

Influential Women Spotlights Dr. Rebecca Stokes-Poths: A Legacy Of Service, Integrity, And Healthcare Leadership

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES,
September 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/
-- Three Decades of Nursing, Military
Service, Infection Prevention, and
Executive Leadership Continue to Shape
Her Commitment to Excellence in
Healthcare

Houston, Texas – Dr. Becky Stokes-Poths, DNP, MS, RN-BC, CFE, CJCP, LSSYB, is a retired United States Air Force Colonel and accomplished healthcare executive whose career has been defined by service, integrity, leadership, education, and an enduring passion for improving healthcare delivery. With more than 30 years of experience spanning nursing, healthcare administration, infection prevention, regulatory compliance, and clinical leadership, she has served both military and civilian healthcare systems while mentoring the next generation of healthcare professionals.



A third-generation military medic, Rebecca's passion for healthcare began within her family. Her grandfather was a flight surgeon in the Army Air Corps during World War II, while her father also served as a military medic in the Army. That family history ultimately influenced one of the most significant decisions of Rebecca's professional life.

Her father once told her, "Becky, the greatest crime I can imagine is you graduating nursing school in Dallas and never leaving Dallas." He encouraged her to consider the Air Force, telling her, "I think you should go in the Air Force." Rebecca thought it sounded like a great idea, and she followed that advice.

On May 15, 1993, the same day she graduated from nursing school at Baylor University, Rebecca was commissioned into the United States Air Force. What followed was a 25-year military career that took her around the world and gave her the opportunity to work alongside remarkable people while serving those who needed care.

Rebecca describes those years with genuine appreciation. She says she cannot imagine loving a job more than she loved what she did during her 25 years of military service. Her career culminated in her role as Air Force Chief Nurse at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where she oversaw nursing operations, aeromedical evacuation coordination, and care transitions for wounded service members returning from combat operations.

Her military leadership experience became an important foundation for the work she would later undertake in civilian healthcare. Throughout her career, Rebecca has developed extensive expertise in executive leadership, strategic planning, infection control and epidemiology, healthcare accreditation, patient safety, and workforce development.

She has been board certified in Medical-Surgical nursing since 1995 and board certified in infection prevention since 2000. Following her retirement from the Air Force, she continued serving healthcare organizations through roles that allowed her to apply her clinical and leadership knowledge to complex operational and regulatory challenges.

For eight years, Rebecca served as a Joint Commission Resources Infection Control and Accreditation Consultant. She was also most recently the Manager of Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology at MD Anderson Cancer Center, where she led a team of infection prevention specialists and advanced initiatives focused on patient safety and healthcare quality.

Building on this extensive foundation of clinical, military, and executive leadership, Rebecca has now launched TXAFRN Consulting, LLC, where she serves as Chief Executive Officer. Through this venture, she continues to bring her expertise in infection prevention, healthcare accreditation, regulatory compliance, and executive leadership to healthcare organizations seeking to strengthen patient safety and operational excellence.

Her commitment to continuous learning has remained central throughout her career. Rebecca earned her Doctorate of Nursing Practice in Executive Leadership from the University of San Francisco in 2021. She has also pursued additional professional education and credentials, including certification in infection control, the CFE Microcredential, and training in confronting bias and thriving across differences.

Her professional affiliations include the American Organization of Nurse Leaders (AONL) and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control (APIC), reflecting her continued engagement with the broader nursing and infection prevention communities.

For Rebecca, however, professional success has never been solely about titles, credentials, or

positions. At the center of her philosophy are work ethic and integrity.

She considers integrity especially important, drawing inspiration from the Air Force's core value of "integrity first." Her name and reputation matter deeply to her, as does the quality of the work she provides. She approaches every role with a willingness to invest herself fully and to pour her experience into those around her.

That commitment to others is particularly evident in Rebecca's approach to mentorship and leadership. One of the best pieces of career advice she has carried throughout her professional life is to always prepare subordinates to one day take their leader's place. She believes leaders have a responsibility to prepare the next generation.

Rebecca would tell those she mentored, "You are my tomorrow, and you will be taking care of me as a retiree in the military healthcare system." For her, leadership has always involved paying forward the wisdom and guidance she received from others.

Rather than attributing her career to a single mentor or one defining piece of advice, Rebecca believes her philosophy developed through the combined lessons, wisdom, and encouragement she received throughout her life and career. She has never forgotten where she came from, and she has sought to carry those lessons forward by helping others develop.

Her advice to young women entering nursing is similarly grounded in preparation and experience. Rebecca emphasizes that admission to nursing school can be highly competitive and recommends that prospective nurses focus seriously on their high school grades, particularly because GPA plays an important role in admission to nursing programs.

Once someone enters the profession, she strongly recommends finding a mentor early in a career. A mentor can provide guidance, perspective, and practical advice that can be invaluable to a new nurse navigating the profession.

Rebecca also recommends beginning a nursing career in Medical-Surgical nursing for a couple of years. In her view, this experience provides foundational skills that cannot be taught anywhere outside of direct experience. She also encourages aspiring nurses to prepare themselves in every way possible, noting that becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant or Medical Assistant can provide valuable preparation for a future nursing career.

Rebecca recognizes that the healthcare industry currently faces significant challenges, particularly for new graduates seeking hospital positions. At the same time, many experienced nurses are retiring or moving into positions outside of hospital and bedside nursing. This can create a difficult situation in which new nurses are sometimes being trained by nurses who themselves are relatively new to the profession.

Yet Rebecca sees tremendous opportunity within nursing. In fact, the endless possibilities

available to nurses are one of the things she loves most about the profession. Nursing can lead to clinical practice, leadership, administration, education, infection prevention, healthcare quality, regulatory compliance, and many other areas.

Education remains an important part of Rebecca's own contribution to the profession. She currently serves as Adjunct Faculty at the University of St. Thomas in Houston and has also taught at Lone Star College in Houston. Through teaching and mentorship, she continues to share the knowledge gained across decades of clinical, operational, military, and regulatory experience.

At the heart of Rebecca's professional and personal life are the values instilled in her and her siblings by their parents. Rebecca and her brother and sister have reflected on their family's values and the tremendous importance their parents placed on work ethic and integrity.

Those principles have followed Rebecca throughout a career that began with a family legacy of military medicine, expanded through 25 years of Air Force service, and continued through influential roles in healthcare leadership, infection prevention, education, and patient safety.

Today, Dr. Rebecca Stokes-Poths represents the culmination of decades spent serving others and developing those who will follow. Her career demonstrates how preparation, integrity, experience, and a genuine commitment to people can create a lasting impact—not only on individual patients and healthcare organizations, but also on the professionals who will shape the future of healthcare.

Learn More about Rebecca (Becky) Lynn Stokes-Poths:

Through her Influential Women profile: <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/becky-stokespoths>

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