



RN CONNECTION

Professional News and Resources for the Acute Care Health Quest Nurse

May, 2017



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Assistant Vice President
Professional Development
Health Quest

Happy Nurses' Week!

I want to start this edition of RN Connection by sending warm greetings for Nurses' Week 2017.

I've been a nurse for more than 23 years and to this day regret nothing about my choice of profession! I still vividly recall those moments that made a lasting impact on me both as a person and a medical professional. I clearly remember the day I opted to attend nursing school instead of pursuing interior design. As a new student nurse, my very first patient was an older gentleman in the priesthood. I remember the first patient I sat with as she passed, a kind elderly woman who had no family. And back in the days before scrubs, I remember the challenge of trying to pin my nurse's cap on straight. So many people and experiences shaped me over the years into who I am now. It has been an awesome journey for me, and one I know will continue to provide new challenges and rewards.

I encourage you all to take a step back this week and remember the people, places and events that made you the nurse you are today. Remember the colleagues and the patients—those who learned from you and who taught you so much, as well. Remember the patients who recovered because of your care.

Nursing is a hard job. It is sometimes physically difficult and can be emotionally and mentally taxing. So, I also encourage you to take time now, and always, to nurture the most important patient in your life... you.

Once again, Happy Nurses' Week!

Sincerely,

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Have an idea for an
article or feature?
Have a question
about the newsletter?

Contact us! 
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Practicing Transformational Leadership

Maria Melendez, MSN, Ed., RN

We hear it over and over.

“Work as a team!”

“We need teamwork!” Yes, nurses working in a team enhance the quality of patient care and patient satisfaction. Teamwork also boosts morale and job satisfaction.

The bigger questions are, “How do we achieve efficient teamwork?” “How do we engage with each other to achieve our vision for the nursing team as a whole and for Health Quest?” One of best ways to create effective teams that create meaningful change is to embrace the transformational leadership model.

According to the ANCC Magnet Recognition Program, transformational leadership is a principle where leaders inspire a vision, mission, and influence the attitudes and behaviors of others to help reach common goals. Transformational leaders also empower others to express that vision and mission which gives nurses and other health care professionals a stake in the outcomes rather than imposing these ideas from the top down.

James MacGregor Burns first introduced the transformational leadership model in 1978. A historian and political scholar, Burns studied the actions and behaviors of military

and political leaders and concluded that two types of leadership existed: transactional leadership, in which leaders focus on the hierarchal relationship between the leader and follower, and transformational leadership, in which leaders focus on the beliefs, needs, and values of their followers.

Industrial psychologist Bernard Bass later expanded upon Burns’ theories, identifying four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

In 2011, James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner published *The Leadership Challenge: The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*, which turned Bass’ components into teachable practices applicable to all organizations, including health care.

Transformational leadership can help us meet our goal to rank in the Top 10% of all healthcare organizations across the nation. It also can help us manage growth; elevate the quality of our service to achieve greater patient satisfaction. No matter what stage you are in your career, we all have some leadership trait that wants to emerge. By understanding and applying the five basic practices of transformational leadership, each of us makes this a better organization at which to work! ■

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

- 1. Modeling the way:** You should lead by example: execute on what you claim you will do. For example, your unit has adopted bedside shift handoff. Although others are not consistent with the new practice change, you continue to provide report at the bedside and express the benefits the practice has on patient care.
- 2. Inspire a shared vision:** Share your goal for the day with others: For example, perhaps a head nurse says to the nursing staff, “I would like to help you bathe all my patients today.” By working alongside her team, she inspires them to complete the task and likely more quickly than normal.
- 3. Challenge the process:** Identify a problem, research or develop innovative solutions; introduce those ideas to others. For example, after a recent number of patient falls occur in your unit, you feel it important to find a solution. You join your patient safety committee to identify practical ways to address the problem.
- 4. Enable others to act:** For example, a co-worker has an expressed a feasible idea for better work-flow. You encourage your co-worker to bring it forward and champion the change.
- 5. Encourage the heart:** Exhibit genuine acts of caring, such as teaching others something new, listening to an issue that a staff member or patient’s family member has and providing possible individualized solutions, and displaying empathy.



Evolving Expectations Offer New Opportunities to Share Nursing Care

Caren Goldstein, Orthopedic Program Coordinator

“The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health” asserts that nursing makes a critical contribution to healthcare reform and the demands for a safe, quality, patient-centered, accessible, and affordable healthcare system (IOM, 2010).

To deliver these outcomes, nurses, from the chief nursing officer to the LPN, must understand how the practice of nursing must change dramatically to deliver the expected level of quality care. Moreover, nurses must be proactively and passionately involved in that change. These changes will require a new or enhanced skill set related to wellness and population care. It will also call for a renewed focus on patient-centered care, care coordination, data analytics, and quality improvement.

The transformation required will not be easy—at the individual or systems level. Individually, nurses will need to examine their own knowledge, skills, and attitudes to determine if they feel ready to contribute to, or will resist, the coming changes.

At an organizational level, transformation will require an analysis of mission, goals, partnerships, processes, leadership, and other essential elements of the organization and then overhauling them, a massive endeavor already underway here at Health Quest.

Even without the uncertainty around healthcare reform on a national level, new technologies, breakthroughs in medical research and customized medicines, ongoing concerns about rising costs and improved longevity have created new expectations across the entire continuum of care. The roles that patients, physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals play must change to meet those expectations. Success will only come if all healthcare professionals work together to transform and leverage the contributions of each provider. Achieving patient-centered, coordinated care requires inter-professional collaboration and presents a unique opportunity for nursing to shine. ■





Hudson Valley Nurses' Awards

This year, thirteen Health Quest nurses were nominated for Hudson Valley Magazine's Excellence in Nursing Awards.



Anthony Harris



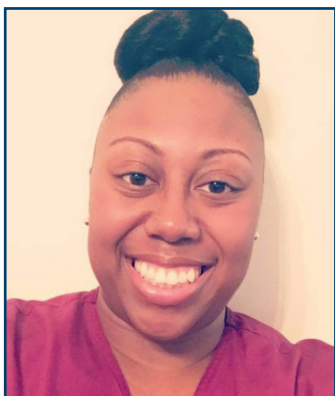
Beth Lamorgese



C. Deb Amico



Jane Scaccia



Leticia Savage



Linda Alberg



Melissa Wilson



Rose Decker



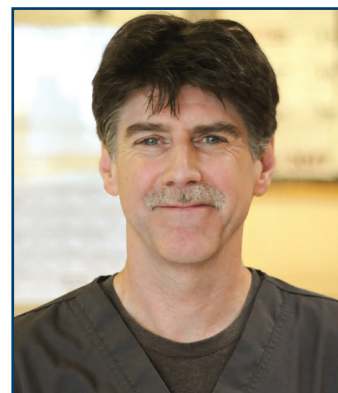
Shani Littles



Svetlana Cohen



Tyra Thompson



William Rober

We're proud to recognize this year's nominees for Hudson Valley Magazine's Excellence in Nursing Awards:

Linda Alberg, RN

Clara "Deb" Amico, RN

Svetlana Cohen, RN

Rosemarie Decker, RN, CCRN

Anthony Harris, BSN, RN

Elizabeth Lamorgese, RN

Shani Littles, BSN, RN

William Rober, LPN

Leticia Savage, RN

Jane Scaccia, RN

Jennifer Thietje, BSN, RN

Tyra Thompson, BSN, RN

Melissa Wilson, RN

HEALTHQUEST

VASSAR BROTHERS MEDICAL CENTER • PUTNAM HOSPITAL CENTER • NORTHERN DUTCHESS HOSPITAL
THE THOMPSON HOUSE • HEALTH QUEST HOME CARE

Thompson House, a division of Northern Dutchess Residential Health Care Facility

Jenn Thietje, BSN, RN selected as Top 20 Nurse

Jenn Thietje, BSN, RN, director of the CTICU and CTSDU at Vassar Brothers Medical Center was selected as a Top 20 Nurse! Jenn has been a valuable VBMC team member for 20 years. Her dedicated leadership and commitment to excellence and high-quality patient care has resulted in her CTSDU team consistently ranking in the top-decile nationwide.

Everyone at Health Quest is proud of Jenn and all of our Hudson Valley Magazine Excellence in Nursing nominees. Thank you for building a nursing culture that truly promotes our REACH values!





The Role of the ENS in Brain Dysfunction

Christina Bierling, MSN, RN, Neuroscience Educator

An ever-growing body of evidence shows that all living beings consist of a complex collection of organisms. We exist not as a single unit, but as a cooperative microbiome. We coexist with a staggering number of bacteria and viruses that are both essential to our survival and also capable of doing us great harm. One of the most interesting aspects of this interconnected system is our enteric nervous system (ENS).

The ENS consists of two thin layers of more than 100 million nerve cells lining your gastrointestinal tract from esophagus to rectum, which constantly communicates with our brain. Research reveals that the ENS has a significant effect on not just digestive health, but also on how our brain functions.

The bacteria and viruses that live inside us mediate to a large degree the health of our GI tract. A disruption in our internal microbiome may lead to brain, as well as GI, dysfunction. Conditions like anxiety and depression have long been viewed as symptoms of brain dysfunction, but new research indicates that GI dysfunction may potentially be a cause of neurological symptoms. An article from Johns Hopkins Medicine says, "These new findings may explain why a higher-than-normal percentage of people with IBS and functional bowel problems develop depression and anxiety. That's important because up to 30 to 40 percent of the population has functional bowel problems at some point."

A small but fascinating study conducted by researchers from University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University may provide insight into the importance of our internal microbiome for brain as well as GI health. Children with autism have a higher than normal rate of gastrointestinal disturbances because they typically have fewer types of important bacteria in their guts. Drawing on this data, the Arizona researchers gave 18 autistic children a fecal transplant with healthy gut flora to learn if the introduction of healthy flora would decrease GI dysfunction like IBS and diarrhea. The research

found that the average score on a scale for ranking gastrointestinal symptoms dropped 82 percent from the beginning to the end of treatment. It also found that doctor-reported symptoms (from the Childhood Autism Rating Scale) decreased by 22 percent at the end of treatment and by 24 percent eight weeks later. The researchers collected this information from parents through established, standardized questionnaires to assess social skills, irritability, hyperactivity, communication and other measures. One of those tools showed the average developmental age increased by 1.4 years after treatment.

These findings, although limited by the small size of the study, point to the importance of the microbiome in our neurological as well as GI health. Plans for another study with a much larger sample size to see if these results are reproducible are underway.

To learn more about the microbiome, read, "I Contain Multitudes," by Ed Yong. It's a fascinating book about the microbiome and our interconnectedness with the microbial world around us. ■

Employees Praise our Awesome Health Quest Nurses

The Internal Communications Department recently collected employee comments about their favorite Health Quest nurses.

Take a minute to read about just a few amazing acute care nurses and how they have made a difference to their co-workers.

Awesome Gram

Barbara Jones

You're **awesome** because

Barbara Jones is an excellent VBMC Maternal Child Health nurse. She is caring, compassionate, dedicated, loves her job and uses a nonjudgmental approach when working with patients.

Awesome Gram

Carol Leppla

You're **awesome** because

Carol Leppla is a nurse in the ER at Putnam. She constantly helps me become a better nurse, she helps me feel confident. I was lucky to have had her as a preceptor, she is a huge asset to Putnam ER.

Awesome Gram

Chris Dubois

You're **awesome** because

Chris Dubois is a PACU nurse at VBMC. Standing up for co-workers and helping in any situation is what makes Chris an awesome nurse.

Awesome Gram

Geraldine Kenny

You're **awesome** because

Health Quest employs many amazing nurses, but I want to give a special thanks and recognition to Geraldine Kenny, MSN, RN, FNP-CVCC/TAVR Coordinator at VBMC. My mother had been in failing health for a few years and it became worse in December of last year. It became apparent that she needed a double valve replacement and Gerry was so wonderful in helping to schedule with testing making it easier for me to get a lot done on certain days to avoid several trips and missed work. She understood how difficult everything was and truly tried her best to get everything done and kept me informed. My mom passed away last month and when Gerry heard, she called me to personally express her condolences, which showed compassion for her patients and their families. She truly is an asset to Health Quest and embodies our values.

Awesome Gram

Lisa Ann Levine

You're **awesome** because

Lisa Ann Levine works at the PHC birthing center. My daughter had a procedure done at PHC. When she went to her room, this woman Lisa was very caring helped her with all of her needs and answered all her questions. When she did not have an answer, she called her doctor to put my daughter at ease. God Bless this nurse, she was really great to my daughter and her family.

Awesome Gram

Pamela Funcctus

You're **awesome** because

Pamela Funcctus is AWESOME because she was kind and supportive during the birth of my baby girl.

Awesome Gram

Rachel Jarvis

You're **awesome** because

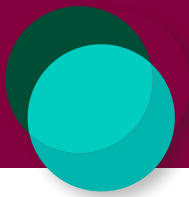
Rachel Jarvis is an RN in the VBMC NICU. Whenever Rachel is working, she always greets and welcomes me with a big smile and is so appreciative of me. During one of my shifts with Rachel, a baby had to be admitted to NICU from our MBU due to meconium aspiration. The baby had to be intubated and transferred out of the NICU. Rachel maintained complete control as she basically ran the "code" on the baby until the PA arrived. When I complimented Rachel at how smooth everything went and her expertise she replied, "this is all in the day of a NICU nurse." I am sure it is, but I wanted to recognize her as an awesome NICU nurse!

Awesome Gram

Sandy Dodge

You're **awesome** because

Sandy Dodge is a Pediatric RN at VBMC. She is awesome! She is so attentive to her patients and their families during stressful, pressured times. Sandy has a kind personality and represents our REACH values well!



Vassar Brothers Medical Center Campus



Nurses' Week

Lore Bogolin,
MSN, RN

VP of Patient
Care Services

and Chief Nursing Officer
Vassar Brothers Medical Center

In honor of National Nurses' Week, I would like to extend a special thank you to our nurses. I appreciate all of your hard work and dedication to our patients. You deserve special recognition and thanks for providing the highest level of quality care to the patients of our community.

The American Nursing Association selected Nursing: the Balance of Mind, Body, and Spirit as this year's theme. We tend as health care providers to care for everyone but ourselves. The importance for nurses to strive for a balanced life cannot be overstated, including being passionate about your life's work. That you have chosen to live your passion for nursing here at VBMC honors all of us at Health Quest. ■

Employee Recognition

Congratulations to three of our nurses at Vassar Brothers' Maternal-Child Group:

Kelly Burger received her FNP degree from Pace University.

Erica DerBoghossian and **Rose Pagan** both earned BSN degrees from Western Governors University. ■

VBMC Launches Emergency Department Nursing Residency Program

As nursing knowledge continues to increase, Health Quest actively seeks new ways to grow the quality of care, safety, service and compassion we deliver to our patients.

Our new Emergency Department Nursing Residency Program (EDNRP) trains skilled nurses to care for patients experiencing trauma or injury, based on Emergency Nurses Association's (ENA) principles and practice guidelines.

The year long residency program consists of three learning components. First, the nurses engage in four weeks of didactic learning that involves ENA modules, speakers, and open discussions. Both the text and modules work together to introduce basic concepts of ED Nursing.

Each nurse then participates in a seven-month ED preceptorship. During the last four months of the program, residents work on their own with close supervision from Nursing Leadership and Nursing Professional Development. These three learning components will provide the nurses with essential knowledge as they move through each level.

With the launch of our EDNRP, we hope to increase patient safety and quality outcomes as well as improve patient and staff satisfaction. As professional nurses, we have an obligation and commitment to providing our patients with advanced knowledge and skills. This latest program is just one of many ways that Health Quest delivers new knowledge and innovation to the community. ■

Specialty Spotlight: Pediatrics Unit

Kim Christiano, Director, Pediatrics Patient Care Services and
Joe Brooks, BSN, RN, Associate Pediatrics Nurse Manager

Children are not small adults. Even if kids suffer from the same diseases or conditions as grownups, they need specialized care. Growing brains and bodies respond differently to treatments and depending on the child's developmental growth, cookie cutter approaches to disease management can lead to poor outcomes.

That's why we take a multidisciplinary approach to each child's care and build family caregiver roles into every treatment plan. We work with a cohesive group of medical professionals trained in pediatric subspecialties of cardiology, pulmonology, hematology/oncology, medical genetics and gastroenterology who see children on an outpatient basis or provide consults for inpatients

on extremely short notice for our more challenging cases.

Even more importantly is the approach and care provided by the dedicated RNs and Pediatric Hospitalists who see the patients on a daily basis. They ensure that the patients' physical and emotional needs are met, particularly as children (and their parents) often fear their treatments and need reassurance.

Few diseases cause more heartache or complications than Cystic Fibrosis. With more than 20 years of experience caring for kids with this inherited chronic illness, in 2015, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation designated us an Affiliate Cystic Fibrosis Center—one of only 53 such accredited centers in the US.

Children certainly are not small adults. Nevertheless, over the years, our dedicated staff of physicians, nurses, nutritionists, respiratory therapist, and pharmacists have forged relationships with our child patients that last long into adulthood. When these patients bring in their own kids for their first checkups, it's like coming home. ■



Policy and Procedure Committee Focused on Creating Systemic Guidelines

VBMC's multidisciplinary policy and procedure committee oversees the writing, renewal, and retiring of policies. Comprised of representatives from our nursing staff, nursing leadership, education, pharmacy, quality, and risk management teams, the

committee routinely reviews policies to ensure they incorporate the most current literature and evidenced-based best practices as defined by content experts such as Mosby.

As part of our strategic priorities to improve care

coordination and function as one system, the committee is now focused on developing policies that will work effectively throughout Health Quest so that all follow the same processes. ■

Northern Dutchess Hospital Campus



Caring for the Caregiver

Pamela Rhodes,
MHA, RN

Vice President
of Patient Services

and Chief Nursing Officer
Northern Dutchess Hospital

The American Nurses Association has declared 2017 “The Year of the Healthy Nurse.” The ANA defines the healthy nurse as “someone who actively focuses on creating and maintaining a balance and synergy of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, personal, and professional wellbeing.” This goal inspires many of us to care for others and serve as team leaders and role models at Health Quest. Performing at our best, however, depends on how well we care for ourselves.

Self-care has never been more important. Our compassion for our patients and commitment to delivering proper medical care on schedule drives us. It provides us with job satisfaction and meaningful careers. It also often lead us to delay or forget to take the time to recharge.

Burnout reduces productivity and lessens the care we provide our patients. It negatively affects how we interact with patients and their families, and can result in long-term damage to ourselves. “Compassion fatigue” causes valuable nurses to leave the profession. Nurses inherently embrace our REACH values, but we can only achieve excellence by tending to our personal needs.

A healthy diet, daily exercise, self-awareness, and emotionally supportive relationships arm us with the tools to meet our career challenges. We owe it to ourselves, and those who care for us, to make our health as important as that of our patients. ■

A Look Back As We Celebrate Nurses' Week



As we celebrate Nurses' Week, let's remember how much the Nursing field has changed over the years. Take a look at these nurses on the steps of the Northern Dutchess Health Service Center (later Northern Dutchess Hospital) circa 1930. ■

NDH Launches Weight-Loss Surgery Program

Breaking the cycle of weight gain can be difficult.

To help those battling weight issues, Northern Dutchess Hospital recently launched a weight-loss surgery program. The bariatric team includes Brian Binetti, MD, bariatric program coordinator Mae Antonio, RN, and nutrition counselor Roufia Payman, who runs the support group.

The program includes minimally invasive gastric bypass, sleeve and

band surgeries. These surgeries change the anatomy of the digestive system and result in decreased hunger, the absorption of fewer calories and more efficient fat burning.

“Life-changing bariatric surgery offers a new beginning,” said Dr. Binetti, who lives in Rhinebeck.

“In this intimate community hospital setting, patients benefit from personalized attention and supportive aftercare, so they can make lifestyle choices that improve their health and lives for the long term.”

“Bariatric patients shouldn’t have to travel to Albany or Westchester to receive high quality care, or be far from their surgeon during recovery,” hospital President Denise George said. “Now, we have a skilled bariatric team and a state-of-the-art medical pavilion, giving people the option to stay close to home.”

For more information, call Dr. Binetti’s office at 845-871-4275 (TTY 800-421-1220). ■





IMPACT Award Winner: Theresa McGrath

Maintaining high-quality compassionate care while managing strategic initiatives with excellence

Theresa McGrath, RN, is one of 13 Health Quest employees chosen as the first recipients of the prestigious IMPACT award. As Director of Emergency Services for Northern Dutchess Hospital, she oversees the clinical and financial aspects of the Emergency Department.

She enjoys developing teams and helping them reach their potential. "I have an outstanding staff," Theresa explains. "They take care of each other. There's an amazing culture with a lot of respect for each other, which is why they deliver such great results."

Theresa's manager, Pamela Rhodes, Chief Nursing Officer at NDH, says, "Theresa has done an amazing job rallying the troops throughout invasive construction of a 3,300 square foot Emergency Department addition. Despite this, Theresa has maintained top decile patient satisfaction scores. She has also adopted new workflows to increase operational efficiency."

When Theresa, who has been with Health Quest since 2005, learned she had earned an IMPACT award, she says, "I was overwhelmed and excited. It was quite an honor. This was actually a team honor, because I work with an outstanding leadership team and clinical staff." She adds, "I didn't even know they had this award. When my boss called me into her office, I thought something was wrong. I had no idea I had won an award." ■



**Congratulations,
Theresa and Brenda!
You make us all proud.**

Health Quest's IMPACT Award is an "employee of the year" recognition. Eligible employees may be nominated by leaders at the supervisor level and above. An executive committee reviews the nomination and selects winners from across the system.



Visit *dimensions* to read upcoming features about each of our inaugural IMPACT winners!

IMPACT Award Winner: Brenda Case

Taking the initiative to drive quality improvements while delivering compassionate care and contributing to team success

Brenda Case is one of 13 Health Quest employees chosen as the first recipients of the prestigious IMPACT award. As an RN, Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU), Northern Dutchess Hospital, Brenda and her department work closely with the anesthesia team to provide specialized care for each patient, ensuring the best possible patient outcomes.

Her supervisor, Lisa Hagerty, RN, PACU Lead, Northern Dutchess Hospital, says, "With the help of her team, Brenda worked tirelessly to develop and implement the 'Managing Your Pain' pamphlet, provided to all surgical patients pre-operatively to begin the pain management dialogue before surgery." She adds, "Her desire to achieve higher patient satisfaction with pain management, along with the detailed work on this project, is a great example of the excellence in nursing care at Northern Dutchess Hospital. As a valued member of the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, Brenda is an exemplary team member, always willing to help her peers and going the extra mile for our valued patients."

When she learned she had earned an IMPACT Award, Brenda, a Health Quest employee since 2008, says, "I was totally surprised. I felt overwhelmed to be recognized at this level. I love to work on new projects and continue to improve the way we provide care to our patients. Although the award was presented to me, I feel strongly that my job is part of a team effort, and that this award is reflective of the entire PACU team." ■



Putnam Hospital Center Campus



Caring for Yourself

Eilish C. Hourihan,
MS, RN, NEA-BC

VP of Patient

Care Services and

Chief Nursing Officer

Putnam Hospital Center

As we plan to celebrate National Nurses Week, the ANA theme for this year is Nursing: The Balance of Mind, Body and Spirit.

To me, that means caregivers should take the time to care for themselves.

We should all strive to lead a healthy lifestyle not only for own sense of well-being, but for our own families and patients alike.

Thank you so much for all you do for our patients, your colleagues and your loved ones.

Have a happy and healthy Nurses Week!
Celebrate yourself! ■

MIND BODY SPIRIT

Meet Princess George, Emergency Department Manager

We welcome Princess George BSN CCRN as our new Emergency Department Manager.

Princess joins us from VBMC with 101/2 years of Emergency Department experience, first as a staff nurse and then as Nurse and Critical Care Associate Manager.

Princess loves the Emergency Dept. for being fast-paced and community-focused.

When asked to describe herself, Princess said she has a good sense of humor, loves to laugh, values humility and transparency. She also sees herself as a team player who leads by example.

Princess looks forward to meeting everyone on our great Emergency Department team. She plans to work collaboratively with all on opportunities that improve patient-focused care.

Please welcome Princess to our Leadership Team. ■



PMH Nurses Treat the Mentally Ill and Help Reduce its Stigma

Luann Convery, Director, Mental Health Services

Psychiatric-mental health (PMH) registered nurses provide wellness promotion, prevent mental health problems, and assess, care and treat persons with psychiatric disorders.

The seriously mentally ill require complex care and support. Many suffer from poor general health, particularly if their mental disease has resulted in neglect, homelessness or drawn them into dangerous situations. Additionally, because mental health programs often serve as the patients' primary point of access, traditional medical needs often are not met. The PMH specialty bridges the gap between mental and physical health and highlights the art (caring for) and science (using evidence and research) of nursing.

Putnam's dedicated Reed 4 Team consists of PMH nurses trained in medical science, neurobiology of psychiatric disorders, treatment methods, and relationship science. Each PMH nurse also possesses the skills and insights to safely de-escalate agitated behaviors and teach both patients and family members' methods that help patients stay on track with their medications.

The actions we take every day, such as advocating for the individual with schizophrenia who needs his lipids and glucose levels checked or arranges for him to meet with a general practitioner, demonstrates both REACH values and leadership

skills. We provide such help to patients with depression, anxiety and personality disorders.

We also play an integral role in changing public perception of mental health conditions, educating people on how the mentally ill can improve, and even cured, through appropriate treatment. Drawing on the theories of Hildegard Peplau, we fight the stigma of mental illness through our use of recovery-oriented language and focus on working with each individual in the context of his or her own life.

We connect with and earn the trust of patients during their most vulnerable moments—in crisis or in situations laden with negative emotions. We witness the turmoil of a young rape victim trying to recover her sense of self and dignity. We watch the fear on the face of a caregiver struggling with the ravages that Alzheimer's disease wrought on her parent or partner. We listen with patience and compassion as we piece together a message conveyed through psychosis that might give us valuable insights into a patient's past. And we sit with the person considering suicide as the final solution. At its core, our role is to provide transformative holistic care and offer hope.

Let us celebrate that hope by doing what we do best and inspire others by sharing what PHM nurses do in our hospitals, schools, clinics, and communities. ■



FROM LEFT: PHP staff: Angela Sanseverino, LCSW; Linda Cisneros, RN; Elizabeth Omin, LCSW; Erika Camilli, LCAT



FROM LEFT: R4-Day-Night Nurses: Eva Santoro, RN; Arne Nordstrom, RN; Christine Straessle, RN; Michael Chitty, RN; Heather Socci, RN



FROM LEFT: R4-Night Nurses: Lisa Powell, RN; Daisy Villanueva-Lim, RN



Putnam Holds First-Ever Nursing Town Hall

On March 29th, PHC held its inaugural Nursing Town Hall. Hosted by Eilish Hourihan, CNO and PHC Vice President for Patient Care Services, the meeting provided a strategic map for the future of nursing at the hospital as well as a forum for nurses to express how they viewed issues affecting them. After breaking the ice by describing her own professional journey from staff nurse to management, Eilish presented the 2016 accomplishments of Health Quest's nursing department as well as new PHC initiatives.

System-wide, accomplishments included the establishment of monthly CNO meetings, a formal professional nursing development program, and a more robust safety program to reduce the number and severity of patient falls that begins May 2017. Professional Nursing Development introduced unit-based educators to teach, encourage and inspire nurses to excel in their field. Some of these educator positions remain open, but we expect to fill these roles in the coming months. Professional Nursing Development also rolled out nursing

practice alerts designed to improve communications on both a unit and systemic basis.

Also discussed was the need for more systemic leadership meetings and development sessions, establishing a nursing mission and vision statement, creating a professional practice model, a nursing strategic plan, and launching the Daisy Award. Other topics raised included creating a formal preceptor program, revamping the orientation program, developing nursing residency programs, and defining unit scopes of service.

Securing Magnet designation is a key Health Quest priority and Eilish reviewed what components PHC needs in place before embarking on the Magnet journey. She also encouraged nurses to consider pursuing ANCC certification in their particular field of expertise as a way to demonstrate that Health Quest's nurses perform at the top of their profession.

Among proposed unit-based initiatives, the town hall sparked conversations about patient satisfaction, employee engagement,

quality and patient safety practices such as multidisciplinary rounds, a protocol 30 pilot in the Emergency Department and the restructuring of operating room procedures.

During the meeting, the nurses also received an update on the completion of several equipment upgrades and those projected to be finalized later this year. Finally, Eilish introduced several nursing leaders that recently joined the hospital, including Ron Stephens, Director of Critical Care and Emergency Services, Princess George, PHC's new Emergency Department Nurse Manager and Suzanne Martz, Critical Care Nurse Manager. Kathryn Duras, Director of Human Resources, also attended. The meeting concluded with a question and answer session.

We hope the meeting gave nursing staff a voice in the direction of the Nursing Department and helped foster a level of open communications that set the standard for many more town halls to come. ■

Nursing Recognition

We are proud to announce the following achievements:

Karen Smith MSN RN attained NE-BC certification.

Michelle Paolicelli BSN RN recently attained Med Surg certification.

Congratulations to these wonderful colleagues.