

AUG 2026 | EDITION 05



NATIONAL APP WEEK

UVA HEALTH | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THE WORK TAKES SHAPE

FROM CLINIC DESIGN TO LEGISLATIVE
ADVOCACY, APPS ARE BUILDING WHAT
CARE NEEDS NEXT.

THE PULSE OF PROGRESS

EXPERTISE BECOMES IMPACT WHEN APPs PUT IT INTO MOTION.

THIS MONTH'S STRONGEST SHARED IDEA IS TRANSLATION: APPS ARE
TURNING CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE INTO DURABLE SYSTEMS, A SPECIALTY
CLINIC, A FELLOWSHIP MODEL, TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE PLANS AND
MOBILE PEDIATRIC ACCESS.

www.nationalappweek.com

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From The Desk

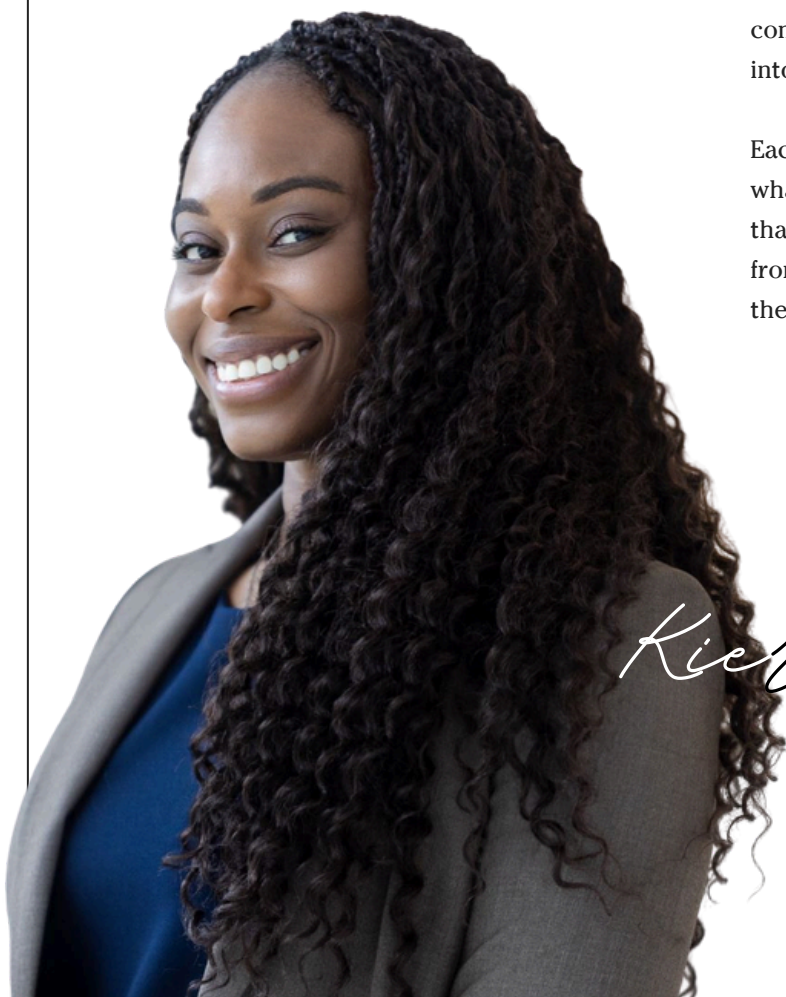
A MESSAGE FROM APP LEADERSHIP

Advanced Practice Providers are now one of the fastest-growing groups in healthcare, and that growth is reshaping what this profession looks like in real time. This August is a good moment to consider what that shift looks like from where you stand, both in your career and in the season ahead.

That reflection feels especially timely as we head into National APP Week, September 21–25, a week built to recognize exactly what this newsletter tries to do all year: give APPs the space to define their own profession, out loud, on their own terms.

This is the fifth issue of the National APP Week Newsletter, hosted by UVA Health, and this issue follows APPs who are turning expertise into infrastructure: building an APP-led heart failure clinic, developing the workforce through education and advocacy, creating trauma-informed systems for complex care, and bringing pediatric services directly into Chicago communities.

Each story offers a different answer to the question of what leadership looks like. Together, they remind us that the future of advanced practice is not arriving from somewhere else. It is being built now, through the choices APPs make every day.



Kierah Barnes

CARE REIMAGINED

A HEART FAILURE CLINIC BUILT AROUND THE TRANSITION HOME



KRISTIN RAMELLA & ABBY HUBBARD

**MSN, AGACNP, CHFNP, HF-CERT / CRNP, CHFNP
at Upstate University Hospital**

The first days after a heart failure hospitalization can determine what happens next. Medication regimens are changing, symptoms can return quickly, and the gap between discharge and follow-up can become a clinical risk of its own. At Upstate University Hospital, Kristin Ramella and Abby Hubbard built a model designed to close that gap.

Upstate's APP-Led Heart Failure Clinic opened in January 2026 after nearly two years of planning, research and advocacy. Both clinicians brought deep specialty experience to the work.

Kristin's path began in cardiothoracic intensive care, where the complexity of hemodynamics and the launch of a ventricular assist device program drew her toward advanced heart failure. Abby brought more than a decade of experience from the Johns Hopkins Heart Failure Bridge Clinic, along with expertise in guideline-directed medical therapy, cardiac amyloidosis and longitudinal patient education.

Together, they translated that experience into a coordinated outpatient model. The clinic provides expedited post-discharge appointments, rapid optimization of guideline-directed medical therapy, outpatient IV diuresis and specialized cardiomyopathy evaluation. Specialty-trained APPs and nurses pair those services with individualized education, shared decision-making, nutrition counseling, family support and attention to social determinants of health.

The transition from inpatient to outpatient care is central to the design. Working closely with the inpatient heart failure RN team, the clinic uses nurse triage to identify patients who need same-day or next-day evaluation. Cardiologists, primary care providers and specialists across the region can also consult the clinic when patients need focused heart failure management.

The early results are significant. In 2025, Upstate's average post-discharge follow-up occurred approximately 13 days after hospitalization. Since the clinic opened, seven-day follow-up has consistently trended below seven days, and heart failure readmission rates have reached the lowest levels recorded at Upstate.

The clinic is the only one of its kind in the local region and one of approximately 300 clinics recognized by the Heart Failure Society of America nationwide. Kristin and Abby now hope to extend the model across Central New York and continue growing multidisciplinary care for rare and complex cardiomyopathies.

APP SPOTLIGHT

BUILDING THE WORKFORCE: IN THE CLINIC, THE CLASSROOM AND THE CAPITOL



LENNEA COOMBS

MHS, PA-C at NORTON HEALTHCARE

Lennea Coombs' work sits at three points where the future of advanced practice is being shaped: patient care, postgraduate education and public policy.

As APP Fellowship Program Director at Norton Healthcare, Lennea leads one of the nation's few APP fellowship programs housed within a large, non-academic health system. The model demonstrates that advanced clinical training does not have to be limited to academic medical centers. Under her leadership, Norton has worked to standardize education across specialties, strengthen accreditation and create learning experiences that prepare fellows for independent practice.

She has never stepped away from the clinical work that informs that mission.

Across 22 years in cancer care, Lennea has developed expertise spanning patient management, research, education and mentorship. She continues to practice at Norton Cancer Institute and serves on the American Society of Clinical Oncology's QOPI Certification Program Steering Group, which helps outpatient hematology-oncology practices evaluate and improve the quality of care they provide. She is also a board member of the Kentuckiana Cancer Research Foundation.

Her leadership extends beyond the health system. Through the Kentucky Academy of Physician Assistants Government Affairs Committee, Lennea supported legislation passed in 2026 that modernized the definition and administration of PA supervision and expanded prescriptive authority to include Schedule II privileges. She was also selected to serve on the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure Physician Assistant Advisory Committee, advising on issues affecting PA practice across the Commonwealth.

The through line is workforce development. Whether she is caring for oncology patients, preparing fellows for independent practice or helping shape the rules under which PAs serve, Lennea is building conditions that allow APPs to do their best work, and patients to reach that work more easily.



EMERGING LEADERSHIP

A CARE PLAN FOR THE MOMENTS THAT USUALLY GO UNPLANNED

For patients with complex medical, psychiatric and social needs, hospitalization can introduce uncertainty at exactly the moment when consistency matters most. Maria Vardaro is helping Brigham and Women's Hospital replace that uncertainty with a clearer, more compassionate plan.

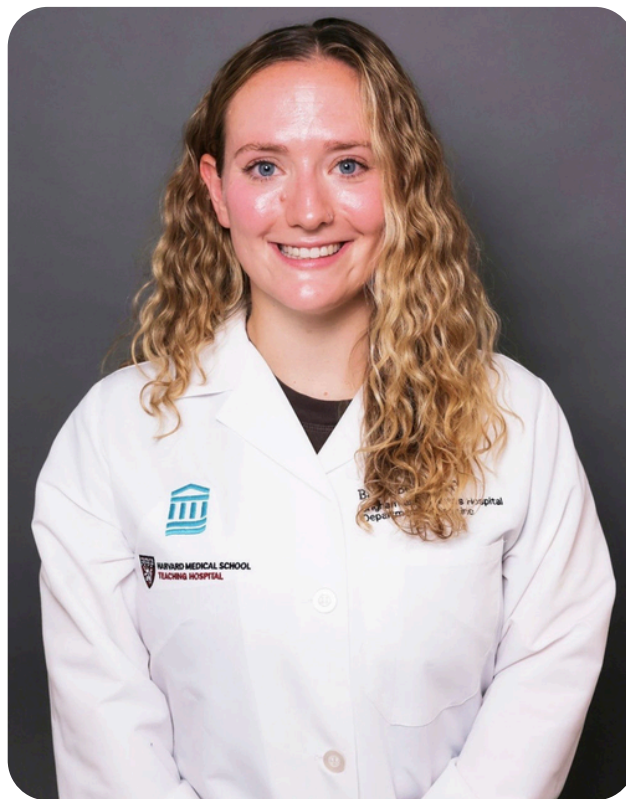
As the PA leader representing general medicine on the social work Acute Care Plan committee, Maria identifies patients who may benefit from a trauma-informed Acute Care Plan because of frequent hospital presentations, medical complexity or significant psychosocial needs. Through detailed chart review and direct collaboration, she develops plans that address medical management while also documenting patient perspectives, potential triggers for distress and practical strategies for difficult conversations or behavioral escalation.

The goal is not to reduce a patient to a protocol. It is to give every team a shared framework for care that remains consistent across admissions. Maria brings together outpatient clinicians, inpatient multidisciplinary teams, social work, ethics consultants and legal counsel so that each plan is comprehensive, actionable and aligned with the patient's goals. Her previous experience in primary care helps her connect what matters in the hospital with what must remain workable after discharge.

Colleagues report that the plans have clarified admission goals and made time on rounds more productive for patients and providers. Preliminary internal findings also suggest reductions in readmissions and length of stay among patients with updated trauma-informed plans.

Maria's work extends into professional education. As a founding member of the inaugural PA Leadership Council's education subcommittee, she has helped select timely topics, recruit expert speakers and improve programming through participant feedback. She also precepts PA students and fellows and previously represented the PA community in the AAPA House of Delegates.

Her leadership is quiet by design: listen closely, bring the right people together and build a system that helps the next encounter go better than the last.

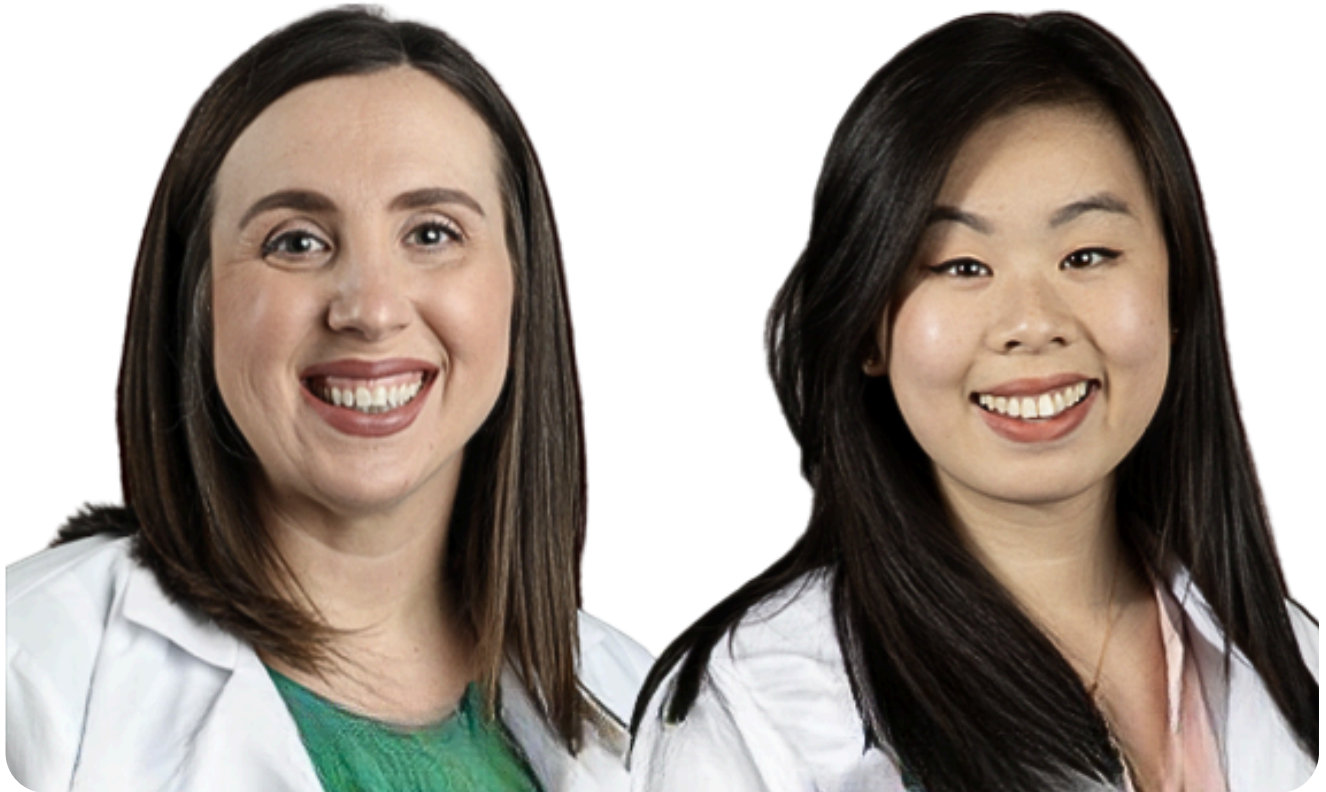


MARIA VARDARO

PA at BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

COMMUNITY ACCESS

A CLINIC ON WHEELS



BLAIR FOUSHI

MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC
at UChicago Medicine

EMILY WANG

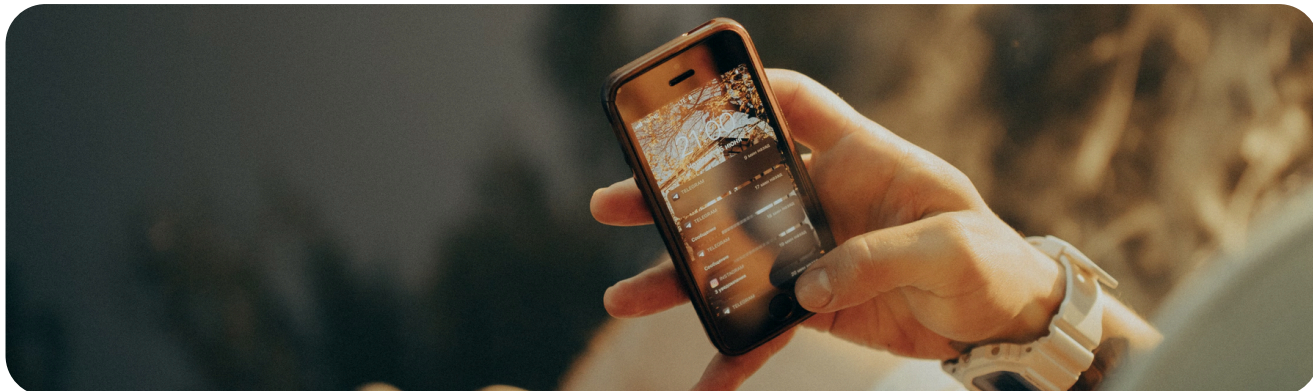
MSN, APRN, FNP-BC
at UChicago Medicine

For families who face transportation, scheduling or geographic barriers, access to pediatric care can depend on whether the clinic is able to come closer. Through UChicago Medicine's Pediatric Mobile Unit, Emily and Blair bring care directly into Chicago communities, making it easier for children and adolescents to receive services where they are.

Both clinicians arrived at the mobile unit through pediatric nursing. Emily began at UChicago Medicine as a nurse extern in 2016 and joined the unit after becoming a Family Nurse Practitioner. Blair, a former pediatric ICU nurse, joined the Pediatric Mobile Unit in 2018 after working in pediatric primary care.

Their combined experience supports a model built around continuity, mobility and trust. The vehicle may be the most visible part of the program, but the larger work is relational: meeting families in their communities and reducing the distance between a child and the care they need.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNITY



GET INVOLVED

As of August 11, 215 organizations had registered to participate in National APP Week 2026. The growing list spans children's hospitals, academic medical centers, community systems, specialty practices, professional associations and universities across the country.

That reach reflects something larger than a single observance. APPs practice in nearly every part of healthcare, and each registered organization adds another place where their work can be seen, named and celebrated.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

SHARE YOUR STORY

Every edition of this newsletter features APPs driving measurable impact. If you have a story, a quality improvement initiative, a program you built, an outcome worth documenting, submit it for consideration.

[SUBMIT HERE](#)

SUBMIT YOUR CONTENT

Photos and videos from your institution celebrating National APP Week are welcome. Share what your team is doing.

[SUBMIT HERE](#)

STAY CONNECTED

Stay Connected Follow National APP Week on social media and share your participation using the official hashtags. Tag your institution, your team, and your stories.

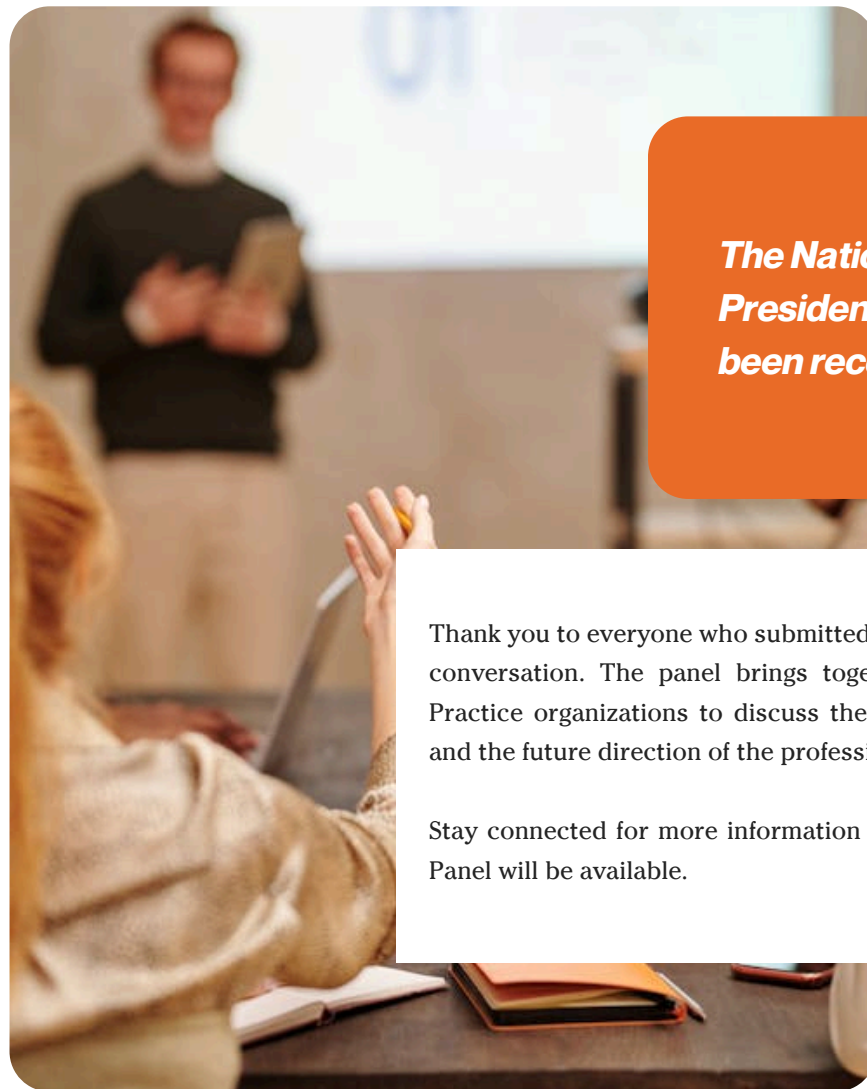


REGISTERED ORGANIZATIONS

Don't see your organization or need to correct its information? Register or contact the National APP Week team before registration closes at the end of the day on September 21.

[VIEW REGISTERED
ORGANIZATIONS](#)

MEET THE PRESIDENT'S PANEL



*The National APP Week 2026
President's Panel has officially
been recorded.*

Thank you to everyone who submitted questions and helped shape this year's conversation. The panel brings together leaders from national Advanced Practice organizations to discuss the issues influencing APP practice today and the future direction of the profession.

Stay connected for more information about when and where the President's Panel will be available.

PANEL

VALERIE FULLER

American Association of Nurse Practitioners

JACKELINE ISELER

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists

DAVID BUNNELL

American Academy of Physician Associates

TRACY YOUNG

American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology

EMILY MYCYK

American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants

PETER JOHNSON

American College of Nurse Midwives

AWARDS UPDATE

253 NOMINATIONS. ONE NATIONAL CELEBRATION.

The 2026 National APP Week Awards Nomination Portal is officially closed. This year, 253 nominations were submitted recognizing APPs whose clinical excellence, leadership, mentorship, innovation and service are making a measurable difference.

Every nomination is now undergoing review and evaluation by the National Awards Committee. Award recipients will be notified on August 19, 2026.

FOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Recipients will be asked to record a brief acceptance video and submit it to Lauren Maino at BTT6JH@uvahealth.org no later than September 14, 2026.

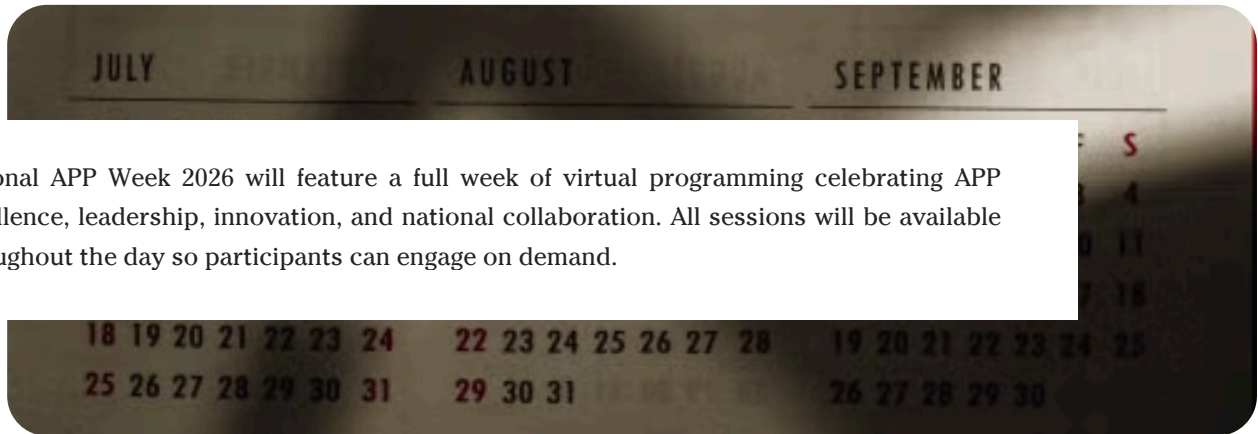
- Length: 60 seconds maximum.
- Format: MP4 preferred; MOV accepted.
- Orientation: landscape, recorded at eye level in a quiet, well-lit location.
- Quality: 1080p recommended.
- File size: 25 MB maximum for email. If the file is larger, email a secure OneDrive, Google Drive or similar download link.
- Suggested content: name and credentials, organization, award category, a brief thank-you and one sentence about what the recognition means.

WATCH FOR YOUR EMAIL

RECIPIENT NOTIFICATIONS BEGIN AUGUST 19

NATIONAL APP WEEK 2026 EVENT CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 21-25, 2026



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

- Opening Ceremony & Keynote Speaker featuring Dr. Daniel Kraft: The Future of Health & Medicine, Where Can Technology Take Us?

Available all day to watch on demand.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

- President's Panel Discussion Hear from leaders across the nation as they share insights on the future of APPs in healthcare.

Available all day.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

- Midweek Keynote Speaker featuring Jones Loflin: Leadership expert, author, and speaker who helps busy professionals and organizations get more done with less stress.

Available all day to watch on demand.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

- Awards Ceremony Celebrating excellence and the incredible impact of APPs across the nation.

Available all day.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

- Wrap Up & Host Handoff Closing out National APP Week 2026 and passing the celebration forward.

Available all day to watch on demand.

***Together, we celebrate APP
excellence at both UVA
Health and nationally.***

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Contact Questions, story submissions, or newsletter feedback: CUK7UB@uvahealth.org

For any sponsorship-related inquiries, please contact: BTT6JH@uvahealth.org

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