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ANAC President’s Message – Carol Dawson-Rose

After many years of being an active member of ANAC and the Golden Gate Chapter, I am now stepping into the ANAC President ruby slippers. I am excited and a bit overwhelmed by thinking of those who have come before me. One of the people in whose footsteps I will be following is long-time member Patrick Kenny, who died earlier this year. At our meeting in Denver last year, the local ANAC chapter organized a wonderful celebration of life event at which we all shared small stones with words on them. The stone that another ANAC member shared with me said GRACE, and the man who handed it to me was Patrick Kenny. He said to me that he knew I would bring grace to the ANAC presidency. I hope so Patrick, I hope so.

We are back together now, and I want to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to ANAC’s 32nd annual conference in Portland, Oregon. For me, the annual conference is a way to reconnect with my colleagues, to remind myself of the focus and impact of our collective work, and to renew my commitment to HIV research, prevention, and our long road to excellent clinical care for those affected by HIV and the comorbidities that travel with it. The conference presentations provide a wealth of information on such a broad array of topics that I am always in awe of all the choices. But at heart, I most enjoy attending the poster sessions where I am able to interact with people one-on-one, learn more, and talk to the next generation of scholars and clinicians. I am reminded that making connections is one of the most important parts of nursing care. Oh, and the gala!

In my two years as President-elect, I have been humbled by the commitment of both ANAC members and staff, in the same way that I have been humbled over the years by the commitment of nurses who care and have cared for people living with and affected by HIV in the United States and the world beyond our borders. As nurses responding to HIV, we are not alone. Our colleagues from so many disciplines have been right alongside of us. The dedication of this community is immeasurable, and I am proud to be part of it.

As I transition into this new role, our remarkable immediate past-President Jeffrey Kwong moves out of his role as president of the Board. I cannot fully express the gratitude I have for Jeff and what he has focused on during his presidency—member listening sessions; welcoming and integrating our first non-nurse, David Vance, to the board; and setting the tone at the top levels of the organization. Based on Jeff's commitment, I know he will remain an active and involved member of ANAC. At the same time, we welcome Melanie Steilen as ANAC President-elect. Melanie is a member of the greater New York Chapter of ANAC, has served on the national ANAC Board of Directors, and has been an active member of the Global Health Committee. I am looking forward to working with her closely over the coming years.

As we move forward into the next calendar year, my attention will be on ensuring that ANAC continues to run smoothly and to serve its members most effectively, both through local chapters and through national-level programs. This includes attending to our organization's strategic plan and its five goals: (a) Leadership in all aspects of HIV prevention, care and treatment, research, and policy; (b) Engagement of members and chapters and increasing diversity; (c) Influence on nursing policy for the promotion of health, welfare, and rights of individuals living
with and at risk for HIV and comorbidities; (d) Global engagement to develop, foster, and enhance HIV nursing capacity and leadership globally; and (e) Advancement of HIV nursing practice and research. These goals go to the heart of who we all are as nurses in AIDS care, regardless of what our specific focus is, and I am committed to moving these efforts forward. I initially became a member of the national ANAC board because I thought ANAC members from California were underrepresented in our association leadership. Because of this, one of my personal priorities is to increase opportunities for distinct and underrepresented opinions and perspectives in our organization and its leadership. Join me!

Also, coming up in 2020 is the 23rd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2020). This year's theme is RESILIENCE, aptly reflecting the strength that people living with HIV, their loved ones, clinicians, and caregivers have shown over the many decades of this disease. ANAC is working to increase the presence and visibility of nursing at the conference, and Carole Treston will be working to that end as a member of the AIDS 2020 Conference Coordinating Committee.

I hope to see many of you at this year's ANAC conference and to hear directly from you throughout the year about ways in which ANAC and I can best serve you. Please feel free to reach out to me—I look forward to hearing from you.