

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT

**Sara Knippa, MS, RN, ACCNS-AG, CCRN, PCCN**

**Clinical Nurse Specialist, Critical Care**

*UCHealth Metro Denver Region*

*Aurora, CO*



## Experience and Activities

### **AACN Commitment and Involvement, 2022-present**

*Includes ways in which the candidate integrated the mission and work of AACN into their current role and practice. Local and national volunteer activities are listed, if applicable.*

- AACN Board of Directors
  - Secretary, 2025-2026
  - Director, 2023-2026
- Director, AACN Certification Corporation Board of Directors, 2024-2025
- Editorial board member, *AACN Advanced Critical Care*, 2020-present
- Team mentor, AACN Healthy Work Environment National Collaborative, 2025-2026
- Invited speaker, AACN chapters
  - “What’s Your Purpose for Certification” and “Applying Evidence to Practice,” West Michigan Chapter, 2026
  - “Healthy Work Environments,” Denver Chapter and Siouxland Chapter, 2025
  - “AACN National Update,” Denver Chapter, 2024, 2023
- Co-instructor, PCCN review course, 2023
- NTI presenter, 2022
  - “Critical Care Fellowship: A Comprehensive and Efficient Redesign of Orientation”
  - “Ensure Your Practice Is Rooted in Evidence”
  - “12 Lead ECG: Tips and Tricks for Nurses Who Want to Understand Why the Shapes Go Up and Down”

### **Key Professional Activities outside AACN, 2022-present**

*Includes involvement with other professional organizations, teaching and/or speaking engagements*

- Course coordinator and instructor, “Fundamental Critical Care Support,” Society of Critical Care Medicine, 2023-present
- Co-presenter, “What Was the Secret Sauce? Successful Implementation of Evidence-Based Delirium Practices in Two Contrasting ICUs,” National conference concurrent session, American Delirium Society, 2025
- Clinical Nurse Specialist program, University of Colorado College of Nursing
  - Adjunct instructor, 2021-2026
  - CNS student preceptor

## Issues Statement

Healthcare today operates under constant strain. Within our healthcare system, high workloads and emotional intensity create conditions that can lead to incivility, moral distress, burnout and staffing shortages. These pressures feed on one another, creating a vicious cycle of increasing burdens that weigh on nurses and the system. Breaking this cycle is possible. AACN data consistently demonstrates that units implementing the AACN Healthy Work Environment standards outperform those that do not, with measurable improvements in workplace culture and patient outcomes. By intentionally advancing the pillars of a healthy work environment, we can better address burnout and increase staff retention. Retention leads to appropriate staffing, which in turn improves patient care.

It is natural to focus on immediate problems, addressing issues one by one. But this approach can miss the larger pattern that exacerbates the vicious cycle. The healthy work environment standards provide a way for us to see interrelated issues more clearly and shift from a vicious cycle towards a virtuous cycle. Virtuous cycles allow each positive change to influence the next, reshaping the patterns, making it easier for good things to build. It takes energy and intention to maintain virtuous cycles. AACN is advancing work on multiple fronts to create and sustain virtuous cycles in healthcare, at unit, hospital and system levels, through initiatives such as the AARP-AACN Campaign for Action Research Grants, the Johnson & Johnson-AACN Workforce Solutions CSI program and the AACN Healthy Work Environment National Collaborative. Through this work, AACN is a leader in efforts to transform U.S. healthcare. By disrupting the vicious cycles and intentionally building new virtuous ones, AACN is creating positive change for nurses and patients.