

CANDIDATE FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Tracy Thomas,

MSN, APRN, CCRN, TCRN, ACNS-BC, FCNS

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Critical Care

Mayo Clinic

Phoenix, AZ



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.

- Lead and champion, AACN Beacon application, Mayo Clinic ICU, 2023-present
- Greater Phoenix Area Chapter
 - Secretary, 2022-present
 - President, 2021-2022
 - Vice president/President-elect, 2019-2021
 - Governance chair, 2018-2019
- Member, Chapter Advisory Team, 2022-2025
- Speaker, National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition, 2024

Key Professional Activities outside AACN, 2022-present

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

- Member, Arizona State Board of Nursing Advisory Committee
 - Scope of Practice, 2024-present
 - Advanced Practice, 2018-2023
- Advisor, Mayo Clinic, Phoenix
 - Unit-Based Shared Governance Coordinating Council, 2023-present
 - Intensive Care Unit-Based Shared Governance Council, 2022-present
- Member, Arizona Nurses Association/American Nurses Association Government Affairs Committee, 2022-present

Issues Statement

One key issue affecting acute and critical care nursing today is nursing burnout and moral distress. Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, this issue continues to impact nurses' well-being and their ability to provide high-quality patient care. Nursing burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Moral distress occurs when nurses are unable to act according to their ethical beliefs due to various constraints, leading to feelings of frustration, guilt and powerlessness. These issues are pervasive in acute and critical care settings due to the high-stress environment, long working hours, and the emotional toll of caring for critically ill patients.

Addressing nursing burnout and moral distress is crucial for several reasons, including patient safety and quality of care, nursing retention and workforce stability, nurse well-being, and organizational culture and morale. Burnout and moral distress can impair the ability to make sound clinical decisions, potentially leading to errors and safety events. They can also greatly impact nursing retention and workforce stability, creating a continuous cycle of training new staff, increased costs, and reduced efficiencies in care due to the influx of novice nurses. Chronic stress and burnout can lead to increased health issues, potentially impacting morbidity and mortality. Cultures that prioritize nursing well-being promote positive work environments, improve job satisfaction, and foster teamwork and collaboration, leading to improved patient and organizational outcomes.

The AACN and AACN Certification Corporation are well-positioned to address this issue through advocacy for improved policies, support for nursing research, and strengthening support networks. By addressing nursing burnout and moral distress, they can enhance the well-being of nurses, improve patient care, and strengthen the healthcare system as a whole.