

Gerald Bryant, DNP, RN

BIO

Gerald W. Bryant, DNP, RN, is a distinguished nurse executive with over 40 years of experience in nursing practice, leadership, and healthcare operations. He currently serves as Executive Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer, and Chief Operating Officer at Lake Charles Memorial Health System in Lake Charles, Louisiana. In this key leadership role, Dr. Bryant oversees nursing and clinical operations, driving strategic initiatives to enhance patient care, safety, and workforce excellence.

Dr. Bryant holds a Doctor of Nursing Practice in Executive Leadership from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, a Master of Science in Nursing from McNeese State University, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. He has held certifications in multiple nursing specialties, including nephrology nursing, critical care nursing, and nurse executive practice.

A long-time leader and advocate in the profession, Dr. Bryant has been actively engaged with the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) for over 25 years and has served on the Board of Directors for the Louisiana Organization for Nursing Leadership (LONL) multiple times, including being a current member of the board. He is a recognized force in shaping the future of the nursing profession, having led initiatives aligned with the Future of Nursing Campaign and serving as an influential voice in both policy and education.

Dr. Bryant played a pivotal role in developing and achieving Magnet® Recognition at two healthcare facilities, underscoring his commitment to nursing excellence and shared governance. He has also served as an adjunct faculty member for Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs, mentoring the next generation of nurse leaders and contributing to the academic advancement of the profession.

Additionally, Dr. Bryant has served on a State Board of Nursing in Louisiana, where he helped shape regulatory standards and champion safe, evidence-based nursing practice. His leadership has earned accolades such as the Texas Organization of Nurse Executives (TONE) Excellence in Leadership Award and ongoing recognition as a mentor, innovator, and transformational healthcare leader. He is a 2025 nominee for the Louisiana Nurses Foundation Nurse Administrator of the Year.

Dr. Bryant remains dedicated to advancing professional nursing, driving strategic change in healthcare, and inspiring others through service, scholarship, and advocacy.

STATEMENTS

1. Provide a statement describing the biggest issue facing AONL and potential strategies to address the issue.

Nursing leadership has become increasingly less attractive to evolving nurses, yet the value of the voice of the nurse is more important than ever. Removing obstacles that disengage potential leaders, providing resources and support and advocacy is key. Strategies have to be more than education to develop these potential leaders...leadership residencies, continued advocacy for "nurses on boards", strategically positioning nurses to influence and lead health policy are key.

2. Describe your actions to increase engagement/belonging within your organization or community.

I am extremely proud of my organization's RN turnover. 2024 we were at 9% while the national average was 17% (per my HR VP). The strategies deployed to achieve this outcome have included

shared governance at the unit level as well as the system, advancing nursing education and certification, celebrating accomplishments, evidence-based staffing standards, evidence-based transition to practice program, preceptorship training, mentorship for up and coming leaders and nurses at the bedside, a strong focus on nurse wellbeing.

3. Illustrate the unique perspective or skills you would bring to the AONL Board.

I would bring 40 years of nursing practice experience, the majority of which has been in progressive leadership roles, more than 20 as clinical executive (often filling more than one role in operations and medical group executive leadership). The emotional maturity that such tenure brings along with the appreciation of the voice of others provides a strong foundation for being part of a board. Lastly, accountability when I accept a challenge is a strong point. I view serving the profession through such roles as both a duty and an honor.

4. Describe your actions to improve health outcomes through advocacy.

Development of an ambulatory quality program to really help address social determinants of health. Executive sponsorship for a peer counselor positioned in the ED to partner with identified substance abuse patients has led to a 50% reduction in mortality and program being promulgated across the state.

Nursing leadership development has been a hallmark of my professional contributions. I have successfully identified and supported the development of multiple nurse leaders, 7 of whom have advanced from unit managers to Chief Nursing Officers in their own right. The AONL Nurse Executive competencies provide the foundation for this along with other AONL programs including the fellowship.