

### Keynote Speakers

**Judith Schmidt (Judy), MSN, DHA (c), RN, CCRN:**  
Chief Executive Officer  
New Jersey State Nurses Association & the Institute for  
Nursing

**Stacey Heath, LCSW**  
Director of Clinical Services  
MeadowWood Behavioral Health Hospital

**Melissa Jones, CHPA, HS-BCP, CADC**  
Director of Workplace Violence  
Children's Health

**Andrea Agnello, MSN, RN, PMH-BC**  
EmpATH Unit Nurse  
Atlantic Health Overlook Medical Center

**Pinky Garcia- Paquiz, MSN, ACM-RN**  
RN Care Manager  
Atlantic Health Overlook Medical Center

**Stephen Mateka, DO**  
Director of Psychiatry at Inspira Health & Co-chair of  
Psychiatry, Center for Family Guidance

**Nicole Powasnick MSN, RN, NEA-BC, CEN**  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Barnabas Health Corp - Behavioral Health

**Christine Belluardo**  
Barnabas Health Corp - Behavioral Health

### Program Description

A dynamic conference designed to strengthen the foundation of psychiatric-mental health nursing practice. This event focuses on the unique bond between nurses and patients, exploring how empathy, evidence-based communication, and trauma-informed care can improve outcomes for both individuals and communities

**Target Audience:** Psychiatric nurses, advanced practice nurses, students, and Interdisciplinary behavioral health professionals

**Program Outcomes:** Enhance therapeutic communication skills grounded in empathy and evidence-based practice.

Promote culturally responsive practices that improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities

### APNA NJ CHAPTER INFORMATION

The APNA NJ Chapter currently has 482 members. Our primary focus is networking, education, and advocacy for psychiatric mental health care.

### Chapter Leaders

**President:** Samantha Kunz, MSN, RN, CLSSGB, PMH-BC

**President-Elect:** Christopher Stephan-Jones, MSN, RN, PMH-BC, PMHNP-BC

**Past President:** Donna Pink, DNP, RN, PMH-BC, CARN

**Secretary:** Nicole Powasnick, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, CEN

**Treasurer:** Michael J. Steele Jr, MBA, MSN, RN, PMH-BC

### Board Members at Large:

Laura Bourque, MSN, RN, PMH-BC, NPD-BC

Cecilia Boyd, DNP, MSN, RN, PMH-BC

### Chapter Involvement

If you are interested in attending a meeting or in becoming involved contact Samantha Kunz at Chapter Support at [chaptersupport@apna.org](mailto:chaptersupport@apna.org).

## Healing Together:

### Empowering the Nurse-Patient Relationship and Fostering Resilience

APNA and APNA NJ Chapter are providing this activity.

Thursday, April 30, 2026

9:00 am – 5:15pm

Registration, Breakfast/coffee start at 8:00 am

### The Molly Pitcher Inn

88 Riverside Ave.  
Red bank, NJ 07701

The Molly Pitcher Inn will be offering discounted room rates for Wednesday, April 29, 2026. *Must contact hotel directly for discount at (732) 747-2500.*



**DISCLOSURE AND NURSING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NCPD) INFORMATION**

**Disclosure**

The presenters have no relevant financial relationships or off-label uses to disclose.

**Nursing Continuing Professional Development**

Criteria for successful completion of this activity includes attendance at the entire event and submission of a completed evaluation form, no partial credit will be awarded.

*ANCC Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) contact hours are pending for this activity.*

**APNA Membership/Continuing Education**

If you are interested in becoming a member of APNA or to view our continuing education, please visit our website at <https://www.apna.org/membership/why-join/>

**Accreditation**

Accreditation of the nursing continuing development activity does not imply endorsement by APNA, ANCC or the APNA NJ Chapter of any commercial products displayed in conjunction with this activity.

*The American Psychiatric Nurses Association is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.*

**ACTIVITY AGENDA  
Thursday, April 30, 2026**

- 8:00 am** Registration, breakfast/coffee
- 9:00 am** Welcome/opening remarks
- 9:15 am** Legislative Update (Judith Schmidt)
- 9:45 am** Break
- 10:00 am** Session (Nicole Powasnick & Christine Belluardo)
- 11:00 am** Session (Melissa Jones)
- 12:00 pm** Lunch
- 1:00 pm** Session (Stacey Heath)
- 2:00 pm** Session (Pinky Garcia-Paquiz & Andrea Agnello)
- 3:00 pm** Break
- 3:15 pm** Session (Dr. Stephen Mateka)
- 4:15 pm** Summary and Evaluations, Induction of New Officers

We're excited to share that we will be raising funds and selling items in support of Ranch Hope NJ. Ranch Hope is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping youth facing emotional and behavioral challenges. They provide trauma-informed residential care, counseling, and educational support, offering a safe and structured environment where young people can heal, learn, and build confidence for the future.

Every purchase and donation will directly support Ranch Hope's mission to empower youth and strengthen families through compassionate, life-changing services. Thank you for helping us make a meaningful impact! Cash only.

***Special Thanks to...**  
Former board members  
Susan Gray & Susan Adams  
for their continued support with the annual APNA NJ Chapter Conference.*

**REGISTRATION**

APNA Member ID

First Name Last Name

Address

City State Zip Code

Cell Phone

Email Address (required)

**Select Rate**

Select (x)	Category	Rate
	APNA Member	\$115.00
	Non-Member	\$125.00
	Full-Time Student	\$75.00

**ONLINE PAYMENT IS AVAILABLE:**

<https://myaccount.apna.org/apna-new-jersey-chapter-conference-2026/>