

February 12, 2025

Dear Members of the IFNA Awards Committee:

I am thrilled to offer my strongest endorsement of Melissa K. Uveges PhD, MAR, RN for the 2025 IFNA Rising Star in Family Nursing Award. As a nursing scholar in her fifth year as a tenure track early career professional at Boston College, Dr. Uveges has demonstrated a strong career trajectory in family nursing. As an IFNA member and an Associate Professor at the University of Maryland School of Nursing, I am qualified to nominate Dr. Uveges. I have known and worked with Dr. Uveges for a decade. I met Dr. Uveges in 2015 during her predoctoral training at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. Because of our shared interests in pediatrics and family nursing, Dr. Uveges and I joined the pediatric palliative care working group at Children's National, led by Dr. Pamela Hinds, through which we published a systematic review together on the benefits and burdens of pediatric palliative care. **In the last five years** (in 2023 and 2025), we have been co-authors on two accepted IFNA conference abstracts, on topics related to ethics and family nursing. These arose out of the work that Dr. Uveges, I and other IFNA members have done as part of the IFNA family research ethics subcommittee. Dr. Uveges and I have worked together as part of the IFNA family research ethics subcommittee since its founding in 2020. Currently, we are collaborating on a scoping review of research ethics to advance family health.

Dr. Uveges is an exceptionally well-trained scientist who completed her PhD at Johns Hopkins University. Following her PhD studies, Dr. Uveges was chosen for a highly selective postdoctoral research fellowship at Harvard Medical School, Center for Bioethics, which she completed in 2020. She is the first nurse scientist to be selected for this interdisciplinary bioethics postdoctoral position. During her postdoc, Dr. Uveges was invited by Robert Green, MD, MPH, the Director of the Genomes2People Research Program at Brigham and Women's Hospital, to be a postdoctoral research trainee. As such, she received clinical and research genetic training at Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Broad Institute alongside clinical genetics medical fellows. She also became an integral team member of two major Genomes to People research studies, which received NIH funding: 1) Genome sequence-based screening for childhood risk and newborn illness ("BabySeq"), U19 HD077671 and 2) Integration of whole genome sequencing into clinical medicine, U01 HG006500. **In the last five years** with Dr. Green's research team, Dr. Uveges has published five high-impact manuscripts, one on cascade screening in families, one on returning actionable genomic results in a research biobank to families, and three about the impact on parents who consented to their infant's participation in a trial of newborn genomic sequencing. As a result of her postdoc, Dr. Uveges identified a genetics mentor with mutual interests in the ethical, legal, and social implications of genetics research (Ingrid Holm, MD, MPH) and a cardiovascular mentor, Dr. Sarah DeFerranti, whose research focus is Familial Hypercholesterolemia. With guidance from these mentors, she has developed an independent program of research focused on *improving the care of children with genetic conditions and their families' health and care experience*.

Dr. Uveges' current research focuses on reducing disease across families by developing and testing strategies that facilitate implementing and maintaining evidence-based genomic practices, such as cascade screening, which can identify heritable diseases. With funding from the Manton Center for Orphan Disease Research at Boston Children's Hospital, Dr. Uveges conducted a follow-up study with parents involved in the BabySeq study, which involved interviewing parents whose infants received a monogenic result after participating in BabySeq, to understand family communication patterns around infants' monogenic results. The findings of this study were published in *Genetics in Medicine* in December 2024. Dr. Uveges was awarded the 2024

Boston College, Connell School of Nursing Research Innovation Grant for a project titled, “Understanding Family Management of Pediatric Heterozygous Familial Hypercholesterolemia (FH).” As the Principal Investigator (PI) of this project, she is utilizing the Family Management Style Framework to understand and describe factors that influence family management of FH in children. Findings from this mixed-methods study will be used to design interventions to promote pediatric FH family management. Dr. Uveges was also awarded the 2024 International Society for Nurses in Genetics Research Grant for a project titled, “Family-level determinants of Heterozygous Hypercholesterolemia (HeFH) Cascade Screening for Spanish-speaking Families.” This grant will address disparities in HeFH screening by identifying barriers that Spanish speaking parents face when communicating their child’s results to family members, who are also at risk of HeFH, and develop strategies for addressing these barriers.

Dr. Uveges has gained national recognition for her family research, as evidenced by an invitation to coauthor an AHA Scientific statement on Trisomy 21 and congenital heart disease with the AHA Pediatric Cardiovascular Nursing Committee, Council on Cardiovascular and Stroke Nursing, of which she is an elected member, that has been published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* (2024). She was also invited to be a co-author on a manuscript on screening for homozygous FH in the U.S. with several FH experts, published in the journal *Global Heart* (2024). Dr. Uveges has built a dedicated team of research collaborators, and I am convinced that she will continue to grow her independent family research program.

In addition to these research accomplishments, in 2023, Dr. Uveges was co-editor on the textbook, *Nursing ethics and professional responsibility in advanced practice* (4th ed.), the only comprehensive textbook on the ethical issues that APRNs face across the lifespan. In 2024, she was certified as a healthcare ethics consultant (HEC-C) and has been assigned a permanent membership on the Boston Children’s Ethics committee, where she reviews cases involving value-laden questions that arise during a child’s hospitalization and helps consider how to work with children’s families and healthcare teams to resolve these questions. Thus, her work is doubly impactful, influencing both clinical practice and ethics-related care of families.

I very much appreciate how Dr. Uveges is committed to both the discovery of new knowledge related to family health and functioning during health crises of a child member and the translation of such knowledge into nursing practice. She is a nurse scientist developing a well-honed program of research that is innovative, timely and important. She is one of very few nurses studying FH and will bring to bear all of her previous research with factors, internal and external, to parents and the family, which influence choices made by the family. She is able to lead interdisciplinary teams that implement evidence-based interventions to improve the health of children and families with this genetic disease. It is quite likely that the findings from this approach to science and its application to care will be relevant for other genetic-related, rare conditions in pediatrics. I enthusiastically support Dr. Uveges for this important award.

Sincerely,

Kim Mooney-Doyle