

ANI Innovator Profile

Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS)

Interview with Gregory Alexander PhD, RN, FAAN
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www.mnrs.org

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The Alliance for Nursing Informatics (ANI) is a collaboration of organizations that represents more than 5,000 nurse informaticists and brings together 30 distinct nursing informatics groups globally.

Mission: To advance NI leadership, practice, education, policy and research through a unified voice of nursing informatics organizations

Vision: Transform health and health care through nursing informatics and innovation

ANI Innovator Profiles Program

The purpose of this program is to capture an ANI Innovator Profile for each ANI member organization to increase awareness and visibility, and to describe their contribution towards a unified voice for nursing informatics.

ANI Innovator Profile – MNRS

Since 1975, the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) has been transforming how nursing is practiced. We do this two ways: by promoting, disseminating, and using nursing research and by encouraging, supporting, and connecting the next generation of nurse scientists. Today, with more than 1,300 members, MNRS is one of the largest and most influential nursing research organizations in the country, serving individuals in a 13-state Midwest region.

MNRS Mission: MNRS exists as a network of discovery that advances science, transforms practices and enhances careers.

MNRS Vision: MNRS advances science to improve health.

MNRS Strategic Plan:

- Advance science
- Transform practices
- Enhance careers

MNRS Interview with Gregory Alexander:

1. What is the primary mission of MNRS?

MNRS exists as a network of discovery, and within that network of discovery it strives to advance science, transform practice and enhance careers. Those three areas are our emphasis areas, where we push people to share research and science that is cutting edge, that transforms practice, and that enhances nursing as a profession.

2. How many members do you currently have?

MNRS has approximately 1300 members and about 10% of that membership is part of the MNRS Health Policy/Health Systems in Informatics Research Interest Group. There are different active MNRS groups – MNRS as a whole, a regional group composed of 13 different states in the Midwest and then about 10% of those individuals that are within that Midwest region are also part of this Health Policy/Health Systems in Informatics Research Interest Group. The Interest Group is where I bring back input from ANI and also provide input for initiatives.

3. What projects is MNRS working on to advance informatics and innovation in healthcare?

Because we have such a fairly large contingent of states within the Midwest, it is important to address connectivity between those individuals. Members that are part of the Research Interest group and part of MNRS support communication about advances in the science that are occurring and support communication around people and careers, enabling good professional support. MNRS has been in the process of a reorganization to develop better communication between the Research Interest group members through a new web portal on the MNRS web site. That will allow us better connectivity, which will help within our region to establish a more solid base of people that can work together on a consistent basis.

Recently our group has submitted a symposium for this upcoming conference, we are constantly thinking about new ideas for cutting edge proposals and one of those deals with personal health records (PHR). The title of the symposia is *“The Contribution of Health Information Technology in Improving Patient Care and Delivering Outcomes.”* This symposia was developed in direct response to the ANI pledge to support consumer health and use of PHRs, so we will be able to provide cutting edge research and meet some of the initiatives of ANI at the same time. Additionally, each year we recognize our members through our competitiveness submission process for Informatics research. This award recognizes excellence in innovation and research related to Informatics. I am a recipient of that award and Dr. Dana Shannon from the University of Michigan received the 2012 Nursing Informatics research award for her advances in Informatics and her innovations. We encourage applications each year for this award and it’s a nice way for people to be recognized for their work.

Finally, another way I support innovation is being on the editorial board of our MNRS’s official journal, The Western Journal of Nursing Research, so I can impact what source of publications are presented within the journal. I am also a co-editor with Dr. Wakefield for the Journal of Gerontological Nursing and we have a special section called Technology Innovations and within that journal we publish quarterly manuscripts about Informatics that impacts the care of

geriatrics patients and their caregivers, which is an area of emphasis for my research. I am always looking for people to submit to the technology and innovations sections and we are constantly trying to put things in the Journal that are cutting edge about the care of elderly people.

4. What value do you see in MNRS being an ANI member?

I have always seen value in ANI since the beginning and I have kept up with it since that time. As a member of the Governing Directors, that position enables me to partake in developing comments on policy issues that arise frequently about Informatics issues, especially in relations to ARA and other legislation that is currently out there that come about on a routine basis. Furthermore, I think it allows the membership of ANI to submit great contributions to ANI connections, which is in the Computer Informatics Journal. The Journal also publishes short editorials about Informatics topics and through those editorials we are able to make statement about the importance of Informatics. I encourage members of MNRS to provide input to those short editorials, I have written several of those including some with you Joyce, so it's been a privilege to have that opportunity and anytime they come about I encourage the membership to participate. With the new web site I believe we will be able to do that with greater impact. ANI initiatives have been important for our membership to keep abreast of the current informatics issues. We have people within our organization that are national leaders but ANI has a unique mission as it's designed to advance Nursing Informatics in education and policy through a unified voice. MNRS has a similar mission except our focus is more heavily weighted on research, but certainly policy and education is extremely important to our membership. But I think ANI provided an excellent vehicle for MNRS members to become engaged in national policy initiatives where they may not otherwise because ANI has unique structure.

5. In what way(s) is MNRS supporting ANI Initiatives e.g. the [ANI Consumer Pledge](#), ANI Comments & Testimony, the Emerging Leader Program, etc?

Last year we supported a nomination to the Emerging Leader program which is an excellent program for new leaders in Informatics. It's an excellent way provide opportunities for people to be recognized, get ideas about new innovations in Informatics, and to become engaged in policy and thing that really matter to our nursing profession. That process is very competitive and there were many excellent applications that were received, that program is really taking off. I will continue to support the emerging leader process and encourage people at MNRS to apply and I will support their applications and try to be a mentor to them. I have had so many great mentors over the years and so many of them are ANI members or participated in ANI and organizations within ANI, so it's one way I feel I can give back to my profession and the success that I've had. It's an honor to be around these really innovative people and to connect with them.

6. What is MNRS's vision for the future of nursing informatics?

Our organization wants to create and support and facilitate better information exchange and connectivity between people that have an interest in Nursing Informatics. We support programs within our region, whether they are academic or other types of professional programs, to discuss issues and provide resources related to Nursing Informatics for our MNRS members and

also to other org that we interface with. I know that many of our members have Sigma Theta Tau chapters and so we do have a lot of interface with other organizations ourselves. But they are not as established as ANI so it allows us to meet our mission when we can interface with other organizations and ANI's set-up allows us to do that.

We also see that dissemination and the use of Nursing Informatics resources is important. Because if you create lots of good technology and innovative tools, but you don't use it and its not shown to be effective, then it doesn't do people or patients any good. So we want to show the use of Nursing Informatics research within and beyond the MNRS community and globally and show that it has implication for education and policy areas. Those are really the objectives of MNRS and our Research Interest group. Our mission is to provide an avenue for people within our region to socialize and recognize each other and help support the development of emerging and seasoned leaders within one of nursing specialties and that is Nursing Informatics.

Biography for Greg Alexander

Greg has been recognized for his scientific contributions as an inducted Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing (2011). He has a broad background in human factors, informatics, patient safety and quality improvement. Recently, Greg completed specialized graduate education in evaluating Information Systems as well as a certificate in Human Computer Interaction. He has played a large role in the development of Meaningful Use standards for information systems, which are being deployed now by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. Greg was a Co-Chair of the Care Management and Health Records Technical Committee under the Health Information Technology Standards Panel which recommended initial drafts of Meaningful Use standards. He represents ANI in the Long Term and Post-Acute Care (LTPAC) Collaborative which plays an important role in monitoring health IT policy initiatives, providing comments for current health IT meaningful use initiatives, and disseminating important roadmap documents designed to provide policy makers information about current health IT developments in the LTPAC community.

Greg received a BS in Biology in 1990 and a BS in Nursing in 1997 from SW Missouri State University, an MHA in Health Management & Informatics in 1999, a PhD in Health Care Systems in 2005, and an MS in Information Science & Technology in 2009 from the University of Missouri. He is currently an Associate Professor at Sinclair School of Nursing at the University of Missouri. He is the MNRS Representative to ANI's Governing Directors and also serves in an elected position on the ANI Steering Committee.

Recorded: October 4, 2012

For full interview recording you can [click here](#) or visit <http://www.allianceni.org/members.asp>