

It is my pleasure to nominate and strongly recommend Dr. Nicole Letourneau PhD RN for IFNA's 2025 Excellence in Family Nursing Award. She is a Full Professor, Research Excellence Chair in Parent and Child Health, and Scientific Director of the Alliance against Violence and Adversity (AVA) at the University of Calgary, a research-intensive college in Calgary, Canada (student body: 35,000). Her academic research focuses on childbearing families affected by vulnerabilities such as maternal depression, family violence, low-income, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). While she has made outstanding contributions to the development of family nursing practice and education, her research achievements particularly stand out. Over her career, she has focused on understanding and intervening to support vulnerable families, resulting in seminal contributions to the field. For example, her parenting intervention program called *ATTACH™* (Attachment and Child Health) has improved the lives of vulnerable families in Canada, but also around the world in countries including Brazil, Denmark, France, and Cameroon. Her national health research training platform and knowledge mobilization hub called AVA has provided innovative training opportunities to nursing and other health care professionals across Canada. Her contributions exceed all the award criteria. Dr. Letourneau would be a truly remarkable recipient. I offer supporting details below.

Positive Outcomes and Exceptional Achievement Dr. Letourneau is a tireless, passionate advocate for generating evidence-based support and care for families and children in Canada and internationally who experience various vulnerabilities. As Principal Investigator of the CHILD (Child Health Implementation and Longitudinal Development) Studies program (childstudies.ca), her research, intertwined with nursing education and advocacy, has directly impacted the health of: (1) Mothers affected by postpartum depression and family violence, and (2) Preschool children affected by ACEs such as parental depression, family violence, and low-income. Her research has also contributed to relevant positive policy changes in family nursing. Her CHILD Studies program focuses on five goals, which she has achieved and continues to promote progress: GOAL 1→ Understanding **impacts** of socio-environmental exposures (e.g. postpartum depression, family violence, low-income) on vulnerable mothers (and family caregivers) and children including health and genetic outcomes; GOAL 2→ Understanding **mechanisms** (e.g. mediators, moderators) to explain associations identified in GOAL 1 with a particular focus on modifiable factors such as parent-child relationship quality and attachment security; GOAL 3→ Creating and testing innovative, relevant family **interventions**, typically focused on parent-child relationships; GOAL 4→ **Translating** knowledge from GOALS 1-3 to inspire relevant action (e.g. practice/policy change) to promote mothers' (family caregivers') and children's health; and GOAL 5→ **Training** the next generation of scientists to undertake community-engaged implementation science research to improve services relevant to improving health of vulnerable families and children.

Her work covers the full spectrum of research, education, and practice, ranging from understanding **impacts** and **mechanisms** via her landmark cohort study of 2,200 Alberta families followed from pregnancy to 18 years of age called *APrON*, **interventions** to address mechanisms (e.g. *ATTACH™*, *VID-KIDS*; see below), to **knowledge** translation (e.g. 290+ peer-reviewed papers, 3 parenting books, opinion-editorials appearing 190+ times in Canadian national news outlets, TED talk viewed 15,000+ times) and innovative **training** (e.g. *AVA*).

Translating and disseminating knowledge about impacts, mechanisms, and interventions has facilitated adoption of evidence-based, effective programs like *ATTACH™* for vulnerable families across Canada and the globe. Her research has also contributed to policy change to improve services for new mothers with depression in Canada, including the implementation of regional, provincial and national screening guidelines for postpartum depression. Her research demonstrating that postpartum depression is preceded frequently by prenatal depression and has negative impacts on newborns, directly guided local agencies such as the Calgary Urban Project Society (an agency serving low-income families) to begin screening for depression in pregnancy. This change occurred well before national guidelines were published recommending prenatal screening, in addition to postnatal screening.

Sustained and Positive Impacts on Family Nursing Dr. Letourneau is one of the most well-funded researchers in Canada and estimated to be among the top-5 most well-funded nurse researchers in all of Canada. Over her 25-year career, she has attained more than \$80+ million in research funding, including \$30 million as Principal or Co-Principal Investigator. She *currently* holds \$6 million from Canada's equivalent to the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), called the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR). At present, she is Principal Investigator on nine studies (including innumerable student projects, and sub-studies), Co-Principal Investigator on three, and Co-Investigator on eight more. Since 2000, she has been part of more 200 funded studies focused on family and

child health, of which she led 111. She has been referred to as a “serial innovator” as she has developed and tested many successful programs for families over the years. A full list would not fit the space allotted, but examples include: (1) *ATTACH™*, a psychoeducational training program for parents of infants/preschoolers affected by family violence, depression, low-income, and ACEs; (2) *VID-KIDS* (Video-Feedback Interaction Guidance for Mothers with PPD), a nurse home-visiting program to improve parent-infant interactions/relationships between depressed mothers and infants (3) *MOMS* (Mothers Offering Mentoring and Support), a peer-based in-home support program for improving parent-infant interactions/relationships between depressed mothers and infants; and (4) *MOMS Link*, a telephone-based peer support program for reducing mothers’ depressive symptoms.

She has attained many honors demonstrating sustained excellence over time, not only for her research, but for her pioneering work as educator and Scientific Director of AVA. AVA focuses on training the next generation of nursing scholars to undertake community-engaged implementation research to address family violence and ACEs. She created this network of more 250 leaders, supporting trainees at all levels with innovative funded internships, community mentorship, and online education. Other noteworthy honors (see CV) include *Canada’s Outstanding New Investigator* (2006), *Canada’s Top 40 Under 40™* (2007) and the *Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing Research Award* (2017). She received the *Excellence in Leadership Award* from the *Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women’s Health Nurses* (2019) and *Global Research Award* from the *International Society of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses* (2022). She was inducted into the prestigious *American Academy of Nursing* (2020) and *Canadian Academy of Nursing* (2022). She received the *Canadian Nurses Association’s* highest honor for career contributions, the *Jeanne Mance Award* (2020). She was also inducted into the *Royal Society of Canada* (2023), the highest honor a scientist can attain in Canada and among less than a dozen RNs ever selected in the society’s 100+ year history.

Successes and Leadership in Field of Family Nursing Internationally, her success and leadership in creating family interventions were recognized by Harvard’s Center on the Developing Child when *ATTACH™* was named a prestigious Harvard Frontiers of Innovation project (2019; only RN-led project). She has frequently been invited to share her knowledge internationally as mentor/expert, for example, as visiting scholar to Pakistan’s Aga Khan University, Denmark’s University of Copenhagen, and Brazil’s Universidade Federal d’Espírito Santo. She is also been an expert panel presenter at the International Family Nursing Association Conferences (2019, 2023, 2025), and frequent speaker at the International Society of Nurses in Genetics (keynote), International Attachment, and World Association of Infant Mental Health Conferences. Finally, *ATTACH™* is being delivered by most public health nurses in Copenhagen with plans to promote sustainability in place. The first Train-the-Trainer program occurred in January 2025 in Copenhagen, and discussions are underway to implement *ATTACH™* across Denmark.

She has also been invested in leadership, as CIHR’s Governing Council Member (2007-2014; only RN), setting research strategic directions and overseeing a budget of more than \$1 Billion annually. She is a sought-after consultant, for example to UNICEF (only RN, 2016-) helping create the National Index of Child Health for Canada and to the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, advising on practice guidelines for perinatal depression. As President (2022-24) of the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta, she successfully advocated for improved nursing education on impacts of ACEs and family caregiving on children. Notably, she contributes to IFNA’s mission by serving on the Board of the International Family Nursing Foundation (2023-), and now as the Foundation’s Board President (2025-).

Sustained Success through Innovation, Uniqueness, and Impact In Canada and around the world, *ATTACH™* is in great demand by service providers and parents for its positive impacts. Her published trials reveal *ATTACH™* significantly improves maternal and child health and development, including epigenetic outcomes related to reduced inflammation, especially for those affected by ACEs. Her large longitudinal *APrON* cohort, resulted in collaboration with other well-regarded international cohorts (e.g. UK’s Wirral and Avon cohorts, Australia’s Barwon) and multiple publications demonstrating impacts of the early caregiving environment, such as parent-child attachment security, on children’s DNA methylation. She published some of the only work conducted by nurses on the interaction between caregiving and children’s genotype in predicting children’s mental health problems, a finding which can explain why some children benefit more from family-level intervention than others.

In summary, Dr. Letourneau has led a truly remarkable career, characterized by innovation and impact. Her emphasis on understanding through to training the next generation of family nurses is unique, and her sustained success makes her most worthy of this award. It is my pleasure to nominate this outstanding colleague.