



2020
DCNA
Candidate
Profiles

Agnes Addington, RN

I am Agnes Addington. I have been an active DCNA member for over forty years. Currently I am serving on the Finance Committee and a member on the DCNA negotiation team working on a new contract with the DCNA staff. Past positions include Treasurer (4 terms), Board of Director At-Large (2 terms), and E & GW Cabinet At-Large (2 terms). I was past Chair of Howard University Hospital local unit, and Treasurer of Howard University Hospital local unit.

Over the past several years DCNA has experienced great changes. There will be further changes in some of the units DCNA is representing in terms of closing or restructuring. DCNA is working on expanding our membership to include new units in the coming years. In spite of changing we remain striving to maintain our unique dominance in the District of Columbia in both the political and labor arenas. Also we maintain our influence in the practice of nursing in the District through our relationship with the Board of Nursing. My goal is to work together with our members and leadership to expand our membership to include more nurses working in D.C, and to gain new legislations that safeguard our members in their workplace. Many employers are putting nurses in very unsafe working condition because of cost cutting/saving. Nurses are forced to work overtime, without adequate breaks, and excessive patient load today. Many nurses who are not in any collective bargaining units are unaware of putting their professional life at risk by allowing their employers' demands unchallenged. I believe our organization must find a way to educate these fellow nurses and offer them support.

Urvi Banerjee, RN

Urvi Banerjee is a labor and delivery nurse at Howard University Hospital (HUH). After graduating with summa cum laude honors from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, she was drawn to HUH for its commitment to serving those most marginalized in traditional healthcare settings. As a member of DCNA's Economic and General Welfare Cabinet At-Large, she will work to ensure that local units secure the resources, conditions, and benefits needed to ultimately do what we do best: provide excellent care to our patients.

Robin Burns, RN

I attended Howard University College of Nursing. I started my career in Medical–Surgical Nursing at Howard University Hospital where I was employed and nurtured as a student nurse during my matriculation at Howard. After further preparation and excellent mentoring, I pursued my passion as a Critical Care Nurse at the District of Columbia General Hospital. Here I grew as an advocate for nursing and gained knowledge and experience in intensive care nursing throughout the departments of Medical, Cardiac, Surgical-Trauma and PACU.

Much to the City's loss DCGH closed its' doors. This was a long-fought battle to keep it open. There have been Collective Bargaining losses and wins in the Metropolitan DC area. I'm grateful for DCNA and its' impeccable track record of fine nursing representation.

Currently I am a Community Health Nurse in DC Public and Charter Schools. I serve as the President of this fine group of nurses. We are now at a cross road with DC Health that proposes to return nurses to school without proper PPE for the add on responsibilities that are not in our Scope of Nursing Practice. I am also the Vice President of DCNA's Board of Directors.

I have served in leadership roles for DCNA nurses in many capacities at DCGH and the DCNA Board of Directors and Economic and General Welfare Cabinet for more than 20 years. It is in my blood. I am now a current member of the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Washington Council. With your vote for me as a Delegate, I am able to continue to advocate for DCNA nurses and give us a voice as the only member of DCNA on the Board of Directors.

Valesay Cherie, RN

Hello, I am Valesay Cherie and I am seeking the DCNA “s E & GW Cabinet At- Large position.

I have worked at Howard University Hospital for 35.9 years. I have held positions in Nursing Management as well as my present position as a clinical nurse. I am presently one of the DCNA’S Shop Steward at HUH for the past seven years.

I enjoy photography as a past time and riding my horse “Letitbee”. At my church, Immaculate Conception (8th & N STs NW). I am the Youth Coordinator for the children in our Parish. Right now Covid - 19 is wreaking havoc on our activities.

I truly will serve all of you well in this position because I am a hard worker and dedicated to any task and positions I am assigned . So feel comfortable voting for me!! Thank you in and advance and have a great day!!!



Katrena N. Clark, BSN, RN

I, Katrena N. Clark is running for a second term for President of The District of Columbia Nurses Association. My initial term was impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic 2020. It was unexpected to the entire world and the United States was not properly prepared to inform or protect us. I have decades of nursing experience throughout the District, Maryland, and Virginia. My initial experience was there at the legendary District of Columbia General Hospital. I had the unique experience clinically and administratively to expand my knowledge in nursing. The illustrious former “Mayor for Life”, Mr. Marion Barry appointed me to serve on the District of Columbia Licensure Board. It was a pleasure for me to accept the task and to continue my advocacy for both patients and nurses. I have served my community as a productive citizen and strong advocate for the Ward 8 community citizens. I received the Wilhelmina J. Rolark Keep On Pushing Women’s Impact Award in 2016. I know that nursing is a “Calling”. My service to humanity is a reflection of my admiration in taking care of those who cannot care for themselves. I am blessed to have had opportunities to build character, educate, and develop friendships with those I cared for throughout my nursing career. My obligation as your President is to organize unions, advocate on the behalf of both nurses and patients, and to continue fighting for equality and justice. “Early in life I had learned that if you want something, you had better make some noise.” – Malcolm X. Let us continue to collaborate on strategizing and building a stronger union!

Veronica Gray, RN

Veronica has been a nurse at SEH since 2013. Prior to this position she was a nurse leader at UNC healthcare systems in North Carolina. She has worked in nursing for over 20 years holding a variety of position in the medical-psychiatric area. Her current specialty is psychiatric nursing at Saint Elizabeth's hospital. Honesty and integrity, along with determination and dedication, are philosophies that Veronica strives for in all aspects of her life. Applying these principles to her career, has allowed her to be a top nursing leader.

In addition to her role as staff nurse at Saint Elizabeth's hospital, Veronica is the current union secretary for DCNA at SEH.

Myra Hines, RN

I am a transplant from Brooklyn, New York (at six months old) to Washington, DC. I attended public schools and graduated from The Washington Technical Institute earning an Associate's Degree of Applied Science. Starting my career in nursing at NIH in surgical neurology for five years, I transferred to DC General Hospital and accepted a position as charge nurse for the night shift in their NICU. I worked approximately thirteen years there. I was unable to complete my studies for a BSN while working there due to a family hardship. I moved on to Providence Hospital working in their Special Care Nursery for eight years but found myself back home at DC General Hospital on the Pediatric unit. After a short time on the pediatric unit, I transferred to the Southwest Clinic until The Public Health Benefits Corporation ended in 2001. I worked as an agency nurse gaining experience in the State Department, several local hospital nurseries, and the DC Immunization Program. In March of 2002, I started with Children's School Services and I presently assigned to Anne Beers Elementary School. I have developed a passion for history, especially DC and DC Black history. I do volunteer as a docent for the Anacostia Community Museum. Sometimes my students get a band aid, an ice pack, and a dose of DC history!

I have served as a representative for the COPE committee and as a union shop steward. I also have served on the negotiation committee for CSS. Presently, I co-chair for the LSAT for Anne Beers ES. I continue to love my neighbor as myself.

Ignacia Joyner, RN

Currently a Registered Nurse with wide range of experiences gained within DCNA as a member in good standing. Previous positions held at DCNA include; At Large Bord Member, Secretary, finance committee, and most recently nominations committee. Seeking another term with goal of creating an electronic system for future voting, and promoting continuity with transition of processes.

Jacqueline Lewis, RN

Jacqueline Lewis has been a Registered Nurse at Howard University Hospital for over 42 years, she served in numerous departments in a many various capacities.

- Howard University Cancer Center (HUCC) – Nurse Coordinator
- Ambulatory Nursing
- Medical/Surgical Nursing

Jacqueline has been in her current position as Nurse Coordinator in the Cancer Center since 2012 and has successfully maintained a high level of proficiency which enhances the treatment and care of the patients within her department.

Jacqueline's personal and professional philosophy is to first and foremost serve others and to always give 100% at all tasks that are assigned to her. She enjoys nursing and is committed to the core values, educational opportunities, community resources and outreach that is afforded to her so that she can connect to the people she serve. She has always maintained a positive outlook which is a great assistance in accomplishing her many daily tasks while networking with the Howard University Hospital infrastructure. Additionally, she served as correspondence secretary for two contracts and is currently vice-chair of the DCNA leadership since 2018.

Jacqueline's hobbies includes reading, sewing, exercising, traveling and spending time with her family and friends.



LaKisha Little-Small, RN

I am LaKisha Little-Small, your current Secretary of District of Columbia Nurses Association (DCNA) Board of Directors and Vice-Chair of the Economic & General Welfare Cabinet (E&GW).

As an employee of Children's National Hospital (CNH) of 20 years, my position as a staff Registered Nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit has been challenging and very fulfilling. At CNH, I am also Chair of the DCNA/CNH Bargaining Unit and a shop steward. Along with the bargaining unit committee, we completed the first DCNA contract negotiations, via Webex, during the COVID-19 pandemic and ratified a new collective bargaining agreement.

DCNA has allowed me to expand my horizons as a patient/people advocate for all throughout the United States. I have lobbied on Capitol Hill on several occasions, rallied for Medicare & healthcare for all, and testified at City Council for safe nurse to patient ratios. I am an active At-Large Member of the DCNA E&GW and a delegate for National Nurses United. In the past, I have served in capacity as the Vice-President and President of the DCNA Board of Directors and the Secretary of the E&GW Cabinet.



Laverne Plater, RN

Laverne D. Plater, BSN, RN-BC, Nurse Consultant for Office of Chief Nursing Executive, District of Columbia Department of Behavioral Health

Laverne D. Plater is also serving as Union Steward for District of Columbia Nurses Association and is currently a Board and Cabinet member for the District of Columbia Nurses Association

Laverne D. Plater is also serving as Vice Chair for the District of Columbia Board of Nurses with the mission is to safeguard the public's health and well-being by assuring safe quality care. This is achieved through the regulation of nursing practice and education programs and by the licensure, registration and continuing education of nursing personnel.

Laverne D. Plater, BSN, RN-BC is currently the Nursing Consultant for the Office of the Chief Nursing Executive at Saint Elizabeths Hospital ("Hospital") in Washington, DC. Ms. Plater is highly respected professional and leader at the Hospital. Ms. Plater's job requires her to evaluate the nursing practice, and to promote a clinical climate that is conducive to quality patient care. She created a formal Nursing Education Division ("NED") within the Nursing Department. NED revamped the unreliable on the job educational training system that the Hospital had employed to prepare its front-line nurses and nursing assistants to face the challenges of working in dangerous, ever- changing psychiatric units. Ms Plater's efforts however did not stop there. Soon after, Ms. Plater created a hands – on Nursing Skills Lab. to ensure the nursing staff had the practical skills necessary for the job. Most importantly, Ms. Plater is a great nurse and a patient advocate. Her gumption, work ethic, and innate leadership skills sets Ms. Plater apart from the crowd but her down- to earth nature, humor, and charisma makes any distinction seem small. No job is too big, too hard or even too small that Ms. Plater does not always put her heart and soul into it to complete.

She has served on numerous hospital committees. She was appointed to serve as a member of the Mortality and Morbidity, Infection Control, Pharmacy & Therapeutic, Institutional Review Board, Risk Management, Grievance, and Professional Nurse Practice Committee to name a few.

Eileen Shaw, RN

Eileen Shaw has been a Registered Nurse at Howard University Hospital for over 30 years where she served in numerous departments and in many various capacities.

- Department of Radiology – Nurse Coordinator
- Medical /Surgical Nursing
- Surgical and Medical Intensive Care Nursing
- Ambulatory Nursing

Eileen has been in her current position as Nurse Coordinator in the Department of Radiology since 2015 in which she successfully collaborates with interdisciplinary staff to accomplish client care goals. She has subsequently held a position as Chair for DCNA at Howard University Hospital, since 2015 and has been part of the negotiation team for 2 contracts. Eileen also serves on the DCNA Board. Eileen's passions for providing exceptional care lead her to become the Director of Nursing for ResCare. In tenure, she supervised the medical care for mentally challenged residents.

Eileen earned her Associates of Applied Sciences in 1977 from Washington Technical Institute, now known as the University of the District of Columbia. She went to earn her Bachelors of Science in Nursing from the University of Maryland, Baltimore Country in 1994.

Eileen is the proud mother of three adult daughters, and in her spare time she enjoys exploring new countries and their cultures. She attends Zumba and Line Dancing classes and spending time with her family.

If chosen Eileen plans to work closely with the DCNA leadership and members to uphold the mission of the District of Columbia Nurses Association on addressing health care issues, health care reform and health education to enhance this professional organization.

Maria Velasquez, MSN, RN, CPN

I have 13 years of experience in nursing at Children's National Medical Center where I have worked on diverse units: Respiratory Care, Medical/Surgical Care, Emergency Department, Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) /Surgical Prep, and Perioperative Care Clinic. I completed my Master in The Science of Nursing with a focus in Education in 2016 and was a Clinical Instructor for the PACU/Surgical-Prep area.

I have been an active member in many Shared Nursing Leadership committees at a unit and hospital wide level since 2010 where I have had the opportunity to improve patient safety, nursing safety and nursing satisfaction. I have been part of many projects: Updated Unit/Hospital Policies, Scheduling Guidelines, On-Call Redesign, PACU Redesign, PACU Acuity Board, Teamwork Building Presentations, Magnet Champion, and PACU Medication Safety. I currently serve on the Cabinet of DCNA, Secretary of DCNA/CNH, and was part of the negotiation team for DCNA and CNH new contract negotiations 2020.