

BI ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



All about AWHONN

Our mission is to empower and support nurses caring for women, newborns, and their families through research, education, and advocacy.

What AWHONN does for your clinical practice and professional development:

Clinical Practice:

- Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Position Statements
- Access to Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing (JOGNN) and Nursing for Women’s Health (NWH) Journals.

Professional Development:

- Emerging Leader Program, Research, and a wealth of volunteer



Section Chair Corner

Chris Emmons



No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn. April is a promise that May is bound to keep, and we know it.”

– Hal Borland

“As we welcome the season of renewal and early blooms, the AWHONN Illinois Conference Planning Committee worked very hard to organize this year’s annual spring conference, held at Maggiano’s Little Italy in Schaumburg, Illinois. I'm thrilled to share that we had a strong turnout, beginning with our pre-conference event on April 9, “Tales from the Witness Chair: How to Survive a Deposition,” presented by Adam Snyder, JD. This engaging session welcomed 80 nurses and set the tone for an impactful conference.

On April 10, our main conference brought together 114 nurses for a day of learning, connection, and inspiration. We opened with humor and camaraderie and moved into insightful presentations covering Perinatal Genetic Testing, Mastering OB Anesthesia, Congenital Syphilis, and PTSD in Birth Professionals. The day concluded on a high note with an energizing session on The Healing Power of Humor. We were also proud to host 15 exhibitors who shared valuable resources and support.

Plans for the 2026 conference are already nearing completion, and I am filled with gratitude to work alongside such a creative, talented, and passionate group of nurses. Their dedication to advancing our profession and supporting the educational needs of Perinatal and Women’s Health nurses across Illinois is truly inspiring.

As we prepare to celebrate Nurses Week (May 6–12, 2025) with the theme “The Power of Nurses,” I want to take a moment to celebrate all of YOU—the incredible nurses who make this profession the best there is.

AWHONN Illinois remains committed to serving and uplifting nurses throughout the state. We are 752 members strong, and growing—because of your passion, your leadership, and your heart.

With gratitude, Chris



Newborn News

Neonatal Advanced Life Support (NALS)-Developed in collaboration with the American Red Cross, this program provides evidence-based, scientifically validated training to address the urgent need for skilled neonatal care, especially in maternity deserts—areas with little to no access to maternity services.

Neonatal Resuscitation Program- fall 2025 the 9th Edition of NRP will be launched.

CCHD- The American Academy of Pediatrics published updated guidelines to the Newborn Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Disease this year. Changes to the guidelines originally published in 2011 are as follows:

- Lower limit of an acceptable oxygen saturation should be $\geq 95\%$ in both the pre- AND post-ductal measurements leading to less confusion and misinterpretation.
- Recommendation to retest only ONCE after an “indeterminate” result leading to shorter time to recognition of a critical congenital heart defect.
- The newborn should be in room air and not receiving supplemental oxygen to avoid false negative screening results.
- Education on the limitations of screening and that CCHD may still be present in a newborn who has “passed” the screening. CCHD screening may lead to the identification of conditions leading to hypoxemia other than congenital heart disease. Some examples provided include: hemoglobinopathies, persistent pulmonary hypertension, sepsis, and non-critical congenital heart defects.

The full free publication can be found [Here](#)

Maternal Matters

New version:

Intermediate Fetal Monitoring 8th Ed, Advanced Fetal Monitoring 7th Ed, Intermediate Instructor courses launched updated version in February of 2025. The OPS program version 4 will launch in June.



Legislative Lines

Learn How You Can Make an Impact

On Monday, April 28, AWHONN will fully prepare you to meet with the staff for your members of Congress with a full day of briefings on bills, training on how to lobby, and a rundown on logistics for our annual lobby day. Then on Tuesday, April 29, meet with staff for your representative and senators to lobby for the advancement of legislation. Don't worry! AWHONN will pre-schedule your appointments and provide you with talking points before your 20-30 minute meeting with each office.

Here's What You'll Be Advocating for at AWHONN on Capitol Hill

- Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act: This bill reauthorizes programs from the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act, strengthens federal support for maternal mortality review committees, enhances surveillance of pregnancy-related deaths, and aims to reduce disparities in maternal health.
- Maternal Health for Veterans Act: Part of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus, this bill requires the VA to report annually through FY2028 on maternal health care coordination, veteran health outcomes, and recommendations for improvement. It also authorizes funding for VA maternal health programs through FY2028.
- Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs Reauthorization and Appropriations: We'll be advocating for increasing funding for the federal Nursing Workforce Development Programs in the annual Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations bill. We will also be advocating for a bill to reauthorize the Nursing Workforce Development Programs.

[Learn more about this legislation](https://www.awhonn.org/get-involved/awhonnnoncapitolhill/) <https://www.awhonn.org/get-involved/awhonnnoncapitolhill/>



Student Sector

AWHONN Illinois section will accept applications for student nurse interns. The intern must be a nursing student currently enrolled in any nursing program in Illinois entering the final year of their program. Student interns should show a commitment to the mission and vision of AWHONN and have a passion for women's health, obstetric, and neonatal nursing. Each student intern's term will run from May to May. We are looking for interns to start in May of 2025! Visit Illinois.AWHONN.org site for developing information on the exciting opportunity.

District 5 Representative



We would like to welcome our new district 5 representative, Keri Meverden.

I had the pleasure of attending the WI and IL conferences this month and would like to congratulate both teams on a job well done. It was great to see familiar faces and meet so many new people. I hope to see many of you at the AWHONN Convention in June. The MO section is planning a District 5 event, so please try to attend if you are going to be in Orlando.

AWHONN Convention District 5
Meet Up
June 22, 2025 from 5:30 - 8:30 PM
Room: Suwannee 15

IL Annual Conference

This years conference, held at Maggiano's in Schaumburg on April 9 & 10, was an amazing event. There were 15 prizes that included gift baskets, free membership and free registration for next years conference. There was a diaper drive held during the conference, were participants donated 5942 diapers. Huggies matches the donations for a total of 11,884 diapers donated.

See next years save date at the end of this newsletter.

AWHONN Illinois Hospital Liaison Program

AWHONN Illinois is seeking volunteers to serve as a liaison at Illinois hospitals with obstetric services. Our vision for the hospital liaison is to promote AWHONN as a trusted resource for education, and evidence-based clinical practice.

- The hospital liaison will disseminate information on education programs at the local, state, and national levels within their hospital.
- The hospital liaison will promote Section and Chapter activities to women's health and perinatal colleagues.
- The hospital liaison will also communicate the professional and educational needs of the women's health, obstetric, and neonatal nurses within their hospital to the AWHONN Illinois Section leadership team.

The organization can offer support for liaisons interested in coordinating educational webinars, or in-seat events. (Optional)

Requirements for designation as a Hospital Liaison are active AWHONN membership and employment at the hospital in which they serve. If you are interested in this role, please get in touch with me using the information provided below.

Christine Emmons, MSN, RNC-NIC, CNL, C-ONQS
AWHONN Illinois Section Chair
Cmemmons1806@gmail.com

Every Women Every Baby

What is Every Women Every Baby (EWEB) and why are you asked to donate? When you donate to EWEB your supporting nursing in our specialty through research, education and more. Below is a 2024 break down of donation dollars.

2024

THE IMPACT OF EVERY WOMAN, EVERY BABY

AWHONN every WOMAN everyBABY

\$115,000 AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ADVANCING NEONATAL & PERINATAL CARE

- \$9.5K AWARDED** 84 nurses from four health care centers/hospitals
NOEP: Neonatal Orientation & Education Program
A program that equips neonatal nurses with evidence-based education to improve outcomes for high-risk newborns.
- \$9.5K AWARDED** 84 nurses from four health care centers/hospitals
POEP: Perinatal Orientation & Education Program
A program designed to provide essential clinical education to enhance patient safety and efficiency.
- \$1K AWARDED** 12 nurses supported
Perinatal Bereavement Certificate
A program that educates nurses on providing compassionate care for families experiencing loss.

EMPOWERING NURSES THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

- \$28K AWARDED** 45 nurses awarded
AWHONN Convention Scholarships
Scholarships that support professional growth with access to workshops & networking.
- TOP FUNDRAISING SECTIONS**
Iowa and California Sections received complimentary scholarships.
- \$28K AWARDED** 12 nurses selected
Emerging Leaders Program
Leadership development program that cultivates nurse leaders to drive change in maternal and neonatal care.

GLOBAL & RESEARCH INITIATIVES

- \$2K AWARDED** Two nurses awarded
APEX Perinatal Exchange Program
Immersive programs that provide cross-cultural experience and enhance patient care.
- \$25K AWARDED** Three nurses funded
EWEB Research Awards
Awards that support new researchers in maternal and neonatal health.
- \$12K AWARDED** Eight nurses awarded
Evidence-Based Practice Training
Funding that allows nurses to attend immersive training in best practices.

Together, we're empowering nurses, improving care, and making a difference!

Learn more or donate at awhonn.org/donate

AWHONN IL Chapter Map

For information on Chapters, please contact Section Chair

Chris Emmons

Cmemmons1806@gmail.com



- East Central IL
- Southern IL
- South Central IL
- North Central - Peoria
- Chicago
- Chicago Suburbs
- Northwest IL Chapter



Save The Date

2026



Join us at IL AWHONN conference for unparalleled learning and networking.



April 16 & 17, 2026

*Eagle Ridge Resort
Galena, IL*

