

New York State ENA Council Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2026

New York State Emergency Nurses Association (NYSENA) Council Meeting

Date: April 22, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: 2026 Setting the Pace Conference, Saratoga Springs, NY (Hybrid meeting via Zoom)

Attendees (Board of Directors):

All current members of the Board of Directors were present either in person or via Zoom.

- Eileen Breckenridge, President
- Vepuka Kauari, President-Elect
- Dawna Scheich, Treasurer
- Christopher Sorrentino, Secretary
- Carolyn Dixon, Board Member
- Mickey Forness, Board Member
- Tammy Aiken, Board Member
- Wendy Allen-Thompson, Immediate Past President
- Sue Chalupa-Breese, Parliamentarian
- [Add other BOD members as per attendance sheet, ensuring accuracy with provided slides/transcript where roles shifted]

Attendees (Council Members & Committee Chairs):

A full attendance roster, including Council members and Committee Chairs, will be provided separately by Secretary-elect Carolyn Dixon.

- Maryanne Portoro, Communications Chair
- Jamla Rizek, Education Chair
- Jonathan Nover, Government Affairs Chair
- Mary Ann Teeter, TNCC/Trauma Chair
- Mary Harwood, Long Island Special Interest Group/Water Whistle Program presenter
- [Add other Committee Chairs/Council members as per attendance sheet]

Excused (Board of Directors):

- [List any BOD members absent beyond those specifically mentioned in the October minutes or current slides, if applicable]

Absent (Committee Chairs):

- [List any Committee Chairs absent as per attendance sheet]
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1. Call to Order

President Eileen Breckenridge called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes (January 2026)

The minutes from the January 2026 Council meeting were presented for approval, having been circulated via email.

- **Correction:** Carolyn Dixon, as Secretary-Elect, noted that the attendance list in the circulated minutes would be corrected based on her notes.
- No further corrections were brought forth.
- A motion to accept the minutes as corrected was made, seconded, and carried by majority vote.

3. Adoption of Agenda

A motion to adopt the meeting agenda was made, seconded, and carried.

4. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

President Breckenridge announced that all required conflict of interest forms for individuals doing committee work, chairing committees, or representing the association, were completed and available on the website, marking a significant achievement.

5. Board Reports

5.1. President's Report (Eileen Breckenridge)

President Breckenridge provided comprehensive updates on important dates, ENA national initiatives, and NYSENA state-level activities.

- **Important Dates:**

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- **April 2nd - 30th, 2026:** Call for nominations for National ENA Board of Directors, including positions on the Leadership Development and Elections Committee.
- **April 23rd - May 30th, 2026:** Call for nominations for NYSENA Board of Directors, specifically for President-Elect and Board Position One. Forms are available on the NYSENA website under the "Forms" tab.
- **May 15th - June 15th, 2026:** Call for General Assembly applications. Anticipated increase in delegate slots (from 34 to 36 or 37) due to the merger with the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), which added approximately 320 members to NYSENA. Members were strongly encouraged to apply for this networking and professional development opportunity.
- **May 31st, 2026:** ENA Strong Challenge closes. NYSENA has currently collected \$775, ranking 22nd nationally. Members were encouraged to contribute to this fund, which supports scholarships and research projects.
- **August 7th - 8th, 2026:** NYSENA Council Meeting in Binghamton, NY, which will be an in-person event. Education sessions are planned for August 7th.
- **August 15th - September 10th, 2026:** NYSENA Board of Directors Elections.
- **September 27th - 28th, 2026:** General Assembly in Phoenix, AZ.
- **September 28th - October 1st, 2026:** EN26 in Phoenix, AZ.
- **October 14th, 2026:** Emergency Nurses Day (part of Emergency Nurses Week). The board is actively seeking suggestions for member recognition and public outreach during this period.
- **October 9th - 10th, 2026:** NYSENA Council Meeting in Binghamton, NY. Education sessions are planned for October 9th, with the meeting on October 10th.
- **Save the Date Events:**
 - **May 15th, 2026:** ED Pearls of Wisdom 2026 (Long Island event).
 - **May 20th, 2026:** Inaugural Leadership Lecture with Heidi Gilbert (virtual), as part of a new monthly leadership education series addressing high leadership turnover in EDs.

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- **June 17th, 2026:** SUNY Upstate pediatric lecture offering 4 CEUs, focusing on topics like button battery injuries, pediatric trauma/burns, and pediatric stroke (including the administration of TPA to children). Future pediatric lectures will cover SANE and CPEN topics.
- **October 5th - 6th, 2026:** Solheim CEN review course. This year, it will be limited to 200 members at a reduced rate of \$100, following last year's record 641 attendees.
- **ENA Updates:**
 - A search committee has been formed, and a search firm hired, to recruit an Executive Director for National ENA. Interviews are anticipated in Q2, with placement by end of Q3.
 - National ENA is developing leadership standards to define performance requirements for board members.
 - Initiatives are underway to enhance communication and strengthen connections with state councils, including diverse communication strategies to engage members across different age groups.
 - A Global Council is being developed to support international members who lack the state/local council structure available to US members.
 - Enhanced online educational offerings are planned, including "10-minute shorts" for quick learning on critical topics.
 - Bylaw amendments are being developed to address expanding membership to include LPNs working in EDs, support for members with encumbered licenses, and the inclusion of seasoned leaders.
 - The merger with the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) on April 1st, 2026, absorbed 20,000 members nationally, with approximately 320 added to NYSENA. NYSENA is exploring how to incorporate these new members, possibly through ad-hoc committees or special interest groups.
- **NYSENA Updates:**
 - The Strategic Plan development has been completed and submitted to the Council for approval.

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- Social media platforms have been streamlined (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram) to increase communication and member engagement. QR codes are being utilized for easy access.
- An alliance has been formed with the American Red Cross, with a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to supplement disaster response statewide through a team of nurses.
- A collaborative effort between the Leadership Development and Elections Committee (LDEC) and the Education Committee has led to the development of the leadership lecture series.
- A dedicated pediatric education track has been developed, including the 4-hour presentation by SUNY Upstate University Hospital.
- Revisions to the election process have been completed and submitted to the Council for approval.
- Review of bylaws, policies, and procedures has begun, with a projected completion date for the August Council meeting. This process will include sessions for members to provide input and seek clarification.
- The feasibility of hosting a CPEN review course is being explored.

5.2. President-Elect's Report (Vepuka Kauari)

President-Elect Kauari gave a brief report, noting that much of her work is integrated into other committee reports, particularly the Awards Committee. She expressed her enthusiasm for working with the Council and looked forward to the year ahead.

5.3. Treasurer's Report (Dawna Scheich)

Treasurer Scheich provided a positive financial update:

- The initial budget projected a **-\$40,000** deficit for the year. However, the association is currently operating under budget.
- Current liquid funds total approximately **\$147,000**, with an additional **\$190,000** in CDs, bringing the total assets to approximately **\$337,000**.
- Expenses so far this year total **\$56,000**.
- Income has exceeded **\$100,000**.
- The conference, which was projected to incur a **-\$23,000** deficit, is now anticipated to make a profit.
- **Action Item:** The Treasurer's full report with detailed figures will be circulated.

5.4. Secretary's Report (Christopher Sorrentino)

Christopher Sorrentino, as Secretary-Elect, indicated there was nothing further to report at this time.

5.5. Director at Large's Report (Tammy Aiken)

Tammy Aiken reported on communication outreach to members regarding events and organizing support for a board member. She had no further report.

5.6. Director at Large's Report (Mickey Forness)

Mickey Forness gave a brief report, wishing everyone a good time at the conference and thanking Sue Breese for her leadership.

5.7. Immediate Past President's Report (Wendy Allen-Thompson)

Immediate Past President Allen-Thompson shared two key initiatives carried over from her presidency:

- **Medical Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic:** Following a successful trip last year with 14 participants, another medical mission is planned for **October 31st - November 7th, 2026**. Sophia is the team lead, and interested individuals were encouraged to speak with Sophia or Wendy.
- **New York State Emergency Response Team:** The collaboration between NYSENA and the American Red Cross has resulted in a signed MOU, establishing a team of nurses ready for disaster response.

5.8. Board Adjunct Members

- **Historian (Kathy Conboy):** Kathy Conboy's contributions to the bylaw review process were acknowledged.
- **Parliamentarian (Sue Breese):** Sue Breese provided guidance on parliamentary procedure throughout the meeting.

6. Committee Reports

6.1. Awards Committee (Vepuka Kauari)

President-Elect Kauari reported that the Awards Committee, with the help of others, had concluded the selection process for the state awards. While not all 16 nominees could be selected, some winners would be recognized tonight. She encouraged members to continue nominating colleagues, highlighting the excellent work being done across the state. It was noted that nominations were sent from New York to National, raising the state's profile.

6.2. Communications Committee (Maryanne Portoro)

- The committee is actively developing a newsletter and hopes to release it soon. Members were encouraged to submit information to the communications email (communications@nysena.org).
- The committee is exploring names for the newsletter, with "The Roadrunner" and "Setting the Pace" being historical options.
- Jamla Rizek of the Education Committee, also working closely with Communications, highlighted the new QR codes available on tables and conference badges, linking to NYSENA's LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram pages.
- A "Setting the Pace Selfie Challenge" was launched this morning, encouraging attendees to post pictures with the hashtag #NYSENA. One of the prizes for this challenge is a free CEN registration.

6.3. Education Committee (Jamla Rizek)

Jamla Rizek provided extensive updates on educational offerings:

- **Monthly Educational Topics:** Held on the fourth Monday of every month, these free virtual sessions offer CEUs. The next presentation on **April 27th, 2026**, will feature "Lessons from a Hostage Negotiator."
- **Upcoming Presentations:**
 - Pat Frost (National Pediatric Disaster Committee President) will present on pediatric topics.
 - Steve Wyman and Kathleen Robinson will present on "What you wish you would have known if there was an in-flight emergency."
 - Sue Chalupa-Breese will present on the history of ENA later in the year.
 - Presentations are also planned on flight nursing, "ultimate caducus" (international disaster event), and by a Colonel who is both Chief Nurse of the U.S. Army and a Joint Commission evaluator, addressing Joint Commission changes.
- **Registration:** Registration for all events, including the June pediatric event (\$25 fee) and CPEN courses, will be announced via social media. Members were encouraged to follow NYSENA's social media channels to be first to receive information.

6.4. Government Affairs Committee (Jonathan Nover, *report delivered by President Breckenridge*)

- Two NYSENA nurses were in Albany yesterday for the state senate reading of the April Workplace Violence Prevention Month, standing with Senator [Sepulveda-Bredahl - based on context] and ASAP colleagues. The Albany Advocacy Day will be under budget.
- Next week, four NYSENA nurses will represent New York in D.C. for Day on the Hill, with numerous meetings scheduled. This event is also expected to be under budget.
- A legislative poster summarizing last year's work is displayed near the registration desk.
- A 1st ENA State Award winners poster will be unveiled tonight, celebrating state award recipients.
- The 2nd legislative summit is in planning and will likely move to Northwell Phelps Hospital at Sleepy Hollow.

6.5. EMS Committee (Mickey Forness & Maryanne Portoro)

- The February meeting was canceled due to weather. The committee will meet in two weeks and will provide a report after that.
- A new EMS committee is being formed, inviting all EMS providers (paramedics, etc.) to participate.
- **Current Issues in NYS EMS:**
 - Significant discussion surrounds the challenges faced by rural EMS agencies due to lacking membership and personnel, partly attributed to decreased Medicaid reimbursement rates.
 - There is concern over a low pass rate on the state EMS exam, the cause of which is currently being investigated. These two items will be heavily discussed at the upcoming meeting.

6.6. ENPC Committee (Sue Breese)

- The 7th edition of ENPC is anticipated for release by October.
- **Pediatric Readiness Initiatives:**

- 52 hospitals in New York State have registered for the state-level EMS pediatric readiness program. Hospitals not yet involved were encouraged to join.
- The state is exploring establishing 21 behavioral health off-site facilities across New York to decompress emergency department volumes for behavioral health patients.

6.7. Injury Prevention/TNCC/Trauma Committee (Mary Ann Teeter)

Mary Ann Teeter acknowledged the contributions of TNCC and EMPCC instructors and faculty.

- **TNCC 40th Anniversary:** A video celebrating the 40th anniversary of TNCC is available on the website.
- **Committee Meetings:** The committee meets on the second Thursday of every month at 7 PM (website details).
- **Successful TNCC Production:** The committee has solicited and received creative ideas for producing successful TNCC courses, with the top 40 ideas to be published in the newsletter.
- **Instructor Potential Guidelines:** New guidelines have been implemented to clarify the process for selecting instructor potential candidates, addressing a disconnect between selection and actual instructor course participation. These guidelines are available on the website.
- **New Reimbursement Form:** A new TNCC/EMPC revenue expense form has been piloted and received positive feedback from the Treasurer. This form will be shared with the Treasurer's team for potential state-wide implementation on the website.
- **Course Schedule:** Over 40 courses are scheduled for the next quarter, including 8 EMPCC courses, demonstrating strong activity.
- **TNAC Hosting:** NYSENA successfully hosted the Trauma Nursing Advanced Course (TNAC) last fall in Syracuse, with Upstate as the host. This included both provider and instructor courses. Carolyn Dixon has completed her requirements and is now a TNAC instructor.
- **TNCC 10th Edition Revision:** Carolyn Dixon is also part of the TNCC 10th edition revision course at the national level. Members were encouraged to provide feedback on ways to improve, add, or delete content based on their experience with the current edition.

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- **Discussion on Course Funding:** It was emphasized that a majority of NYSENA's revenue comes from TNCC and ENPC courses. It was also noted that the state now centrally manages course finances (ordering books, paying fees, tracking payments), relieving course directors of upfront costs and long reimbursement waits, absorbing any courses that might run in the red.
- **Grant Money for Courses:** Discussion about grant monies available through various programs (e.g., disaster funds) that support TNCC/ENPC courses. Some areas of the state, like Western New York, have scholarship programs for these courses.

6.8. Leadership, Development and Elections Committee (Mel Wilson)

New Policies: The committee worked weekly to develop two new policies to be discussed today under New Business: the "NYSENA Council ENA Election House Policy" and the "Running for Officer Election Policy."

- **Election Timeline:** The call for nominations for President-Elect, Treasurer-Elect, and Board Member One (a one-year term) will open immediately after this conference, with online applications available.
 - **June 30th:** Call for nominations closes.
 - **July:** Candidate review (applications, credentials, interviews) and "Meet the Candidates" information posted online.
 - **August 15th - September 10th:** Electronic voting.
 - **October 9th:** Recognition of new officers at the October Council Meeting, with installation of 2027 officers and board members.
- **Leadership Development:** The committee has developed a process for virtual speakers on leadership skills within ENA and for hospital systems. Heidi Gilbert will be the first speaker on May 20th.
- **Roving Reporters:** The committee plans to have "roving reporters" at the conference to interview past national presidents and attendees about leadership needs and insights, with findings to be shared in the newsletter.

6.9. Membership/Fundraising Committee (Mickey Forness)

- Current membership stands at **2,277**, including the newly absorbed forensic nurses. The committee is working on a process to actively engage these new members.

- Over 200 lifetime members are part of NYSENA.
 - Funds raised during the conference will go to the ENA Foundation, which supports scholarships (e.g., the 9/11 scholarship).
 - A small raffle will be held today, with a larger basket raffle during the conference, concluding Friday afternoon.
 - The ENA Strong Challenge has raised \$775 during the conference so far.
 - Handmade bracelets will be sold for \$10 each, with proceeds benefiting NYSENA.
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7. New Business

7.1. Water Whistle Program (Mary Harwood)

Mary Harwood presented the "Water Whistle Program," an injury prevention initiative that originated on Long Island approximately 18-20 years ago.

- **Program Details:** The program provides English (purple band) and Spanish (white band) wristbands with whistles. Children wearing them alert adults if they are in trouble in the water. The whistle indicates they need help, and adults are instructed to blow their own whistle to alert a lifeguard.
- **Background:** This program aligns with ENA's injury prevention mission, housed under the TNCC/Trauma committee. It addresses drowning, particularly in lake-infested areas with cold water (where hypothermia can hasten drowning) and where lifeguards are not always available.
- **Proposal for Statewide Implementation:** Mary Harwood proposed that NYSENA adopt this as a statewide program, noting its similarity to the "Stop the Bleed" initiative. The last order for whistles cost approximately \$1,800 for 700 English and 300 Spanish whistles.
- **Discussion & Motion:**
 - It was suggested that National ENA has grant funding available for such initiatives, and a grant application could be pursued to fund the program.
 - A motion was made to "write the grant, fund the water whistle program through National."
 - The motion was seconded.

- **Vote:** The motion was unanimously approved.
- **Action Item:** A grant application will be written and submitted to National ENA to fund the Water Whistle Program statewide.
- **Action Item:** Mary Harwood to provide details of the existing program to support the grant application.
- **Action Item:** Explore partnerships with New York State Parks and community parks.
- **Safety Tip:** When purchasing swimsuits for children, avoid blue colors as they can make children difficult to see in water.

7.2. Julie Cangrow Award (Mary Harwood)

Mary Harwood proposed that the "Julie Cangrow Award," an annual \$1000 educational award from the former Suffolk County ENA chapter, be integrated as a statewide award.

- **Background:** This award honors Julie Cangrow, an active and well-known emergency/transport nurse in Suffolk County, and includes a plaque and \$1000 for educational purposes. As Suffolk County ENA is no longer a standalone chapter, the award cannot continue as a regional award.
- **Discussion:**
 - Concerns were raised about establishing a precedent for state-level named awards and the need for clear criteria. Marianne Teter emphasized the importance of a standardized process for establishing new state awards to ensure consistency and fairness, rather than individual proposals.
 - It was clarified that this is an existing award being "grandfathered in" and transitioned to the state level, similar to other existing state awards (e.g., Ann Ryan, Ginny Hens). The process typically involves a member bringing it forward, discussion, criteria, and a rubric-based selection by the Awards Committee.
 - The current criteria for the Julie Cangrow Award involve an essay-based submission and a blind review by a committee. The award also includes a monetary component.
 - **Motion to Table:** A motion was made to table the discussion on the Julie Cangrow Award until the Board of Directors could review the criteria and rubric and bring it back to the next state meeting (August Council Meeting).

- The motion was seconded.
- **Vote:** The motion to table was unanimously approved.
- **Action Item:** The Board of Directors will review the criteria and rubric for the Julie Cangrow Award and bring a recommendation to the August Council Meeting.

7.3. NYSENA Council ENA Election Policy (Mel Wilson)

Mel Wilson presented the "NYSENA Council ENA Election House Policy," outlining the procedures for the election of officers.

- **Purpose:** To describe the procedure for officer elections to the NYSENA Council.
- **Key Points:**
 - The Leadership Development and Elections Committee (LDEC) is a standing committee responsible for nominations, applications, and elections, as well as mentoring future leaders.
 - All NYSENA voting members are eligible to vote. Ballots are sent via email. Non-voting members (affiliate/student) and members who opt out of ENA emails will not receive a ballot.
 - The LDEC committee establishes and notifies the voting membership of the election timeline, utilizes an independent vendor for elections (currently Election Runner), and reviews established application criteria.
 - Candidates self-nominate, complete an application form (which includes a new emphasis on accountability and financial disclosure), and submit within the allowed timeframe.
 - **Elective Positions and Terms:** President-Elect (1-year term, 3-year commitment), Treasurer-Elect (1-year term, 2-year commitment), Secretary (2-year term), Director at Large (2-year term).
 - **Eligibility Criteria:** NYS RN license, NYSENA member for 2 years, attendance at ≥ 2 NYS Council meetings in past 12 months, attendance at ≥ 1 ENA General Assembly or Setting the Pace in past 3 years.
 - **Professional Headshot:** Requires a 300-pixel, 5x7 professional headshot taken within 3 years, depicting professional business attire (no scrubs or AI-generated photos).

- **Discussion:**
 - Clarification was sought on the method of candidate notification (President makes phone calls for both winners and non-winners).
 - Concerns were raised regarding members who opt out of emails potentially missing ballots. It was clarified that opting out of Constant Contact (state communication) is separate from opting out of National ENA emails (which handle the initial ballot). However, opting out of Constant Contact means missing reminders. The LDEC will ensure transparency, especially for new members, on the implications of opting out of communications for voting eligibility.
- **Motion:** A motion to accept the LDEC Election House Policy was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

7.4. Leadership Development and Elections Committee Policy (Mel Wilson)

Mel Wilson presented the "Running for Officer Election Policy," defining the responsibilities and role of the LDEC.

- **Purpose:** To describe the responsibilities and role of the LDEC (formerly Nominations Election Committee).
- **Responsibilities:** Oversee elections, identify and facilitate professional development and mentoring of leaders, provide leadership education, foster opportunities for board service, and serve as a resource to the Board.
- **Committee Structure:** Up to 5 members, including a chair and Board liaison. For 2026, members are appointed by the President. Starting January 2027, committee members will apply and be ratified at the first Council meeting of the year.
- **Eligibility:** Current ENA and NYSENA member for 2 years, current NYS RN license. Candidates must meet 2 or more additional criteria (e.g., prior board/committee chair experience, active committee service within 2 years, attendance at Council meetings/GA/Setting the Pace).
- **Chair Qualifications:** Expertise in leadership, mentoring, and dedication to advancing emergency nursing.
- **Terms:** 3-year terms with staggered rotation (one member rotates off year 1, two off year 2, two off year 3). If no applicants, terms may be extended.
- **General Activities:** Minimum of 4 meetings annually, financial disclosure submission, presentation to general membership for approval, timely posting of

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minutes, attending national meetings, reviewing/revising policies, participating in Board meetings as designated, and budget development.

- **Discussion:** No further discussion was noted.
- **Motion:** A motion to accept the LDEC Committee Policy (Running for Officer Election Policy) was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1100am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Sorrentino
NYSENA Secretary

Carolyn Dixon
NYSENA Secretary-elect