



## 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference Schedule and Objectives

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Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>

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7:30-  
8:00AM

Registration, Visit with Sponsors, Breakfast

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**Keynote Presentation** with *Annie Sterle, AFE Survivor and Maternal Health Advocate*

*Special Viewing: 24 Days Without You*

A powerful look into the experience and aftermath of severe obstetric trauma told through the eyes of providers, family members, and the patient herself. Raw and vulnerable, *24 Days Without You* invites reflection on clinical preparedness and the lasting influence of compassionate care.

**From Both Sides of the Bedside: A Conversation on Crisis, Care, and Connection**

*Annie Sterle, AFE Survivor and Maternal Health Advocate; Beth Elfstrand, MD; Alicia Weyrauch, RN*

8:00-  
9:45AM

Description: When an AFE upended one family's birth experience, it also left a lasting imprint on the providers who saved her life. In this conversation between a patient, her OB, and her labor nurse, the panel explores not only the day of crisis—but the long, complex aftermath. Together, they reflect on preparedness, communication, and the path to healing that continues long after discharge.

Objectives: Reflect on how to support patients and families who go through a catastrophic event like an AFE in the moment and in the weeks that follow. Discuss trauma informed approaches and language to use with patients and family following severe events. Reflect on the lived experience of a patient and apply lessons learned to clinical practice. Analyze the emotional and psychological impact of AFE on patients, families, and healthcare providers. Evaluate the importance of teamwork, communication, and preparedness in responding to rare but catastrophic obstetric emergencies. Identify means to care for oneself and one's coworkers following a severe event.

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9:45-  
10:15AM

Break, Visit with Sponsors

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**Amniotic Fluid Embolism: Essential Resources for Healthcare Providers and Families**

*Miranda Klassen, Executive Director of the AFE Foundation and Beth Elfstrand, MD*

10:15-  
11:30AM

Description: Amniotic Fluid Embolism (AFE) is a rare, unpredictable, and high-acuity obstetric emergency. This 60-minute session provides attendees with essential knowledge and practical tools for recognition, immediate response, coordination of care, and family support during an AFE event. The session will also emphasize specimen collection protocols, registry enrollment, and available support resources. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to improve clinical outcomes and patient-family experiences.

Objectives: Initiate an immediate, evidence-based clinical response to suspected Amniotic Fluid Embolism (AFE) to optimize maternal outcomes. Recall and apply the AFE Hotline process for specimen procurement and case submission to the AFE Registry and Biorepository. Identify and access resources available to support patients, families, and healthcare providers during and after an AFE event.

**Wrap-up**

*Annie Sterle, AFE Survivor and Maternal Health Advocate*

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11:30-12:30PM	Lunch, Visit with Sponsors
12:30-1:30PM	<p><b>From Chaos to Coordination: Transforming OB Emergencies Through Interdisciplinary Simulation</b> <i>Cheniqua Morales, BSN, RNC-MNN, C-EFM, C-ONQS</i></p> <p><u>Description:</u> In obstetric emergencies, teamwork and preparation can mean the difference between life and loss. This session explores how interdisciplinary simulation training equips clinical teams to act with confidence, strengthen communication, and deliver safer, more equitable maternal care when every second matters.</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u> Review the role of interdisciplinary simulation in improving communication, coordination, and decision-making during obstetric emergencies. Apply evidence-based strategies from simulation training to enhance teamwork and maternal safety in high-risk clinical scenarios. Discuss how simulation can be leveraged as a quality improvement tool to reduce disparities and strengthen equitable maternal health outcomes.</p>
1:30-2:30PM	<p><b>CODE: Team</b> <i>Kerry P Appleton, MAN, RN, NBC-HWC</i></p> <p><u>Description:</u> A CODE BLUE is called, and a healthcare team jumps into action. Additional team members arrive, a procedure is followed, and live-saving care is administered to a patient in crisis. Health care is intentionally designed around the patient. Everything a healthcare team does is for the patient. But, as a healthcare team's stress and challenge mounts, who cares for them?</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u> Recognize signs and symptoms of stress reactions. Describe the components of real-time TEAM Defusing. Verbalize the benefits of real-time TEAM Defusing. Discern differences between real-time TEAM Defusing and other debriefing formats.</p>
2:30-3:00PM	Break, Visit with Sponsors
3:00-4:00PM	<p><b>Rising Together: Healing and Posttraumatic Growth for Clinicians</b> <i>Nicole Beckmann, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC and Kathryn Mercado, DNP, APRN, NNP-BC</i></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Healthcare workers routinely navigate moments that stretch their emotional, ethical, and professional limits. In Rising Together, Drs Nicole Beckmann &amp; Kathryn Mercado will guide participants through an exploration of how traumatic clinical events shape the lives of healthcare professionals and how the "second victim" experience can evolve into a pathway for meaning, connection, and posttraumatic growth. Through narrative reflection, evidence-informed frameworks, and immediately usable strategies, this session invites clinicians to recognize their own responses to trauma and discover ways to heal, reconnect with purpose, and support one another. Participants will leave with practical tools and "take-home nuggets" they can begin using right away to strengthen personal resilience, foster healthier team dynamics, and build a culture where clinicians feel seen, supported, and empowered to grow after difficult events.</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u> Describe the emotional, cognitive, and physiological responses that clinicians may experience following rare or serious clinical events. Define the second victim phenomenon and explain its relevance to nurses and healthcare professionals across settings. Identify factors that promote healing and reduce the long-term impact of traumatic clinical experiences on individual clinicians and teams. Discuss the core components of posttraumatic growth and how these can be cultivated intentionally within healthcare environments. Apply at least three practical, evidence-informed</p>



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strategies to support personal resilience and enhance peer-to-peer support after critical events. Reflect on how shared narratives and team connection can foster collective strength and a culture that supports clinicians in “rising together” after trauma.

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4:30PM Closing, Door prizes

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### Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>

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Poster presentations are original and pertain to completed clinical education, leadership change, or evidence-based practice projects related to women's health, obstetric and/or neonatal practice, education, or administration. Each poster has specific, individualized objectives and presenters will be available for questions and discussion.

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7:30-8:00AM Registration, Breakfast, Posters

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#### **Sepsis in Obstetrics** *Martina Burn, MD*

8:00-9:00AM Description: Obstetric sepsis is a leading cause of maternal morbidity and mortality. The goal of this talk will be to summarize what is known about sepsis and to help provide guidance on management strategies in order to optimize the care of pregnant patients with sepsis.  
Objectives: Review the diagnosis of sepsis including diagnostic challenges. Review the pathophysiology of sepsis. Discuss management principles including how to minimize morbidity and mortality.

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#### **Neonatal Resuscitation & the Implementation of a Tele-NICU Program in a Multi-Hospital Organization** *Emily Bourgeois, MSN, RNC-NIC, NPD-BC*

9:00-10:00AM Description: This session will provide details regarding the successful implementation of a Tele-NICU program across multiple hospitals within our organization. We will discuss implementation strategies, timelines, education, and ongoing success of the program.  
Objectives: Describe the process for Tele-NICU rollout across multiple hospitals within our organization, including both rural and metro locations. Provide data to support ongoing use of Tele-NICU programs to reach resuscitation teams both with and without on-site NICU support. Demonstrate success of Tele-NICU program in providing resuscitative care and early transport activation to neonates who need transfer to a higher level of care.

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10:00-10:30AM Break, Posters

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#### **Cannabis Use in Pregnancy, Postpartum, and Infant Feeding** *Cresta Jones, MD*

10:30-11:30AM Description: This session will examine the data on perinatal cannabis exposure and provide evidence-informed guidance on care and counseling for pregnant and lactating patients who use cannabis.  
Objectives: Examine the evidence on cannabis exposure in pregnancy. Examine neonatal outcomes with cannabis exposure. Discuss data on cannabis exposure and lactation.

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#### **Enhancing Maternal and Fetal Health through Community-Based Utilization of "Count the Kicks"** *Sarah Coleman, MPH*

11:30-12:30PM

Description: Maternal and fetal health outcomes are pressing concerns, particularly in underserved

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communities. "Count the Kicks," an evidence-based public health program, empowers expectant mothers to track fetal movement, an essential indicator of fetal well-being. While widely recognized for its potential to reduce stillbirth rates, its impact on community-level implementation remains underexplored.

Objectives: Discuss the importance of regular and consistent monitoring of fetal movements. Emphasize the role of fetal movement monitoring in prenatal care and maternal-fetal health. Explain the steps to take if a decrease in fetal movements is detected.

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12:30-  
1:30PM

Lunch, View Posters

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### **Time for a Change – Prioritizing Nurse Wellbeing**

*Kristin Waite-Labott, BSN, RN, CARN, CPRC*

1:30-  
2:30PM

Description: This presentation by Kristin Waite-Labott, Founder & President of the Wisconsin Peer Alliance for Nurses (WisPAN), focuses on the mental health and substance use crisis within the nursing profession, using peer support as a core solution. The presentation concludes by listing numerous other resources, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988), the Healthy Nurse Health Nation program, and 12-step/recovery organizations.

Objectives: Gain an understanding of mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) within the nursing profession. Recognize a decrease in stigma by listening to a nurse's lived experience. Recognize the indicators that a nurse may be in need of support. Identify available resources for nurses facing mental health or substance use challenges.

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### **MythBusters**

*AWHONN Leadership Team Members*

2:30-  
3:30PM

Description: Healthcare is an ever-changing landscape and some days keeping up can feel impossible. Separating fact from fiction, delivering patient-focused care in a world of social media trends & influencers, and curating evidence-based practice from the plethora of available sources is a challenge for us all. This session aims to shed light on some of the persistent myths in perinatal health and send you home with hands-on information to better equip yourself and your team.

Objectives: Discuss the importance of separating evidence-based practice from "how we've always done it". Review current discrepancies in online/social media trends versus science-backed recommendations. Express ideas and resources to care for your patient and elevate your ability to help your team stay up to date.

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3:30PM

Closing, Door prizes

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