



NYS ID/DD NURSES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2023

President's Message

When I started my 2-year term, we were coming out of COVID. These past 2 years we moved from virtual to hybrid, back to in-person State Board meetings. New officers have added thoughtful ideas, new insight, and brought renewed energy to these Board meetings. We have held two highly successful annual conferences thank you to the dedication of our conference committee. The amazing support from this Association



provided all the checks and balances, while moving this Association forward towards our goals during my term serving as your President. I'm truly grateful.

Please check the website for new updates to the goals in our Strategic Plan. The Nurse Recruitment and Retention Committee developed resources around coverage for RN on-call and successful use of Telemedicine. We plan to trial one RN to BSN scholarship this spring. Another committee will be reaching out to the Board members and/or the President of the voluntary agencies to promote the importance of nursing expertise and recognition that membership for their nurses in this Association providing a network of support could positively impact nurse retention and reduce turnover.

During the fall Board meeting there was discussion around submitting a proposal for either a poster presentation or a session presentation at one of the agency administrator's conferences offered throughout the year. We also discussed having an NYSIDDDNA exhibitor's table during the conference to promote the Association. If you are interested in becoming involved with these Association efforts, please reach out to me.

By the time you receive this Newsletter, the contract will be signed for the April 11-12 Spring Board meeting in Cicero (Syracuse). If you are an officer, please mark your calendar to save the date. If you are not a Zone officer, consider becoming one so you can join us! We need your participation!

During the Board meeting, we will be appointing a scholarship committee to review and select the winners of the DSP/LPN to RN scholarship and the RN to BSN scholarship. We will also appoint a nominating committee to recruit nominations for Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary beginning in 2025 for a 2-year term.

More recently, it was my humble honor to represent this Association virtually attending and accepting the Champion Award we received from the Justice Center. This Champion Award was given to NYSIDDDNA for our dedication as nurses to supporting individuals with ID/DD, as well as our collaborative efforts working with the Justice Center around presentations during our annual conferences and Zone meetings.

As I'm finishing this message, I am pleased to share that I have completed the next step in my treatment journey. My Radiation finished today!!

I wish all of you a wonderful holiday season. May 2024 bring all the best in the new year for everyone!

Thank you for everything.

Mary Jean Keegan, RN, CDDN, President
mjkeegan74@gmail.com or
mkeegan@wildwoodprograms.org

NYSIDDDNA 2024 State Officers

Effective January 1, 2024, your State Officers will be:

- Linda Cultrara, President (Zone 8)
- Cindy Pross, President Elect (Zone 4)
- Pat Ruckel, Recording Secretary (Zone 6)
- Karen Jarvis, Treasurer (Zone 1)
- Meghan Miskinis, Corresponding Secretary (Zone 3)

Thank you to Mary Jean Keegan for her leadership and guidance during her Presidency in 2022 and 2023. Mary Jean has shown great resilience in the face of tough challenges. Her strength of character shows through. We recognize and appreciate Mary Jean's commitment and support for the NYS ID/DD Nurses Association.

The New York State Intellectual Disabilities/Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association (NYSIDDDNA) was founded to promote Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Nursing as a specialty area of practice. The Association continues to support its members' activities in nursing law, education, research, and practice.

Membership Committee Update

It was great to see everyone at the conference! Thanks to everyone who stopped by the Membership table – always a pleasure to chat and put faces to names!

We currently have 190 members! A big WELCOME to 66 new members who joined NYSIDDDNA in 2023.

Membership renewals will be due April 1st – time flies so this is just an early reminder. ALL renewals must be done ONLINE (as well as new memberships). The membership application needs to be done annually with this easy and quick process. Dues payments can be made by check or PayPal.

Membership allows nurses to register for conferences at a reduced rate and provides a great opportunity for learning and networking with nurses from across New York State. Several nurses from other states attended this year’s conference. It is always interesting to share our stories. Mark your calendars now to join us Sept. 9-11, 2024 at The Queensbury Hotel!

Zone meetings are an excellent way to stay in touch with nurses in your geographic area throughout the year and also take part in educational opportunities coordinated by your Zone leadership. As a member, you will receive e-mails about educational opportunities, as well as information related to regulations and other areas of interest.

Please continue to reach out to other nurses in the field and spread your enthusiasm for membership. Help to promote ID/DD nursing as a specialty and increase the public’s awareness.

As always, please consider becoming involved – submit an article to the Newsletter, serve on a state level committee, or consider an elected or appointed position. They are all great ways to gain experience and leadership skills!

Happy Holidays to all!

Cathy Engel, BSN, RN, CDDN
Membership Committee Chairperson
 engelcathy12@gmail.com

Zone 1	25	Zone 7	18	Membership by Zone
Zone 2	18	Zone 8	7	
Zone 3	7	Zone 9/11	26	
Zone 4	35	Zone 10	8	
Zone 5	20	Zone 12	0	
Zone 6	26	TOTAL	190	

As of 11/13/23

DDNA Update

Plans are underway for the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association’s 32nd Annual Conference, which will be held in Orlando, Florida April 18-21, 2024.

A “Certification Boot Camp” will be offered on April 18. Nurses will have the opportunity to take the certification exam at the DDNA conference. For more information on the certification process, visit the DDNA website at ddna.org.

Please check the DDNA website for more information regarding conference registration fees, cancellation policy, speakers, etc. The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Orlando with a conference rate of \$225 + \$10 resort fee per night. The reservation deadline is March 27, 2024.

Please Note: Membership in DDNA is separate from membership in the NYSIDDDNA. For information on DDNA membership, visit the DDNA website.

Cathy Engel, BSN, RN, CDDN
 DDNA Liaison
 engelcathy12@gmail.com

Conference/Meeting Dates for 2024

Webinar: OPWDD Update for Nurses

March 5, 2024 1pm | via WebEx

Note: This webinar will be hosted through the OPWDD Webex system. There will be no limit on attendance. The link will be sent a few weeks prior to the webinar.

NYSIDDDNA Spring Board Meeting

April 11-12, 2024 | Syracuse, New York

Note: This meeting is for state officers, zone officers, and committee chairs. The meeting will begin at 11:00 on Thursday, April 11. Information about the meeting will be sent to all officers prior to the meeting.

DDNA 2024 Annual Conference

April 18-21, 2024 | Orlando, Florida

Note: Check www.ddna.org for more information.

NYSIDDDNA 2024 Annual Conference

September 9-11, 2024

The Queensbury Hotel, Glens Falls, New York

Note: We have reserved the entire hotel for our Annual Conference. When we open the registration site in May 2024, we will provide information about reserving your hotel room.

From the Conference Chair

The 2023 conference has come and gone, but I must say it gets better and better every year. Everything about our conference is top notch. We had absolutely amazing speakers and such a diverse array of topics we all found ourselves trying to split ourselves in half to attend it all. THAT is something that brings this event from good to great!

I cannot say enough about the level of support, dedication, and passion that the planning committee and members brings to this event. We, as NYSIDDDNA, are blessed to be in a field where everyone who participates, gives their very best. New York State ID/DDNA nurses are unparalleled.

Thank you to all who planned, participated, and attended. We are truly grateful. As I leave this position and transition to President in January, I welcome my mentee, Cindy Pross, into the role of conference chair. Cindy has shown incredible enthusiasm and organization. I can't wait for 2024!

Linda M. Cultrara., Conference Chair
Linda.m.cultrara.@opwdd.ny.gov

Website Update

www.nysidddna.org

The online membership registration was a big success. Information goes into a database without the extra steps that were necessary with paper copies. PayPal is available, but you can still pay by check. Work will be starting on making conference registration available online also. Watch for this for the 2024 conference.

The **What's New** page material has been updated. If you have any items for addition to the website, send them to Trish Potocar papotocar@thearcjslc.org or Linda Dudman information@nysidddna.org. Be sure to identify pictures with the event, those in the photo, and your name in case we have questions.

Trish Potocar, Website Chair
papotocar@thearcjslc.org

A Few Notes About Membership

We have a few points to share with you.

- You will be notified when it is time to renew your membership. Please wait until you receive an email in March letting you know it is time to renew.
- If you have a recurring payment through PayPal, please cancel this payment arrangement. You pay your dues when completing the online application.
- Everyone needs to complete the online application.

Thank You to Our Conference Chair

Thank you to Linda Cultrara for serving as the Conference Chair for the past four years. Linda has shown exceptional skill in organization, leadership, and planning. In 2020 and 2021, Linda provided the leadership we needed to re-think our conference plans when we could not meet in-person. By offering webinars, we were able to meet our primary goal of educating nurses in the ID/DD field. In 2022 and 2023, Linda led us to our successful return to in-person Annual Conferences. By mentoring Cindy Pross throughout 2023, Linda prepared Cindy to assume the role of Conference Chair in January 2024. Thank you, Linda, for all you have done and continue to do for NYSIDDDNA.

Accessing OPWDD Training Site: SLMS

Statewide Learning Management Service (SLMS) is an on-line system allowing voluntary and state employees to access training from OPWDD. Nursing Orientation and other courses relevant to nursing are in this system.

For instructions on how to use SLMS, there is a page on the OPWDD website that fully explains creating a user ID and searching for a class. To find the SLMS instructions, search "SLMS" from the OPWDD home page rather than searching for training or other terms.

Email TalentDevelopment@opwdd.ny.gov for further assistance with finding OPWDD-sponsored training in SLMS.

The *SLMS Troubleshooting Guide*, an insert in this newsletter, provides information to help you better navigate through common technology/ programming problems. Thank you to Susan Prendergast for sharing this SLMS Troubleshooting Guide.

Cindy Pross, RN, MS, BSN, CDDN
Corresponding Secretary and Zone 4 Secretary

OPWDD Webinar for Nurses

On Tuesday, March 5, 2024, Susan Prendergast will present an OPWDD Webinar for Nurses. This webinar will begin at 1:00 p.m. The link will be sent to all members a few weeks prior to the webinar.

We appreciate the opportunity to work closely with Susan Prendergast, Deputy Director, State Operations Clinical Services, and colleagues to ensure nurses have a forum to clarify regulatory expectations and address current nursing questions.

This webinar will be hosted through the OPWDD Webex system. There will be no limit on attendance. Pre-registration is not required.

Congratulations to FRED WETZEL, Recipient of the Joyce Binder Memorial Award



Fred Wetzel, RN, PhD, LNC, NCC was presented with the Joyce Binder Memorial Award at the 2023 NYS ID/DD Nurses Association Annual Conference in Albany, New York this year.

Dr. Wetzel has been a member of the Association and esteemed colleague, speaker, and friend. This year we were able to share this award with him as a symbol of our appreciation for his dedicated work and mentoring others in the field of ID/DD nursing.

Dr. Wetzel was the former Downstate Director at NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, Division of Quality Improvement. He worked for 31 years at OPWDD and was responsible for all survey and certification activities for over 3500 facilities. Since retirement he has continued to work in the field as a consultant, volunteer, and speaker. Dr. Wetzel has an extensive biography. Any summary will surely miss the multitude of ways his work continues to impact the field of ID/DD supports.

Beyond his impressive work accomplishments, Fred's personal qualities make him a great choice for this award. He is a gifted leader and educator — presenting relevant, topical content with experience and humor. He has a compassionate mentoring style. He is kind and respectful. He is a great advocate for people with special needs, direct support professionals, clinicians, and especially nurses.

To quote one of our members, “Dr. Wetzel is truly a shining star in the field of ID/DD care...”

Congratulations, Fred.

About the Joyce Binder Award

Every year, a member of our Association is chosen to receive the Joyce Binder Memorial Award. This award is named in memory of Joyce Binder, one of our own who made outstanding contributions to the field of ID/DD and to the individuals she served throughout her career.

This award is given to a member of the Association who has made significant contributions to advancing the practice of supporting individuals with ID/DD through demonstrated attributes, such as caring, compassion, advocacy, mentoring, leadership, dedication, education, and research.

Nominations are welcomed from all members of the Association. Members will receive an announcement when the nomination period opens in 2024.

An announcement and the nomination form will be included in the Winter 2024 newsletter. Information about this award is on the NYSIDDDNA website.

To view the list of previous recipients, click on Awards on our website (www.nysiddna.org).

Fall 2023 Election Results

Congratulations to our two State Board members who were elected in the 2023 elections.

- President-Elect: Cynthia Pross (Zone 4)
- Recording Secretary: Pat Ruckel (Zone 6)

Thank you to everyone who voted in the election. The results of the election were announced by Courtney Bacon, Nominating Committee member, at the annual meeting that was held at the Annual Conference in Albany.

Cindy will begin her role as President-Elect on January 1, 2024. She will be in this role for two years before becoming President in January 2026. Pat is currently the Recording Secretary. She will continue in this role for two years.

The next election will take place in the summer of 2024, with the results announced at the Annual Conference. To be eligible to vote in the election you must be a 2024 member as of July 1, 2024. *Note:* Associate members are not eligible to vote in elections.

Meghan Miskinis, MSN, RN
Chairperson, Nominating Committee
miskinm@thearclexington.org

Justice Center Selects NYS ID/DD Nurses Association for Champion Award



The award presented to the New York State ID/DD Nurses Association.

The Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs recently announced their Code of Conduct and Champion Award Winners for 2023. The Justice Center awards individuals and groups who work diligently to improve the lives of individuals with special needs in New York State.

All of the award winners have maintained their commitment to helping people "live self-directed meaningful lives in their communities, free from abuse and neglect and protected from harm."

The Justice Center received more than 100 nominations for this year's program. The New York State ID/DD Nurses Association was considered an organization winner for the Justice Center's Champion Award. Nominees for this award included individual staff members, community members, and people receiving services or organizations that support the mission of the Justice Center.

Congratulations to the NYS ID/DD Nurses Association

for their commitment to helping those people we support live their best lives.

Pictured to the right: Several of our officers with the Champion Award at the October 2023 Board meeting.



Justice Center Selects NYSIDDDNA Member to Address Staff and Administration

Karen Bazan participated in a panel for the Justice Center staff's annual in-service. The session was entitled, *Post Pandemic: A Workforce Perspective*. This was a dynamic panel with experts from several facilities discussing current workforce issues including under-staffing, floating, training, economic stress, and the fear of JC scrutiny of their actions. The discussion was well received and sparked conversation and interest within the Justice Center in reducing the stress DSPs and nurses feel toward the investigative process.

Karen Bazan is the Director of Nursing at Arc Otsego and member from Zone 4. Karen was a well-informed and effective representative for ID/DD direct support and nursing staff.

2024 Annual Conference

The Queensbury Hotel
Glens Falls, NY
September 9-11, 2024

We are excited to host our 2024 Annual Conference at The Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls, New York. The Queensbury Hotel is a charming historic hotel centrally located in Glens Falls. A visit and tour of the hotel last May convinced us that the hotel will fit our needs perfectly. We have reserved the entire hotel for our Annual Conference. We think you will agree with us that this is the right hotel for us!

OPWDD Staffing Updates

Congratulations to Susan Prendergast! She has been promoted to Deputy Director, State Operations Clinical Services. Thank you, Susan, for your years of support to our membership and nurses across the state!

We are pleased to share the following new staff for OPWDD Health Services with our members.

- George Shaw, BSN, RN
Director of Nursing and Health Services
George.b.shaw@opwdd.ny.gov
- Parish Ogunjana, BSN, RN
Registered Nurse 3 Consultant
Parish.x.ogunjana@opwdd.ny.gov

For questions, email:

nursingandhealthservices@opwdd.ny.gov

This the best email for questions. This email is closely monitored by George, Parish, and others.

Welcome and best wishes for our continued effectiveness working together to support nurses in the ID/DD field.

Important Dates to Remember

March	First reminder about renewing membership
April 1	Beginning of the 2024 membership year. NOTE: Everyone needs to complete the online membership application to renew their membership for 2024. Please wait to be notified it is time to renew.
April 11-12	NYSIDDDNA Board Meeting in Syracuse
May 30	Conference registration site to open.
July 1	Must be a member to vote in elections.
July 15	Nominations for state officer positions due.
July 15	Nominations for Joyce Binder Memorial Award for 2024 due
July 31	Must be a member to receive member rate for the Annual Conference.
July 31	Last day to receive Early Bird rate.
Aug. 28	Last day to receive a refund if cancelling conference registration.
Sept. 9-11	Annual Conference at The Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls, NY.

Zone Reports

ZONE 1: St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton and Essex

A zone meeting was held October 6 with a presentation and lunch at the Lobster House Restaurant provided by Neurelis. Valerie Stanley CPNP spoke on the use of Valtoco (diazepam nasal spray) and seizure care in general. She said the option of this alternative has made improvement in the usage of diazepam to prevent multiple seizures. Teenagers particularly are resistant to treatment with diazepam rectal gel or suppositories. Speed of administration and appropriateness in the community are other pluses.

The recent Annual Conference and the plan to make conference registration available online were discussed.

The next meeting is planned for March 2024. Items can be donated at this meeting for people who need the services of Renewal House when domestic violence is an issue.

Please contact one of the officers below if you would like zone information or to suggest presenters and/or programs for our meetings.

Trish Potocar, Co-chair / papotocar@thearcjslc.org
Joanne Carkner, Co-chair / jmcarkner@thearcjslc.org
Karen Jarvis, Secretary / kejarvis@thearcjslc.org

Trish Potocar, Zone 1 Co-Chairperson
papotocar@thearcjslc.org

ZONE 2: Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, Oneida, Onondaga, Madison, and Herkimer

Please email me if you are interested in helping arrange educational programs for members in Zone 2.

Jacinta Ramczyk, Zone 2 Chairperson
jacinta5576@gmail.com

ZONE 3: Hamilton, Fulton, Washington, Warren, and Saratoga

Happy Fall! Zone 3 is actively looking for new members to join our Zone! Tara Sanford remains the Zone 3 Chair. Meghan Miskinis is the Zone representative and now the New York State Corresponding Secretary. Courtney Bacon continues in her role as the Zone Secretary. Tara, Meghan, and Courtney all attended the NYS ID/DD Nurses Association Board meeting in October and plan to attend the Spring Board Meeting in April. Zone 3 will be working towards setting up a Zone meeting in the coming months to help collaborate and share information across the Zone! Zone 3 continues to recruit, so if you or any of your colleagues are interested in joining, please reach out to Meghan!

Meghan Miskinis, Zone 3 Secretary and Corresponding Secretary
miskinm@thearclexington.org

Zone Reports (cont'd)

ZONE 4: Albany, Montgomery, Schoharie, Greene, Schenectady, Otsego, Delaware, Rensselaer, and Columbia

Zone Members and guests met September 26th at Springbrook's Family Engagement Center. Carrie DeLong and Diane Marrone from Care Design presented "CCO's Role in Healthcare." We reviewed the role of the CCO for routine situations and learned more about the clinical support structure of the Care Coordination Organization (CCO). We discussed how this clinical support could be utilized for complex medical or behavioral situations and for planning around changing residential supports.

The presenters and our nurses were able to problem-solve some cross-boundary problems that are common. Key among these was the understanding that the RN should attend the Life Plan meetings whenever possible and send the nursing annual summaries, med lists, physicals, and major consults PRIOR to the meetings to ensure the records are accurate. There was consensus that the RN should be the chief contact for any hospitalization, but a CM may assist with this role if the team agrees. Care Managers or Care Coordinators do have regulatory responsibilities for follow-up related to hospital stays, so they will ask for results and reports.

We found the meeting helpful in having a greater understanding of the Care Manager role and how to get the most from this collaboration.

Our next meeting will be at Buca di Beppo on Wolf Road in Colonie on December 5th from 11 am – 1 pm. We will not have a speaker. We will have an opt-in gift swap and buy our own lunch.

We will be selecting a Secretary and Zone Chair this fall to fill these roles for 2024-2025.

Cindy Pross, Zone 4 Secretary
Cynthia.pross@justicecenter.ny.gov

ZONE 5: Sullivan, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester

Joy Fojtlin, Zone 5 Secretary
joyann56@aol.com

ZONE 6: Nassau and Suffolk

Hi All. Zone 6 had a great attendance at the Annual Conference in Albany in September. We are looking forward to next year!

The Zone 6 counsel continues to coordinate quarterly meetings with zone members. All invitations/ notifications regarding our events will be sent via email. Our most recent event was 11/16/2023 with a guest speaker from LifeVac regarding choking prevention / interventions.

(Continued in next column)

We look forward to continuing these quarterly meetings with guest speakers on priority topics that will be of interest to all zone members.

Happy Holidays, Zone 6 members!

Amy Kessler, MSN, RN
Amy.kessler@ddiny.org

ZONE 7: New York, Richmond, King & Queens

Rob Peters, Zone 7 Chair
Robert.Peters@ahrcnyc.org

ZONE 8: Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, and Erie

Zone 8 has not had any active meetings this period as time has gotten away from us with planning the conference! We had a few new faces at the conference, which was pretty exciting! I'd like to see more of the participants become members. Membership allows the opportunity to hold a position in the Zone and even attend our Executive board meetings twice a year. The board is an amazing group of energetic, talented, and knowledgeable members looking to support our nurses! There is no greater networking experience than with the folks doing the work alongside you. I am hoping to once again plan a holiday gathering in January to touch base and revitalize. I welcome anyone interested in the zone to reach out! We have a chair and rep position open. I can't emphasize enough how great it is to have such collaboration.

Linda M. Cultrara, Zone 8 Secretary
Linda.m.cultrara.@opwdd.ny.gov

ZONE 9: Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Steuben, and Allegany

ZONE 11: Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Yates, Cayuga, Seneca, and Livingston

We are always looking for members to participate with zone meetings/suggestions for topics. If interested, please contact Edie Smith at edie.smith@cayuga-cc.edu or Deb Hill at dhill@pathwaysforyou.org

Edie Smith, Zone 9 & 11 Secretary,
Edie.smith@cayuga-cc.edu

ZONE 10: Schuyler, Tompkins, Cortland, Tioga, Chenango, Broome, and Chemung

Members in Zone 10 are always welcome to reach out to other zones to join them for educational presentations and networking opportunities.

ZONE 12: Members from Other States

Zone 12 members are encouraged to reach out to other zones to join them for educational presentations and networking opportunities.