

South Carolina Informatics Nursing Network News



SCINN – sitting l-r: Brenda Herrmann, Kathy Williams; standing l-r: Lydia Parrish, Nahn Chang, Betsy McDowell, Gail Erlitz, Carol Scales.

The new South Carolina Nursing Informatics group, which had its first meeting at Lander University in Greenwood, SC, on April 21, 2001 was sparsely attended, but heartily received! The name, South Carolina Informatics Nursing Network or SCINN (pronounced “skin”) was proposed by Betsy McDowell, and tentatively accepted by the group, pending approval by the rest of those who indicated a desire to join. We had seven attendees, and over a dozen others responded that they would like to take part in this, but could not attend the initial meeting. Hence this newsletter to update everyone as to what has taken place so far.

Gail Erlitz, co-founder of the Central Savanna River Area – Clinical Informatics Network in Augusta, GA, shared with the group how they started their organization. Additionally, Gail offered copies of their startup documentation for us to work from.

A number of options for affiliations were presented to the group, including South Carolina Nurses’ Association, American Nursing Informatics Association (ANIA), Capitol Area Roundtable on Informatics in NursinG (CarinG), Health Information Management and Systems Society (HIMSS), CSRA-CIN, and no affiliation. Pros and cons were discussed as follows:

✦ SCNA: Kathy Williams from MUSC brought information about this.

- Pros – North Carolina Nurses’ Association sponsors an NI group, thus taking advantage of the strength of the American Nurses’ Association.
- Cons – All members of our Nursing Informatics (NI) group would have to be nurses and members of the ANA. Cost is pretty steep for this. Also, do we ever want to include other professions in our group or do we just want to be nursing?
- ✦ ANIA: Brenda has been in contact with the board of directors and president Angie Weathersby regarding starting an east coast chapter of ANIA, which is based in California. Cost of membership is \$40 a year.
 - Pros – This organization’s name has the connotation of a national group representing Nursing Informatics. Also, they have recently reorganized, sending out a nice quality newsletter, and becoming affiliated with HIMSS.
 - Cons – Logistics of being part of a group based in California might make a costly affiliation, at least for the officers. And the benefit of educational opportunities offered by this group would be limited.
- ✦ CarinG: Brenda also brought information about the possibility of some kind of affiliation with this group. Cost of membership is \$40 a year.
 - Pros – CarinG has the largest membership of any NI group in the world, with over 500 members in 45 states and 8 foreign countries. They are also probably the NI group with the greatest longevity.
 - Cons – CarinG has never had any kind of formal affiliation with another NI group, although its founder, Susan Newbold, presents the Weekend Immersion in Nursing Informatics for NI groups all over the world.
- ✦ HIMSS: Gail’s group, CSRA-CIN, is attempting to establish itself as a HIMSS chapter.
 - Pros – HIMSS is probably the premier informatics society to belong to if you work in healthcare. Their annual conference consists of about 8,000 attendees and 1,000 vendors.

- Cons – Cost is again a concern, as it is rather expensive. Additionally, there is already a new HIMSS chapter in South Carolina.
- ✦ CSRA-CIN: Gail, of course, brought information about this possibility.
 - Pros – This group is rather centrally located for most of South Carolina (Augusta, GA). Also, there is no cost for membership.
 - Cons – The group meets on Thursdays at 2:00 in the afternoon, but Gail says they might be able to flex that.
- ✦ Stand alone: We could start out from scratch just like all the other groups have, without any preconceived ideas or restrictions.
 - Pros – We get to define who we are and what we want to do.
 - Cons – We have to define who we are and what we want to do.

So with all that information, we decided to take it to everyone interested in being part of this. What do y'all think? Please respond to me at bherrmann@selfmemorial.org. One more option to consider, which we did not discuss, would be the possibility of trying to affiliate with multiple organizations. For example, we could see about getting a group discount for joining both CarinG and ANIA. Both organizations have newsletters, websites, and membership lists, which we could link to, learn from, and build on. Gail did say CSRA-CIN would be interested in collaboration with our group in order to be able to sponsor better educational opportunities.

When & Where Do We Meet?

Good question. Since Kathy had to drive four hours (from Charleston) to make this meeting, she was glad it was on a Saturday. Gail prefers Saturdays because she is busy with “kid stuff” on weeknights. What do the rest of you want? The “where” question is an issue since we are so spread out around South Carolina. So what if we spread the meetings out as well? The North Carolina group does this, meeting in four different predetermined set locations during the year, so that no one has to travel all the time. Probably four meetings a year is a good start. Sue Newbold says their group started much more aggressively, and it almost wore them out before they could establish themselves.

Are We Nursing or Are We IS?

Another good question, and the affiliation we pursue could help decide this. Or we could decide, and that would help determine which affiliations we pursue. The consensus of the people at this first meeting was that we are nurses, and the fact that some of us specialize in informatics just helps define who we are in nursing, and not vice versa. Some of you may feel differently.

Meeting topics are as diverse as our profession. Nahn Chang introduces her nursing students to NIC/NOC, and so would like to have a session on this. Lydia Parrish is president of the Mu Zeta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, and this year she is responsible for Research Day in the upstate. She would like to have breakout session(s) on Nursing Informatics – anyone interested in helping present? Betsy McDowell is an editor for the SC Nurse Newsletter. Any member of the ANA can submit articles, and possibly we could have a regular NI corner. Carol Scales is Dean of Lander University’s School of Nursing, and sees the use of computers in nursing as a potential recruiting tool for young people today who are so enamored of technology. Future agenda topics for consideration might include Personal Digital Assistants (e.g. Palm Pilots), Telehealth, NIC/NOC, and Web Design. Anyone interested in sitting for the ANCC’s certification exam in Nursing Informatics might like the idea of hosting the Weekend Immersion in Nursing Informatics, as CSRA-CIN just did.

Where Do We Go From Here?

We *will* go on from here, and you can help decide where we go. Our next meeting will be this summer. Where? Who wants to sponsor the next meeting? MUSC has a strong contingency in this group. Those who have volunteered so far include:
Nahn Chang, RN, C, MSN – Greenwood
Gail Erlitz, MSN, RN – Augusta, GA
Brenda Herrmann, RN, BSN – Greenwood
Betsy McDowell, RN, PhD, CCRN – Greenwood
Lydia Parrish, RN, MSN – Greenwood
Carol Scales, RN, PhD – (Historian) Greenwood
Kathy Williams, MSN, RN, C – Charleston

Won't you join us?