

Nurse Recognition Award

LAURA A. MULARZ

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Rutgers University School of Nursing



Dr. Laura Mularz is an influential nurse leader and educator whose career reflects a commitment to advancing nursing excellence and leadership development. As both an Advanced Practice Nurse and Clinical Assistant Professor and Specialty Director at Rutgers School of Nursing, she is student-focused and designs transformative learning experiences that prepare graduate nurses to lead with confidence and compassion. Her work with emotional mastery, just culture, and high-reliability organizational concepts has enhanced professional practice and strengthened the future of nursing education and elevated standards of leadership practice across the profession.

Dr. Mularz has developed innovative, accessible pathways for nurses—such as the weekend model for graduate leadership education—and has played a pivotal role in elevating the DNP program to a #4 national ranking by U.S. News & World Report. Her curriculum blends leadership theory, systems thinking, and strategic decision-making, preparing nurses to lead with courage, clarity, and purpose.

Beyond her formal roles, Dr. Mularz is a trusted mentor and advocate. Her influence extends into the community through her service on the Hackensack Meridian Health IRB, her work as a manuscript reviewer, and her involvement with the NJ Action Coalition, the NAM Education Committee, and the NJ Future of Nursing 2020–2030 Summit.

Her students describe her as someone who sees their potential before they do— opening doors to scholarships, national mentorships, and leadership opportunities, and challenging them to lead with integrity, courage, and vision. Through her innovative curriculum and tireless dedication, she prepares future nurse leaders to transform healthcare systems and advocate fiercely for their patients and communities.

Dr. Mularz's work is a testament to the heart of nursing, and the relentless pursuit of better care. Her influence is felt in every patient she touches, every student she mentors, and every system she helps improve. She is not only a nurse but a force for change. Dr. Mularz leads not for recognition, but to uplift others. Her legacy is written in the lives she's touched, the systems she's improved, and the future nurse leaders she continues to inspire.

A message from Laura: *I am deeply honored to receive this award and grateful to be part of such an inspiring community of nursing leaders, colleagues, and students. My journey has been shaped by an incredible group of nurses who remind me every day why teaching and leading this profession is a privilege. My years in clinical practice taught me about the heart of nursing, and that experience fuels my passion for guiding students as they grow into confident, compassionate leaders. I am endlessly thankful to my husband, Ed, and family for their love and support, and to my students and colleagues who continually inspire me to keep learning, leading, and giving back to this remarkable nursing profession. Thank you, Manda and Dean Starkweather, for this honor.*