Deb Zimmermann, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, is the Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Patient Care Services at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System (VCUHS). She served in the United States Army Nurse Corps, practiced as a nurse practitioner, and for the past 20 years has served in executive positions in New York and Virginia. She is the past Chairperson of the ANCC Commission on Magnet®, is a Board member of the Virginia Organization of Nurse Executives & Leaders, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. She currently chairs the Academy's expert panel on Building Health System Excellence. Her work has been dedicated to strengthening the education and influence of nurses, the creation of collaborative interprofessional care models across the continuum and quantifying the contribution of nurses in improving health outcomes.

In 2009, Dr. Zimmermann was recognized by the New York Organization of Nurse Executives (NYONE) for her collaboration with the New York State Board of Nursing, state legislature, college deans, and hospital healthcare association on academic progression for nurses. As President of NYONE, she introduced legislation advancing educational requirements for New York State registered nurses. Although not passed into law, the Bills have been re-introduced every legislative session since 2006. Between 2011 and 2016, Dr. Zimmermann co-led the Virginia Action Coalition on Nursing Education, and in that period, the percentage of BSN prepared nurses increased from 49% to 55%. She worked with academia and practice on the institution of seamless models of academic progression.

At VCUHS, Dr. Zimmermann facilitated the creation and dissemination of a predictive modeling tool that allows front-line managers and organizational leaders to accurately forecast the impact of policy changes on education progression. Sixteen Magnet organizations piloted this tool, and over 2000 leaders learned to use the model to accurately forecast workforce education in their organizations.

As Chair of the Magnet Commission, Dr. Zimmermann introduced and facilitated approval of Magnet standards on education, innovative models of nursing across the care continuum, and nurse sensitive outcome measures.

Presently, Dr. Zimmermann is privileged to chair the American Academy of Nursing's expert panel on Building Health System Excellence. The panel is composed of national leaders from practice, academia, research, and professional organizations who are dedicated to highlighting and enhancing the contribution of nursing in improving the health of populations, improving the patient experience, reducing costs, and improving the work life of clinicians. This expert panel's work aligns with the strategic plan of AONE and positions nurse leaders as change agents, advocators, innovators, and influencers. As Chief Nursing Officer at VCUHS in Richmond, Virginia, Dr. Zimmermann leads over 3500 employees and oversees a $450 million annual operating budget. She is responsible for nursing, cardiac, trauma, transplant, emergency service lines, critical care regional air transport and is the Associate Dean, VCU School of Nursing.

Dr. Deb Zimmermann is a proven leader who believes nursing can move from the most trusted to the most influential healthcare profession and positively impact the health of the nation.