FNINR

NightinGala

OCTOBER 7, 2026

FNINR NightlinGala

Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research™

FNINR's VISION

is a future where adequate support and funding for nursing research, through NINR and other support of nurse scientists, results in improved health for communities and individuals through funded nursing research and rigorously-trained nurse scientists.

FNINR's MISSION

is to improve health by strengthening and amplifying the impact of NINR and nursing research through strategic advocacy to advance nursing science.

The Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research (FNINR) is an independent, non-profit, organization founded in 1993. Nurse researchers are grounded in clinical nursing practice and focused on the physical, mental, emotional, and social needs of patients. They recognize the illness and the presence of health risk factors affecting the overall well-being of individuals.

The healthcare community faces new challenges and opportunities to improve patient care each year. With the continuing leadership provided by NINR and the support of FNINR, nurse researchers will continue to contribute to the enhanced health and well-being of all Americans, especially in a time when cost-effectiveness and quality of care are equally championed by the public and the Nation's decision makers.

National Institute of Nursing Research

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) was first established in 1986 and was elevated in 1993 to an institute at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency. NINR believes that nursing research is the key to unlocking the power and potential of nursing by leveraging nursing's strengths and unique knowledge and perspectives inherent to the discipline to the benefit of all people. Their overall mission is to lead nursing research to solve pressing health challenges and inform practice and policy, optimizing health for all.

Support FNINR's mission by scanning the QR code.

Welcome



Teri A. Murray, PhD, PHNA-BC, RN, ANEF, FADLN, FAAN

On Behalf of the FNINR Board of Directors,

Welcome to the NightinGala!

Tonight, we gather to celebrate the power of nursing research to improve health, inform policy, and transform lives. We also celebrate the remarkable community of researchers, advocates, supporters, and partners whose commitment makes this important work possible. The progress we achieve is driven not only by scientific discovery, but also by the collective dedication of those who believe in the value and impact of nursing science.

FNINR remains steadfast in its mission to advance rigorous, innovative nursing research and to ensure that nurse-led science is recognized for its critical contributions to health and healthcare. We advocate for the visibility, support, and resources needed to strengthen nursing research and amplify its influence on policy, practice, and population health. These efforts help ensure that nursing science continues to address the most pressing health challenges facing our communities and our nation.

At the heart of our work are FNINR's core values: supporting rigorous nursing research that produces compelling science; demonstrating the transformative improvements in health made possible through nurse-led research; communicating the value of nursing science so that its impact is seen, heard, and understood; advocating for the funding and visibility needed to advance the field; and strengthening the future of nursing research through continued excellence and innovation. These principles guide every initiative, partnership, and conversation we undertake.

As we honor outstanding nurse scientists and recognize leadership that advances our profession, let us also celebrate the collective impact of this community. Your support helps ensure that nursing research continues to thrive and that its contributions to health and healthcare grow ever stronger.

We hope you enjoy this evening of recognition, fellowship, and celebration. Thank you for your continued commitment to FNINR and to the advancement of nursing science. Together, we are elevating the voice of nursing research and improving health for all.

Kind regards,

Teri A. Murray

President, FNINR
2025-2026

FNINR NightinGala



A Message from the NINR Director



Courtney F. Aklin, PhD

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this year's FNINR NightinGala. Tonight we gather at an important moment for health and for nursing science. The nation's most challenging health issues are experienced every day by people, families and communities navigating illness, caregiving, fragmented systems, and the conditions that shape their opportunities to be healthy. Meeting these challenges requires us to move with purpose. Nursing science can and ultimately will be part of the solution, but realizing its full promise will take all of us.

NINR's vision begins with the clear conviction that scientific progress must be measured not only by what we discover, but by whether those discoveries improve health in people's daily lives. We are advancing rigorous science that connects basic discovery to the development, testing, and implementation of interventions, and examines systems and settings in which health is experienced. By understanding how the conditions and context of daily living shape the distribution of health and disease, nursing science can generate solutions grounded in evidence and responsive to the realities people face.

The urgency of this moment calls us to strengthen that contribution. We must pursue bold questions, embrace innovation, move evidence more rapidly into real-world settings, and prepare a scientific workforce equipped to lead across disciplines. NINR is committed to supporting emerging science, strengthening translation and implementation, expanding meaningful partnerships, and positioning nursing science to contribute fully across the biomedical research enterprise.

This work does not belong to one institution, profession, or generation. Progress depends on a collective effort of scientists and clinicians, educators and trainees, communities and advocates, public and private partnerships, and all who invest in the future of nursing research. For more than three decades, FNINR has helped bring this collective together and amplify the impact of nursing science. This partnership remains essential to what we accomplish next.

The NightinGala honors extraordinary achievement, but it also reminds us of the responsibility and possibility we share. I am deeply proud to be part of this collective and inspired by what we can achieve together. With our creativity, courage, rigor, and commitment, nursing science will respond to the nation's health challenges by shaping the solutions that will allow people and communities to live healthier lives.

On behalf of NINR, thank you FNINR and to each of you for your partnership. May tonight renew our shared purpose and strengthen our resolve to move this vital work forward.

With appreciation and warm regards,

Courtney F. Aklin, PhD
Director
National Institute of Nursing Research

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Researchers meet with HomePal research participant Maggie McCullom (far left) in her home. The HomePal study uses smart-speaker technology and AI to assess loneliness among older adults living alone, the first step in heading off its negative health effects and helping people live independently.

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Congratulations to the 2026 Welch/Woerner Path-Paver Awardee:



Maxim Topaz, PhD

Elizabeth Standish Gill Associate Professor of Nursing

Previous FNINR Awardees

Welch/Woerner Path-Paver Award



Lusine Poghosyan, PhD
2024



Rebecca Schnall, PhD
2020

Protégé Award



Veronica Barcelona, PhD
2023



Ruth Masterson Creber, PhD
2022

President's Award



Jacquelyn Taylor, PhD
2021

Ada Sue Hinshaw Nurse Scholar Award



Patricia Stone, PhD
2019

Pathfinder Distinguished Service Award



Suzanne Bakken, PhD
2010



Elaine Larson, PhD
2003

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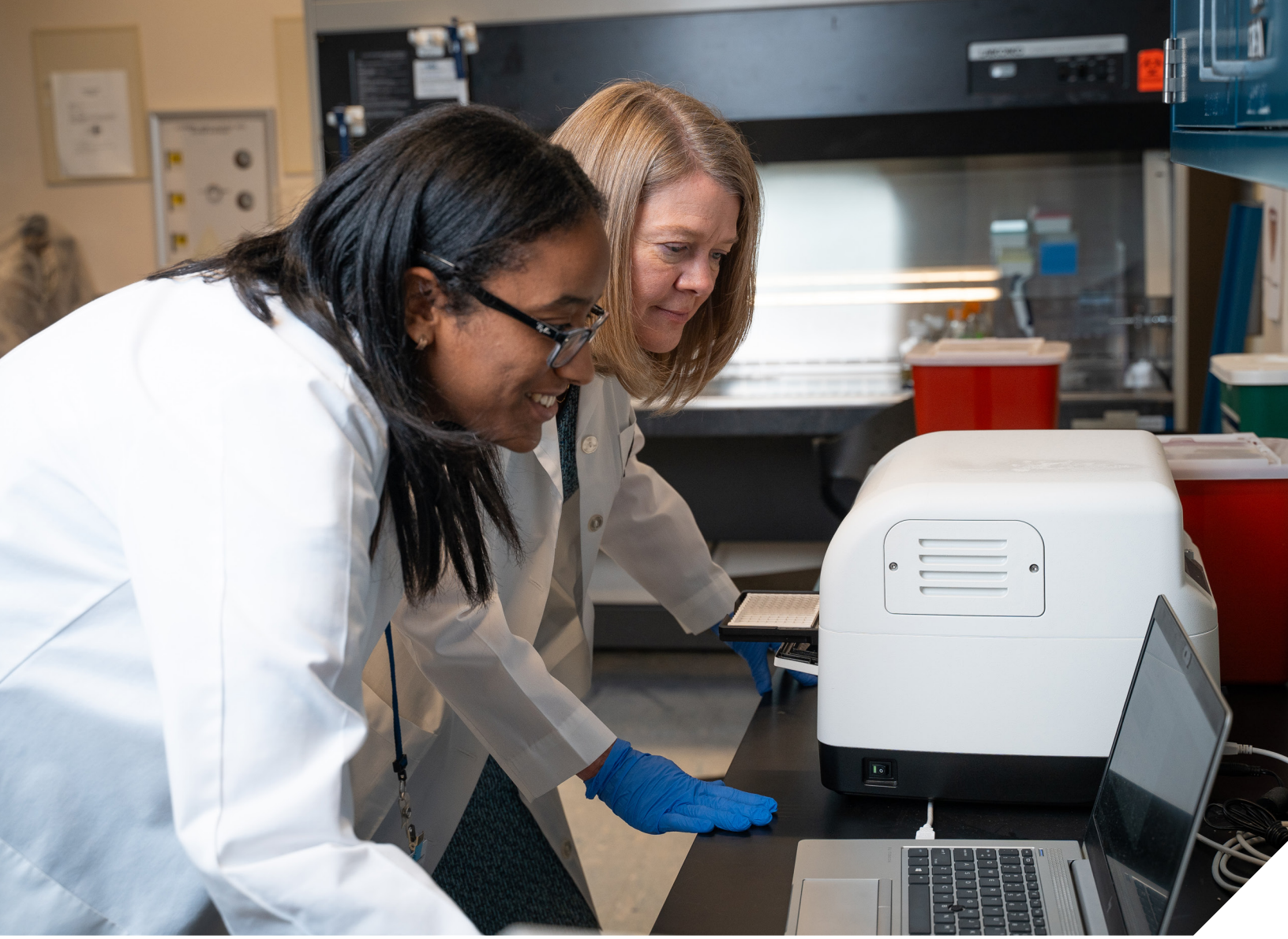
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Awards 2026

ADA SUE HINSHAW NURSE SCHOLAR AWARD

The Ada Sue Hinshaw Nurse Scholar Award is considered the pre-eminent award given by FNINR and is named in honor of the first permanent Director of the National Institute of Nursing Research. Recipients have a substantive and sustained program of science that would afford her/him recognition as a prominent senior scientist.

FAYE GLENN ABDELLAH LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Faye Glenn Abdellah Leadership Award is named for this renowned nurse researcher. Faye Abdellah's vision has resulted in inestimable value created by nurse scientists over the years. This award will go to an organization or individual with a sustained or lasting impact on nursing science through advocacy, institutional leadership, or individual program of research that has led to the public awareness of the value of nursing science in improving health at the individual and/or population levels.

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The President's Award is given based on a specific theme established by the President of FNINR, varies annually, and is awarded to a nurse researcher with sustained contributions in the field. In 2026, the recipient will be a nurse researcher who has made a significant impact on the improvement of the health of marginalized and/or minoritized populations. The focus of the research should be on health equity, health disparities, and/or the social and structural determinants of health. The recipient should have a long-standing trajectory in this focus area (at least 10 years) and demonstrate substantial positive outcomes/impact and improvements in the health of communities and populations.

WELCH/WOERNER PATH-PAVER AWARD

The Welch/Woerner Path-Paver Award is named after Colleen Conway-Welch, the renowned nursing advocate, and Louise Woerner, the Founding President of FNINR. The recipient is a mid-to-late career nurse scientist who has achieved one or more breakthroughs in theory development, research methods, instruments, or subject matter that has paved the way for other scientists and who has influenced and mentored the next generation of nurse researchers.

PROTÉGÉ AWARD

The Protégé/Protegee Award is given to an evolving nurse scientist who shows great promise in advancing science and who is within the first 6 years of completing either their PhD or Post-Doctoral study.

NURSING RESEARCH ADVOCACY AWARD

The Nursing Research Advocacy Award is awarded to a current FNINR Ambassador who has demonstrated exemplary leadership and dedication in educating policymakers about the importance of nursing research and advocating for robust funding and support of the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR).

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THE Ada Sue Hinshaw NURSE SCHOLAR AWARD



For Recognition as a Prominent Nurse Scientist in Maternal and Child Mental Health & Biobehavioral Science

Sandra Weiss, PhD, RN, FAAN

UCSF School of Nursing

Dr. Weiss' research program focuses on depression and stress-related mood disorders, including risks for their development, their underlying mechanisms, and their effects on women and young children. Through her multi-decade, NIH-funded research, she identified how prenatal maternal stress and depression, stress hormones, and prescribed corticosteroids alter core fetal and infant biological systems (ANS, cortisol regulation, the microbiome, and telomere structure) which shape a child's mental and physical health. Her work also provided evidence of the effects of these early exposures on a child's difficulty regulating emotional distress, physiologic recovery from stressors, and the risk of developing anxiety and depressive disorders. These findings are now targets for screening and early interventions that are improving infant stress management as well as children's mental and physical health. In addition, Dr. Weiss' research is the first to provide detailed data on the heterogeneity in symptom profiles among women with mood disorders as well as significant gender differences in phenotypes of mood disorders. She has also substantiated distinct cortisol-related alterations that differentiate women who experience stress, depression, anxiety and suicidal risk during pregnancy and the postpartum, indicating different underlying mechanisms for each of these unique types of psychological distress.

Her findings have stimulated new approaches to clinical assessment of women's mood disorders, including precision-based interpretation of both biomarkers and symptom profiles. Furthermore, Dr. Weiss has held numerous scientific leadership roles, including service as Associate Provost for Research for the University of California's 10-campus, Systemwide Office of the President and Vice President of the National Network of Depression Centers. Her impact also endures through her extensive contributions as chair and member of multiple NIH scientific review panels and strategic initiatives as well as through her mentorship of 77 PhD students and 28 postdoctoral fellows whose own research carries forward her scholarly insights and wisdom.

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THE Faye Glenn Abdellah LEADERSHIP AWARD



For Exemplary Leadership in Advancing Nursing Education, Practice, and Research

Joyce Fitzpatrick, PhD, MBA, RN, FAAN, FNAP

Case Western Reserve University, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing

Joyce J. Fitzpatrick, PhD, MBA, RN, FAAN, FNAP, is Director of the Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy dedicated to the mission of empowering nurse leaders to impact health globally. She is Elizabeth Brooks Ford Professor of Nursing, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), Cleveland Ohio; she served as Dean from 1982 through 1997. She earned a BSN (Georgetown University), MS in Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing (The Ohio State University), PhD in Nursing (New York University), and MBA (CWRU). Dr. Fitzpatrick received honorary Doctor of Humane Letters recognition from Georgetown University (1990) and from Frontier University of Nursing (2011). In 2020 she was appointed a Distinguished University Professor at CWRU.

Dr. Fitzpatrick was a founding board member of FNINR (1993) and served as Board Chair of the American Nurses Foundation (2010-2015). Dr. Fitzpatrick founded and led the Bolton School's World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Nursing and has provided consultation throughout the world, including universities and health ministries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Dr. Fitzpatrick is widely published in nursing and health care literature with over 450 publications, including more than 85 books. She received the American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award 22 times. She was elected a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing (1981), Fellow, National Academies of Practice (1996), and Honorary Fellow, American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (2018). Dr. Fitzpatrick was inducted into the STTI Research Hall of Fame (2014) and was named an AAN Living Legend (2016). In 2018 she received the ANA Jessie M. Scott award; in 2019 she was awarded the International Council of Nurses Florence Nightingale Foundation International Achievement Award recognizing her contribution to advancing international nursing through leadership demonstrating the interdependence between nursing education, practice and research.



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THE President's AWARD



For Significant and Sustained Contributions to Research in Health Disparities and Social Determinants of Health in Adolescents and Young Adults

Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, RN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FSAHM, FAAN

Cizik School of Nursing at University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN is a nurse scientist whose research advances health equity by developing and testing innovative interventions for adolescents and young adults experiencing structural vulnerability. Her program of research focuses on youth affected by homelessness, housing instability, poverty, foster care involvement, juvenile justice involvement, trauma, and limited access to healthcare—populations that bear a disproportionate burden of HIV, sexually transmitted infections, substance use, and mental health challenges.

Dr. Santa Maria has built a sustained, NIH-funded program of community-engaged research that integrates behavioral science, nursing, public health, and mobile health technologies to address the social and structural determinants of health. Her work pioneered the use of ecological momentary assessment (EMA) in this population to identify real-time predictors of substance use and sexual risk among youth experiencing homelessness, establishing the foundation for just-in-time adaptive interventions (JITAIs) that deliver support when youth are at greatest risk.

Dr. Santa Maria leads several innovative intervention studies designed in partnership with youth and community organizations. Her NINR-funded CAYA (Come As You Are) trial demonstrated that nurse-led case management significantly increased PrEP uptake among youth experiencing homelessness, providing one of the first evidence-based HIV prevention interventions for this highly marginalized population. She has expanded this work through MY-RIDE, which delivers personalized, app-based HIV and substance use prevention in real time, .b4me, a mindfulness intervention addressing trauma and stress, and SAFELY, an intervention to improve HIV prevention and healthcare engagement following sexual assault.

Beyond intervention science, Dr. Santa Maria translates research into policy and practice through national leadership, workforce development, and mentorship. She has helped secure more than $20 million in research funding, contributed to national adolescent health guidelines and Texas legislation, and remains committed to developing scalable, nurse-led solutions that improve health outcomes for populations made vulnerable while advancing the science of healthcare access for all.



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Lindsey Harris
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(MSN 2011, DNP 2016)

Joy Deupree
(BSN 1994, MSN 1997, PhD 2011)

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THE Welch/Woerner Path-Paver AWARD



For Exceptional Leadership and Breakthroughs in Health Informatics and AI-Driven Clinical Decision Support

Maxim Topaz, PhD, RN, FAAN, FACMI, FIAHSI

Columbia University

Maxim (Max) Topaz, PhD, RN, MA, FAAN, FIAHSI, FACMI, is the Elizabeth Standish Gill Associate Professor of Nursing at Columbia University School of Nursing and Senior Research Scientist at the VNS Health Center for Home Care Policy & Research.

His path to science began as an army medic and a bedside nurse. A Fulbright Fellowship brought him to the University of Pennsylvania for doctoral study, and he became one of the first nurse scientists to complete a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard Medical School.

A pioneer of artificial intelligence in nursing, Dr. Topaz created some of the field's first natural language processing tools, including the open-source software NimbleMiner, unlocking the knowledge held in nurses' notes. With support from the National Institute of Nursing Research, his team built and tested PREVENT, among the first AI-driven clinical decision support tools in home healthcare, helping nurses reach high-risk patients sooner and reducing rehospitalizations.

Dr. Topaz has authored more than 250 scientific articles, secured over $25 million in research funding, including five NIH R01 awards, and ranks in Stanford University's top 2% of scientists in health informatics. The first nurse to receive the American Medical Informatics Association's New Investigator Award, he co-chairs an NIH scientific review section on artificial intelligence, served as President of MEDINFO 2025, the world's largest health informatics congress, and co-directs the Nursing and Artificial Intelligence Leadership (NAIL) Collaborative. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, the American College of Medical Informatics, and the International Academy of Health Science Informatics, and a 2026 inductee into the Sigma International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame.

True to the spirit of the Path-Paver Award, Dr. Topaz has mentored more than two dozen students, fellows, and early-career scientists, many now NIH-funded investigators paving paths of their own.

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For Outstanding Contributions to Research Elevating Cardiovascular Disease Prevention & Dietetics Among Underserved Goups

Bunmi Ogungbe, PhD, MPH, RN

Johns Hopkins School of Nursing

Dr. Bunmi Ogungbe is an Assistant Professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, with a joint appointment at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is also a faculty member at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity and an associate faculty member at the Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology, and Clinical Research. Dr. Ogungbe's research focuses on cardiovascular disease prevention and implementation science, with an emphasis on reducing hypertension and cardiovascular disparities among underserved and immigrant populations.

She currently leads, or co-leads, several NIH- and American Heart Association-funded studies in the United States, Ghana, and Nigeria, including a multi-country cluster-randomized trial to improve hypertension control and a national Food is Medicine initiative that combines dietitian coaching with produce prescriptions. Her work has been recognized with several honors, including the 2026 Rising Term Professorship at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, the Emerging Nurse Researcher/Scholar Award from Sigma Theta Tau International, the American Heart Association Lifestyle Early Investigator Award, and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award for Community Service. She is the Founder and CEO of Leira Health, a startup building an AI-enabled heart health companion, and Leira Heart, an NGO expanding access to cardiovascular diagnostics and therapeutics in low-resource settings.

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THE Nursing Research Advocacy AWARD



For Outstanding Legislative Advocacy and Exceptional Commitment to Advancing Nursing Research

Terri E. Weaver, PhD, RN, FAAN, ATSF, FAASM

University of Illinois Chicago

Terri E. Weaver, PhD, RN, FAAN, ATSF, FAASM is Emerita Dean of the College of Nursing, Emerita Professor of Biobehavioral Nursing Science University of Illinois Chicago College of Nursing and Emerita Professor, School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Weaver received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Pittsburgh and her Master of Science in Nursing and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. She is recognized internationally for her research on the effect of daytime sleepiness on daily behaviors and assessment of the impact of sleep disorders and treatment outcomes. Supported by the National Institutes of Health for over 25 years, Dr. Weaver's scholarship has been widely disseminated in more than 130 publications, including the New England Journal of Medicine. Notably, she developed two internationally utilized instruments – the Functional Outcomes of Sleep Questionnaire (FOSQ), the gold standard measure of daily functioning in situations of daytime sleepiness and the Self-Efficacy Measure for Sleep Apnea (SEMSA). She received the prestigious Ada Sue Hinshaw Award from the Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research and the William C. Dement Academic Achievement Award for exceptional initiative and progress in the areas of academic research from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine as well as being inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame. Dr. Weaver is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, the American Thoracic Society, and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. She has served on the Boards of Directors of the American Academy of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, and the Sleep Research Society and previously was Chair of the Board of Directors of the American Lung Association.

Ambassadors

The FNINR Ambassador Program is a group of committed individuals who serve as advocates of the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). Ambassadors focus on educating Congressional leaders as to the high-impact, cost-effective interventions and quality-of-life enhancements that emanate from nursing science. The goal of FNINR's Ambassador program is to increase research funding for continued scientific breakthroughs and training of scientists made possible by the NINR.

> *The discoveries stemming from nursing science not only improve care but also transform lives, inform policy, and shape the future of healthcare. The ambassadors, who advocate for nursing science, help to ensure that nurse-led scientific discoveries receive the visibility, support, and funding needed to advance health and equity for all.*
>
> ~ Teri Murray, President of FNINR

Learn more about the program by scanning the QR code:

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Advancing Maternal Health

In her NINR-funded research, Dr. Suzan Carmichael is investigating the ongoing challenge of rising severe maternal morbidity (SMM) and its precursors by developing a large linked dataset to examine how multiple risk factors and repeated pregnancies affect SMM risk, using rigorous analysis and community input to identify strategies that could improve maternal health outcomes over time.

Improving nurse work environments to maximize inpatient care

With support from NINR, Dr. Matthew McHugh is evaluating how nurse work environments affect patient outcomes over time, aiming to identify strategies that improve care quality and patient-centered outcomes for hospitalized older adults with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Understanding adverse childhood experiences to identify adolescents at risk for depression, anxiety

With earlier support from an NINR-funded individual fellowship program, Dr. Chelsea Moore leveraged data from a longitudinal cohort study to understand the impact of cumulative adverse childhood experiences and household income on adolescent depression and anxiety, identifying factors that can support development of targeted prevention interventions.

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FNINR is a primary advocate for the NINR and for nursing science. As a 'Friend' of FNINR, we enhance visibility of nursing research, strengthen legislative support for NINR, and foster funding for development of nursing knowledge and the training of nurse scientists. Ultimately, being a 'Friend' is a superb way to promote the health of our communities and assure high quality, evidence-based nursing care.

– Sandra J. Weiss, PhD, DNSc, FAAN
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Being a friend of NINR is one of my top philanthropic activities. Nursing has never needed NINR more than it does today as we work diligently to increase the numbers of nursing scientists. The future of nursing science depends on Friends who continue to show their support for our next generation.

– Linda A. McCauley, PhD, RN, FAAN, FRCN
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- Cathleen Wheatley, DNP, RN, CENP, FAAN
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