

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

International Commission on Health Care Certification
Certificate in Life Care Planning (CLCP)

American Hospital Association, Certified Professional in
Healthcare Risk Management (CPHRM)

Phoenix School of Law, Arizona
Juris Doctor

Ohio University, Ohio
Bachelor of Specialized Studies-Healthcare Administration

Moorpark College, California
Associate Degree in Nursing

BAR License

Arizona #027677 (Active Status)

Nursing License

Arizona #096824 (Active Status)

California #495552 (Inactive Status)



PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MACKENZIE LIFE CARE PLANNING, Tyler, TX

Life Care Planner / Vocational Consultant (October 2024 – present)

- Provide life care planning expert analysis/reports/testimony
- Provide life care planning services/testimony

DENISE ATWOOD, PLLC, Scottsdale, AZ

Owner/Manager (January 2011 - present)

- Care Plans for Life, LLC (2024)
- Sheston Law Group, PLLC, Of Counsel, represents providers before licensing boards, appellate brief writer, and administrative hearing work (since 2023)
- Ethics Evaluator for the Arizona State Board of Nursing (since 2016)
- Created and implemented a Framework for Ethical Decision Making, a tool to evaluate whether a nurse has the capability to practice ethically in the workplace
- Online compliance blogger for YouCompli.com and education content writer Coverys/Med-IQ (2020-2023)

DISTRICT MEDICAL GROUP

Chief Risk Officer and Associate General Counsel (July 2018-April 2024)

- Developed high-performing, cross-trained teams who meet or exceed organization goals
- Implemented the Johns Hopkins Rise Program for peer-to-peer support
- Developed and implemented an Enterprise Risk Management program
- Created and implemented all Risk Management and Associate General Counsel policies and procedures
- Integrated incidents, potential, and actual claims into electronic system to better evaluate claims trends
- Implemented an electronic system to track incidents, inquiries, legal matters, and risk education
- Provided >500 in-house risk education services based on risk trends and staff requests
- Developed and fostered a culture of trust, which resulted in a 30% increase in risk incident reporting
- Reassigning workloads for 3 team members allowed the department to develop Workers' Compensation, Employee Health, Infection Control, and return-to-work programs at no added cost to the company
- Represented providers in professional board matters with no substantiated claims

DISTRICT MEDICAL GROUP INSURANCE COMPANY (DMGIC)

Vice President (July 2018-April 2024)

- Developed a collaborative team comprised of risk management, an insurance broker, and a third-party administrator
- Evaluated and timely purchased all lines of insurance under the captive or with commercial policies
- Utilized electronic CHaRT reports to evaluate loss runs and make sound decisions to improve financial performance
- Educated all new employees on the value and impact of having a captive insurance company
- Managed claims and protected assets by outperforming the actuary's analysis of losses for 5 straight years

WOLTERS KLUWER LEGAL & REGULATORY

- Freelance author and contributor on healthcare, healthcare reform, medical-legal, and compliance topics (January 2000 to October 2023)

SUN LIFE FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS, Multiple Cities in Arizona

Director Quality & Risk Management (December 2016-July 2018)

- Collaborated with U.S. Department of Justice on litigated matters under Federal Torts Claims Act (FTCA) coverage
- Collaborated with insurance carriers to identify gaps in care and improve quality metrics
- Developed and implemented Enterprise Risk Management and Quality Improvement programs
- Created and implemented Emergency Operations Plan, Business Continuity Plan, and Risk and Quality policies and procedures as required by HRSA for a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Implemented an electronic system to track incidents, inquiries, and risk education to identify trends and implement mitigation strategies.
- Developed data mapping workflow for AZARA (data warehouse) and eCW (electronic medical record)

MUTUAL INSURANCE OF ARIZONA, Phoenix, AZ

Senior Risk Management Consultant (April 2016-December 2016)

- Physician-owned and directed mutual insurance company that provides medical professional liability insurance in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah

MIHS (Maricopa Integrated Health System) now VALLEYWISE HEALTH, Phoenix, AZ

Vice President of Hospital Operations (Oct. 2012-Nov. 2015)

- Co-Chair of the Executive Compliance Committee
- Maintained pharmacy operations in budget and in compliance with HRSA 340B program
- Maintained overtime at less than 1.2% across operations departments without using contract staff
- Aligned a multidisciplinary team (cardiologists, radiologists, pulmonologists, and trauma surgeons) to develop and grow cardio-vascular-pulmonary (CVP) services in a financially challenging environment
- Developed return to work program with Workers Compensation Supervisor, allowing employees to return to work sooner, earning an insurance refund of \$725,000 in year one

Director, Provider Contracting & Compliance and Administrator-on-call (Dec. 2004-April 2012)

- Facilitated the development and implementation of a Medical Legal Partnership with Arizona State University and U-Haul
- Oversaw compliance for 11 HRSA/FQHC-LA clinics, adding \$18 million/year to the health system budget
- Ensured compliance and drafted contract amendments for a \$100,000,000/year physician services agreement

- Ensured compliance with HRSA FQHC/NHSC (National Health Services Corps) program
- Collaborated with general counsel with research, drafting contracts, contract review, statutory review, and legal analysis; writing legal letters and memoranda
- Collaborated with the compliance department for research, exclusion checking, and healthcare compliance with Stark laws, Anti-Kickback Statute, HIPAA, HITECH, Medicare Regulations, & Accreditation Standards with no violations
- Successfully coached, trained, and mentored 6 new nurse managers

Nurse Manager, The Arizona Burn Center, Trauma Services, and Emergency Services

- Managed and consistently met monthly budgets of more than \$500,000/month
- Consistently met or exceeded quality assurance/performance improvement plan objectives and metric benchmarks
- Ensured the hospital passed the American College of Surgeons (ACS) verification for trauma with no deficiencies

Trauma Coordinator

- Ensured the hospital passed the American College of Surgeons (ACS) verification for trauma with no deficiencies

ARIZONA HEART HOSPITAL (Vanguard then Abrazo), Phoenix, AZ

Director, Quality and Risk Management (April 2012-September 2012)

- Risk Management Program including filing first notice of claim, responding to subpoenas, assessing and mitigating risks, addressing patient complaints, and evaluating deviations in accepted standards of practice or care
- Quality Program, including implementing strategies to ensure core measure and cardiac database metrics are attained and sustained and implementing best practices to ensure compliance with regulatory and state licensing agencies

AFFILIATIONS & AWARDS

American Association of Nurse Life Care Planners (AANLCP), 2024-present

International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP), 2024-present

American Society for Healthcare Risk Management (ASHRM), 2016-present

Arizona Society Health Care Attorneys member, 2016-present

Arizona Ethics & Compliance Commission participant, 2017-2022

AZ Wellbeing Commons – Public Health Law, Policy and Equity participant, 2017-2022

PSL Family Advocacy Pro Bono Project and ADR Club, Member 2006-2008, President 2008

American Nurses Association and Arizona Nurses Association, 2016-2019

Phoenix School of Law, Law Review, Staff Editor; Articles Editor, 2006-2009

PUBLICATIONS

- Documentation: Be your own best witness, co-author Kelly Pullaro, *Arizona Nurse Journal*, Jan. 2025
- Life care planning and the risk connection, *Journal of Life Care Planning*, Jan. 2025, *pending peer review*.
- 2022 Complete Healthcare Compliance Manual, HCCA, *What Are Federal and State False Claims Acts in Relation to Whistleblowers?*
- Arizona State Board of Nursing decision-tree regarding *Misinformation or Disinformation Related to Nurse Complaints*, April 2022.
- Compliance as a quality challenge: Working together to improve the organization. Co-author Nathan Ward, *Compliance Today*, September 2020.
- Hospital Checklist: CMS, Joint Commission and DNV Standards, freelance contributor, 2000-2019.
- Learning compliance and risk through the movies, Co-author Isabella Porter, *Compliance Today*, July 2019
- It's FATE – Navigating and Leading Change Ethically, Co-author Chris Atwood, *Ethikos*, Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics, March 2019.
- Ethical leadership principles: Described with four A's, Co-author Chris Atwood, *Ethikos*, Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics, July/August 2018.
- Can companies (and politicians) learn something about ethical culture from Hollywood? Co-author Kaitlynn Wells, *Ethikos*, Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics, May/June 2018.
- Ethical leadership principles: A foundation of organizational culture, *Ethikos*, Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics, March/April 2018.
- Impact of State False Claims Acts, *Compliance Today*, March 2018.
- The role of ethics in healthcare, *MICA Physician Risk Advisor*, December 2017.
- Case history: Refusal of care, *MICA Physician Risk Advisor*, December 2017.
- Consider these strategies before terminating the physician-patient relationship, *MGMA Connection*, April 2017.
- Strategies for Success in Purchasing Medical Technology, co-authors Pete Larose and Randy Uttley, *AAMI Biomedical Instrumentation & Technology*, March/April 2015.
- A Primer on Drug Shortages, *AHLA Connections*, co-author Ambrosia Johnson, May 2013.
- Organ Donor Considerations, *Nursing Management*, co-authors Randy Uttley and Debra Ortega, June 2012.
- Law & Nursing, Chapter 5: Professional Liability Insurance, TAANA, April 2012.
- Help! Strategies for preventing information overload, *Nursing Management*, July 2011.
- Flag e-mail, save time, *MGMA's Connexion*, May/ June 2011.
- Compliance with Stark Phase III: algorithm and outline, *HCCA's Compliance Today*, May 2011.
- Ambulance Replenishing: Federal Guideline Compliance, *HCCA's Compliance Today*, March 2011.
- A Primer in Attorney-Client Privilege, *JONA's Healthcare Law, Ethics and Regulation*, January-March 2011.

Riding Helmetless: Personal Freedom or Societal Burden, *Phoenix Law Review*, Volume 1, Number 1, 2008.

Impact of Medical Apology Statutes and Policies, *Journal of Nursing Law*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 2008. To Hold Her Hand: Family Presence During Patient Resuscitation, *JONA's Healthcare, Law, Ethics, and Regulation*, Volume 10, Number 1, 2008.

An Algorithm for Basic Electrocardiogram Interpretation, *AORN Journal*, November 2005.

Hospital Perinatal Compliance Manual 2003 Edition, Aspen Publishers, Inc., Contributor.

EMTALA Regs: You May be Surprised at Proposed Changes, *ED Management*, Vol. 13, No. 7, July 2003.

EMTALA Q&A, *ED Management*, Volume 15, Number 1, January 2003.

Continuing Education Reviewer, American Health Consultants-Advanced EMTALA, 2001.

Consultant and education reviewer, Compliance Monitor, Opus Communications/HCPPro 2001.

A Practical Approach to EMTALA, *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, August 2001.

Now We're Talkin', Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul, 2001.

Resources for Thorough Discovery in Health Care Cases, *The Trial Lawyer*, Nov/Dec 2000.

Use an Algorithm to Avoid EMTALA Violations, *ED Management*, Volume 12, Number 11, Nov. 2000.

Solving the Puzzle of EMTALA, *Nursing Spectrum*, 5 print editions and online July/August 2000.

EMTALA, How Does it Apply to You, *Journal of Nursing Law*, August 2000.

PRESENTATIONS

American Association Nurse Life Care Planners (AANLCP), *Home Health Services: How to Assess and Defend Level of Need*, pending presentation April 2025.

Arizona Assisted Living Federation of America (ALFA), *Compliance and Risk: How to Protect Your License*, February 2025.

Legal and Risk Education, Aegis Global Group, Mesa, AZ, August 2024.

Risk Education – Psychiatry Fellows Grand Rounds, Creighton University virtual, October 2023.

Active Shooter/Armed Intruder: Risk Mitigation Planning Discussion, AzSHRM virtual July 2023.

Information law firms collect and store: What to do in the event of a cyber breach? Esquire CLE (recorded), May 2023.

So you are sued, now what? Creighton University OB-GYN Residents, January 2023.

Consent Issues with Minors, AzSHA (virtual presentation), June 2022.

Risk mitigation enterprise risk management during a pandemic, ASHRM (virtual poster), October 2020.

Consent issues with minors, HCCA Conference (Seattle virtual), June 2020.

Learning compliance and risk through the movies, HCCA Conference Hawaii, October 2019.

Probate, conservatorship & HIPAA challenges, Wealth Counsel Arizona Forum, October 2019. Medical-Legal documentation (run sheets), Daisy Mountain Fire Department, April 2017. Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation (GPCF), AZ Compliance Risk Talent, Participant, <http://phoenixchamberfoundation.com/compliance-risk-management/career-resources/>. Medical-Legal documentation (run sheets), Tempe Fire Department, November 2017. Medical-Legal documentation (run sheets), City of Maricopa Fire Department, October & November 2017. Physician(s) and Clinical Research in Private Practice...Should I Care? HCCA Conference Phoenix, October 17, 2017. Risk management HRSA/FQHC presentation, Wesley Community Clinic, August 2017. 23rd Annual Region IX Leadership Council, Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers (AACHC), Ethics and compliance: I have to do what?, May 2017. Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association, Medical Ethics, Conference Speaker, November 2016. AzHIMA, Documentation and Discovery – A Legal Perspective, Conference Speaker, October 2016. Dignity Health, Joint OB-GYN residency training program, Legal Basics for Medical Students and Residents, Sept. 2016. Arizona State Society of Radiologic Technologists, Scope of Practice, Conference Speaker, April 2016. MIHS, Presenter, Jurors I present to you...poor legal documentation, February 2016. Arizona Summit Law School, Presenter, Professional Skills, February 2016. Arizona Pharmacy Association, Board of Pharmacy and Drug Shortages, Conference Speaker, February 2016. MIHS, What Defines a Leader at the Medical Imaging Leadership seminar, October 2013.

PROFESSOR & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

State Bar of Arizona, Member Assistance Program (MAP), *Spring orientation pending*, 2025
Grand Canyon University, Adjunct Professor, Ethical and Legal Issues in Business, 2024
Alaga Hospice, Prescott, Board Member, 2023-present
Arizonans for Children, Phoenix, foster care mentor and tutor, 2023-2024
ASHRM Ethics Committee Member (2-year term), 2022-2024
Arizona Risk Management Collaborative (ARMC) co-creator, 2021-2024
Christian Family Care, Phoenix, foster care mentor program created life skills modules, 2020-2022
University of Phoenix, School of Health Services Administration, Advisory Council Member, 2015-2018
Ottawa University, Adjunct Professor, OAD/40654 Health Care Law and Ethics and BUS/7303, Legal, Ethical, and Political Aspects of Health Management synchronous and asynchronous, 2014-2018



Denise Atwood, RN, JD, CPHRM, CLCP

A.T. Still University, Annual Guest Lecturer, Medical Ethics (case scenarios), 2015-2018
University of Phoenix, Adjunct Professor (online), HCS/545 Health Law and Ethics, 2015-2017
Arizona Summit Law School/A.T. Still University, Health Care Law Overview, Business and
Legal Skills for Healthcare Professionals Certificate Program, Adjunct Professor
(certificate course), 2015
MIHS, Leadership Development Institute, Instructor (two sessions per quarter), 2013-2014
Strategic Planning Advisory Commission, Town of Fountain Hills, 2011-2013

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