

# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CRITICAL-CARE NURSES



YEAR IN REVIEW  
2024-2025

## **A Year in Review: Together, we grow it On Purpose.**

The Year in Review gives us a chance to look back on the past year and reflect on the key events, achievements, and challenges that shaped our work together. It is more than a recap; it is a celebration of what we accomplished as a community and a way to show the impact of our collective efforts.

We look back on what we've built together and set the stage for the year ahead. By reflecting on the moments that shaped our year, we can see how our work today drives excellence in acute and critical care, supporting nurses, patients, and families with intention and care.

At its essence, the Year in Review is about connection. It shows where we have been, highlights the strength of our collaboration, and points us toward the opportunities and goals that lie ahead. Together, we are making every action count because when we act with care, thought, and commitment, we move forward—On Purpose.



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# AACN ADVOCACY AND POLICY



## A Year of Growth and Connection

### 01. **New Alliances, Greater Impact**

This year, we built new partnerships with the Alliance for Nursing Informatics, the Nurses on Boards Coalition, and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers—connections that strengthen our collective impact and open doors for future collaboration.

### 02. **Advocacy in Action**

Together with the Nursing Community Coalition, we contributed to more than 20 letters advocating for nursing education and research funding, the PRECEPT Act, the Workplace Violence Prevention Act, the Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act of 2025, and other key priorities.

### 03. **Action on Critical National Challenges**

We joined with partner organizations to address critical national issues, including the extension of telehealth, prevention of workplace violence, IV fluid supply chain disruptions following Hurricane Helene, and the dismissal of Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) representatives.

### 04. **Strengthening Our Professional Voice**

Together, we reviewed and updated our position statements, including endorsing the Position Statement on the Integration of Critical Care Pharmacists into the ICU team, reinforcing our shared commitment to advancing interprofessional care.



# Looking Ahead

Guided by insights from the Community Impact Survey, we focused our advocacy efforts while updating webpages to highlight our work, provide practical advocacy tools, and connect members with the Strategic Advocacy team.

# Beyond the Highlights

We remain committed to monitoring policy, analyzing impact, and advocating for acute and critical care nurses, patients, and families.





# AACN ADVOCACY STAFFING WORK

- ▶▶ **Advancing Healthy Staffing**  
Staffing efforts gained momentum with publication of the AACN Standards for Appropriate Staffing in Adult Progressive Care in April 2025, national presentations, and NTI sessions. Collaboration strengthened via AACN's role on the CHEST APP ICU Staffing taskforce.
- ▶▶ **What's on the Horizon for FY2026**  
AACN Staffing standards for pediatric critical care are in development in collaboration with pediatric subject matter experts to address the unique needs of this population.
- ▶▶ **What our Community Should Know**  
Since 2017, AACN has prioritized appropriate staffing through collaboration and remains committed to advocacy and expanding resources.



# AACN

## ADVOCACY HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT

### Driving Healthy Work Environments Forward

#### **Healthy Work Environment (HWE) Initiatives**

The HWE National Collaborative meetings provided expert insights and project presentations to help drive projects forward. AACN launched Healthy Work Environment Assessment Tool (HWEAT)-Team, expanding its work environment assessment to interprofessional teams. Results of large-scale testing will be published this Fall and the tool is available online. An AONL HWE webinar reached 1,000+ nurse leaders, a webinar delivered to Massachusetts Hospital Association CNOs helped promote the use of HWEAT and the HWE Standards, and collaboration with Jefferson Hospital System is underway to implement HWEAT-Team system-wide.

#### **Advocacy & Funding**

AACN is collaborating with the University of Pennsylvania on the 6th HWE National Survey, planned for October. The HWE National Collaborative will mark its 2 year commitment at NTI 2026, celebrating 140+ projects. New CSI HWE cohorts are launching through the Nursing Workforce Solutions program, supported by a Johnson & Johnson grant.

#### **National Survey & NTI 2026**

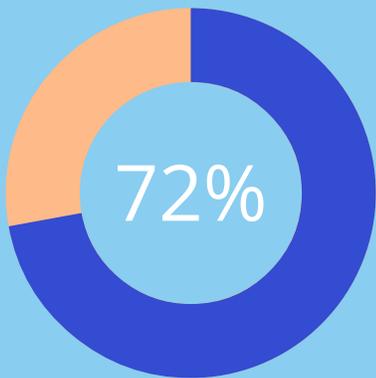
Healthy Work Environments and staffing remain a top advocacy priority, with larger-scale collaborations driving adoption of AACN's HWE Standards and improvements in outcomes. Results of the 2025 HWE National Survey will launch at NTI 2026, alongside work on the third edition of the Standards.



# AACN BEACON

## The Impact

The first Beacon 3.0 cycle was a remarkable milestone, closing with over 300 submissions—72% from new applicants—showcasing the innovation and dedication of our community. Nearly 20,000 nurses and staff were celebrated for their contributions, and in 2024, Beacon units collectively exceeded expectations, highlighting the strength and impact of our shared commitment to excellence. In 2025, our community embraced fresh ways to engage, with more than 500 individual modules purchased and 20% of participants returning, reflecting the enthusiasm, dedication, and ongoing impact of nurses across our community.



**Beacon Program Growth & Returning Units  
(2024-2025)**



In 2025, the Beacon Award offered volume discounts for the first time, which over half of applicant units used. These milestones show the momentum of Beacon 3.0 and the value units find in continued participation.

# Looking Ahead

2025 Beacon Applications are currently under review and benchmarking analysis to determine application scores and award levels is beginning. Simultaneously, module availability is being expanded in key practice areas such as Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU), Cath Lab/IR, and telecritical care.

# Beyond the Highlights

Staff in units participating in the Beacon Award report feeling valued and supported by their hospitals, and recognized for their accomplishments. Increased unit engagement and positive feedback reflect a strong response to program enhancements, including a focus on unit-based outcomes and initiatives where direct care nurses have the greatest influence.





# AACN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## A Year of Purpose and Progress

### Chapters

This year, AACN's 173 active chapters continued to engage nurses across the country. At NTI, more than 200 chapter leaders gathered for the Riding the Waves of Change Workshop. Members also joined virtual networking sessions to share best practices and ideas.



173 active chapters nationwide

- ▶▶ At NTI, the exhibit booth sparked over 225 conversations.
- ▶▶ Connections were made through conversations about the value of chapter membership, volunteer opportunities, and becoming an Ambassador.
- ▶▶ AACN leadership, including the President and Certification Corporation Chair, were invited to speak at 36 events.
- ▶▶ The 2024 Community Impact Survey showed chapter members report higher satisfaction with being a registered nurse.



## Volunteers

Volunteer engagement remained strong this year, with 960 individuals across 28 groups supporting a wide range of AACN initiatives. Their dedication continues to bring AACN's mission to life in meaningful ways.



**960 Volunteers | 28 Groups**

## Ambassadors

AACN's 1,125 Ambassadors are making an impact in hospitals, units, and communities nationwide. At NTI, Ambassadors came together for a Roundtable where they heard updates on AACN programs and shared the initiatives they're leading locally —building stronger connections and inspiring one another.

**1,125  
Ambassadors  
Nationwide**

## On the Horizon

Looking ahead, chapter listening sessions will bring the community together to explore today's volunteer landscape. The Ambassador Online Community will launch, making it easier for Ambassadors to connect, share, and learn from one another.

# AACN CERTIFICATION

## IMPACT: CERTIFICATION IN MOTION

### Celebrating Growth and Achievement

Over the past year, Certification has experienced exciting growth. Early trends for 2025 are already matching 2024's momentum, fueled by record numbers of initial exam candidates and certificants, showing a clear reflection of the dedication, enthusiasm, and collective commitment of our nursing community.

### Testing Flexibility

Remote proctored exams, launched in 2021, now serve nearly 30 percent of all test takers, with almost 1 in 3 choosing this option, highlighting the growing demand for flexible testing options.

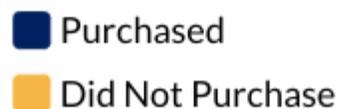
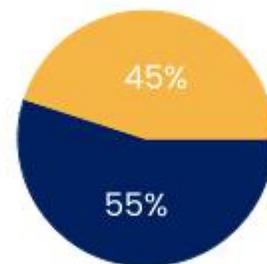
#### Remote Proctored Exams in 2025



### Practice Exams

A major driver of this growth has been the continued success of practice exams. More than half of initial exam candidates used an AACN practice exam to prepare for test day, reflecting the value nurses place on accessible, effective preparation tools.

#### Practice Exam Adoption (Initial Candidates)



# Micro-credentials

Innovation is creating new pathways for learning within our community. More than 800 members have earned micro-credentials in FY25, reflecting the growing engagement and commitment of our community to ongoing professional development.

# Value Program

The Value Program advances excellence in patient care by offering volume discounts that make professional growth, validation, and renewal more accessible to nurses and their employers. The program's reach continues to grow, now encompassing 294 organizations, including one large system representing more than 180 hospitals, demonstrating the widespread impact of this initiative across our community.



# Looking Ahead to 2026

The Certification Corporation will update CCRN test plans and practice exam items across all populations, with ACCNS-AG and ACCNS-P updates later this year. Work is also underway to develop new micro-credential topics and product innovations while monitoring regulatory changes that could impact certification pathways.



# AACN CONTENT CREATION



## Connected through Content

### Educational Resources

This year, we advanced key initiatives to enhance AACN's educational resources. Nursing journey mapping was completed to clarify the readiness-to-practice timeline, and content standards were updated to support consistent, high-quality learning experiences.

#### Impact at a glance



**29 blogs**



**3 webinars**



**15 podcast episodes**



**A stand-alone edition of the AACN Scope and Standards for Progressive Care Nursing Practice**



**200+ continuing education activities, awarding 2.1 million contact hours**

# Looking Ahead

AACN is excited to publish the stand-alone edition of the AACN Scope and Standards for Critical Care Nursing Practice and the stand-alone version for Progressive Care. We will continue expanding readiness-to-practice materials, and grow APRN and pharmacology-focused content. We will also explore the role and impact of AI in nursing through a content analysis, identifying emerging trends to guide the development of future educational resources that support and empower our community of nurses.

# Our Work, Together

Every piece of AACN content is co-created with community members who bring real-world expertise and diverse perspectives. This collaboration ensures our resources reflect the realities of practice, address emerging needs, and uphold the highest standards of accuracy, inclusivity, and impact.





## A Year of Progress and Partnerships

### 01. **CSI: Expands Its Reach**

In June, we launched 4 Nursing Workforce Solutions cohorts sponsored by Johnson & Johnson, this 18 month program equips direct care nurses with the tools and leadership skills to strengthen healthy work environments, improve retention, and boost satisfaction.

### 02. **Strong Outcomes**

Over half the teams improved both overall HWEAT scores and performance across all six standards, while about a quarter showed progress in their overall scores and targeted standards.

### 03. **Healthy Work Environment Focus**

In March, 7 cohorts focused on Healthy Work Environment Projects wrapped up. Seventy-three teams across 7 locations participated.



# Highlights

We're currently developing a publication to highlight outcomes from the HWE Cohorts, capturing stories of innovation and teamwork from across our community.

Three teams have publications in progress, showcasing the transformative results of their HWE Cohorts projects.

At NTI, the impact continued to shine with a record 26 CSI posters, five podium presentations, and four ExpoEd Hall features at the AACN Theater, many spotlighting the remarkable work from HWE Cohorts.

## Looking Ahead

Thanks to Johnson & Johnson, 6 additional cohorts are set to launch in 2026, continuing our mission to support and grow strong nursing teams in healthcare.



*Johnson & Johnson*





# AACN E-LEARNING

## New Courses

In Summer 2025, the Fundamental Skills for Preceptors (FSP) course launched with a modern design, realistic preceptor/orientee scenarios, and interactive tools. Earlier that spring, major updates were released for Essentials of Critical Care Orientation (ECCO) and Essentials of Pediatric Critical Care Orientation (EPCCO). Work also began on new versions of ECG & Dysrhythmia Monitoring and the Adult CCRN Certification Review.

## Webinars

During FY25, we produced three Critical Care webinars and two CCRN/PCCN Live Certification Review webinars, expanding access to flexible learning.

## Podcasts

In December 2024, we launched the Voices in Nursing podcast. A special Black History Month episode featured Dr. Virginia Allen, one of the last “Black Angels” who helped combat tuberculosis.

# Learning in Motion

## Key Products

In FY26, AACN will keep building and releasing favorites like ECCO, CCRN Certification Review Courses, the Digital Competency Toolkit, and the AACN Knowledge Assessment Tool. Work on the new ECG course is also moving forward, with release planned for early FY27.

## Fresh Content

All year long, new webinars and podcasts will keep rolling out, offering practical insights and expert knowledge in a format that's easy to access.

## Our Focus

Creating high-quality, engaging learning that gives nurses tools they can use every day. By expanding what we offer, we make sure there's innovative content for every stage of a nurse's career journey.





## A Year of Big Wins



Both NTI 2025 events were a great success, with a live conference in New Orleans in May and a virtual event in June, bringing together thousands of nurses from across our community. Participation and engagement exceeded expectations, reflecting the enthusiasm and commitment of our members. Highlights included the debut of the Recognition Celebration, the new Skills Lab in the exhibit hall, the highly popular interactive sessions, and Nurses Night Off. All of these elements brought energy, connection, and excitement to the experience.

7,900+ Nurses Reached



Recognition  
Celebration



Skills  
Lab



Interactive  
Sessions



Nurses  
Night Off



# Celebrating NTI 2025



NTI 2025 highlighted the power of connection, bringing nurses from across the country—both in person and online—to learn, celebrate, and help shape the future of critical care. Building on this momentum, NTI will continue to offer engaging education, exciting experiences, and meaningful opportunities to connect, ensuring it remains the premier event for critical care nursing.

## Looking Ahead to NTI 2026

We'll be reviewing feedback from attendees of both conferences to celebrate successes, highlight what resonated most, and identify ways to make future events even more engaging, impactful, and memorable for our nursing community.



Attendee  
Feedback  
Review



New  
Event  
Platform



Finalize NTI  
'26

# AACN PUBLISHING



## Publishing's Impact

### Boosting Access



Over the last year, AACN has undertaken projects to increase traffic to journal websites and optimize internal workflows. Supporting all three AACN journals, electronic tables of contents (eTOCs) were launched, offering members and subscribers an easy and immediate way to access journal content online through regular email communications.

### Ensuring Compliance

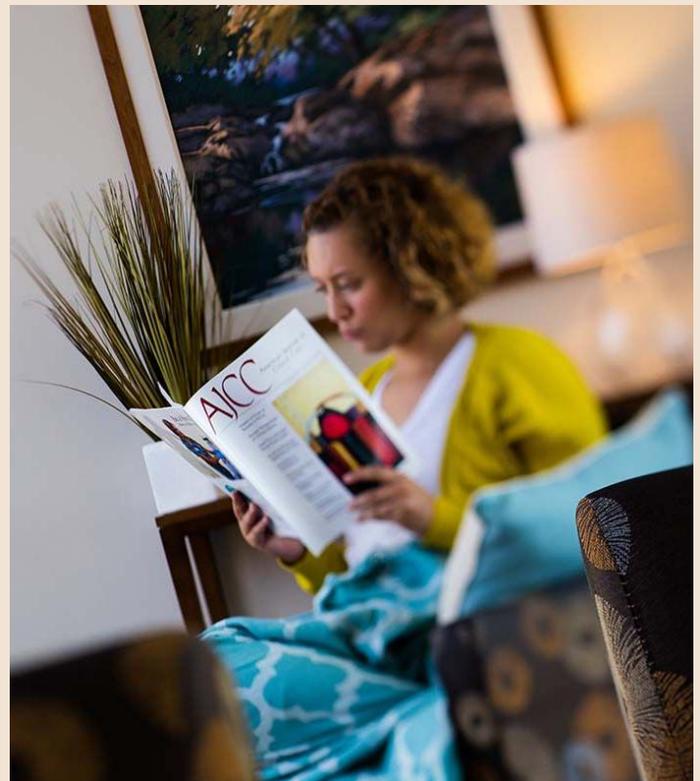


Requirements of the European Accessibility Act (EAA), which went into effect at the end of June 2025, were reviewed. The act governs accessibility of cross-border trade, particularly targeting digital content on public-facing websites. Changes to processes and formats are being planned to ensure compliance.

### Evolving Formats



We collaborated with other departments to prepare for the planned change in delivery format of member benefit journals. All three journals will now be available in digital-only formats, with print copies offered separately for a nominal fee on a per-title basis.



# Looking Ahead: 2026 Plans



## **Pay-for-Print Digital Default**

The new pay-for-print digital default option for members will launch with the January 2026 issue of AJCC, allowing rising print and postage costs to be addressed without increasing membership dues.



## **Ongoing Book Projects**

Multiple book projects will continue to be managed with the Practice Excellence team and a variety of stakeholders.



## **Digital Member Magazine**

In collaboration with Community Impact, a digital-only version of the monthly member magazine will return, targeting an April 1, 2026, launch date.

# Publishing Excellence

AACN Publishing is committed to the highest quality standards for peer-reviewed journal and commercial book content focused on progressive and critical care nursing research and practice. From our flagship research journal, American Journal of Critical Care; to our bedside practice journal, Critical Care Nurse; our quarterly advanced practice journal, AACN Advanced Critical Care; our commercially published books including the AACN Core Curriculum and AACN Procedure Manual offerings; and our self-published standards guiding specialized scope and practice standards, we will continue to publish content that helps critical care nurses provide the safest and most effective care while optimizing patient outcomes based on best available evidence.

# AACN

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE COMMUNITIES

### Highlights from this Year

#### Amplifying the Voice of Nursing

In FY25, our presence grew in meaningful ways. We shared 1,905 posts that reached more than 12.4 million screens and sparked over 300,000 engagements—likes, comments, shares, and link clicks. Our community also welcomed more than 15,500 new followers, a reflection of the value our content brings and the strong connections we continue to build together. This growth was fueled by targeted campaigns and, most importantly, by the voices of you, our community. The posts and stories created by nurses themselves resonated deeply and helped amplify the spirit of connection that defines us.

1,905



posts

12.4 M



Impressions

300,745



Engagements

15,573



Follower  
Growth

#### Connecting With You, in More Ways

We're passionate about sharing content that matters to nurses. Soon, we'll take things even further by growing our reach on TikTok and YouTube, bringing fresh stories, tips, and inspiration to even more of our nursing community.





## Beyond the Highlights

AACN remains dedicated to amplifying your voices, reflecting the experiences of the acute and critical care nursing community. Timely clinical resources will be shared through targeted outreach, ensuring information reaches those who need it. The organization is committed to fostering an online space to connect, share challenges and successes, and strengthen the community.

## Online Community Impact

Bring nurses together to connect, share insights, and engage in meaningful conversations on acute, progressive, and critical care.

**Membership grew by +1,619 this year — showing strong interest in peer-to-peer learning and collaboration.**



**+1,619 Members**



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