



# AWHONN

MARYLAND

PROMOTING THE HEALTH OF  
WOMEN AND NEWBORNS

## MARYLAND SECTION MESSENGER

### AWHONN Hospital Liason Spotlight: University of Maryland St. Joe's

*Lynn Arenson, MSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM, NPD-BC*



Many moons ago 😊 I received a bachelor's degree in nursing from Villanova University. In 2019 I obtained a master's degree in nursing education from Stevenson University. I have worked primarily in Labor and Delivery in Maryland, Florida, Texas, North Carolina, New York, and Japan but also dabbled in high risk OB, GYN, postpartum, and the newborn nursery. I left the bedside and switched to a career in nursing education in 2017. I began working at University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center (UM SJMC) as the Maternal-Child Health Clinical Practice Specialist this past April.

I am an AWHONN intermediate and advanced electronic fetal monitoring instructor. In addition, I am a neonatal resuscitation instructor and certified in inpatient OB, EFM, and nurse professional development.

I am the immensely proud mother of a 26-year-old daughter who is a speech language pathologist in Queens, NY and a 21-year-old daughter who is in her senior year at University of Tampa. During my time off, I love to read mindless books, go to any beach, and travel (picture from recent trip to Greece).

In April, UM SJMC was honored with a five-ribbon designation in Newsweek's 2025 "America's Best Maternity Hospitals" rankings. UM SJMC does about 2000 births/year and has a level three NICU. Current initiatives have focused on TeamSteps culture work, communication workshops, and expanding simulation. SJMC is also currently participating in the Maryland Patient Safety Center debriefing initiative and the medication risk assessment.

*Interested in becoming a hospital liaison?  
Contact Jessica Chiappelli, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, RNC-MNN, C-EFM, C-ONQS,  
Hospital Liaison Coordinator*

# March 2026

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# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## STRONGER TOGETHER ADVOCACY IN ACTION

AWHONN ON CAPITOL HILL

APRIL 27-28, 2026



**AWHONN on Capitol Hill will take place April 27-28, 2026. We encourage you to join us for this annual event. This year the priority issues we will be advocating for include:**

- **“HR 3942/S 2059: Keeping Obstetrics Local Act** would improve access to maternity care, support hospitals facing financial challenges, and enhance the quality of maternal health services, particularly in underserved areas, by increasing the Medicaid payment rate for maternal health care services and through other programs.
- **HR 3593/S 1874: Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act** would invest in the nursing workforce and increase patients’ access to high-quality nursing care by bolstering and sustaining the nursing pipeline, helping to educate the nursing workforce by supporting academic institutions, addressing nursing shortages in rural and medically underserved areas, and supporting the recruitment and retention of nurses through the Nurse Corps scholarship and loan repayment programs.
- Legislation requiring that graduate school nursing programs be eligible for student loans under the federal Grad Plus Student loan program. The Department of Education has filed a proposed rule in the Federal Register, which will exclude graduate nursing programs from the federal Grad Plus Student loan program for professional degrees.”

*- Bassey Etim-Edit, MS, RN, CNL, Legislative Liaison*

[Click here to register](#)

# AWHONN Maryland Leaders Shine at 2026 National Leadership Development Conference

AWHONN Maryland Section Chair **Stacey Iobst, PhD, RNC-OB, C-EFM, CNE** and Education Coordinator **Laura Garifo, MSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM, C-ONQS**, proudly represented our section at the AWHONN Leadership Development Conference in Dallas, Texas, held February 2–4, 2026.

Stacey presented on behalf of Peer Mentor Program Co-Facilitators **Amy Brown, RN, BSN, RN, CPST** and **Erica Reid, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM**, delivering the session Empowering Nurses Through Peer Mentorship: The AWHONN Maryland Approach. The presentation highlighted the innovative strategies our Maryland team is using to strengthen nurse-to-nurse support and foster meaningful professional growth. Stacey and Laura also shared insights from Maryland’s leadership team with their joint session, From Conception to Collaboration: Building a Strong Section Leadership Team, outlining the planning and vision behind our 2025 Leadership Retreat.



Both leaders returned energized and inspired by the ideas exchanged with section leaders from across the country. We’re excited to bring this momentum into 2026 as we continue to grow, lead, and strengthen the AWHONN Maryland community!

## CHAPTER COORDINATORS NEEDED

**Embrace the call!** Unite with a great team of nurses to strengthen our AWHONN MD Section, all while making connections with fellow nurses and reveling in the experience! We are presently on the lookout for energized volunteers for the following roles: Chapter Coordinators carry out the following duties:

- Send welcome letters to new members
- Host a minimum of one chapter event each calendar year
- Attend quarterly leadership meetings
- Communicate with the leadership team and promote chapter events

Vacant Position:

- Northern Maryland Chapter Coordinator

**Interested? Contact us at [awhonnm@gmail.com](mailto:awhonnm@gmail.com)**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

22

**AWHONN MD Spring Conference Registration:** It's now open! [Register here](#)

JUNE

12

**Podcast club:** Save the date for our first virtual podcast club meeting when we'll discuss [The Retrievals Season 2](#) - a compelling podcast about poorly managed CS anesthesia.

## AWHONN MD MEMBER STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

**Akunna Mezu** is a graduating nursing student in the Entry-Level Master's program at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (JHUSON) with a strong interest in improving health outcomes through nursing, research, and innovation. A Maryland native, Akunna was drawn to nursing by her desire to support individuals and families during life-changing transitions. She has dedicated her time to maternal and child health and hopes to continue combining clinical care with research and technology to support equitable, evidence-based care. Akunna currently works at Delfina, a maternal health technology company, where she partners with healthcare providers to support the integration and delivery of patient-centered pregnancy and postpartum care. She also serves as the AWHONN Maryland Newsletter Intern, contributing to member engagement and professional communication efforts. Her experience as a doula and in public health research has strengthened her understanding of innovative and collaborative healthcare practices. Looking ahead, Akunna will pursue her PhD at JHUSON, where she plans to further integrate research, technology, and advocacy into her nursing practice. Outside of nursing, she enjoys baking and owns a small business, Akunna's Delights, where she creates homemade treats for special occasions.





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JOIN US FOR

# PODCAST CLUB



SCAN HERE TO REGISTER:



<https://tinyurl.com/AWHONNMD-PodcastClub1>

A new opportunity to come together and discuss thought-provoking podcasts focused on women's health and patient advocacy.

**Our first featured podcast is The Retrievals. We'll be discussing one episode every 3 months. On Friday, June 12, 2026, from 1-2 PM we'll discuss Episode 1, "The Case".**

**Listen to the podcast beforehand: <https://tinyurl.com/Retrievals-Podcast>**

Come ready to share your thoughts and engage in meaningful conversation. We hope to see you there!

Save the dates for future discussions:

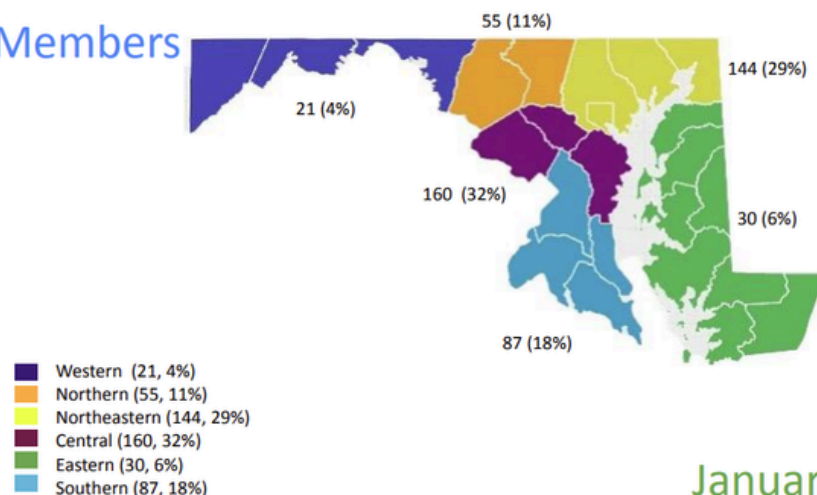
- September 11 from 2:30-3:30 pm
- December 11 from 1-2 pm
- March 12 from 1-2 pm

## Growing our Maryland AWHONN Community

Membership is strong and growing! We encourage you to invite your colleagues and friends to join our amazing AWHONN community! Thank you for your commitment to advancing the health of women and newborns through your membership and advocacy.

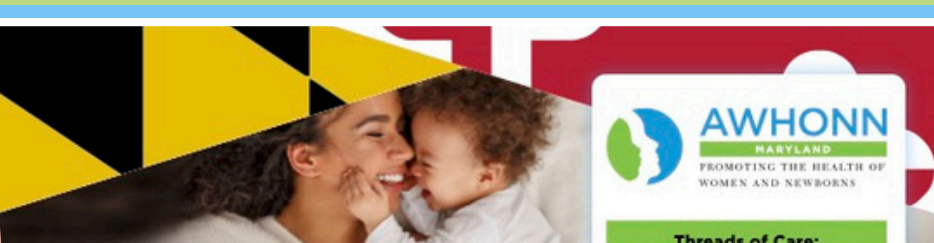
- Cara Caccamisi,  
Membership Coordinator

497  
Members



January 2026

# MD AWHONN CONFERENCE REGISTRATION IS LIVE!



**Threads of Care:  
Weaving Maternal & Perinatal  
Health Across the Lifespan**

## 2026 SECTION CONFERENCE

**Wednesday • April 22, 2026 • 7:00am–5:30pm**

*Breakfast, lunch, and snacks included*

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION**  
[https://my.awhonn.org/NC\\_Event?id=a01V000005zVdVYAU](https://my.awhonn.org/NC_Event?id=a01V000005zVdVYAU)

**PRE-CONFERENCE  
COCKTAIL HOUR:**  
Tuesday • April 21  
6:30–9:30pm

### PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- Reducing Postpartum Anxiety Through Group Prenatal Care
- Disrupting Obstetric Violence in Perinatal Care
- Supporting Patients and Nurses through AFE: A Shared Experience
- Teamwork in Action: Improving ED/L&D Communication
- Ignite Session: Maternity Care in Maryland

### WATERFRONT CONFERENCE VENUE

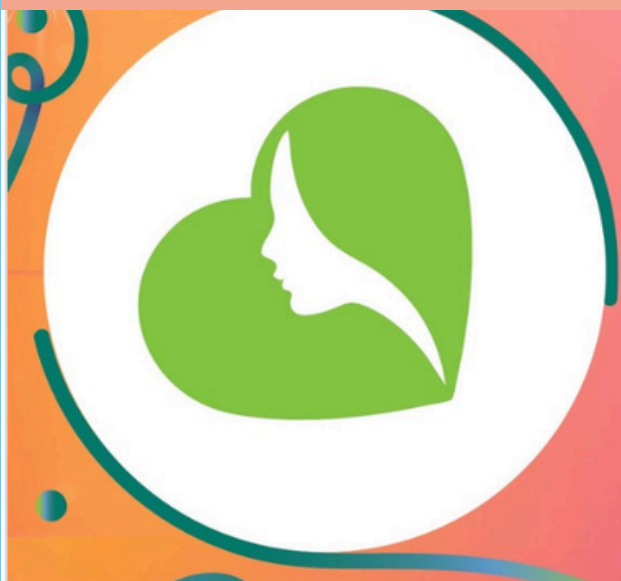
**CHESAPEAKE BAY BEACH CLUB**  
500 Marina Club Road • Stevensville, MD 21666  
<https://www.baybeachclub.com>

**CHESAPEAKE INN HOTEL BLOCK**  
<https://www.baybeachclub.com/the-inn> PROMO CODE: 185999

**HILTON GARDEN INN KENT ISLAND MARINA HOTEL BLOCK**  
<https://tinuurl.com/AWHONNMDHilton> PROMO CODE: AMC26



## A WHONN NATIONAL CONVENTION



**REGISTER HERE!**

<https://registration.experientevent.com/Showawh261>

# 2026 AWHONN CONVENTION

**June 6–10 • Orlando, FL  
Disney's Coronado Springs Resort**

# CONNECT WITH US

[HTTPS://MARYLAND.AWHONN.ORG/](https://maryland.awhonn.org/)

[AWHONNMD@GMAIL.COM](mailto:AWHONNMD@GMAIL.COM)



AWHONN Maryland  
Section



@awhonn\_md



@\_awhonnmd

## SECTION LEADERS

STACEY IOBST  
**Section Chair**

AMY BROWN  
**Secretary/Treasurer**

KIM HALL  
**Webmaster/Social Media  
Coordinators**

BASSEY ETIM-EDET  
**Legislative Coordinator**

LAURA GARIFO  
**Education Coordinator**

CARA CACCAMISI  
**Membership Coordinator**

NAOMI CROSS  
&  
LYNN ARENSON  
**Newsletter Coordinator**

KATIE CABRERA  
**Student Coordinator**

JESSICA CHIAPPELLI  
**Hospital Liaison  
Coordinator**

ERICA REID  
**Peer Mentorship Program  
Coordinator**

## CHAPTER COORDINATORS

JAIMI HALL  
**Eastern Shore**

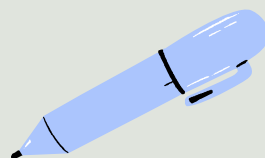
JUDITH COOMBS-HAYLETT  
&  
CHERICE DEW  
**Northeastern MD**

SHERRIE BURKHOLDER  
**Western MD**

VACANT  
**Northern MD**

ANGLESIA LAMBERT  
**Central MD**

AASTASSHIA LACY  
**Southern MD**



## STUDENT INTERNS

AKUNNA MEZU  
**NEWSLETTER INTERN**

HAVILAH MANGALAPATI  
**LEGISLATIVE INTERN**

JAYLA HAWKINS  
**MEMBERSHIP INTERN**

STEPHIE M KAYUMBA  
**EDUCATION INTERN**

