



## **THE 2026 RECIPIENTS OF THE AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION DAISY AWARDS FOR ETHICS IN NURSING PRACTICE AND LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED**

April 2026 (Anacortes, WA) – Dea (Sandra) Mahanes, DNP, APRN, CCNS, CCRN, CNRN, HEC-C, FNCS, Neuroscience Clinical Nurse Specialist at UVA Health and Mark Fucanan, BSN, RN, Clinical Development Specialist at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, were selected as the 2026 recipients of the American Nurses Association (ANA) DAISY Awards for Ethics in Nursing Practice and Leadership. The award was developed through collaboration with the DAISY Foundation and the American Nurses Association’s Center for Ethics and Human Rights and is generously sponsored this year by Careismatic Brands. The awards recognize nurse leaders and clinical nurses whose leadership, compassion and clinical practice demonstrate the importance of human values and ethics in nursing.

An Honorable Mention was also bestowed upon Dr. Lori Forbus, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CENP, Recognition Program Manager at Midland Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Dea Mahanes was selected for her ethical leadership across direct care, policy, education, and scholarship. Whether navigating the complex care of patients with neurological disorders, shaping brain death and circulatory death protocols to reduce variability and improve compliance with national standards, or mentoring nurses and interprofessional colleagues, Dr. Mahanes remains consistent in unwavering integrity, compassion, and visionary influence. During her 6-year tenure as co-chair of the UVA Health Organ Donation Committee, Dr. Mahanes collaborated with LifeNet Health to improve processes with a focus on patient dignity and family trust. She serves on the Ethics and Moral Distress Consult Service and the Medical Center Ethics Committee shaping institutional responses to complex ethical issues. Dr. Mahanes’ scholarship-including national and international neurocritical care guidelines and publications on ethics and moral distress-helps inform ethical practice on a global scale. Her work bridges bedside care and organizational leadership, ensuring that ethical principles guide decisions at every level.

Mark Fucanan was recognized for his ethical awareness and principled action impacting patient, family, and clinical teams. A specific example cited his care of a stem cell transplant patient and family conflict that may have caused misalignment with the patients’ wishes. Drawing on learnings in oncology ethics from UT MD Anderson’s Center for Clinical Ethics in Cancer Care, he was able to educate all

involved about the potential for ethical concerns, ultimately resulting in reduced emotional escalation, restored focus on the patient's goals, comfort, and dignity. The results were meaningful not only to the patient but also provided the family clarity, shared understanding, and peace. Colleagues reported increased ethical awareness, improved communications, and stronger advocacy skills from this experience. His exemplary embodiment of the code of ethics, ethical awareness and mentorship have resulted in system-level changes that protect dignity and promote a flourishing environment.

Dr. Lori Forbus received an Honorable Mention as a driving force on the Nurse Staffing Advisory Council, establishing standardized Unit-Based Councils and strengthened nurse-led teams that identify staffing, safety and ethical concerns at the unit level and escalate system wide solutions. Additionally, her work with the Texas Nurses Association has expanded nursing influence regionally, bringing best practices and ethical dialogue to the forefront.

DAISY CEO, Dr. Deb Zimmermann remarked, "These honorees exemplify the very best of nursing leadership and practice. Their commitment to ethical decision-making, patient dignity, and compassionate care strengthens teams, advances systems, and sets a standard for our profession to follow."

American Nurses Enterprise Chief Nursing Officer, Dr. Bradley Goettl, shared, "This year's honorees set a remarkable example for our entire profession. Their ethical leadership transforms not just individual patients and families, but entire care teams and systems. We could not be more proud to recognize them for their accomplishments."

Liz Stokes, Director of the American Nurses Association Center for Ethics and Human Rights added, ""We proudly congratulate Dr. Dea Mahanes and Mark Fucanan as the 2026 recipients of the ANA DAISY Awards for Ethics in Nursing Practice and Leadership, and we extend our congratulations to Dr. Lori Forbus for her Honorable Mention. These exemplary nurse leaders embody the highest ethical standards of our profession through unwavering integrity, compassionate care, and a steadfast commitment to patient dignity. Their leadership not only transforms individual lives, but also strengthens teams, advances ethical practice, and sets a powerful example for nurses everywhere."

Dr. Dea Mahanes and Mark Fucanan received their awards at the [Ethics of Caring's National Nursing Ethics Conference](#) in Los Angeles on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Throughout its thirty-year history, the Ethics of Caring remains committed to building ethical competence and inspiring the next generation of nurse ethics leaders through an annual conference.

### About The DAISY Foundation

The DAISY Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, established in memory of J. Patrick Barnes, by members of his family. Patrick died at the age of 33 in late 1999 from complications of Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), a little known but not uncommon auto-immune disease. (DAISY is an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune System.) The care Patrick and his family received from nurses while he was ill inspired the creation of The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses, an evidenced-based means of providing nurse recognition and thanking nurses for making a profound difference in the lives of their patients and patient families.

In addition to the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses, the Foundation expresses gratitude to the nursing profession internationally in over 7,900 healthcare facilities and schools of nursing with recognition programs that honor and celebrate nurses wherever they practice and throughout their careers. More information is available at <http://DAISYfoundation.org>.

### About the American Nurses Association

The American Nurses Association is the only association that represents and serves as the professional home for all registered nurses in every specialty and practice setting. We believe nurses are the heartbeat of healthcare. It is our calling to champion nurses and the causes they care about by working for improved work environments, top-notch education, smarter policies, and stronger partnerships. We advocate to amplify nurses' roles, their voices, and their value across healthcare and in society.

The American Nurses Association is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

More information available at <https://ana.org>

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