

## FOREWORD

It is my sincerest honor and privilege to write the foreword for *Rethinking Your Unit Council Structure: An Innovative Approach to Professional Governance in Healthcare*. As the System Chief Nurse Executive working with the authors—a phenomenal team of professional nurses—on this innovative unit council model, I am proud to introduce their collaborative work.

Over the course of my career I have participated in unit-based governance as both a staff nurse and a leader. Years ago, I remember a fellow leader telling me, “If you need to solve a problem at the bedside, get the unit-based professional nurses together, give them the resources they need, and then get out of their way.” In my years as a nursing leader, I have seen this phenomenon play out time after time. As a result, I am a fierce advocate of professional governance.

When I began as a new graduate nurse many years ago, we did things the way we were taught and did not question otherwise—a hard practice to break anywhere. And then came one of the most exciting problem-solving evolutions that I have seen in my career: the FLIGHT Model. I have such a powerful memory of the first time I heard about this new idea for our unit-based councils. We had struggled for years with generating energy and adequate participation on our councils, until one day, an exceptional bedside nurse asked the question: “What if?” And from that one question and that one idea, the transformation of our professional governance unit-based council structure was born!

The FLIGHT Model, as presented in this book, highlights an approach that is professionally designed, outcome-focused, interprofessional, and absolutely genius! It is an approach that makes me excited to be a nurse, proud to be a leader, and inspired to work alongside such innovative, accomplished nurses. I did not come up with this model, but I fully support it and encourage those who are struggling with their unit-based governance structure to consider adopting it. You will not be disappointed.

I'd like to thank the exceptional nurses and authors of this book for their dedication to our organization, their passion for the nursing profession, and their commitment to the innovative evolution of professional governance. Each one of you inspires me to be a better leader and supporter of those at the front lines of patient care—nurses who give more to our patients and their families than we could ever ask for.

–Michelle Lopes, MSN, RN, NEA-BC  
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