

NCDONA Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome back to the NCDONA newsletter. The year 2020 has had a profound effect on us, our staff, and those we serve. The NCDONA Board wants you to know that you are still heroes. You continue to get up and show up each and every day. Please know you are not alone in this fight. We are a phone call or email away.

During the pandemic, we have shifted to web-based meetings and try to keep you update on any changes that affect Long Term Care. Our next quarterly meeting in June likely will continue to follow that path. It is our hope that we can resume in person meetings once restrictions have been lifted later this year. If you have any ideas or suggestions for topics please reach out to us.

Stay safe and remember to put yourself on the list.

Linda Barbee, BSN, RN

NCDONA LTC Chapter President

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

We are the North Carolina chapter of the National Association of Directors of Nursing in Long Term Care (NADONA). Being a part of this organization opens access to professional nursing certifications, mentoring, education, support and opportunities to collaborate with your peers in long term care. Although we have many different hats to wear in the career path we have chosen, our focus is still on improving the quality of life for our elderly.

Do you know any new DONs or Administrators who would like to join NADONA? Reach out to non-members who are nurses to join today, or forward us their contact information and we will reach out to them. We welcome all new members of nursing into our organization.

New members may join via the NADONA website: <https://www.nadona.org/>



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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NCDONA MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to educate, serve and communicate to advance the professionalism of long-term care.

We EDUCATE by offering continuing education to our members and others who work in long term care.

We SERVE by providing opportunities for scholarships to further careers in long term care.

We COMMUNICATE by providing quarterly updates, newsletters, web information and networking with peers at the local, state and national level.

We believe that caring, compassionate, and continuously educated individuals will promote exemplary quality care to the geriatric community.

CELEBRATE 25 YEARS WITH US!

NCDONA continues to collaborate on safe and effective methods to be able to hold our 25th Annual Multi-State Conference this year in Myrtle Beach, SC. Stay tuned for more information that will be forthcoming on the NCDONA website: <https://ncdonaltc.com/>

LEADING WITH GRACE BY JILL NOTHSTINE

I don't know how you do it. You have faced – and continue to face - challenges that were unimaginable just a year ago. But you soldier on, and there are no adequate words to acknowledge and thank you for what you do, day after day. I was a DON many years ago, and I thought I had it tough between raising four young children and managing the nursing team. People would ask me how I managed two full time jobs and my standard reply (only half-joking) was, "I don't do either one well."

Now, when I think of our nursing team leaders balancing work and home and COVID-19 with all it brings, I am in awe. The list is endless - constant testing, reporting, transmission precautions, PPE issues, infection control surveys, and the vaccination process – a light at the end of the tunnel that brings its own set of challenges.

So how do you continue to lead your team through this uniquely challenging time? I don't have all of the answers, but I will try to offer a few ideas. For starters, you need to take care of yourself. You may have heard the old saying that you need to take care of your staff so they can take care of your residents. But you can't take care of anyone if you don't first take care of yourself. Easier said than done, I know. Whatever you need to break away at the end of the day, find it and do it. Meditate, pray, take a walk, bake a cake, call a friend, watch a cheesy Hallmark movie – dare I say have a glass of wine? Find small moments with your family to cherish and hold on to – take it from me, your children will not be with you forever.

Everyone needs someone safe to vent to. Find that person and share your feelings with them. By that same measure, be ready to hear those feelings from your team. This is not the time to say, "We are all tired – deal with it!" If you are not the warm, fuzzy type, find that person on your team who is, and ask for his or her support in talking with team members who are struggling. Focusing on the individual strengths of your team members has never been more important.

The first part of Lutheran Services Carolinas' customer service program, the "LSC Way," is *Lead by Example*. Good words that can be life-changing or just another overused expression. The idea here is that everyone, no matter their role, is a leader; that people notice what we do and what we say. Now, more than ever, people are looking to you for guidance and reassurance (no pressure!). Stay informed by *reputable* sources, practice the 3 W's, get vaccinated, and power through those hard days. Remind your team that now – more than ever before – our actions and personal choices impact the well-

being of those we care for and those we love.

The second part of the LSC Way is to *Serve Joyfully*. Talk about a challenge. How do you keep up the morale of your team when everyone is sick and tired and just *over it*?! The standard ideas are still good: feed them, pay them, recognize them, thank them - a lot. As in every day. Long term care has always been difficult, now it can be life-threatening. You and your team truly are heroes. You can be *so* over COVID in every respect except one – our teams need to feel our gratitude every single day.

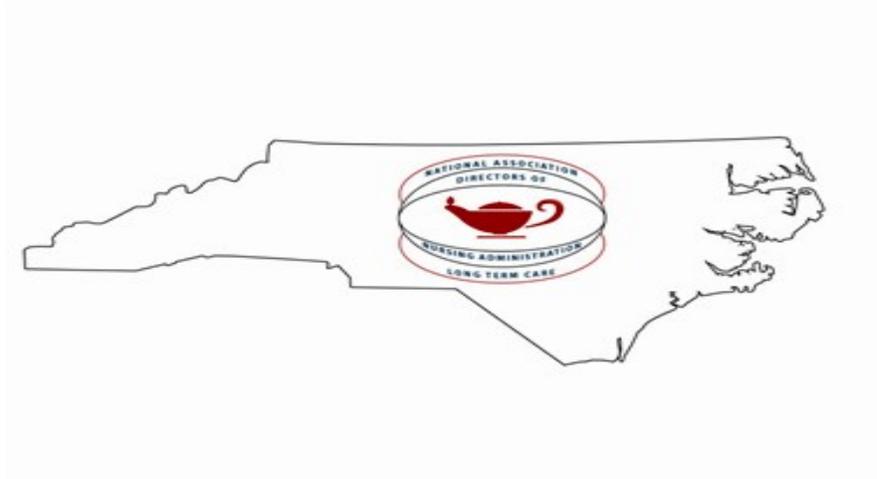
Some other ways to put some joy back in the serving is to encourage activities and relationships between team members and residents - anything you can think of to remind your team why they came to work in long term care (hint: it's the residents, we love our residents). Also, look for growth opportunities for your team members who have really shined in these past months. Leadership positions, committee appointments, and outside educational opportunities are some ways to show appreciation and confidence in exceptional team members. Finally, do all you can to preserve that all-important work-life balance. As much as it feels like it, life did not stop with COVID. Our teammates still need, and are entitled to, their personal time and space. By the way, the same is true for you. If you need a real day off, fight for it and then allow yourself to enjoy it without guilt.

I will end by adding one more thought: give yourself and those you lead some grace. Things are hard for literally everyone on the planet. Think about that. This is the first time in our lifetimes when every person in every nation in every corner of the world has felt the impact of an enemy we can't even see. Yes, there are those who will take advantage, those who may argue that the virus isn't real, those who will forget to wash their hands in front of a surveyor. But most of us are just doing the best we can to navigate this new world. And for every team member who claims a false exposure just to get time off, there are thousands of others working day and night to care for our residents. And that – after all – is why we do what we do.

Thank you again for leading with grace and serving joyfully (most of the time). Please know that you are in the hearts, thoughts, and prayers of many every day.

Jill Nothstine

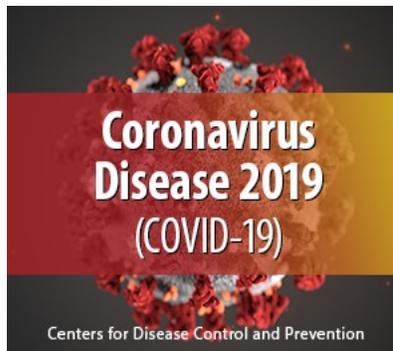
Lutheran Services Carolinas



North Carolina Directors of Nursing Administration Long Term Care, Inc.

COVID-19

It is both hard to believe, and a welcome relief that we have been dealing and living with COVID-19 for a year now. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the North Carolina Department of



Human Services (NCDHHS) continue to provide updates and guidance to facilities related to COVID-19.

NADONA members may access helpful tools and resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic on the NADONA website. Along with auto-generated email for members, NADONA has created an easy to navigate reference page that will place many helpful resources right at your fingertips, no need to go searching to find what you need amongst a large Internet search. <https://www.nadona.org/>

NCDONA QUARTERLY MEETINGS

NCDONA historically holds quarterly meetings across the state of North Carolina. With the ever-changing guidelines related to COVID-19, NCDONA continues to determine the safest way to provide meetings, updates, and safe networking for our members which addresses social distancing and restrictions on group events.

In 2020, NCDONA held a very successful, first time ever, virtual meeting with Cindy Deporter, NC State Agency Director, as the guest speaker.

NCDONA quarterly meetings will resume based on further direction provided by the Governor, the CDC, CMS, and the NCDHHS.

**NCDONA EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

Amanda Kistler,
*Executive Director,
NADONA President*

Linda Barbee,
President

Julie Stafford,
*Vice President,
NADONA Treasurer*

Peggy Shoffner,
Treasurer

Cassie Faircloth,
Recording Secretary

Denise Vance,
Corresponding Secretary

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

*Region I –
Cindy Clampett*

*Region II –
Lydia Foy*

*Region III –
Denise Vance*

*Region IV & V –
Cassie Faircloth*

UPCOMING EVENTS

The 33rd annual National NADONA Conference was successfully held virtually this past year.

The 34th annual National NADONA Conference will be held in Niagara Falls, NY.

The conference dates for the 34th annual National NADONA Conference has been set for:

Pre-conference has been set for August 7th.

The conference dates are August 8th—August 11th.

The conference will be held at the Conference and Event Center at Niagara Falls; Sheraton Niagara Falls in Niagara Falls, NY.

Please access further information regarding the 34th annual conference on the NADONA website. <https://www.nadona.org/>

Start making plans to attend now!

NCDONA 25TH ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE

The NCDONA 25th Annual Multi-State Conference has been scheduled for September 15th through September 17th in Myrtle Beach, SC.

We are very excited to extend a warm welcome to all returning attendees and new attendees to this year's conference!

The conference will be held at the beautiful Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort. Please begin to make plans so that you will be able to take some time to attend, refresh, and rejuvenate while attending

this year's conference.

Do you know any new DONs or Nursing Administrators who would like to attend? Please invite them!

Our conference offers you a large number of CEs for an excellent price while you enjoy the beach!

Come and celebrate good times with us at our 25th annual conference!

Updated information at: <https://ncdonaltc.com/>

Do you know a vendor who would like to participate in our conference? If so, please email Julie Stafford at: julie.s.ncdona@gmail.com

ANNUAL NCDONA CONFERENCE IDEAS

Do you have any ideas for speakers or topics for the NCDONA Annual Multi-State Conference? We would love to hear from you to see what you would like to learn or hear about.

Reach out and connect with us to discuss any ideas you have!

SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sandi Hargette Scholarship has been designed for a North Carolina Director of Nursing Administration Long Term Care, Inc. member who is seeking their Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. The nominee must currently be a member of NCDONA LTC, Inc. and currently work in the long term care setting. The candidate must have plans to remain in long term care for at least two years after graduation. The candidate must be enrolled in a Bachelor of Science Nursing program.

The last recipient for the Sandi Hargette Scholarship award was Ms. Melanie Sanders Johnson in 2019.

If you meet the qualifications, please apply.

MY COVID STORY

My mother's birthday is in February, she turned 90 years old just a few weeks ago. I have two sisters whose birthdays fall in March. In March of 2020 we carried on a tradition of getting together for a "Girls Day Out Birthday Brunch" at our favorite Irish Pub. My oldest sister Vickie began pulling the tissue out of the big green, pink, blue and yellow birthday bag that I had given her and along with a pretty little wind chime she pulled out a four pack of Scott toilet tissue. We burst out in laughter because of the craziness we were hearing on the news of Americans hoarding toilet paper and paper towels. We all sat together and enjoyed our fish & chips not knowing that in a few days the entire world would change and there would be no Easter, July 4th, Thanksgiving or Christmas get together with our family.

I have been in long term care for over 25 years and like I have heard so many colleagues say, I have never witnessed anything like this pandemic. Coming out of the ER into the nursing home in 1995 was less of a culture shock than some would think. You never know what the day is going to hold when you show up for work in a nursing home. I have always tried to proceed with the safety of the patient in mind as a registered nurse but I did not lack confidence by any means. I am proud to say I have been a successful MDS Nurse, a Director of Nursing and a pretty successful administrator, well, at least up until the last year. For the first time in my career in long term care fear filled my head. Fear, not for me, but for literally everyone around me. My family, my staff, my friends and even the strangers that I met in the store or just walking down the street were immediately my responsibility. I never thought I would feel literally beaten up but that is how I have felt most every day after leaving work for the last year. I went from being a confident caregiver to being a consistent second guesser. I was scared. I am still scared. I am not ashamed to admit it. At one time I would have been ashamed but not now.

About six weeks into the pandemic we had our first positive case. Immediately I felt as if I had let the resident down as well as the resident's family. I felt like I was a failure. I had failed my staff, my department heads, my Director of Nursing, my company, the long-term care industry and most of all my family. I was terrified at the thought of bringing COVID home to my then 89-year-old mother. On top of all this, I was worried about DHSR...yes, "the state". Now they would be in my facility to survey us and try to find something, if anything, we were doing wrong. Of course, trying to find toilet paper on the way home was a lost cause and I wasn't laughing any more.

Fast forward to November, I had been asked to move to another facility for my company. Like with any new assignment there are challenges. It was tough going to a new facility before COVID but now there is a whole new set of challenges. Take the already existing census changes, the already existing staffing issues, room changes, reports, infection control surveys, sometimes 5 x weekly COVID calls or meetings with your team with the expectation that the same things we were doing before were still expected as well. Not only do you feel inadequate in the day-to-day prep for the unending dread of a positive case of COVID but the day-to-day operations. So many nurse leaders have dealt with the same issues. I hear stories of colleagues with almost 75% of their residents and 75% of staff positive with COVID. Hearing stories of staff dying from COVID, residents dying with some family members responding in a positive supportive way while others condemn and blame you and make comments like "y'all brought this in there to my mother because you don't know what you are doing and you don't care". This is while I am at home sick, yes COVID-19. I had it, so did a daughter and my husband and my mother. I had brought it home to my family even after trying so hard not to get it and praying my mother would be spared from a severe case. Then the good news came there was a vaccine coming!

Now let's talk about the vaccine. Oh, that vaccine! Trying to convince staff to take the vaccine. Trying to encourage when you are not sure you should do it yourself? Why does it seem that you can get people to drink the kool-aid about most anything they see or hear? Why does it seem that news media shows only the bad? Are we making good decisions about why we should or should not take the vaccine or are we just listening to the media. If I go by what I hear on the morning news I would not come out of the house. Is there uncertainty with taking a vaccine for anything?? Of course. Anytime someone puts a bite of food in their mouth it changes their life. Food keeps you alive. Idiosyncrasy is something I learned early in Pharmacology. Everyone reacts differently to food, medication, chemicals, temperature, viruses and the list goes on and on. What happened the first time someone ate a french fry fried in peanut oil and they were allergic to peanuts? Really it is hard to look at any staff member that refuses to take the vaccine and understand after an outbreak that claims the lives of residents they have cared for and staff they have worked alongside. But it is the American way...we have a right to refuse.

My story is not special as there are so many caregivers that have these same feelings I am sure that have seen so much more, so much worse. There are no simple answers or solutions as you all know. I guess all we can do is continue to support each other, pray for a cure, an end, a resolution, some sort of normal if that is even possible. I will say this. When all the dust settles, long-term care will be standing, NCDONA will still be here to support and Nurses, well nurses will just always be!

By Julie B. Stafford, RN, NHA, CDP, CDONA, CADDCT, FACDONA, IP-BC, EFLA

NCDONA LTC, INC.

No one knows what you go through in a day, no one except NADONA!

NADONA members have access to resources, education, one-on-one education, mentorship, policy and procedure, just to name a few!

Become a member if you are not already one, or renew your membership, invite new members, and take advantage of the benefits of being a member of NADONA!



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