SGNA 45th Annual Course

SGNA’s 45th Annual Course is in Orlando, Florida, May 20—22. Our Northern California chapter of SGNA offers a scholarship, due March 1, 2018, to offset the costs associated with attending the conference. See page 8 for more details or visit our website at ncsgna.org.

We hope to see you there!

NCSGNA Spring Conference

Register before the deadline of March 2 to attend this valuable and relevant NCSGNA Conference. Our speakers are notable for their skills in GI and public speaking alike. Come for the continuing education credits and stay for the camaraderie with colleagues you haven’t seen for a while. Stay for the amazing facts you’ll learn and share with your patients and colleagues, stay for the vendors and new products, and stay for the new friends you’ll make and the renewed inspiration you’ll develop.

NCSGNA’s Spring Conference will be at the Marriott Walnut Creek on Saturday, March 17th.

St. Patrick’s Day ☘

Keep Your Membership Up-to-Date—SGNA wants to ensure that you have uninterrupted access to year-round member benefits. Visit the Member Center to renew your membership today!
January 18th, 2018

New Year, New Opportunities

After a long, suspenseful wait—I finally got my results…

I passed my CGRN exam! I took the exam back in October 2017, but due to the implementation of the new test plan at that time, it took longer to have the exam scored.

As a new Certified Gastroenterology Registered Nurse, I feel relieved (I definitely do not want to spend money on retaking an exam) and excited for new opportunities to contribute to our GI community. As a CGRN, there are a wealth of opportunities for professional growth. For example, a CGRN can now serve on any national SGNA and/or ABCGN committees or even on the Board of Directors for either organization. A CGRN certification helps to validate one’s knowledge and experience in the GI nursing field. Now how does one go about earning a certification?

To be eligible to sit for the CGRN exam, an RN must be “employed in clinical, supervisory, administrative, teaching/education or research capacities in an institutional or private practice setting for a minimum of two (2) years full-time, or its part-time equivalent of 4000 hours, within the past five (5) years in GI/endoscopy”. For more details, please visit www.abcgn.org for information regarding registration and test deadlines. As for me, I have worked full time in a small ambulatory surgical unit for 7 years in which I have gained my GI/Endoscopy experience. After a while, it seemed logical to take the next step and become certified.

Preparing for the exam brought a few jitters to say the least. I honestly thought that I would have a tough time with the exam because my experience in GI has consisted of basic EGDs and Colonoscopies. I have not worked in ERCP or EUS procedures; however, I have gained knowledge over time by attending NCSGNA and SGNA conferences (shameless plug, I know). I set aside about six months before the fall testing period (October 2017) to take my time and read through SGNA’s Core Curriculum. I also went online to SGNA’s website to look at practice statements and review standards regarding infection control and scope reprocessing. I took a few days off from work before the big day (October 12th 2017).

On that morning, I had my coffee, drove through a painful amount of Bay Area traffic, and took the exam in Alameda. I will say, I actually loved that testing center. It was amazingly quiet and they provide headphones to reduce any noise (it was very quiet in the test center to begin with but I can appreciate the extra help; noise tends to become amplified when I become anxious. I know, I’m weird). The computer was pretty simple to navigate and I found it helpful that I can bookmark questions as I went along so I could go back and review them if needed. My advice is to go through the exam and finish answering all the questions before going back to possibly change anything. I used my scratch paper to note which questions gave me trouble, which answer I put down as my first choice, and I also noted the second best answer choice. I found that sometimes another question further in to the test would trigger something in my mind, and it helped me clarify a previous question that I had trouble on.

Overall, I thought that the exam was not as bad as I had originally anticipated. I would not call it easy, but I felt that my work experience, along with reading the Core Curriculum helped me tremendously. I highly encourage any GI RNs out there to go and become certified.

Shaleena Kumar, MSN, RN, CGRN
I really enjoy what I do for a living and want to share that with others. One way I share with others is encouraging them to develop their full potential as a gastroenterology nurse. I’m always really excited if someone takes the initiative to further their leadership skills by advancing their education, acquiring their Clinical Nurse III, and becoming a Certified Gastroenterology Registered Nurse (CGRN).

One of my yearly goals at work is to increase staff’s awareness about the CGRN certification and to facilitate nurses becoming certified. I diligently send out emails when the ABCGN registration begins each Spring and Fall. As well, I explain the benefits of being certified, which include increased GI nursing competence and education both personally and for the unit and hospital, recognition as a leader in GI nursing, personal growth, and a financial incentive at our hospital.

I started encouraging staff to become CGRN certified over three years ago. During the CGRN registration period, when I was informing our nurses it was time to consider registering, studying and taking the certification exam, I would always have interest and excitement from the nurses, but the follow-through was nonexistent. I was willing to lead study groups and share my notes from the Core Curriculum.

This year I was almost ready to give up. Then something happened. One of my colleagues told me she applied and got the grant from the ABCGN to cover the costs on the CGRN exam. The nurse had to defer her first exam as she was starting a new family and did not have the time to review the course material. Then in the Fall she took the exam. She was extremely anxious and felt like she would need to retake it. I assured her that she was very intelligent and I believed she would undoubtedly pass.

Two months later she discovered she had indeed passed. I was so excited and thrilled for her! There was another colleague who did not tell a soul at work she was taking the exam at the same time. She texted me out of the blue to let me know she took the CGRN exam and passed. That made two nurses who obtained their CGRN at the same time from our department. I was so happy about their achievements!

I really believe it makes a difference in patient quality of care to have nurses in our department develop their professionalism, competence, skills and education. I’m proud of the people I work with when they take the initiative to better themselves as GI nurses.

I encourage anyone who has ever considered being CGRN certified to take a leap of faith, and do like what the Nike ad states: Just Do It.

Ted Miller
NCSGNA Past President
To celebrate March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, the staff and volunteers from the Concord Campus Endoscopy Unit and the Concord Campus Cancer Institute sponsored a Digestive Health Fair on March 30th.

The centerpiece of the Fair was the Colon Cancer Alliance 12x12x10 foot Inflatable Colon. Yes, that’s what I said, an Inflatable Colon! It’s an educational tool that you can walk through and see normal colon tissue as well as abnormal colon tissue such as Crohn’s Disease, Polyps, Malignant Polyps, Colon Cancer and Advanced Colon Cancer.

The inflatable colon was purchased with a grant made possible by the Concord Campus Cancer Institute. We had about 70 people attend the Health Fair. They were greeted by our staff and volunteers as well as different vendors who came to talk to the attendees about products that could help them in their fight against Colon Cancer.

The vendors included: Exact Sciences for Cologuard; Braintree for Suprep Bowel Prep Kit; Sigma-Tau for VSL #3 Probiotics; Boston Scientific with instruments used during the procedures; Colon Cancer Alliance.

The featured speakers for the evening were: Dr. Arek Keledjian, Gastroenterologist, who spoke about the importance of having your Colonoscopies. Dr. Samuel Oomen, Colorectal Surgeon, who spoke about different types of surgeries that can be done if you’re diagnosed with colon cancer; Margo Thelander, Genetic Counselor, who spoke on different genetic testing that can be done if you have a family history of cancers in your family.

It was a successful evening and we look forward to next year’s Digestive Health Fair.

Elena Gomez RN, CGRN
John Muir Endoscopy- Concord Campus
Hello everyone! I am Dawn Neblett-Cross, your Director of Membership. I thought I’d tell you a little bit about my GI environment. I have been in the GI department for over 17 years. Over the years, at the Sacramento Kaiser Permanente, we have grown out of our space. We are doing all types of procedures! We do procedures ranging from upper endoscopy and colonoscopy to EMR, ERCP, RFA (radiofrequency ablation), EUS with FNA, as well as single and double-balloon enteroscopy.

There has been a great learning curve keeping up with the latest technical advances. We have a GI suited dedicated to outpatients. We have expanded our GI unit over to the OR for some of the more difficult extended cases. We had so many cases, the OR schedule was getting crowded with GI cases. Now we have opened an OR room dedicated to GI procedures only with an Anesthesiologist or CRNA daily (M-F). We also have another OR room with cases all day, once a week. We also have occasional inpatients in other OR rooms.

At first the OR staff did not like our new partnership. They stated "GI is like a cancer— they are spreading all over the hospital". With time, OR has realized what an asset GI is to the well being of our patients. GI staff are professional and such a joy to work alongside! Now they look at us positively as co-workers.

We have a large department and we are a well oiled machine.
Treasurer Report

NCSGNA Treasurer Report

End of the Year Balances
Checking: $11,010.62
Savings: $47,214.37
Total: $58,224.99

2017
Income: $89,279.50
Expenses: $98,562.51

The year has ended and our expenses exceeded our income for another consecutive year. The cost of providing our educational conferences continues to increase faster than we can generate revenue.

Spring Conference 2017 - Napa Marriott
Income: $39,740.00
Expenses: $58,446.01

Fall Conference – South San Francisco
Income: $24,865.00
Expenses: $32,405.66

As we are looking for venues that meet our specific requirements for attendance and vendor space, our costs increase. The board is constantly working to keeping our costs down and the 2018 budget discussion will be difficult.
As I reflect on my nursing career and head towards retirement, I can’t help thinking how my involvement with SGNA, ABCGN, and the Northern CA SGNA region has been a successful part of my career. In the beginning of my career, I never attended or participated in an organization at all. I could not see the value nor want to pay dues for something I never would use.

I attended a few NCSGNA meetings here and there when I started in GI nursing. I didn’t really know anybody, but I was happy to see others like me trying to learn as much as I could to do my job. I decided to attend the national SGNA meeting for the first time because it was in San Francisco. I was overwhelmed with the different sessions and the party like atmosphere. Again, I didn’t know anybody, but the other issue was that my wife was pregnant with my first daughter. She was going in and out of the hospital because of Pre-Eclampsia issues and so I was not at the conference very much.

Technically, I attended my second national SGNA meeting because I wanted to get certified as a GI nurse. The test was only offered at the SGNA meeting in May (Paper and pencil). I remember taking the exam and I attended a few sessions, but really didn’t find a lot of sessions that I could use. Many of the topics were on procedures and techniques that I would never do in our facility. So I thought….ERCP and other things did enter into my practice.

Once I passed my CGRN exam, I attended a regional NCSGNA meeting and I had made a comment about the newsletter to one of the board members. Next thing you know….I am on the board in charge of the newsletter and scholarships. This started my career as a volunteer within an organization. I never thought that it would blossom into a life long trip in various roles both regionally and nationally.

Being involved with NCSGNA has been fun. I have played many different roles from a director to President (twice) and 22 years later…still going. From this small step of volunteering, my life has been filled with mentorship, growth, learning, leadership and friendships. My volunteering has opened up other opportunities to write, present, provide leadership, mentor, research and become President of ABCGN.

I am hoping that my story will help others decide to become involved and participate in our organization. Volunteering will take you places you never thought you could reach or even consider. We all have the same reservations of being involved: time, money, family. Like all things in life, you just need to try it. Changing an organization is important. We need to train and mentor our leaders for tomorrow and a great place to start is within the NCSGNA region.

Please consider serving on the board. Leadership needs to exist, otherwise the organization will cease to exist. NCSGNA, SGNA and ABCGN provides a great service to the GI community. Please be a part of the continued growth and future of GI.

Kendall Yoshisato
NCSGNA, Treasurer
Leadership Directory
Contact information for the NCSGNA leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>President-Elect</td>
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NCSGNA Calendar of Events

March 17, 2018
NCSGNA Spring Course
Walnut Creek Marriott

May 18-20, 2018
SGNA’s 45th Annual Course
Orlando, Florida

October 6, 2018
NCSGNA Fall Course
Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel and Spa
The NCSGNA Scholarship is open to members only. This information is for informational purposes only. Please download your application from [www.ncsgna.org](http://www.ncsgna.org). You will be asked to provide your:

Name: _____________________________
Address: ___________________________
City/State/Zip Code: _________________
E-mail: ____________________________
Home Phone: _______________________  
Employer: __________________________
Work Phone: _______________________

**What is the scholarship for?**

The goal of this scholarship is to help a regional member attend the SGNA Annual Course. One $1000.00 scholarship will be awarded to be used for registration, airfare, and hotel accommodations. Recipients must provide documentation of actual use of funds.

**What criteria are used to award the scholarship?**

- The applicant's support of SGNA, both regional and national;
- The applicant's promotion of GI nursing;
- The applicant's activities within their hospital and community;
- The applicant's participation within local, state, and federal government on behalf of nursing and health care issues;
- The applicant's participation in other nursing organizations.

**What is the application process?**

Begin by checking off any activities in which you have participated (each category is assigned a point value by the Scholarship Committee). Expand upon these activities, include other areas that you feel demonstrate your qualifications for this award, and add any additional comments. Return this entire form and your comments to the Scholarship Committee Chairman.

Eligible applicants must have been a voting licensed nurse or associate of NCSGNA for two years or more, must demonstrate support of NCSGNA's goals and objectives, must be currently employed in gastroenterology, Members of the Board of Directors and those who have received an NCSGNA Educational Course grant within the past three years are ineligible.

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**ACTIVITIES**

When did you join SGNA/NCSGNA?________

Years in GI Nursing:_____________

Academic/Professional Credentials:________

Northern California SGNA:________

President: held office

President-Elect: held office

Past President/Historian: held office

Secretary: held office

Treasurer: held office

Director of Exhibits: held office

Director of Scholarship/Publicity: held office

Director of Membership: held office

Director of Education: held office

National SGNA or ABCGN (e.g., HOD Speaker or Vice Speaker; national Board Member):

SGNA Foundation Board Member; SIG Group Coordinator; Annual Course poster presenter, speaker, committee member, monitor or moderator):

Education (e.g., staff in-services, community presentations, teaching student nurses, mentoring new employees):

Government (e.g., special projects, resolutions):

Health Fairs/Other Professional Organizations/GI Nurses Day:

Miscellaneous:

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**Research/Educational Posters**

If your poster is accepted for display at the Annual Course, you may be eligible for a monetary subsidy.

Here’s hoping you will join us at the 2018 SGNA Annual Course!!!