: Use our social toolkit to share the Report Card and your state's information on social media—be sure to tag @marchofdimes and use #PrematurityAwarenessMonth and #WorldPrematurityDay.



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working together for stronger, healthier babies

Section Chair's Corner continued...

BY ADRIANE BURGESS PHD, RNC-OB, CCE, C-ONQS, CPHQ, FAWHONN



In November the CDC (2023) issued 2022 provisional data on the U.S. infant mortality rate. In 2022, the infant mortality rate rose 3 percent, the highest increase in two decades. Researchers noted larger increases for two of the leading causes of infant deaths — maternal complications and bacterial meningitis.



Working to improve the health of reproductive-age women, focusing on improving health before and between pregnancies are important strategies to reduce maternal risk factors for preterm birth.

Addressing modifiable risk factors for prematurity, especially smoking, substance use, and obesity, and helping women to manage chronic illnesses prior to pregnancy have the potential to improve both maternal and neonatal outcomes. Addressing social and racial inequalities, supporting access to quality care, and improving care coordination all are key to improving outcomes.

One of the evidenced-based strategies we learned about at our Fall Conference that has the potential to impact both maternal and fetal outcomes is Count the Kicks.



Count the Kicks is a program of Healthy Birth Day, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing stillbirth.



Count the Kicks teaches expectant parents the method for, and the importance of, tracking fetal movement every day in the third trimester of pregnancy. Research shows a change in a baby's movement is the earliest and sometimes only sign there might be an issue with pregnancy and indicates that both mom and baby should be checked by a provider immediately.

In Pennsylvania, 782 babies are lost to stillbirth each year. With the standardized implementation of the Count the Kicks program across Pennsylvania, Healthy Birth Day believes on average 250 babies per year in Pennsylvania could be saved.

Section Chair's Corner continued...

BY ADRIANE BURGESS PHD, RNC-OB, CCE, C-ONQS, CPHQ, FAWHONN



Expectant parents can track their baby's normal movement patterns using the free Count the Kicks app, available in 16 languages. The app helps moms count movements, rate the strength of movements, set a daily reminder, count for twins, and more. Providers around the country recommend kick-counting to their pregnant patients and Count the Kicks provides educational tools and resources to make kick-counting easy. The program has helped save babies in 36 states and five countries.



Learn more about their vision to save 7,500 babies annually and improve birth outcomes everywhere at www.CountTheKicks.org. Low-cost materials are available on their website - order today to start saving babies from preventable stillbirth in Pennsylvania today!

Consider ordering these free materials and sharing information on the importance of fetal movement counting with your patients (friends and family) today! Spread the word about Count the Kicks!



References

Count the Kicks Retrieved from <https://countthekicks.org/statistics/pa/>

Ely DM, Driscoll AK. Infant mortality in the United States: Provisional data from the 2022 period linked birth/infant death file. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Statistics Rapid Release; no 33. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2023. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15620/cdc:133699>

March of Dimes 2023 Report Card Retrieved from <https://www.marchofdimes.org/about/news/2023-march-dimes-report-card-shows-modest-improvement-us-preterm-birth-rate>

March of Dimes 2023 <https://www.marchofdimes.org/report-card>

Shapiro-Mendoza CK, Barfield WD, Henderson Z, et al. CDC Grand Rounds: Public Health Strategies to Prevent Preterm Birth. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2016;65:826–830. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6532a4>

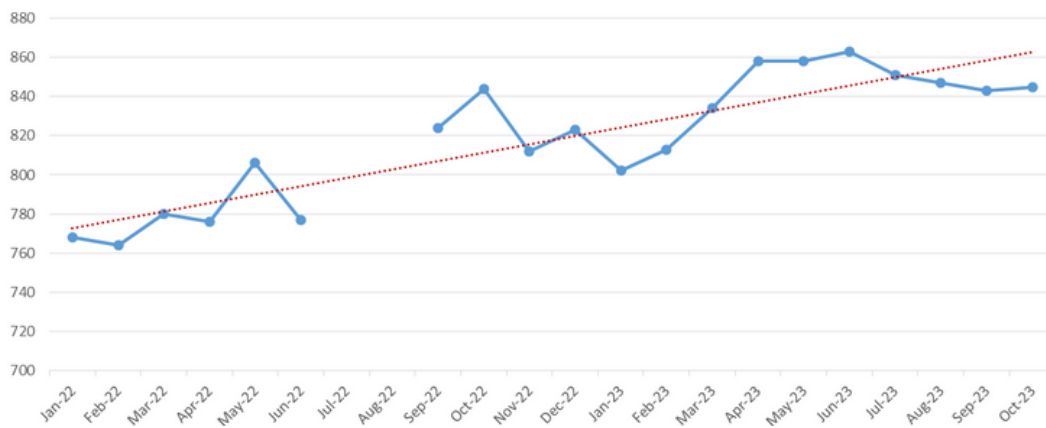
Membership Updates

BY CAROL MCILHENNY PHD, RN--SECRETARY TREASURER

We're Growing! AWHONN PA is growing. As you can see by the trend line, the trajectory indicates that we are continuing to grow. We want to hear from our members (and others considering membership) so we know what topics you want to hear!

There are many benefits to AWHONN membership: both print and e-journal access, and discounts to AWHONN-sponsored events (among many others). But did you know that benefits vary by the type of membership you hold? With a full membership, there are many more opportunities for you. Full memberships allow you to vote in elections, apply for scholarships and awards, and hold office. Consider sharing the member benefits with your friends, colleagues and coworkers who aren't current members. You can have them go to this [LINK](#). If you're not a full member yet, you can view this [LINK](#) to consider upgrading to full membership!

Total PA Section Membership



Call for Student Interns!

Each year, the Pennsylvania section of AWHONN will accept applications for a student nurse intern. The intern must be a nursing student currently enrolled in any type of nursing program, in the state of Pennsylvania, entering their final year of their program.

Student interns should show a commitment to the mission and vision of AWHONN and have a passion for the women's health, obstetric, and neonatal nursing. Each student intern's term will run from May-May.

We are looking for our next set of interns to start May of 2024!

For a full list of duties and requirements, keep an eye on your inbox! Applications will be live beginning in March and will be sent out with our February newsletter.



SouthWest Chapter

CHAPTER LEADERS: DR KATE ENDRES AND DR KAREN COYNE

The Southwest Chapter is working to bring AWHONN to YOU! Reach out to arrange an AWHONN meeting at your hospital covering topics important to you and your team.

Our section is HUGE! So let's work together to have a HUGE impact on maternal health in Pennsylvania!

We are inviting you to our next chapter meeting on December 11th 5pm-7pm!

[Register Here!](#)



SOUTHWEST PA AWHONN CHAPTER MEETING
DECEMBER 11TH, 2023 5PM-7PM

WE ARE INVITING YOU!

Learn about Applying Trauma Informed Care to the Perinatal Setting!

1.5 CEUs are being applied for!

Pizza and Refreshments will be provided!

UPMC ALTOONA HOSPITAL ROTUNDA
620 Howard Ave,
Altoona, PA 16601

REGISTER HERE, JUST SCAN WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE!

South Central Chapter

CHAPTER LEADER: TONYA WERT

For the South-Central Chapter, we will be starting informal virtual meetings every other month called "Sip, Share and Shine" sometime after the first of the year.

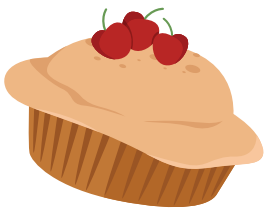
Sip: beverage of choice

Share: discuss professional or workplace issues, interesting articles, local news and events, hot topics

Shine: showcase professional, facility, or personal accomplishments.

More information is coming soon!





SouthEast Chapter

CHAPTER LEADER: JANE DONOVAN

Please contact Jane Donovan with any questions at jdonovan365@gmail.com

NorthWest Chapter

CHAPTER LEADERS: KIM BOGART AND JENNIFER YOUNG

Hello from the NW PA Chapter of AWHONN! Since we last updated you, your chapter has been busy representing AWHONN at the UPMC Hamot Strong Nursing Symposium and the AHN Birth Trauma Workshop. Both of these events allowed us the opportunity to talk with nurses and student nurses from around the area about the many benefits for AWHONN. For 2024, we would like to plan more events and need your feedback on in-person or virtual options.

We invite you to join our next (informal) meeting on Wednesday, December 13th at 10am via Zoom. We will use this time to discuss local events for the coming year.



Details below:

Zoom Meeting: Wednesday, December 13th at 10am
Meeting ID: 930 7704 7418
Passcode: 513200

For questions, please contact co-chairs Kim Bogart or Jenn Young
nursekim71@yahoo.com or jenn.young79@gmail.com

NorthEast Chapter

CHAPTER LEADER: ELISSA CONCINI

On October 4th the NEPA Chapter enjoyed a learning session about rare disorders in pregnancy.

We look forward to increasing our chapter events in 2024!



Legislative Corner

BY: GERRI MAURER DNP, CRNP, FNP-C, RNC-OB, MPM AND
ALANNA HENDRICKSON



The Legislative Committee has been organized for our PA section!

Gerri is the PA section Legislative Coordinator and had a terrific response to a request earlier this year for volunteers to participate. We have had a Legislative coordinator from our chapter in the past, but not a committee. We have 9 members with good representation across the state. We have a student Intern assigned to the committee, Alanna Hendrickson from University of Pennsylvania, and she is one of our 3 student interns for this coming year. Alanna is helping Gerri with the committee organization process. We also have a student volunteer, Paula Hayden-Vazquez from University of Pittsburgh, who was an intern in DC last summer with Senator Cardin from MD and interested in legislative policy development.



New committee members:

Nancy Cupps

Regional Director Women's Services UPMC
South Central Chapter

We have good representation in the southern chapters, but we are **still looking** to find a representative from the **Northeast** and **Northwest** chapters. Ideally, we would like to have representatives from all chapters if we can find them. If anyone is interested, please let us know.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2024! We are taking off the month of December to accommodate those who celebrate holidays then. Alanna will make sure the meeting minutes are posted on the Section page for anyone who wants to keep up with our activity.

Coming up in January:

We will be putting together a presentation for committee members and any members interested in how to develop a personalized letter to state or federal congressional leaders to make an impression, and get our point across!



Committee Activity:

Ellen Taylor from the Southeast chapter is a member of the national AWHONN Public Policy Committee and keeps us updated about the most current discussion the Public Policy Committee has at their monthly meetings. Currently, the public policy committee is performing a survey to determine the 2024 Legislative Agenda for AWHONN.

Seth Chase, who is the Director for Government Affairs at AWHONN in DC, sends updates on the legislative topics we are closely following. The three items we were discussing with legislators in April on the Hill were: (1) the Workplace Violence Bill, (2) the Perinatal Workforce Act, (3) the MOMMAS Act. The first Bill did not pass a vote in the House last year in the 117th congress and is up for vote again this year in the 118th congress. The other 2 items are Acts (so far) and we are pursuing interest in these two pieces of legislation to get them to the Bill stage.

Gerri, Alanna and Paula wrote a letter of support for the MidAtlantic Milk Bank Association as they are seeking insurance and Medicaid coverage for donors' milk for newborns. There is significant data to support this for newborns following discharge. AWHONN has a position statement supporting breastfeeding and breast milk. This bill, also known as Owen's Law, is an amendment to the Human Services code, and was introduced by Representative Oberlander and was sent to the senate. As of November 21, 2023 Owen's Law was signed into law as Act 32!

We have been and will continue reviewing health policy activity in the state of Pennsylvania on a monthly basis. There is a lot of activity in our PA section with nearly 50 issues being addressed at some level – acts, policy, bills – in both the House of Representatives and the Senate of our state.



Our legislative committee is moving forward, we will eventually ask for support from PA AWHONN members in the form of emails and letters to support our legislative initiatives.

In the meantime, as we continue to develop our group, we will keep you all informed about health policy activity and ways we can develop and improve health policy in Pennsylvania to improve the care of Women and Newborns!



Save the Dates: We look forward to seeing you!

PA AWHONN Spring Conference

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WHERE YOU'LL THRIVE

2024

AWHONN CONVENTION

June 7-11 | Phoenix, AZ

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE AWHONN NATIONAL CONVENTION NOW!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Hotel Reservation Info for PA AWHONN Annual Spring Conference:
30 rooms have been reserved!

Rate: \$129/night

Use the following link to reserve your room now: **RESERVE**

Reservations can also be made by calling **717-337-2000** and make sure to reference the **GROUP CODE: ANNU040424**

If you have any questions regarding room reservations please contact the hotel directly!

Section and Chapter Contacts

Chapter Leaders

Chapter Contacts



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Kim Bogart and Jennifer Young, Northwest Chapter
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Carol McIlhenney, PA Secretary Treasurer
swatie2@msn.com

Tonya Wert, South Central Chapter
twert2@wellspan.org

We are looking for individuals interested in joining the PA AWHONN leadership team to help with Sponsorship Coordinator, Planning Educational Events and Conferences, and supporting our Student Intern Program.

Karen Coyne and Kate Endres, Southwest Chapter
COYNEK@pitt.edu
endresk@pitt.edu

Email [Adriane Burgess](mailto:Adriane.Burgess) if you are interested!

Pennsylvania AWHONN Chapter Map

BY VERONICA MAHLSTEDT YCPSN

Do you know which PA AWHONN Chapter you reside? Are you aware of events going on in your Chapter? Check out the updated PA AWHONN Chapter map below. Your assigned chapter is based on the county which reside.

Find your Chapter and check out your Chapter leaders contact listed above and reach out if you are interested in becoming more involved in AWHONN activities at the local or state level.

