



# AWHONN

## CALIFORNIA

PROMOTING THE HEALTH OF  
WOMEN AND NEWBORNS

## *Greetings from your California Section Chair & Secretary/Treasurer*



**Beth Stephens-Hennessy RNC-OB, EFM, MSN, CNS**



**Kandice Duns MSN, BSN, RNC-EFM**

As we have grown accustomed to asking the all-important Covid 19 questions, following algorithms, and donning and doffing PPE, we have learned to fit these processes in with labor support, breastfeeding, assessment, documentation, communicating, and planning for our patients. Learning is never ending in our profession. Every day is different. This is what draws people to nursing and keeps nurses in the profession. What we are going through is just another learning and experience. Last year, we would have never imagined the things we would be doing in 2020.

**2021 CA Conference:** Because of the unknown of the path of Covid 19, and the National Conference being moved to Las Vegas in November, we have decided not to have a California AWHONN conference in February 2021. Instead we will offer 4 one-hour webinars on popular topics. Send top ideas/speakers to [bethhennessyn@gmail.com](mailto:bethhennessyn@gmail.com). More to come later this year.

Chapters can also have on-line meetings/webinars. Contact your Chapter Leaders with ideas and interest in on-line meetings.

One of our California AWHONN 2021 goals is to provide Implicit Bias education in our chapter meeting programs and conferences. As was included in our 1st quarter newsletter's legislative report, Senate Bill 464 requires that all staff receive implicit bias training. The bill defines it as:

"Implicit bias" is a bias in judgment or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes, including implicit prejudice and implicit stereotypes that often operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control.

"Implicit prejudice" is prejudicial negative feelings or beliefs about a group that a person holds without being aware of them.

"Implicit stereotypes" are the unconscious attributions of particular qualities to a member of a certain social group. Implicit stereotypes are influenced by experience and are based on learned associations between various qualities and social categories, including race or gender.

**SB 464 Chapter 533 (Oct. 2019) – California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act**

All perinatal units should implement an evidence based implicit bias program to cover identification of current unconscious biases and misinformation, barriers to inclusion, history of exclusion and oppression of minority communities (ethnic, religious, economic, disabled, elderly, etc.). This requires an initial course and a renewal course every 2 years. [READ HERE](#)

**What does this mean to you?** You should be preparing to complete an implicit bias education course.

**Please share** any innovative educational materials and/or company which provides a course that meets the legislative requirements.

Some groups are considering using computer based tests from Harvard's Project Implicit, a research project that offers tests and guidance free of charge. While this may not meet all requirements for SB 464, the tests would meet the requirement of Identification of previous or current unconscious biases.

[Project Implicit](#)

[A Statement from AWHONN HQ on Racism](#)

## AWHONN HQ Leadership Update: Interim CEO Kathleen Hale

Earlier this month AWHONN announced that Kathleen Hale, MS, RN, NE-BC will serve in the role of AWHONN's Interim CEO. Kathleen brings more than 40 years of nursing experience in a variety of settings, including community hospitals, tertiary medical centers, and multi-campus settings in union and non-union environments. She is also a past president of the AWHONN Board of Directors.

## Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Resources

### COVID 19 Screening/Testing Algorithm

[Management of newborns exposed to mothers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19](#)

[COVID 19 Screening/Testing Algorithm – L&D](#)

[COVID 19 Screening/Testing Algorithm – Antepartum](#)

### AWHONN

[Updates](#)

[Meeting and Event Status](#)

### ACOG (American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists)

[Topics](#)

[Assessment Algorithm](#)

### CMQCC (California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative)

[Materials & Resources](#)

## Legislative Update

**Mary Campbell Bliss RN, CNS, MS and Amy Scott MSN, WHNP-BC, RNC-OB, C-EFM  
Coordinators**

This issue we are sharing an important Federal bill as well as two CA bills for your information and action. If you have any information about any of these bills, please share with us as they move through Congress and the CA Legislature.

[Amy Scott](#), So. CA Legislative Coordinator

[Mary Campbell Bliss](#), No. CA Legis. Coordinator

### **Federal H.R. 6142 / S. 3424: The Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act of 2020**

AWHONN National has sent letters to members of Congress asking them to cosponsor this bill and to urge House and Senate leadership to make passing this bill a high priority. This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other agencies to address maternal health outcomes among minority populations. HHS must (1) establish task forces to address social determinants of health, maternal mental and behavioral health, and other topics; and (2) award grants for maternal mortality review committees, innovative maternity care models, and other purposes.

Sen. Kamala Harris is the original sponsor of this bill. Sen. Feinstein has not co-sponsored the bill. Five CA Representatives, Barragan (44th), Khanna (17th), Bass (37th), Chu (27th) and Lee (13th) are co-sponsors. Please contact Sen. Feinstein and your representative, if not already a co-sponsor, and request them to co-sponsor this important legislation.

**What does this mean to you?** For example, this legislation would:

- Grow and diversify the perinatal workforce to ensure that every mom in America receives maternity care and support from people she can trust.
- Improve data collection processes and quality measures to better understand the causes of the maternal health crisis in the United States and inform solutions to address it.
- Invest in maternal mental health care and substance use disorder treatments.
- Improve maternal health care and support for incarcerated women.
- Invest in digital tools like telehealth to improve maternal health outcomes in underserved areas.
- Promote innovative payment models to incentivize high-quality maternity care and continuity of health insurance coverage from pregnancy through labor and delivery and up to one year postpartum.

### **CA SB 1237 Justice and Equity in Maternity Care Act: Nurse-midwives: scope of practice act**

This bill expands access to perinatal care by authorizing nurse-midwives to conduct routine services without direct physician supervision. This would follow the current practice of 46 other states. [READ HERE](#)

**What does this mean to you?** California's current model of physician supervision has not shown an increase in the safety or quality of maternity care. Nurse-midwives perform 50,000 births a year in California and SB 1237 would result in more women gaining access, particularly areas in which California faces a critical obstetrician shortage and significant race-based disparities in maternal and infant.

### **CA AB 2360: Maternal and Child Telepsychiatry Consult Programs**

This bill requires health care service plans and health insurers, by January 1, 2021, to establish a telehealth consultation program that gives providers who treat children and pregnant and postpartum persons access to a psychiatrist, as specified, in order to more quickly diagnose and treat children and pregnant and postpartum persons suffering from mental illness. [READ HERE](#)

**What does this mean to you?** This bill provides support to frontline screening providers to initiate much-needed treatment for mothers and children with mental illnesses, so that California families can thrive. Maternal Mental Health Now, co-sponsors of this bill, states that this bill is critical during the pandemic, as children and mothers have become even more vulnerable to experiencing mental health issues.

## Member Spotlight

**2020 AWHONN Emerging Leader  
Germielynn (Gigi) Melendez, DNP, MSN, RN**



Let's congratulate our own Gigi Melendez, who has been chosen to complete this 9-month intensive leadership development program along with 10 other AWHONN members. [Read more here](#) about the program and Gigi's commitment to the program.

## Orange County Chapter

We are looking for leaders to start a chapter in Orange County. If you are interested please contact: [bethhennessym@gmail.com](mailto:bethhennessym@gmail.com).

AWHONN National has agreed to give Chapters the opportunity to have a Chapter Facebook page. If your chapter is interested, please [EMAIL Carmen McCormick](#) for details and to receive official authorization.



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