

Influential Women Profiles Kelly Preston, MSN, RN, RNC-MNN, RNC-IAP, RNC-OB, CNE: Advanced Educator At UPMC Washington

WASHINGTON, PA, UNITED STATES, August 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Combining Clinical Expertise, Academic Leadership, and Compassionate Education to Help Prepare the Next Generation of Nurses

Washington, Pennsylvania — Kelly Preston, MSN, RN, RNC-MNN, RNC-IAP, RNC-OB, GERO-BC, CBC, CNE, is an Advanced Educator at UPMC Washington, bringing more than 18 years of diverse nursing experience and over four years of academic leadership to her work in nursing education and maternal-newborn care. Through a career spanning clinical practice, education, leadership, advocacy, and community service, Preston has developed a professional philosophy centered on compassion, integrity, accountability, lifelong learning, and a genuine belief in the potential of others.



In her current role, Preston collaborates with faculty on continuing education, curriculum coordination, and interprofessional collaboration across multiple campuses. Her work supports excellence in nursing education and clinical preparation while helping students and colleagues navigate an increasingly complex healthcare environment. She is also actively involved in institutional committees focused on executive leadership, simulation, curriculum development, and evidence-based practice, where she contributes to innovation, quality improvement, and student success.

Preston's professional expertise is particularly strong in maternal-newborn nursing and nursing education, complemented by experience in medical-surgical nursing, pediatrics, mental health, and geriatric care. Her broad clinical background allows her to approach education from multiple

perspectives and provide learners with a well-rounded understanding of patient care. In addition to her existing professional credentials, Preston holds the CBC certification, further reflecting her commitment to professional growth and specialized nursing knowledge.

Building a Career Through Clinical Practice, Education, and Lifelong Learning

Preston's nursing journey began shortly after high school when she entered a diploma nursing program. Her early career provided her with valuable hands-on experience in medical-surgical nursing and long-term care, while also giving her opportunities to assume leadership responsibilities. She served as a charge nurse and RN assessment coordinator, including work involving Medicare and Medicaid systems.

These early experiences helped shape her understanding of the many dimensions of nursing. Beyond clinical skills, Preston learned the importance of communication, advocacy, teamwork, accountability, and recognizing the individual needs of patients and families. Those lessons would eventually influence her decision to pursue nursing education.

Her transition into education was driven by a longstanding passion for mentorship and lifelong learning. Preston understood that one of the most meaningful ways to contribute to the profession was to help prepare future nurses. She went on to earn a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Waynesburg University, strengthening her expertise in educational theory, teaching, curriculum development, and student support.

She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice at Capella University. Through her doctoral studies, Preston is further developing her commitment to quality improvement, healthcare policy advocacy, and advancing nursing leadership. Her continued education reflects a personal philosophy that nurses and educators should never stop learning.

A Belief in People at the Center of Her Work

For Preston, professional success is rooted in something more fundamental than titles or credentials: a genuine belief in people—their potential, resilience, and ability to create meaningful change.

She has built her career around a strong work ethic and a determination not to give up on others. Supported and shaped by her family, Preston approaches nursing education with both professionalism and heart. She believes that focusing on what lies ahead is essential, particularly in a profession where educators have an opportunity to influence both students and the future of patient care.

At the center of her philosophy is a belief in humanity. Preston recognizes that nursing is ultimately about caring for individuals and for people as a whole. She believes that seeing others as worthy of understanding and capable of growth makes it easier to listen, remain curious,

collaborate, and approach different experiences without judgment.

That philosophy is especially important in healthcare and education, where trust is fundamental. Preston believes that when people trust that others are acting in good faith, they are more likely to remain engaged in improvement, advocacy, collaboration, and innovation. Her belief in human connection helps create an environment of belonging and shared purpose—qualities she strives to bring to her relationships with students, colleagues, patients, and communities.

Following Advice That Turned Passion Into Purpose

One of the most influential pieces of career advice Preston received came from her mother, who encouraged her to make sure she genuinely loved whatever career she chose. Preston took those words to heart.

She knew early in life that caring for others was important to her, while teaching was another passion that naturally attracted her. Although she was initially uncertain how the two interests would come together, she remained committed to both. Ultimately, nursing education provided the opportunity to unite them.

Today, Preston is grateful that her career has allowed nursing and teaching to become complementary parts of her professional identity. She genuinely loves her work and believes she has found a path that allows her to make a meaningful difference. Her mother's advice continues to serve as a reminder to approach her career with passion, purpose, and heart.

Mentorship and Advocacy for the Next Generation

As an educator and mentor, Preston is particularly passionate about encouraging young women entering nursing and nursing education. Her advice is straightforward: find mentors who lift you up.

She encourages emerging nurses to surround themselves with professionals who are willing to teach, encourage, and inspire them. Strong mentors can influence both professional development and personal confidence, while also demonstrating the importance of eventually becoming a mentor to others.

Preston also emphasizes that nursing requires advocacy—not only for patients but also for nurses themselves. She encourages young professionals to speak up when something does not feel right, ask questions, and trust their clinical judgment. Even when someone is new to the profession, Preston believes their perspective matters.

She wants nurses to recognize the value of their voices and develop the confidence to use them. For Preston, mentorship and advocacy are interconnected: nurses who are empowered to speak, learn, and lead are better positioned to advocate for their patients, colleagues, and profession.

Advocating for the Future of Nursing

Preston recognizes that nursing faces significant challenges, including workforce shortages, increasing safety concerns, shortages of nurse faculty and clinical sites, financial and operational pressures, rapid technological transformation, and changing workforce expectations. Together, these challenges have implications for patient safety, care delivery, education, and the long-term sustainability of the profession.

She believes policy advocacy is one of the most important mechanisms for creating meaningful change. Preston has personally advocated for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs, recognizing that investment in nursing education and workforce development is essential to strengthening the profession's future.

Her advocacy philosophy is rooted in engagement. She believes meaningful change requires nurses to speak up, remain informed, participate in public affairs, and become active contributors to healthcare policy discussions. Nurses should not simply respond to decisions made by policymakers or administrators; they should help shape the policies and systems that influence patient care and professional practice.

Serving Communities Beyond the Classroom

Preston's commitment to service extends beyond her professional responsibilities. She is deeply engaged in maternal health advocacy and community initiatives, serving as a patient-family partner with MoMMAs Voices Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Advocates. Her involvement reflects her dedication to understanding and addressing the experiences of patients and families while supporting efforts to improve maternal health outcomes.

Her commitment to maternal health also extends to raising awareness around the devastating impact of postpartum depression and psychosis. Through the school where she collaborates, Preston is working with Cherished Mom to support a butterfly ceremony at the hospital honoring mothers who have lost their lives to postpartum depression and psychosis. The ceremony provides an opportunity for remembrance, compassion, and recognition of mothers and families affected by these tragic losses, while helping bring greater awareness to maternal mental health.

She also collaborates with organizations including Best Buddies and Global Links in support of broader health and community initiatives. Through these activities, Preston continues to demonstrate that nursing is not confined to the hospital, classroom, or clinical environment—it is a profession with a responsibility to serve communities.

Additionally, she is a certified CPR instructor and an active mentor. These roles further expand her ability to educate, prepare, and empower others with practical knowledge and confidence.

Leading With Integrity, Compassion, and Accountability

Five core values guide Preston's work as a nurse educator: integrity, compassion, professionalism, advocacy, and accountability.

Integrity serves as the foundation of her teaching philosophy. Preston believes educators should model the ethical and professional behavior they expect students to carry into their future nursing practice. Compassion influences how she mentors and supports students, particularly when they encounter difficulties or moments of vulnerability.

Professionalism is equally important. Preston recognizes that students look to educators for examples of what professional nursing should look like. Maintaining high standards in education and clinical practice helps establish clear expectations for future nurses.

Advocacy remains central to her approach, whether she is advocating for students, the nursing profession, or safe, patient-centered care. She also believes in equitable clinical opportunities and ensuring that learners have a fair opportunity to succeed.

Finally, Preston emphasizes accountability. She holds herself to the same high standards she expects from her students, including clear communication, fair evaluation, and consistent expectations.

These values extend into her personal life. While raising her daughter, Preston and her husband emphasize independence, honesty, confidence, and a strong work ethic. They hope to help her grow into a strong and courageous woman who understands the importance of integrity and compassion.

A Life Grounded in Family, Learning, and Purpose

Outside of her professional responsibilities, Preston enjoys spending time with her family, attending musicals, dining out, and traveling whenever possible. These interests provide balance to a demanding career dedicated to education, healthcare, advocacy, and service.

As she continues pursuing her Doctor of Nursing Practice, Preston remains focused on the future of nursing and the people who will shape it. Her career demonstrates how clinical experience, academic leadership, advocacy, community service, and compassion can come together to create lasting impact.

For Kelly Preston, nursing is more than a profession—it is an opportunity to care for humanity, empower others, and contribute to meaningful change. Through her work as an educator, mentor, advocate, and lifelong learner, she continues to invest in the future of healthcare one student, patient, and community at a time.

Learn More about Kelly Preston:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/kelly-preston>

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