

Partners in **NURSE ADVANCEMENT**

OUR MISSION PharMerica and NADONA are teaming to provide new resources, education, and information along with additional insights from DONs and Pharmacy Consultants for improved outcomes, care excellence, and a bright future for nurses.

What is your role at NADONA?

I'm the Executive Director so my role is managing the day-to-day operations. That can be anything from recruiting members and making sure certifications run as scheduled to working with state presidents across the country and planning the national conference.

Describe your nursing background.

I went to nursing school and, while there, I got a job working at a long-term care facility as a nurse's aide. Over time, I worked my way up, holding a variety of other roles like charge nurse, DON, and corporate DON. I've now been in the industry for over 45 years because long-term care is my passion. I love being able to really get to know residents and families and making a difference in their lives.

Describe NADONA's mission.

It's really about communication, education, and service to our members. We want to promote the health and wellness of our members, especially because of the stresses they're under in the long-term care industry. We live out our mission in several ways. We develop certification exams. We are on top of new regulations and tools and technologies. We create policies. We run webinars to train our members. And we offer opportunities to help them further their education and manage stress.

We're also simply a place where they can feel supported. Often, nurses feel like they're out there on an island and that no one understands what they're going through. But we do, and hopefully that has an impact on their professional and personal satisfaction.

How is NADONA furthering the development of nurses in long-term care and why is this so important?

The nurses in long-term care need great assessment skills. Yet assessing a geriatric patient is unique from a younger person. It requires different techniques to understand the lung sounds, blood pressure, and other vitals

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RN, CDP, CADDCT, GDCN, CDONA, FACDONA, Executive Director, NADONA

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specific to this demographic when taking the same medications. So we try to make that learning experience available through our national conference, webinars, and certification exams. We currently have seven exams and update them annually to reflect the newest regulations or developments.

How is NADONA helping to address nursing shortages today?

We try to keep the DON and other top nurse leaders like the staff development nurse in place at a long-term care facility. Our members stay longer than those who don't belong to a nursing organization because we provide the resources, networking, and mentors they need, and that helps reduce turnover. And when we can keep the DON longer, staff also stay.

We also provide scholarships through partnerships with PharMerica and other funding organizations to help nurses advance their education. For example, we try to reach a CNA who always wanted to be a nurse and help them with their education to recruit more nurses into the field. Teach one, reach one – that's our slogan. The average age of a nurse is 53 right now so we need to find ways to attract new individuals to the profession.

What impact does NADONA have on the health and well-being of long-term care residents?

One of the biggest ways we further quality care is with the support we provide. With our education and mentorship opportunities, we can expand nurses' knowledge and skills. For example, if a DON needs help with wound care, we can pair them with a mentor in that specialty. We also help make them aware of all the resources they have available at their fingertips. Often, DONs may not know that a Pharmacy Consultant or Medical Director is there to help with specific resident problems.

Describe the partnership between PharMerica and NADONA?

It's a growing relationship that started 15 years ago working on different projects like scholarships to advance the nursing profession. Today, we increasingly see the need for the DON and Pharmacy Consultants – both nurses and pharmacists – to work together. We're really trying to enhance that partnership because we've discovered that none of us can stand alone; a three legged chair doesn't work. By teaming up, PharMerica and NADONA can help facility staff serve residents better and, ultimately, improve care and outcomes.

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To learn more about how PharMerica is supporting DONs, other nurse leaders, and nursing staff in skilled nursing, visit PharMerica.com/who-we-are/nurse-advancement.