

**APNA New England Chapter
Election 2024
Candidate Statements**

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Maria Eden Gianan, DNP, PNMH-CNS

Maria Eden Gianan is both a psychiatric nurse mental clinical specialist (PNMH-CNS) and Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (NP) with Doctorate in nursing (DNP) focused on Compassion Fatigue. She is currently working at Bedford Veterans Hospital as a research NP. She has a private practice both at Cape Cod and Dedham, MA. She was the past president and treasurer of Philippine Nurses Association of New England. Also past president of Philippine Dance and Culture, INC.

Maria is currently on the Board of Directors of Philippine Nurses Association of America Foundation (PNAAF). She is a member of MA Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric nurses (MAAPPN) and lead peer supervision. Her focus is to promote well-being of psychiatric nurses in harmony with their work and personal life to achieve happiness.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Samantha Lukas, BSN, RN

My name is Samantha Lukas, and I am nominating myself to serve as the next President-Elect for the APNA New England chapter. I have been a nurse on the inpatient psychiatric unit at Massachusetts General Hospital for the past four years. I am currently in my fourth of five years of the UMass Amherst DNP program, following the PMHNP track. I enjoy getting involved in leadership on my unit. For example, my unit's nurse practice specialist and I developed and implemented an emotional intelligence quality improvement intervention for mid-level nurses on the unit as a passion project of mine. I also fill in as the resource nurse for my unit on a regular basis. I have trained multiple newly licensed nurses as part of their orientation to our unit. I also have experience as a mental health nursing clinical instructor for both Simmons University and Northeastern University. I am currently level 1 trained and in the process of becoming certified in Collaborative Problem Solving, which is a novel, evidence-based approach to managing challenging behaviors and promoting emotional regulation skill building. This program is affiliated with MGH and I have been active in utilizing the concepts for our adult psychiatric inpatients. I have served as an annual guest lecturer for an undergraduate psychopharmacology class at Harvard University for the past four years, during which I give a presentation on modern-day inpatient psychiatry from a nursing perspective, and the utilization of psychiatric medications in this environment. Finally, I am an APNA Board of Directors scholar for this year's annual conference in Louisville, KY. In my spare time, I enjoy reading fantasy books, crocheting, kickboxing, and spending time with friends and family. I believe I would approach this role with passion, optimism, and a desire to collaborate with my fellow psychiatric nursing colleagues.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Cristina Meehan, APRN

Dedicated and experienced Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) with over 20 years in mental health care and a proven track record in patient advocacy, clinical excellence, and healthcare business development. Adept at providing comprehensive psychiatric care, collaborating with multidisciplinary teams, and delivering patient-centered mental health interventions. Passionate about integrating clinical knowledge with strategic business insights to enhance patient care, optimize operational efficiency, and drive healthcare innovation. Serve as Pharmaceutical lecture and educator as well as consulting on Pharmacy Advisory Boards. Recognized for exceptional communication skills and the ability to build

strong relationships across diverse stakeholders in academic and healthcare settings. Committed to advancing mental health services and delivering empathetic care in diverse clinical settings.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Jennifer Ramirez, PMHNP-BC

I am excited to apply for the President-Elect position, bringing a wealth of experience in inpatient psychiatric care, management, and geriatric psychiatry. My journey in nursing has solidified my commitment to providing compassionate, evidence-based mental health care to diverse populations, particularly vulnerable groups.

Commitment to Mental Health: My interest in mental health began during my early nursing career as a geriatric nurse, where I witnessed firsthand the profound impact of mental illness on patients and their families. I became a Dementia Specialist and Advocate for this vulnerable population. Over the years, I have pursued further education and training in psychiatric nursing for all disorders and ages, with the goal of advocating for those whose voices are often marginalized.

Inpatient Psychiatric Experience: During my time working in inpatient psychiatric settings, I have gained extensive experience in assessing and managing acute psychiatric conditions. Collaborating closely with multidisciplinary teams, I have developed and implemented treatment plans that address the complex needs of patients. My experience includes working with the Department of Mental Health, where I engaged in comprehensive evaluations and coordinated care for individuals with severe mental illness, ensuring they received appropriate resources and support.

Geriatric Psychiatry Expertise: In addition to my inpatient experience, I have focused on geriatric psychiatry, where I developed specialized skills in addressing the unique challenges faced by older adults. I have managed cases involving dementia, depression, and anxiety, emphasizing the importance of individualized care and family involvement. My clinical and management roles in this setting have honed my ability to create therapeutic environments that promote dignity and respect for older patients, facilitating their recovery and enhancing their quality of life.

Holistic Approach: I believe in a holistic approach to mental health care that considers the biological, psychological, and social factors affecting an individual's well-being. I am committed to collaborating with interdisciplinary teams to create comprehensive care plans that empower patients and promote recovery. I believe patients need to be involved in their treatment and help design their care plans to help with compliance of care and services.

Advocacy and Education: I am passionate about mental health education and advocacy. I have participated in community outreach programs aimed at reducing stigma and increasing access to mental health resources. As a Psychiatric NP, I intend to continue this work by providing education to patients and their families about mental health issues and treatment options. I am active with educating student NPs as a preceptor and mentor.

Vision for Future Practice: As I advance in my career, my goal is to foster an environment of compassion and understanding in mental health care. I aim to be an advocate for my patients, ensuring they receive evidence-based, patient-centered care. I am particularly interested in integrating innovative practices, such as telehealth, to increase access to mental health services for underserved populations. I work with health care organizations creating policies and protocols for telehealth services.

By serving on the Board of APNA, I hope to contribute my experience, passion, and vision to help advance our profession and improve mental health care for all. I am excited about the opportunity to work collaboratively with other board members and stakeholders to drive meaningful change in the field of psychiatric nursing.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Dilice Robertson, PMHNP

Dilice Robertson, PMHNP, is a dedicated mental health advocate and an esteemed faculty member at NYU Meyers College of Nursing. With a passion for advancing psychiatric care, she has held prior faculty roles at both Yale University and Fairfield University, where she helped shape the next generation of mental health professionals. As the founder of a pioneering insurance-based practice, Robertson has demonstrated her commitment to serving marginalized communities, ensuring access to quality mental health care for underinsured individuals, as well as those covered by commercial plans. Her clinical expertise is centered on child and adolescent psychiatric mental health, where she addresses the unique challenges faced by young individuals and their families. Robertson's work exemplifies her dedication to bridging gaps in mental health care, particularly for communities that are often overlooked. She is an active advocate for equitable access to mental health services and consistently works to destigmatize mental health conditions in young populations. Through her teaching, clinical practice, and advocacy, she continues to influence the future of psychiatric nursing and mental health care across diverse populations and is candidate for a board member position.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Erica Trudell

Erica Trudell (she/her) brings over 20 years of leadership and clinical expertise in behavioral health, paired with a deep passion for advancing mental health care and fostering collaboration within the behavioral health community. As the Director of Nursing for CHD Community Behavioral Health Center, Erica has consistently demonstrated her ability to lead multidisciplinary teams, manage clinical operations, and spearhead initiatives that improve outcomes, making her an ideal fit for the role of President-Elect for the APNA New England Chapter. Erica's passion for behavioral health is evident in her commitment to creating safe, healing environments for individuals, particularly through her work in developing programs aimed at the prevention of restraints and violence. Her focus on trauma-informed care and person-centered approaches aligns closely with the values of the APNA, and she is dedicated to bringing the behavioral health community together to share best practices, improve care, and foster a supportive professional environment. In her current role, Erica has honed her skills in running meetings, leading committees, and partnering with leadership teams to achieve organizational goals—skills that are essential for working alongside the Chapter President to ensure chapter objectives are met. She is also well-prepared to fulfill the duties of the Chapter President in their absence, ensuring seamless leadership and continuity. Erica's extensive experience in education further positions her to lead the development of an Education Committee for the chapter, designing impactful programs for membership meetings and chapter conferences. Her dedication to professional development and mentorship will also help cultivate future chapter leaders, contributing to the ongoing growth and success of the APNA New England Chapter. Erica is driven by a vision of uniting the behavioral health community to enhance care and outcomes for individuals in need, making her a strong candidate for this leadership role.