

## SWPONL Chair Elect Candidates - Listed in Alphabetical Order



***Jill Marie Larkin, RN, MSN, MBA, DNP, CMQ/OE***

UPMC

Sr. Director of Strategic Initiatives, Center for Nursing Excellence

The true value of SWPONL resides in each and every member having the vision of caring for our communities by having an active nursing organization that focuses on education, sharing best practices, and networking to improve the practice of nursing. Our membership then stretches beyond western Pennsylvania to PONL which is a bonus.

Serving on the Board of SWPONL provides the opportunity to support our members so that together we set the direction for this organization. As a member of the Board, it is my responsibility to remain informed and educated on local and national nursing and health care changes.

SWPONL is a high functioning organization and so where do we go in the next three years? The easy answer is to continue with our proven successful strategies and maintain our active membership. In addition, the board can work with the members to develop a strategic direction to focus our work over the next 3 years through formal and informal assessments. To align with our mission and vision, areas of potential work and focus for SWPONL includes developing the nursing leadership pipeline, being appropriately engaged in nurse advocacy, and to add new ways to share best practices. Furthermore, investigate ways to partner across with other divisions of PONL and other partners who want to advance nursing.



***Bobbi-Jo Skurko MSN, RN***

UPMC Seneca Place

Director Of Nursing

As the Director of Nursing, and a leader of my organization, I feel it is important to network with other nurses at an equal level. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders provides our profession with the opportunity to network as individuals to become better leaders. I would be honored to serve as a member to learn from others and grow in my career.

In the upcoming years I would like to develop my organization by encouraging nurses to continue their education in obtaining higher degrees. Developing nurses for the future is important due to the constant change in the health care environment.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application, I look forward to being a part of your organization.

# SWPONL Board of Directors Candidates - Listed in Alphabetical Order



***Meredith M. Aumer MSN, RN, CPEN, NE-BC***  
Allegheny Health Network, Jefferson Hospital

I joined SWPONL in 2009, a year after I had started my role as a nurse leader in a very busy Emergency Department. I was looking for an organization that would allow me to learn and network from some of the region's most respected and knowledgeable nurse leaders as well as a platform to begin presenting work in a learning and supportive environment. SWPONL has exceeded my expectations. Being a member has allowed nurse leaders in our region to have the opportunity to learn from their colleagues, both locally and nationally. Every year after the annual conference, I take a best practice initiative back to my department and develop a plan for implementation. Having a colleague that is open and willing to mentor and support best practice is invaluable.

I have presented multiple times at the SWPONL annual conference and have been able to teach and mentor other leaders as they implement the strategic and creative ideas from my presentation in their organizations. We are all doing wonderful projects in our area; I would like to represent SWPONL to take the ideas back to the bedside, as well as bring the bedside to the leaders.

Over the next three years, I would like SWPONL to speak to the predicted nursing shortage and work towards resolutions to support our nurses at the bedside. How can we, as nurse leaders, advocate and empower the nursing profession to elevate the nursing practice both locally and nationally and allow our profession to grow.



***Lisa Graper MSN, RN***  
AHN, West Penn Hospital  
Director of Nursing

SWPONL membership brings nursing leaders together to collaborate as we navigate through the many competing priorities of our respective roles. As change becomes a constant state of nursing, SWPONL allows nurses to share ideas and strategies to achieve quality outcomes for our patients. This SWPONL partnership creates a healthy environment to bring meaning to our nursing profession by sharing best practices and providing insight about ways to implement them. Through our common purpose of promoting health and wellness, we can shape policies and practices to further nursing excellence at the local and regional level.

Additionally, I have witnessed the empowerment of colleagues as they acquire new knowledge, using evidence-based problem-solving skills to create new processes to reach improved outcomes. I believe nurses want to share knowledge and successes that can help transform culture to achieve positive nurse-driven results for both patients and nurses. I aspire to participate in realizing the achievement of our mutual goals for local and regional nurses.

Over the next three years, I hope to help increase the SWPONL membership to allow more nurses to experience the benefits of networking among other nurse leaders. I would also like to see a greater SWPONL advocacy for patients as well as for nurses within the region I believe this advocacy would help to achieve greater nurse satisfaction and ultimately the significance of the nurses' role in patient safety in this region. By building a foundation of positive trustful relationships, we can realize transformational leadership together.



**Dawn Elizabeth Klejka, DNP, MSN, RN**

UPMC East  
Clinical Education Specialist

*I have attended SWPONL for the past 4 years. Each conference is a great learning experience and “off the charts” networking opportunity. I have met the most interesting nurses and learned volumes from the vendors and schools present. The event is always well attended, the refreshments and food offerings outstanding, posters are cutting edge and the venue sublime.*

*I am proud to be associated to so many nurse leaders with such vast wisdom, expertise and accomplishments, especially those leaders who donate their time and talent unselfishly to serve in office from the surrounding healthcare institutions.*

*I would like to serve on the board of directors to learn from the experienced nurse leaders who chair and function in director roles. I would like to contribute to this amazing event that highlights hot topics & best practices and give back to an event that has provided so much to me professionally.*

*To add to the past SWPONL excellent topics, we could continue to prepare our nurse leaders for upcoming healthcare trends with a few of the following topics (Importance of cultural competence, importance in pain management, increasing population health prevention and wellness, increase our literacy in upcoming technology to engage learners and make presentations fun, awareness on a few health disparities: opioid use disorder & drug diversion, human trafficking, information on the rise on consumer sophistication, improving care collaboration for better patient outcomes, and the increase in outpatient care / telemedicine).*



**Lynn Kosar, MSN, RN, NEA-BC**

UPMC Passavant  
Clinical Director, Inpatient Services

*I would like to have the opportunity to serve as a board member to have an integral role in providing education, information and resources to our nursing leaders. As we encounter changes that are on the horizon for health care, I believe that by equipping our leaders with the insight and knowledge regarding these changes, they will be in the best position to drive our healthcare environment in the right direction.*

*I have been a member of SWPONL for several years and the organization has assisted me with my professional development. I feel that with my leadership experience, I would be able to serve in a capacity that would help move the organization forward. I would actively participate in important decisions that come to the board, ensure fiscal responsibility and engage in strategic, long range planning for the organization. I would like to continue the growth in the membership of SWPONL as well as members continued high rate of participation and engagement in leadership development and networking activities. I look forward to having the opportunity to uphold the mission of SWPONL and assist in leading nursing into the future. I would be honored to have your support as a member of the Board of Directors. Thank you.*



***Stacey-Ann Okoth, MBA, MSN, RN, PCCN, CNML, NEA-BC***

UPMC Altoona

Chief Nursing Officer, Vice President, Patient Care Services

As a developing leader, I have benefited greatly from being a member of various nursing organizations. Firstly, while I was a member and president of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society, I had the opportunity to learn from my colleagues and was exposed to wisdom that would have taken me years to realize. I was fortunate that the members took me under their wings and cultivated a sense of urgency about safe, quality nursing care as well as the importance of being a leader. Membership provides a responsibility to pay it forward through formal mentorship, encouragement and advocacy.

Secondly, membership has provided me the opportunity to serve on various committees and boards to leverage my skillset which includes planning, directing and coordinating the operations of various projects and initiatives. It is through these opportunities that I am able to provide leadership, professional development, advocacy and help shape public policy. Lastly, membership in nursing organizations provides another platform to continue to promote leadership excellence, competence and community service while bonding with colleagues in various healthcare niches. As a member, I want to continue to build relationships, inspire, improve nursing leadership platform through information sharing/mentoring and be a pioneer for the future of nursing.



***Jacqueline Poydence, MSN, RN, NE-BC, CCTC***

West Penn Hospital

Manager, Nursing

SWPONL membership is invaluable in that it allows nursing leaders to work together to bring excellence in nursing practice to the communities we serve. Through a sharing of ideas, problem solving skills and personal experience, each SWPONL member contributes to the success of the nurses they serve. Such successes are important and lead to increased nursing satisfaction and quality of nursing care. I recently became a member to enhance and fine tune my leadership skills by collaborating with the many talented leaders that comprise SWPONL.

I am seeking the position of Director because I believe that my expertise can assist SWPONL to transform the way we provide nursing care across our region and to strengthen the organization by encouraging trust and a shared vision of excellence in nursing.

Over the next three years, I hope to help the organization increase membership, to help develop a strategic plan that will allow nurse leaders to positively impact nurse recruitment and retention across the region leading to greater job satisfaction and improved patient outcomes.



**Amy Snyder, MSN, RN, NE-BC**  
AHN - Allegheny General Hospital  
Unit Director

SWPONL represents nurse leaders not only at a local level but nationally. Although, I feel this representation in the political realm is an important aspect of the professional organization, it is not what I feel is most valuable. What I value most about being a part of this professional organization is the networking, collaboration, and education that are provided. Many of us struggle with the same day to day challenges and it is imperative to be able to network and collaborate with our peers that share those challenges and to seek out viable solutions. As nurse leader we are still “nurses” and we tend to be the care taker and not the recipient. I see many of the opportunities that SWPONL supplies as opportunities to pause, educate and rejuvenate ourselves.

I would love to see the organization continue to grow in numbers and vision. To hit record numbers in membership across many different health care entities. I envision having continued and expanded educational and networking opportunities that have us pause and “feed our soul’s” as nurse leaders. I have a passion for mentorship of new nurse leaders. I would love to see the organization continue to focus on membership of new nurse leaders and developing them to their fullest potentials. I would be honored to be part of a team working toward that vision.



**Carrie Vincett, MSN, RN, CPN**  
UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh  
Director, Heart Institute and Critical Care Medicine

Please accept my personal statement as application to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders Director at large position. As a highly motivated leader currently looking to build on my professional career and bring my expertise to a well-established professional organization. I have been a SWPONL member for the last two years and have found this membership to help foster my leadership skills and networking with other leaders in the profession. I find the networking aspect of the organization to be influential in gaining insight into other leadership styles and methods.

I would like to serve in this role to help influence and facilitate collaboration among current and future nurse leaders to impact the future in nursing at all levels. In addition, I find great importance in joining with other nursing leaders to shape my own growth in leadership.

I would like to see the organization move in the direction of more networking and educational opportunities for future leaders. I feel this will build not only strength in the organization, but a strong network of current and future leaders to promote change in nursing practice.

It has long been my ambition to utilize my well over a decade of leadership to serve in this capacity. As a leader who has served in a multitude of leadership positions over my twenty-five-year nursing career, I believe I have the prerequisites to assist SWPONL in continued success in the development and partnership of nurse leaders in the region.



***Jamie Yaroscak, MSN, RN, NE-BC***

Jefferson Hospital, part of Allegheny Health Network  
Nurse Manager

As an active member, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders has provided me with the opportunity to participate in a variety of evidence-based educational conferences and opportunities designed specifically for Nurse Leaders. These conferences have not only aided in my professional growth by delivering relevant education designed for today's nursing leaders, but they have also provided networking opportunities with other nurse leaders throughout the region.

I am interested in applying for a position on the regional Board of Directors within this organization so that I may serve as an advocate for nursing, provide insight in the overall support of valuable research initiatives, and help to advance and continue in the development of educational opportunities specific to nurse leaders throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania.

If I was appointed this position, I would use Robert's Rules of Order as a guideline for all SWPONL meetings to effectively aid in the collaboration and decision making processes that are affecting nursing leadership presently as well as in the future. As an advocate of nurses, I have successfully supported and aided in the development and implementation of two nurse-driven Professional Practice Councils within my organization. I have a Master's Degree in Nursing specializing in Administration and Leadership. Additionally, I am ANCC certified as a Nurse Executive. I am confident that my educational background and experience will aid in the opportunity to develop and grow this organization within my elected term. Thank you for the opportunity to apply for this position.

## ***SWPONL Emerging Leader Candidates – Listed in Alphabetical Order***



***Shannon Gallagher, MSN, RN, CMSRN***

UPMC St. Margaret  
Unit Director

I have learned over the years that you can truly do anything you want to do in the nursing field, especially if you have the determination and drive. I have been in nursing leadership for one year, and I wanted to take every opportunity available to help further my leadership skills. I became a member of the SWPONL very shortly after entering leadership. I feel as though it is important to be a member of the

SWPONL to learn leadership styles of others, and to expose yourself to things that you may not otherwise get to experience. The speakers at conferences and such are so informative and engaging, as well as the opportunity to network with others in both my health system and outside health systems.

I feel as though I would be a good member of the board because I am new to leadership and I have a fresh perspective and ideas. I believe that being in the “millennial” age group will help me to understand how to lead the younger generation, and what they are looking for in their workplaces as far as leadership styles go. In the next two years, I would like to see the organization focus more on the young and upcoming leaders, as well as how we as leaders can engage our staff members so that they too want to serve as leaders in our field.



***Elizabeth Labish, MSN, RN-BC***

Excelsa Health  
Clinical Director

Organization begets success. This is a core value proposition of a SWPONL membership. By organizing our ideas, resources, and passion as a group of dedicated and knowledgeable nurses we are giving our profession the best chance of success in overcoming the challenges we face today.

We are working towards a brighter tomorrow not just for ourselves and our future colleagues, but for our patients. I am a SWPONL member because I want to be a part of that success and I have a driving desire to improve the health care environment for all patients.

I would like to serve as an Emerging Leader on the board of SWPONL to contribute to these efforts to the fullest extent of my knowledge, skills, abilities, passion, and professional scope. I would love to see SWPONL grow in size and impact over the next 2 years. I would contribute to this aim in several ways. First by contributing to outreach and engagement efforts to both tap in to our talented network of nurses and also gain new members. Additionally, I would love the opportunity to work to inform policy change for the betterment of patient care throughout our region by serving in this position and dedicating my time and energy to connecting with and understanding the barriers we face and advocating for solutions to those barriers. This position within SWPONL offers a great outlet to complete this work and it would be an honor to serve in this capacity.



**Lisa S. Leonzio, MSN, RN**  
UPMC St. Margaret  
Director

SWPONL provides a platform for current and future leaders to discuss current issues, legislation and relative issues affecting practices. Supporting the development of nurse leaders and positioning them to be able to influence the future of nursing. This brief description of SWPONL and their mission and vision are part of the reason I joined SWPONL.

As a nurse leader of less than five years, I am interested in networking with other nurse leaders for advice, new knowledge and education. I am the current Unit Director for the 5B Medical, Pulmonary, Renal Unit, IV Team and the Patient Assessment Team at UPMC St. Margaret Hospital for the past 2 ½ years and was previously the Clinician on 5B for two years prior, as well as the Administrator on Duty. I would like to be involved in learning more regarding legislation and how it affects our nursing practice. I have attended the Annual Conference and educational sessions in the Spring and Fall. These sessions have provided me with a great deal of information to assist my staff. I especially enjoyed Vicki Hess's presentation for reducing stress, having more energy and remarkable results at work. The words in her book, *Shift to Professional Paradise*, helped me understand, "it's the cumulative effect of many individual POWs and WOWs that determines the quality of your work experience".

I look forward to learning more about SWPONL, assisting with legislation and education and sharing this information with my peers and staff to improve patient care. I sincerely hope you will consider my self-nomination for an Emerging Leader in SWPONL.



**Amanda Petrill, MSN, RN, CPN**  
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh  
Unit Director

Please consider me to serve as the emerging leader for SWPONL. My name is Amanda Petrill and I have worked at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC for over 18 years. I received a bachelor's degree in nursing from Carlow University and my master's degree from California University of Pennsylvania. I would be honored to have your support as a member of the Board of Directors.

As a member of the board, I would provide feedback and insight from the perspective of an emerging leader who is new to a formal leadership role. I believe in the mission of SWPONL and am willing to learn about and be active in engaging new nurse leaders in positively affecting nursing legislation, and resolving issues related to nursing practice and leadership. I want to contribute my experience and expertise.

As the emerging nurse leader, I would network with current nurse leaders in southwest Pennsylvania as well as partner with other emerging leaders in the area to identify disparities in healthcare and collaborate to identify solutions. I would like to see SWPONL help grow a cohort of emerging leaders with potential to create networking sessions to promote professional development and enhance leadership skills. I value the knowledge and expertise of SWPONL's nurse leaders. SWPONL is an organization for nurse leaders to network, consult, and collaborate. Information is shared through conferences, educational sessions, and meetings regarding current and relevant topics within health care. I would like to be a key member and voice for emerging leaders.



***Sarah M. Sakaluk, MSN, RN, PCCN, NE-BC***

UPMC Passavant  
Unit Director

I have been a member of SWPONL in the past but have yet to get really involved. It is a great way to learn from other nurse leaders and have a positive effect on the nursing practice. I attended the PONL conference last year (2017) and really enjoyed the networking opportunities and the work that the organization does regarding advocating for nurses and providing education. I have also most recently been working with a PONL sub-group working to develop a conference opportunity for new and emerging leaders.

As a Unit Director coming on 2 years of experience in my role, I have learned a lot, but I know there is still a lot more to learn which I feel this opportunity will help to provide me with. Encouraging new leaders to be a part of an organization such a SWPONL is a great way to get new leaders engaged in what they do. Thank you for considering me for this role.



***Edward C. Schatz, MSN, MBA, CCRN***

West Penn Hospital  
ICU Supervisor

The term “Emerging Leader” applies to me. I have been in the role for almost two years and I have learned the value that leadership can provide. In the past year, I have served on councils, spear-headed numerous patient safety and nursing quality initiatives, and have served as a conduit between the nursing staff and the senior leadership team.

I joined SWPONL to improve my leadership skills to be more effective in my role. Admittedly, I have only been to one conference but the atmosphere was electric and I returned from the conference reinvigorated with new ideas and processes to bring to my team.

To be the “Emerging Leader” would help me learn how a board of directors works. This experience would be invaluable to me as I continue to build my practice as a transformational leader. Understanding how decisions get made and the reasons behind these decisions will infuse my work at the unit, hospital and council levels with a new understanding.

In the next 2 years, I would like to help SWPONL build an organization of engaged leaders through new participation drives, engaging activities and informative speakers. The phrase “I don’t know what I don’t know” comes to mind and I believe that a chance to be the emerging leader will help me become a more complete leader.



***Kaitlin J. Shotsberger, MSN, RN, CNL***

St. Clair Hospital

Executive Director, Care Management & Quality Improvement

The SWPONL organization provides a tremendous venue for thought leaders in the nursing profession to come together for networking, inspiration, and to drive change. I initially became a member for the occasional networking. After attending my first conference, I was immediately motivated by the many people that I met. The more people that I talked to, the more that I saw the incredible intelligence, passion, and commitment that one room held. I felt encouraged and moved to make a larger impact on the nursing profession.

I would like to serve on the Board of Directors as an Emerging Leader because I want to be a part of the movement that is securing a successful future for the next generation of nurses. I want to define solutions to overcome barriers to adequate staffing. I want to address policy changes that will ensure safe staffing ratios for our patients. I want to inform educational curriculums that develop nurses that are empowered with knowledge and skills to adequately advocate for their patients. Specifically, as an Emerging Leader, I would like to learn from the accomplished individuals who are part of the SWPONL organization in order to grow both professionally and personally.

Over the next two years, I would envision SWPONL continuing its reputation of excellence in providing networking opportunities, leadership development education, and establishing a successful path for the future of nursing.



***Ashley Singh, DNP, MSN, RN***

Carlow University

Instructor

As a doctor of nursing practice student- focusing on transformational leadership - I strive to learn how organizations are developing their current and future nurse leaders, as well as the current legislation and best practice guidelines that may impact this. To serve as an advisor on some of these key issues that may impact nursing leadership is a responsibility and a challenge that I welcome. Serving on the board provides a venue for me to assist other emerging leaders to promote excellence in transformational leadership.

To be on the board allows me the opportunity to support the development of future nurse leaders through partnerships, teamwork, and educational platforms which is in line with the mission of the organization. With a passion for nurse leader education, I recently joined the education committee of SWPONL and am looking forward to embracing and overcoming the challenging topics that are confronting healthcare today. My aim is to present the tools to our fellow nurse leaders to disrupt the status quo. By enhancing our nurse leaders education we are positioning them to lead at their best and model the way for the future nurse leaders.