

Northeast Ohio Cleveland Chapter

2012  
2013  
Directory

AALNC

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
LEGAL NURSE CONSULTANTS

# Mission Statement

The Northeast Ohio Cleveland Chapter of the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants promotes the professional advancement of Registered Nurses consulting within the legal arena by providing a forum for continuing education and networking.

## Goals

The goals of the Chapter are:

- To provide members with opportunities and experience to further their professional development as Legal Nurse Consultants.
- To increase awareness in the legal community of the profession of Legal Nurse Consulting.
- To assure the legal and medical communities of the competence, integrity, and accountability of our members.

## 2012-2013 President's Message

As President of the Northeast Ohio Cleveland Chapter of the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants, our goal is to promote the professional advancement of Registered Nurses consulting within the legal arena by providing a forum for continuing education, networking, and mentoring. Our chapter remains committed to assuring the legal and medical communities of the competence, integrity and accountability of our members.

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# Legal Nurse Consultants

## What is a legal nurse consultant?

The primary role of the legal nurse consultant is to evaluate, analyze, and render informed opinions of the delivery of health care and the resulting outcomes. Legal nurse consultants bring specialized education and clinical expertise to the medically related issues of the litigation process.

## What do legal nurse consultants do?

In the course of their work, legal nurse consultants may be engaged in any number of the following activities:

- Conducting client interviews
- Identifying standards of care, causation and damage issues
- Conducting research and summarizing medical literature
- Helping to determine the merits of a case
- Preparing chronologies of medical events and comparing and correlating them to the allegations
- Educating attorneys regarding medical facts and issues relevant to the case
- Identifying and determining damages and related costs of services, including consulting with economists in preparing a cost analysis for damages
- Assisting with depositions and trials, including developing and preparing exhibits
- Organizing medical records and other medically related litigation materials
- Collaborating with attorneys in preparing or analyzing complaints, answers, and motions for summary judgment, interrogatories, deposition and trial outlines, queries for direct and cross examination, document production requests, trial briefs, demand letters, and status reports
- Locate and retain expert witnesses
- Act as a liaison among attorneys, physicians and clients
- Serve as expert witnesses

## Why should you hire a legal nurse consultant?

Because of their expertise in medically related issues, a legal nurse consultant can bring the following benefits to the litigation team:

- **Cost-effectiveness.** The legal nurse consultant works in selecting a viable case and maximizing its value or, alternatively, assists in defending the case by mitigating or obliterating the liability or damage issues and award.
- **Resourcefulness.** The legal nurse consultant possesses a network of medical and professional resources and contacts.
- **Knowledge.** The legal nurse consultant has a thorough understanding of medical issues and trends related to the total litigation process. This information is custom-designed for the attorney, the client and the jury.
- **Experience.** The legal nurse consultant has a background of clinical experience, which includes interpretation of medical records, documents, and medical-legal issues.

## What should you look for when hiring a legal nurse consultant?

A legal nurse consultant should bring the following characteristics:

- **Experience:** including a strong background in legal nurse consulting and a solid clinical experience,
- **Education:** including nursing education, and other medical-legal related educational programs,
- **Professionalism:** including strong oral and written communication skills,
- **Involvement:** including a demonstrated commitment to the field through involvement in national and local professional organizations.

Distinct from a paralegal or legal assistant, the legal nurse consultant is a unique and valuable member of the litigation team. Legal nurse consultants bring specialized education and clinical expertise to the medically related issues of the litigation process. The practice of legal nurse consulting is performed in collaboration with attorneys and others involved in the legal process. The independent practice of law does not fall within the legal nurse consultant's scope of practice.

# Members By Specialty

## **Abuse/Neglect Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities**

Kathleen Biddlestone

## **Administrative Health Care**

Pam Canfield Opremcak  
Nancy Ceglia

## **Ambulatory Surgery**

Pam Canfield Opremcak

## **Cardiology**

Jeffrey Beers  
Suzanne Blackburn  
Debra Wilden  
Diane Winbigler

## **Cardiothoracic/Vascular Surgery**

Nancy Ceglia

## **Case Management**

Nancy Ceglia  
Linda Gartman  
Pamela Hanigosky

## **Catastrophic Case Management**

Linda Gartman

## **Critical/Intensive Care**

Suzanne Blackburn  
Nancy Ceglia  
Pam Canfield Opremcak  
Georgette Zickefoose

## **Diabetes Management**

Sarah Kurka

## **Electronic Medical Records**

Georgette Zickefoose

## **Electrophysiology**

Jeffrey Beers

## **Emergency Department**

Suzanne Blackburn  
Amber Limbach  
Georgette Zickefoose

## **Fact Witness (IME/DME)**

Linda Gartman

## **General Surgery**

Nancy Ceglia

## **Geriatrics**

Pamela Hanigosky

## **High Risk Obstetrics/Antepartum**

Georgette Zickefoose

## **Intravenous Therapy**

Georgette Zickefoose

## **Life Care Planning**

Linda Gartman  
Pamela Hanigosky

## **Long Term Care/Skilled Nursing**

Patricia Rondaris Danzey

**Medical/Surgical/Telemetry Nursing**

Jeffrey Beers  
Patricia Rondaris Danzey  
Pam Canfield Opremcak  
Debra Wilden  
Diane Winbigler  
Georgette Zickefoose

**Neonatal Intensive Care**

Sarah Kurka

**Nephrology**

Debra Wilden

**Newborn Care**

Molly Kennedy

**Noninvasive Cardiac Testing**

Diane Winbigler

**Nurse Anesthesiology**

Garalynn Tomas

**Nurse Management**

Pam Canfield Opremcak

**Nurse Practitioner Standards of Care**

Molly Kennedy

**Operating Room**

Patricia Brook  
Pam Canfield Opremcak

**Orthopedics**

Nancy Ceglia

**Outpatient Clinical Practice**

Pam Canfield Opremcak

**Pacemaker Technology**

Nancy Ceglia

**Pediatric Nurse Practitioner**

Molly Kennedy

**Pediatrics**

Molly Kennedy

**Product Liability**

Sarah Kurka

**Pulmonary**

Debra Wilden

**Recovery Room (PACU)**

Jeffrey Beers  
Pam Canfield Opremcak

**Urology**

Debra Wilden

**Venous Disorders**

Nancy Ceglia

**Workers Compensation**

Linda Gartman  
Pamela Hanigosky

# Testifying Experts by Specialty

**Abuse/Neglect Mental  
Retardation/Developmental  
Disabilities (MR/DD)**

Kathleen Biddlestone

**Case Management**

Linda Gartman

**Critical/Intensive Care**

Suzanne Blackburn

Georgette Zickefoose

**Diabetes Management**

Sarah Kurka

**Emergency Department**

Suzanne Blackburn

**Intravenous Therapy**

Georgette Zickefoose

**Life Care Planning**

Linda Gartman

Pamela Hanigosky

**Long Term Care/Skilled Nursing**

Patricia Rondaris Danzey

**Medical/Surgical/Telemetry Nursing**

Debra Wilden

Georgette Zickefoose

**MR/DD**

Kathleen Biddlestone

**MR/DD Residential Standards of Care**

Kathleen Biddlestone

**Neonatal Intensive Care**

Sarah Kurka

**Newborn**

Molly Kennedy

**Nurse Anesthesiology**

Garalynn Tomas

**Nurse Practitioner Standards of Care**

Molly Kennedy

**Pediatric Nurse Practitioner**

Molly Kennedy

**Pediatrics**

Molly Kennedy (including office pediatrics)

**Post Anesthesia Care Unit**

Garalynn Tomas

**Pulmonary**

Debra Wilden

**Urology/Nephrology**

Debra Wilden

**Workers Compensation**

Pam Hanigosky

## **Members Biographies**

### **JEFFREY A. BEERS, RN, BSN, MA**

is a Patient Safety and Clinical Risk Manager at a large University Medical Center with responsibilities for OB/GYN, pediatrics, and other areas. Jeff completed his Legal Nurse Consultant education with the Ohio State University. His work as a Clinical Risk Manager brings a clear understanding of the strengths and weakness within the healthcare system. Jeff also remains active in clinical practice. He has 30 years of experience within healthcare including the hospital setting and with a healthcare services management organization. The medical center experience includes, ICU, CCU, electrophysiology, telemetry medical-surgical, PACU, management, education, internal audit, case management and risk management. Healthcare management services include administration, human resources, medical bill audit, medical bill negotiation, provider contracting, utilization & review and case management. Jeff is a member of both the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants as well as the local Northeast Ohio Cleveland Chapter.

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**KATHLEEN BIDDLESTONE RN, BSN, CDDN**

Kathleen has over 30 years of clinical nursing experience, primarily in Home Health Care and in the specialized field of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD), in residential and vocational settings. She is clinically active and employed by a county board of developmental disabilities as an Infection Control and Quality Assurance nurse. She is available to serve as a testifying expert in the field of MR/DD, for both plaintiff and defense. She is also available for case review/chronology preparation for general nursing practice.

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**SUZANNE BLACKBURN RN, BSN, CCRN, CEN, LNC**

Suzanne Blackburn has been practicing as a registered nurse since 2002. She is currently clinically active in Intensive Care, Coronary Care, and Emergency nursing. Furthermore, she is also certified in Critical Care, Emergency Nursing, Trauma Nurse Core Curriculum, and Advanced Cardiac Life Support. She has a Bachelors of Nursing from Cleveland State University and has completed a program through Ohio State University in Legal Nurse Consulting. Suzanne is a member of AACN (American Association of Critical-Care Nurses), ENA (Emergency Nurses Association), and AALNC (American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants). Suzanne's independent consulting services include, but not limited to, medical record review, organization, chronology, and summarization, identifying standards of care, expert witness location, and medical research. She also serves as an expert in Intensive Care, Coronary Care and Emergency Nursing.

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**PATRICIA A. BROOK RN, LNCC**

is a registered nurse with over 20 years experience in Med-Surg, ER & OR. Worked in every specialty area of the OR including charge nurse. ASLNC Board Certified.

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**PAM CANFIELD OPREMCAK RN, MPA, LNC**

is the President of Critical Nurse Consulting, LLC. She has over 30 years of clinical, managerial and executive level experience. Areas of expertise include ambulatory surgery, hospital based surgery, critical care, PACU, outpatient clinical practice, cardiology, policy and procedure, regulatory requirements. Our strengths include, but are not limited to, consulting functions for both plaintiff and defense firms, medical records review and case analysis, medical literature research, preparation for depositions, identifying standards of care, locating expert witnesses, for medical malpractice, personal injury, and product liability.

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### **NANCY A. CEGLIA, RN, CLNC**

Owner/Manager of Ceglia & Associates LLC, providing legal nurse consultant services to attorneys nationwide for over 14 years. The associates in our firm have over 60 years combined clinical experience. We offer medical record review, research, consultation and expert witness location for medical malpractice, personal injury, product liability and toxic tort cases. Our merit reviews offer an affordable alternative to law firms and insurance companies over more costly physician opinions. We are devoted to assisting you through all phases of case development aided by the expertise of our team of resource associates, consisting of Physicians, Surgeons, Interventional Radiologist, Advanced Practice Nurses, and a Pharmacist.

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### **Patricia Rondaris Danzey, RN, MSN, MBA**

- Director, Risk Management/Quality/Education, Long Term Care, MetroHealth Medical Center 2008-2011

- Nursing Supervisor, The Elizabeth Severance Prentiss Center for Skilled Nursing Practice 2004-2008

- Faculty, NCLEX RN and LPN Review Courses, Elsevier Review and Testing, Houston, Texas 1993-current

- Instructor, Basic Cardiac Life Support, American Heart Association, MetroHealth Medical Center Affiliation – Current

- Over thirty (30) years of combined nursing practice, nursing education and nursing administrative experience

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**LINDA GARTMAN RN, CRRN, CLCP, CCM, LNC-C**

is president of Gartman Health & Rehabilitation, Inc. a case management, medical-legal and life care planning firm established in 1994. She specializes in catastrophic medical case management, life care planning, workers compensation and elder care management. She has over 20 years of professional nursing experience. Ms. Gartman is a Licensed Registered Nurse, Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse, Certified Life Care Planner, Certified Case Manager, Certified Legal Nurse Consultant, Qualified Rehabilitation Provider for the State of Ohio and Consultant to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Services include expert testimony in Life Care Planning, Case Management and Workers Compensation. She performs consulting functions for both plaintiff and defense firms and conducts mock trials. She is a program instructor at Ohio State University-Lima teaching the Legal Nurse Consultant program since 1998. Ms. Gartman is a volunteer for the Lorain County Medical Reserve Corps supporting Lorain County Communities during health emergencies and health related events. She has presented at various local, state and national conferences and seminars. Ms. Gartman is a founding member of the Cleveland Northeast Ohio Chapter of the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants and served as President from 2005-2007. She served as Co-President from 2007-2009.

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**PAMELA HANIGOSKY, RN, BSN, CRRN, CCM, CLCP**

Pamela Hanigosky is a Registered Nurse with 35 years of professional nursing experience. She received her nursing diploma from St. Vincent Charity Hospital & Health Center, School of Nursing in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cleveland State University. She is a certified rehabilitation registered nurse, a certified case manager and a certified life care planner. Mrs. Hanigosky is the President & Owner of Recovery Options Management Inc, a case management, medical-legal and life care planning consulting firm, established in 1996. Mrs. Hanigosky specializes in catastrophic medical case management, life care planning and elder care management. She is also an adjunct professor at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio. She teaches in the Life Care Planning Certificate course. Mrs. Hanigosky is a published author and researcher, who has spoken at various local, regional, state and national conferences & seminars.

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**MOLLY KENNEDY, MSN, RN, CPNP**

is a certified pediatric nurse practitioner with over 18 years of professional nursing experience. She received both BSN and MSN degrees from Case Western Reserve University.

Her clinical experience encompasses extremely sound knowledge of general pediatrics, including physical exam, well child care, and diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic childhood illnesses, ages newborns through young adults. She has extensive experience in both pediatric inpatient and office settings.

She has been a Clinical Faculty member at Case Western Reserve University since 1997 and maintains an active clinical practice as a pediatric nurse practitioner in Cleveland, Ohio. She is a member of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners as well as the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants.

In 2008 she established Kennedy Medical Legal Consulting, LLC, an independent legal nurse consulting company, which specializes in pediatrics and nurse practitioner standards of care.

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**SARAH KURKA RN, BSN**

is a registered nurse and legal nurse consultant with extensive clinical and product expertise in the areas of neonatal intensive care and diabetes management (specifically insulin pumps and continuous glucose monitors). Sarah currently practices in a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Prior to this role, she was employed for industry leaders in the pharmaceutical and medical device industry including Eli Lilly and Company and Medtronic. Sarah graduated cum laude from the Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. She also completed a course in legal nurse consulting through the Ohio State University in 2009.

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**AMBER LIMBACH, RN, BSN, CEN**

has over 18 years clinical experience in emergency department nursing. Of those 18 years, she spent 8 years as a clinical nurse manager and Trauma Nurse Specialist (TNS) for a Level I Trauma Center in Chicago IL. She is a Certified Emergency Nurse (CEN) and is an active member of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA). She received her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN) from the University of Texas and is an active member of the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants (AALNC). She is a board member for the Cleveland/NEO Chapter of the AALNC and is president of RN Legal Solutions, LLC serving clients nationwide.

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**GARALYNN V. TOMAS, M.ED, RN, CRNA**

has been a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) for 25 years and an RN for 30 years. Ms. Tomas is certified Basic Cardiac Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Neonatal Resuscitation and Pediatric Advanced Life Support. She is a member of AANA (American Association of Nurse Anesthetists) and serves as a member of the AANA State Government Relations Committee. For the past 24 years she has been actively involved in the Ohio State Association of Nurse Anesthetists, has held numerous office positions and currently is President-Elect. Ms. Tomas is also OSANA/AANA Key Contact for US Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH.)

In 2005 Ms. Tomas was awarded the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Federal Political Director of the Year Award. In addition to her clinical work and professional service, she is involved in many community organizations and has given many professional presentations to both community and professional organizations. Ms. Tomas is licensed in PA, OH, MI, KY and IN.

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**DEBRA WILDEN BSN, RN**

graduated from Ursuline College in 1981 with her BSN, RN. She entered the work force that same year and is still currently employed at Hillcrest Hospital, a Cleveland Clinic Facility. She started on the general med-surg floor (with a lot of gynecological, orthopedic, abdominal, and vascular cases,) then moved to the step down unit with telemetry monitoring. The hospital did away with its SDU making the whole hospital telemetry available. She currently works med-surg tele with the adult population who experience mostly cardiac and pulmonary issues. She works on the floor that handles a lot of cardiac stents, and manages open heart/thoracic surgeries post intensive care unit. Debra is certified in BLS and ACLS. She completed the Legal Nurse Consulting program, from Ohio State University Lima Campus in April 2009. She has joined both national and local chapters of the AALNC. Debra has training in the following legal areas: chart review, medical issue explanations, report and timeline writings, expert finding, research, depositions, and expert witnessing. Debra started her own consulting firm in May 2009 know as Wilden's Legal Nurse Consulting. On a personal level, Debra is involved with her family. She is also involved with her community in volunteering in the following: The Willoughby Salvation Army, Joseph's Home (a transitional home for homeless men recovering from illness,) The University Height's Symphonic Band, The Crooked River Band, and her church-The Hope Church (volunteering as needed, playing her trumpet for worship services, and leading a Bible study weekly.)

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**DIANE WINBIGLER, RN, RDCS, LNC**

20+ years of experience med-surg nursing, charge nurse in cardiology, ICU, CCU, Assistant director of Cardiac and Vascular Services, noninvasive cardiac testing.

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**GEORGETTE ZICKEFOOSE, RN**

is a registered nurse with seventeen years of clinical nursing experience. In that time she has acquired eleven years of critical care experience in which she has become skilled at caring for a variety of patients in intensive care areas, including traumas. She is currently clinically active in the medical and surgical intensive care unit at Akron General Medical Center, a level one trauma center. She is also clinically active as an IV nurse at MetroHealth Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Additionally, she has experience in high risk labor and delivery, emergency room, telemetry, and medical/surgical nursing. She has a nursing diploma from MetroHealth Medical Center School of Nursing, and attended the RN to BSN bridge program at Case Western Reserve University's Bolton School of Nursing for one year. Georgette has been a clinical faculty member at Case Western Reserve University since 1997. Georgette serves as a testifying nurse expert in the areas of IV therapy, critical care, and general nursing practice. She also acts as a consultant to attorneys on a variety of medically-related cases.

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