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Illinois Wesleyan University

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# Illinois Wesleyan Expands School of Nursing to Include Health Sciences

March 15, 2023

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Students seeking more pathways to the healthcare field will find opportunities at Illinois Wesleyan University, where the School of Nursing has expanded its offerings and will be renamed the School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The school is providing several new programs of study, including kinesiology and allied health, and public health. Illinois Wesleyan has added new faculty members to provide instruction in the newly named school.

Amber S. Kujath '97 was selected to serve as the new director of the school [beginning in January](#). Kujath said expanding the school to include health science programs is a tremendous opportunity for Illinois Wesleyan students.

“While some students are firmly decided on becoming a nurse or physician, there are many who are interested in healthcare but remain unsure of their ultimate health career goals,” said Kujath. “Majoring in kinesiology and allied health or public health can set students up for successful admission to graduate programs to become physical therapists, athletic trainers, occupational therapists, dietitians, audiologists, occupational therapists or for a career in public health or health services management.”



Two Illinois Wesleyan University nursing students practice giving injections on a training model.

A group of alumni and University supporters with broad experience as leaders in healthcare has been invited to serve on the School of Nursing and Health Sciences Advisory Council. Members of the council will provide perspective on the changing landscape of healthcare while identifying strategic opportunities for the University to prepare future leaders in emerging areas of medicine.

Advisory council member Cheryl Reinking '87 is the chief nursing officer at El Camino Health in Mountain View, California. After 35 years in the nursing profession, Reinking said she hopes to share support and advice with the advisory board that will result in wise decision-making for the nursing and health science programs.

Reinking said her nursing education from Illinois Wesleyan has impacted her entire career.

“I credit IWU’s comprehensive curriculum in nursing and its focus on leadership as the cornerstone of preparing me as a professional nurse and a future leader of a healthcare system,” she said.

As the pandemic and other challenges have put stress on the healthcare workforce, Reinking said it is vital to prepare future generations of healthcare professionals for the ever-changing field.

“We must examine closely the future of healthcare and those who will be providing care,” she said. “[We should] design educational programs and learning opportunities that meet the learners' needs to ensure that our future caregivers are equipped to care for a U.S. population that is aging, while creating solutions for populations where health care disparities and inequities are rampant.”

Stephen L. Ondra '80 also serves on the advisory council and is chief medical advisor of MITRE, a not-for-profit that operates federally funded research and development centers across the nation. He previously served as a senior healthcare advisor in the Obama administration at the Department of Veterans Affairs and then in the Executive Office of the President at the White House.

“It’s a great time to establish a school that is forward-looking to meet the workforce needs of today, and the rapidly changing system of the future,” said Ondra.

Every aspect of his liberal arts education at Illinois Wesleyan has laid the foundation for his career in healthcare, said Ondra, especially the desire to make meaningful contributions to society — something he believes current students are the most passionate about.

“Healthcare does not exist in isolation. It is deeply woven into the fabric of our lives, the economy, and indeed the nation,” said Ondra. “In a similar way, the School of Nursing and Health Sciences should not exist in isolation, but should be a vibrant part of the IWU campus, interacting with other aspects of the University from business and the sciences, to sociology, the arts and philosophy. Doing so will enrich both the School of Nursing and Health Sciences and every aspect of the University ecosystem.”

As President of Carle BroMenn Medical Center and Carle Eureka Hospital, Colleen Kannaday also provides insight to the current world of medicine as a member of the advisory council.

“Illinois Wesleyan produces extremely talented and well-trained individuals with exceptional clinical and critical thinking skills. The expansion of the nursing program and the broader health sciences programs will better meet the needs of students looking to pursue careers in this growing field,” said Kannaday. “As a local healthcare leader, we value our partnership with IWU and look forward to partnering on these programs so we can continue to attract and retain more students to our community and the broader region.”

## Members of the School of Nursing and Health Science Advisory Council include:

- **Trissa Babrowski** '98 - Associate Professor of Surgery, University of Chicago
- **Eric Bieber** '82 - Retired President and Chief Executive Officer, Rochester Regional Health
- **Ramona Cheek** '81 - Vice President of Nursing Transformation and Innovation - Bon Secours Mercy Health
- **William Farrar** '71 - Retired Chief Executive Officer, Ohio State University Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute
- **Colleen Kannaday** - President, Carle BroMenn Medical Center & Carle Eureka Hospital
- **Michael Luttrell** '93 - Federal Senior Executive, Global Health Affairs
- **Stephen L. Ondra** '80 - Chief Medical Advisor, MITRE
- **Therese Ngo Pasquier** '87 - Chief Executive Officer, Sound Family Medicine
- **Greg Poland** '77 - Distinguished Investigator and Director of the Vaccine Research Group, Mayo Clinic
- **Cheryl Reinking** '87 - Chief Nursing Officer, El Camino Health
- **Ann Stroink** '76 - Neurosurgeon, Carle Health
- **Carrie Nash Wieland** '01 - Physician, Mayo Clinic
- **Mark Wieland** '00 - Physician, Mayo Clinic