

Time to make a splash and proudly pass the baton

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« Science knows no country, because knowledge belongs to humanity, and it is the torch which illuminates the world »

Louis Pasteur

For this special issue, the first of 2026, as our term ends, leading up to the WCET™–NSWOCC® Joint Congress, this inspiring and symbolic quote encapsulates our mission and the top three WCET™ membership benefit favourites: Congress, Journal and education. Most of all this quote epitomises what all attendees will experience during the four exciting and innovative days of our upcoming Congress. The full 2026 Congress programme is now available at <https://www.wcet-nswocc2026.com/program> and the MedTec approval process had been undertaken.

We are very happy to share with you that we received 514 abstract submissions. As only 55 oral slots were available on the pre-programme, only the best ranked submissions in each stream were accepted, keeping in mind the need to balance stoma, wound, continence and other (education and leadership) topics. The remaining 427 eligible submissions were selected for poster presentations. We realise that some presenters may view poster presentation as less prestigious, but they are as valuable and require different skills, including an oral presentation time for authors to defend their work.

We have been working on getting contact hours from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), therefore all speakers have submitted a form on their potential financial relationships or conflicts of interest, in order to be compliant and ensure we will obtain hours for all attendees. Dr Katie Capitulo from WCET™ and Mary Hill from NSWOCC® were identified as Congress Nurse Planner and Content Expert for this application. All abstracts and presentations/posters had to be reviewed, and industry support had to be clearly identified. The good news is that these contact hours can be applied internationally. We cannot thank our reviewers, and our two key leaders on this project enough for all the hard work in making this happen.

From the 2026 General Fund, which was closed early October, we had 14 additional Congress Scholarships applicants reviewed by the Norma N Gill Foundation® (NNGF™) Committee, making a total of 26 eligible applicants who will

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benefit. We do hope to meet all recipients at Congress. You will be able to find their feedback from their experience at the event in future WCET™ BULLETin issues, as this is a real opportunity to get a more personal perspective on what they take away from this educational event.

As mentioned previously, we will have an opportunity to present an update of the 3rd edition of our International Ostomy Guideline (IOG).^{1,2} We deeply appreciate Dr Emily Haesler for her outstanding work and support as methodologist, all the IOG panel members: Richard McNair from International Ostomy Association (IOA) and Asia & South Pacific Ostomy Association (ASPOA); Julie Atkinson (patient and consumer representative); Dr Joseph W. Numoo-Mensah and Dr Joaquim Costa Pereira from the International Society of University Colon and Rectal Surgeons, Dr Elizabeth A Ayello, Laurent Chabal, Denise Hibbert and Dr Jenny Prentice (WCET™ Journal Editor) from WCET™; the WCET™ Education Committee; our WCET™ International Delegates and members for their amazing contributions. A great thanks to Hollister® for the very substantial grant which has made this work possible.

We take this opportunity to thank the WCET™ Education Committee task force for reviewing the Stoma Site Marking Pocket Guide (SSMPG), so both documents (IOG and SSMPG) can be aligned.

There is much more at Congress that you must not miss. There will be important international collaboration in stoma, wound and continence care involving representatives from the Brazilian Association of Enterostomal Therapists (SOBEST®), European Wound Management Association (EWMA), International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP), NSWOCC®, International Wound Infection Institute (IWII), and World Union of Wound Healing Society (WUWHS).

Once again, we will use Artificial Intelligence for simultaneous translation, using Wordly®. We have taken additional steps to allow speakers to present in their own language (although their slides must be in English), this important step is breaking down even more barriers for those whose first language is not English. To all attendees, be sure to follow instructions for the use of Wordly® to be able to benefit from these presentations and especially from the question and answer sessions.

We are delighted to be able to introduce the very first winners of two awards: the WCET™ Dr Elizabeth A Ayello First Time Author Award and the WCET™ Biennial Congress Sally Gill Thompson Best First Time Presenter Award. They will be honoured on stage along with our 2026 WCET™–NSWOCC®

Best Poster winners. The 2026 WCET™ Norma N Gill President Awards will be presented at the Gala Dinner to Dr Ayişe Karadağ from Turkey, for her ongoing commitment regarding stoma, wound and continence (SWC) leadership, education and research; Mariam Mohd Nasir from Malaysia, for her commitment in SWC leadership and education; and to Richard McNair from New Zealand, from the IOA and the ASPOA, for his commitment in SWC peer support over the years.

Please also take time to come visit us at the WCET™ booth, participate at our Norma N Gill Foundation® tombola, in doing so you are helping us in raising funds. WCET™ is an England and Wales registered charity and the money we make is reinvested into our scholarships. We thank all donors who have been acknowledged under of BULLETin Roll of Honour, and thanks go in advance to all the future donors. Without you we would not be able to complete our mission (Norma's dream). Unfortunately, due to healthcare issues, Paula Erwin-Toth, invited speaker, who was also preparing to co-sign the WCET™ Norma N Gill Book with Dr Diane L Krasner, will not be able to be with us. Our deepest thoughts and prayers go to Paula and family at this time. I am sure she will miss us a lot, having dedicated her life to our specialty. We thank Dr Krasner for her generous support and valuable time.

In order to get as many members as possible on board and excited for this amazing event, we met with International Delegates (IDs) and Enterostomal Therapy Nurse Education Programmes (ETNEPs)/Recognised Education Programmes (REPs) Directors, during our online leadership forum in November. We thank all who attended and especially Dr Katie Capitulo from the NNGF™ Committee and Dr Angela Bocarra from the Education Committee for having organising this event. Once again many thanks to all IDs who have sent their biennial reports³ giving all our members a chance to understand what is going on around the world in relation to our tri specialty. It is great to see the number of reports are even greater than the previous years, showcasing your involvement and our global rich and diversity.

As this is the Congress issue, it is our last edition as President Elect (and President), the last for our Executive Board (EB) 2024–2026; and the start of the new era of the incoming EB 2026–2028, where I (Laurent) will pass the torch to Denise as new WCET™ President and to Dr Kimberly LeBlanc as new WCET™ President Elect. All other EB members will stay on in their positions for the two years remaining of their term.

The four year term may look long, but it actually flies by very quickly. From personal experience, we know it takes us (EB members) at least two years to be comfortable in the position we have been elected to and it will give us two more to do our best to bring WCET™ to the next level.

In addition, and as always, this congress issue will be linked to a WCET™ Journal supplement, which this year is a Coloplast® supplement. Congratulations to them, as a valued Sustaining Journal Partner (SJP). Both of these issues will be provided in every attendee's Congress bag. This supplement will also be available in the four languages other than English that

the WCET™ Journal is professionally translated into, thanks to Calmoseptine® for the Portuguese and Spanish versions. Regarding the Chinese version, following a Coloplast® China request, a new plan is in process, so stay tuned for more information about this exciting venture.

We hope you will enjoy the content from the journals and supplements you receive at Congress. If unfortunately, you did not have a chance to attend, you will be able to read selected abstracts we have received from this outstanding event in future WCET™ Journals. We also hope many of the presenters will consider submitting their topics as manuscripts so that a larger audience can have the opportunity to learn from their experiences, their findings and their ongoing research.

This issue is also an opportunity to reflect on our four year term, and on our first joint editorial.⁴ This journey has been extraordinary, literally and metaphorically. Many challenges have been overcome, some are still to be resolved; but most of all, many achievements have been accomplished with the support of all the WCET™ team, which includes you, our members and supporters. Our joint successes have made us shine with pride.

As it is my (Laurent's) last written piece as President, I would like to deeply thank all the WCET™ EB and supporting team, members, industry partners and beyond for their support and contributions over my term. Especially Denise Hibbert, next WCET™ President, for having, over and over, reviewed and edited my proposed stories. As a non-English first language speaking person, I could not have done it without her, even if after 12 years, as part of WCET™ EB, I have made huge improvements, I still need her review and edits. This close relationship shows how much the ongoing collaboration and communication between President and President Elect is one of the major keys of WCET™'s success. I am very confident the next term will bring positive opportunities for the next EB.

In two years' time WCET™ will have a major milestone anniversary, celebrating its 50th anniversary. We are already working on celebrations, but we will keep you guessing for now as the magic has to go on. As is usual, the next Congress destination will be announced at the end of the 2026 Joint Congress.

REFERENCES

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