



## 2025 New England School Nurse Conference “School Nurses: Caring for Our Future”

### Speaker Bios as of April 25

#### **Kristine Bennette, BS**

Kristine Binette is the Community Education Manager for the Epilepsy Foundation of New England, where she utilizes her extensive experience to understand the impact of seizures on families. She has trained over 2,000 school staff and nurses in epilepsy awareness and management. Kristine's personal connection to epilepsy is through her 17-year-old daughter, Delia, who has been living with the condition since she was just one month old. A lifelong resident of Maine, Kristine currently lives in Cumberland with her husband, Jason, and their daughters, Morgan and Delia. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and is a certified elementary school teacher. After dedicating more than eight years to teaching 2nd and 3rd grades, Kristine chose to step away from her teaching career to care for her daughter. This decision, which she has never regretted, ultimately led her to a fulfilling role at the Epilepsy Foundation New England.



#### **Presentation: Seizure First Aid Training for School Nurses**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- three most common seizure types
- three ways to support students living with epilepsy
- identify the importance and application of seizure action plans
- when a seizure is a medical emergency
- when intervention with rescue medications is needed

#### **Suellen Breakey, PhD, RN, FAAN**

Suellen Breakey is Director of the and a Distinguished Teaching Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at MGH Institute of Health Professions. She teaches evidence-based practice and population health in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. Her clinical background includes

cardiac surgery, critical care, hospice care, and global health nursing. [Center for Climate Change, Climate Justice, and Health](#) and a Distinguished Teaching Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at MGH Institute of Health Professions. She teaches evidence-based practice and population health in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. Her clinical background includes cardiac surgery, critical care, hospice care, and global health nursing. For over 10 years, she was a leader with Team Heart, a nonprofit organization that provides RHD screening, cardiac surgical care and follow-up, and patient/provider education in Rwanda. Her scholarship interests include the impact of climate change on human health and well-being, bioethics, and global health ethics. Dr. Breakey is a co-author of [Global Nursing in the 21st Century](#), which was published in 2015. She co-chaired the National League for Nursing's 2022 Vision Statement on Climate Change and Health. Dr. Breakey has published widely and presented locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.



### **Presentation: Climate-related Health Risks in School Age Children**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- 3 climate-related health risks that may impact children and adolescents
- factors that place school age children at risk for climate-related health impacts
- strategies to prevent or mitigate climate-related health impacts in school age children

### **Elizabeth Cabral-Townson, B.A., M.Ed., J.D.**

Elizabeth Cabral-Townson (Beth) is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts School of Law, magna cum laude, and she currently represents school districts throughout Massachusetts in a variety of student related matters, with particular emphasis on special education issues. Beth holds a Master of Education Degree in Elementary Administration from Providence College, and she was employed as both a school administrator and a district administrator prior to becoming an attorney. Before joining Lyons Law Group, LLC, Beth was an elementary school principal for four years and a special education director for nine years. Beth holds a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary/Special Education from Providence College, and she started her career as an elementary special education teacher for seven years.



### **Presentation: Legal Issues in School Nursing**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- responsibilities as they pertain to field trips and extracurricular activities

- distinctions between FERPA and HIPAA, and the ways that these two laws intersect in daily practice
- practical information and tips to minimize liability in their daily work

## Mark Curdo, MD

Lt Col Mark Curdo is assigned to the 157th Medical Group, Detachment 1, as the flight surgeon on the CERFP emergency mass casualty response team. He is also currently serving as the director of the immunization clinic. He was named the Pediatric Advanced Life Support Course Director in 2023. He was born and raised in Lynn Massachusetts. He was commissioned in the NHANG while working in a successful private pediatric practice for 14 years. He was recruited based on his expertise in immunizations, preventative and pediatric medicine. He lives in the town of Wilmington where he has been the school physician for many years. He is married to his lovely wife Noreen with whom he has four wonderful children: AJ, Nathan, Audrey and Brian.

### **Presentation: “Name That Rash!”**

Learning Outcome - Nurses will be able to identify at least three common rashes in the pediatric population

## Christianne Eason, PhD, ATC

Christianne Eason is the President of Sport Safety & Education at the Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut. She is the director of innovATe, a project designed to help under resourced school communities Sports Safety Project. Her work focuses primarily on best practice policies for preventing sudden death in sport and access to athletic training services. Christy earned her BS in athletic training from UConn, her MS in nutrition and physical activity from James Madison University, and her PhD in Sport Management from UConn. She maintains her athletic training licensure and provides patient care annually at the Boston Marathon and Falmouth Road Race.



### **Presentation: Best Practices for the Prevention, Recognition, and Treatment of Exertional Heat Stroke and Sudden Cardiac Arrest**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- signs and symptoms of exertional heat stroke
- the importance of obtaining accurate core temperature readings in cases of suspected exertional heat stroke
- the importance of the school nurse's role in the emergency action plan and response to exertional heat stroke and sudden cardiac arrest

## **Brittany Hardiman, MSN, RN**

Brittany Hardiman has been a school nurse since 2015. She is currently the nurse leader in the Medfield Public School District and the school nurse at Medfield High School. She graduated from Boston College School of Nursing in 1995. She received her master's degree in nursing with a concentration in public health from Worcester State University in 2022. Prior to school health, she worked in pediatric hematology and oncology nursing at Children's Hospital, Boston and the Jimmy Fund Clinic. Her school nurse interests include studying chronic absenteeism at the high school level, promoting health equity in underserved populations and supporting students with mental health issues.



### **Presentation: Artificial Intelligence in the Nurses Office**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to:

- identify the basics of what AI is
- list at least two pitfalls of AI
- articulate intent to use AI in the nurse's office

## **Kate King, DNP, MS, RN, LSN**

Kate King has been a Registered Nurse for 43 years and practiced School Nursing for 24 years. She received a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Otterbein University in 2019 and is currently working as a school nurse at World Language Middle School for Columbus City Schools. She served the Columbus City School District, the largest school district in Ohio with 40,000 students, 112 school buildings and 123 school nurses, as the Health Services Administrator for 9 years. Dr. King is a strong advocate for supporting School Health Services through practice and legislation, creating Voice in School Nurses, and promoting and providing health care to children. Dr. King has clinical experience in Adolescent Mental Health and Community Health. Her professional interests focus on increasing self-efficacy in School Nurses and Mental Health for school-aged children. She currently serves as the President of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), is the immediate Past President of the Ohio School Health Services Association, a founder of the Big 8+ Health and Safety Coalition and is a past Director for NASN and the Ohio Association of School Nurses.



### **Presentation: The Power of Advocacy**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to:

- identify definitions and types of advocacy
- explore current advocacy efforts of NASN Examine principles of engaging in Advocacy
- discuss challenges and opportunities of advocacy for school nurses
- identify future plans to increase individual and collective advocacy as a school nurse

## **Kathleen Maher, MS, PHNA, RN**

Kathleen (Kate) Maher is an Advanced Public Health Nurse with 20 years of experience as a school nurse and school nurse administrator in public, private, collaborative and 766 Special Education Schools. She has 10 years of experience as a care coordinator for children with neuroinflammatory conditions including PANS/PANDAS (Pediatric Acute Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndromes) and supporting school nurses in managing the disorders in the school setting. She currently serves as the MSNO school nurse delegate on the MADPH PANS/PANDAS Advisory Council to the Commissioner and is passionate about the school nurse role in early identification, referral and in-school management for children with inflammatory neuroimmune disorders.



### **Presentation: Inflammatory Brain Disorders - PANS/PANDAS Impact and Intervention in Schools**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- the potential impact of inflammatory triggers on brain function
- combined physical and psychiatric symptoms of PANS/PANDAS
- tools for creating IHCPs
- strategies for supporting families during diagnosis and treatment

## **Safdar Medina, MD, FAAP**

Safdar Medina is a pediatrician at Tri River Health Center in Uxbridge and an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at UMass Chan Medical School. He was the Medical Director of Pediatrics at Tri River from 2020-2025. His current focus is the care of adolescents struggling with mental health and substance use disorders. He currently serves as the school physician for the Northborough/Southborough School District and the School Health Consultant for the Department of Public Health



### **Presentation: Pediatric Mental Health**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- students in the school setting with common pediatric mental health conditions: depression, anxiety, ADHD
- accommodations that can be made in the school setting for students with depression, anxiety or ADHD
- principles of medication management of these conditions

### **Presentation: Red Flags -"When to Worry"**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- conditions that need urgent/emergent referrals when children/teens present: headaches, abdominal pain, dizziness, chest pain and testicular pain

## **Tylee Schrafnagel, MS, ATC**

Tylee Schrafnagel received her bachelor's degree in Kinesiology - Athletic Training from the University of Wisconsin and her master's degree in Human Physiology - Athletic Training from Boston University. She also completed a Residency in Neurotrauma and Spine at BU before becoming the full-time athletic trainer at Chelsea Public Schools in 2017. She works closely with the nursing staff in the Chelsea district and has a passion for interprofessional collaboration and community health



### **Presentation: Orthopedic Assessment**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- an orthopedic assessment flow for use during patient encounters
- when to use Ottawa Ankle Rules for acute ankle injuries

## **Shayn Toulouse, DNP, MEd, RN, NCSN**

Shayn Toulouse has been a practicing RN since 1995 with experience in multiple areas of health care and education including primary care office management, acute care, community health, school nursing, and child and adolescent health consultation in early, primary, and secondary education settings. As the Northeast Regional School Nurse Consultant, she provides support, training, technical assistance, and consultation for all public, charter, non-public, collaborative, and other school districts in Northeast Massachusetts. Dr. Toulouse served on Massachusetts Governor Baker's Children's Vision Commission as a subject matter expert and consultant to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) in the revisions of the MDPH Children's Vision Screening Protocols that were released August 2021. Dr. Toulouse currently serves on the National Association of School Nurses Board of Directors and National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health Advisory Committee at Prevent Blindness.



### **Presentation: Experiences of a School Nursing Delegation in Cuba: A Panel Discussion**

**Panel:**

**Sandi Delack, MEd, BSN, RN, NCSN-E, FNASN**

**Jessica Gervais, MS, RN**

**Soph Hall, DNP, MEd, RN, NCSN**

**Kate King, DNP, MS, RN, LSN**

**Kathleen Schoemer, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC**

Learning Outcomes - Nurses will be able to identify:

- experiences of a group of school nurses traveling to Cuba on a cultural and educational vista
- similarities and differences between the US and Cuban education and healthcare systems