

ABRAMSON FAMILY CENTER FOR NURSING EXCELLENCE AT THE HOSPITAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REBECCA L. TROTTA, PHD, RN

*“After less than four years since its inception, the **Abramson Family Center for Nursing Excellence** supports a portfolio of research, practice, and innovation initiatives aimed at fostering our commitment to patient- and family-centered research and inquiry; developing innovative approaches to care delivery; promoting ethics and equity; and building the professional nursing workforce of the future. Such work is needed more than ever, and we are incredibly grateful for the investment made by the Abramson Family, which has allowed us to build this Center and achieve these outcomes. **Thank you.**”*

Abramson Family Center for Nursing Excellence Programs

The Center supports four signature programs: the **Madlyn Abramson Nursing Research Fellowship**; the **Center for Evidence-based Practice Practicum in Evidence Synthesis**; the **Nurse Leader Ethics Fellowship**; and the **Diversity Nurse Leader Fellowship**. The Center is thrilled to share the following updates from each initiative:

Madlyn Abramson Nursing Research Fellowship

Nurses selected for this competitive fellowship propose empirical investigation into questions or problems they face in their practice, and they are passionate about developing data-driven solutions. The Center supports a portfolio of ongoing nurse-led research, including the following projects.



Julia Valenziano, MSN, RN, CCRN recognized that neurocritical care patients often receive palliative care too late in their hospital stay, or they miss the opportunity completely. She believes that if nurses had a systematic way to assess for palliative care needs, they could not only better advocate for their patients, but also improve their autonomy in practice. This year, Julia received two research grants for her study titled, “Establishing Nurse Focused Feasibility of a Neurocritical Care Palliative Care Screening Tool (NCPST).” She received \$5,000 from the Agnes Marshall Walker Foundation and \$4,000 from the Southeastern Pennsylvania chapter of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. The emerging NCPST will be the first of its kind.



Danielle Pollock, MSN, RN, OCN is passionate about preventing falls. She observed that despite scoring as low risk on standard falls risk assessments, vulnerable oncology patients are falling at higher than expected rates. She was keen to identify specific risk factors in this population and was funded by the Daisy Foundation for her research titled “Identification of Factors Related to Falls in Neutropenic Hematologic Malignancy Patients Undergoing Stem Cell Transplant or Induction Chemotherapy: An Exploratory Retrospective Study.” The study is in the final stages of data analysis, and the findings will inform the development of a nurse-driven oncology-specific falls risk assessment tool.

Data collection is almost complete for the **Wharton School’s Center for Leadership and Change Management**-funded study, “The Path for Women of Color to Ascend in Healthcare: Stakeholder Perspectives in Nursing.” This year, four talented nurses of color, **Larissa Morgan, MSN, RN, NPD-BC** (also the study’s PI), **Andrea Blount, MPH, BSN, RN, Georgian (Gigi) Green, BSN, RN-C**, and **Felicia Morrison, MSN, MBA, RN-C** have collected data from Black/African-American women in positions ranging from certified nursing assistants to senior nurse executives about their professional experiences and career trajectories. The findings will directly inform the development of a playbook to ensure career advancement for women of color.

Center for Evidence-based Practice (CEP) Practicum in Evidence Synthesis

The third cohort of the CEP Practicum launched in May 2023 with three projects selected to address pressing issues in clinical care and workforce development:

Delirium and aspiration pneumonia are two common, yet potentially preventable, causes of hospitalization. Two teams of clinical nurse specialists are synthesizing existing evidence on these topics with the goal of developing nurse-led protocols. **Colleen Peachey, MSN, RN, CCRN, AGCNS-BC**, and **Krupa Trivedi, MSN, RN, AGCNS-BC** are investigating non-pharmacological interventions for delirium. **Katie Hopkins, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC** and **Rachel Mea, MSN, RN, OCN** are investigating interventions to prevent aspiration pneumonia in high-risk patients. **Jason Saucier, PhD, RN, CRNP**, Advanced Practice Manager in Surgical Critical Care, is investigating the outcomes of advanced practice provider models of care. Advanced practice providers contribute to positive outcomes, and the team aims to learn the best ways to structure and organize their team-based contributions for maximum impact.

Samantha Schad, MSN, RN, OCN, WTA-C, Rian Mills, BSN, RN, OCN, and **Cristina Colella, BSN, RN, OCN** participated in the second CEP Practicum Cohort. This team completed a systematic review and meta-analysis of the literature on nurse-driven protocols for antibiotic initiation in febrile neutropenia neutropenic fever, or a fever combined with a significant decrease in a specific type of white blood cell necessary for immune response. This is a common complication in patients undergoing cancer treatment. The team presented this work at the April 2023 Oncology Nursing Society Congress. Building on this research, they received a \$2,500 grant from the Daisy Foundation for the evidence-based practice (EBP) project titled, “Development and Implementation of a Nurse-Driven Neutropenic Fever Protocol.” This will reduce the time to antibiotic administration and thereby improve outcomes for vulnerable oncology patients.

Collective outcomes of the first and second CEP Practicum cohorts include:

- ▶ **5 posters presented at external conferences**
- ▶ **3 external research and EBP grants to advance implementation of the work in practice**
- ▶ **4 manuscripts in progress supported by the Writing Lab (more below).**

Nurse Leader Ethics Fellowship

The Nurse Leader Ethics Fellowship provides frontline nurse leaders with the opportunity to build leadership, conflict resolution, and communication skills; learn core competencies of clinical ethics; handle common value-laden clinical issues; and reflect on their role in the clinical environment. After a successful first year concluding in April 2023, a second cohort of fellows launched in fall 2023. This group attends monthly seminars with the fellowship's creator and director, **Aliza Narva, JD, MSN, RN, HEC-C**. The seminars feature multiple guest subject matter experts, in addition to a four-day Bioethics Mediation Intensive led by **Autumn Fiester, PhD**, the Director of the **Penn Program in Clinical Conflict Management**. Initial data show that the fellowship decreased moral distress and increased ethical confidence and leadership in the first cohort of nurse leader fellows

The 2023–24 Fellowship cohort consists of nurse leaders from a variety of clinical backgrounds and experiences:

- ▶ **Karen Brooks, MSN, RN** – Advanced Medicine
- ▶ **Victoria Brown, MSM/MSN, RN-BC** – HUP Cedar Medicine
- ▶ **Mark Caldwell, BSN, RN, CCRN** – Heart & Vascular Critical Care
- ▶ **Diane Cappelletti, MSN, RNC-OB** – Labor & Delivery
- ▶ **Sinead Donnelly Hellings, MSN, RN, CEN** – Emergency Medicine
- ▶ **Phyllis Dubendorf, MSN, RN, CCNS, CNRN, ACNP-BC** – Neuroscience
- ▶ **Chelsea O'Brien, BSN, RN, CCRN** – Assistant Nurse Manager, Cardiac Intensive Care
- ▶ **Kirsten Pettit, MSN, RN, CCTN** – Transplant & Thoracic Surgery
- ▶ **Jaclyn Rieco, MSN, RN, OCN** – Oncology
- ▶ **Casey Ryan-Mastil, MSN, MBA, RN** – Medical Intensive Care
- ▶ **Sheri Walsh, MSN, RN** – Cardiology Progressive Care

When the instructional portion of the fellowship closes in summer 2024, the second cohort of fellows will leverage their new communication skills, ethics knowledge, and leadership strategies to transform how their clinical teams resolve everyday ethical questions and manage moral distress. Using the Moral Distress Map, a tool created by bioethicist **Denise Dudzinski, PhD, HEC-C**, the fellows teach staff to systematically address and resolve concerns and questions about patient care, communication breakdown, and clinical decision-making.

Diversity Nurse Leader Fellowship (DNFL)

The Diversity Nurse Leader Fellowship (DNLF) Program launched in January 2023 with the inaugural cohort of six clinical nurses from HUP. The goal is to improve nurse diversity on the front lines and in leadership roles. The fellowship, the first of its kind at Penn Medicine, provided the clinical nurses with leadership competencies and developmental opportunities. Striving for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion within nursing teams is critical and an important antecedent of quality care and health equity.

The American Organization for Nursing Leadership nurse leader competency model serves as the framework for the curriculum with focus on self, people, and finances. Curricula topics have included financial management, leadership principles, strategic planning, professional teaming, high reliability training, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, career mapping, professional development, and communication. To date, the fellowship boasts 100% retention rate of nurses in the program and in same role since program inception. After each session, fellows complete a reflection and a session evaluation. Early qualitative feedback indicates a progression of leadership knowledge, overwhelming appreciation for the program, and confidence to pursue leadership opportunities in the future. Outcome measures are being assessed at the program, individual nurse, and organizational level to evaluate for sustainability and the next cohort.

Spotlight on Nurse-led Innovations

Virtual Nursing

Virtual nursing leverages video technology to connect nursing teams with patients and each other. Its use in the hospital setting is an emerging nursing care model that can support nursing practice and patient care in the increasingly complex acute care delivery landscape. It complements Penn Medicine's existing connected care and telehealth services. The opportunity for virtual nursing at HUP positions nurses as leaders in transforming care delivery through innovation. Virtual nursing allows nurses to leverage a team approach to care, where on-site staff can focus on highest value activities that require in-person nursing. It also offers the potential to keep tenured nurses in the workforce and can support improved work-life balance.

In spring 2023, the Center launched a series of pilots to establish the feasibility and acceptability of virtual nursing in selected clinical settings with a focus on the admission and discharge processes. Fifty-four patients received virtual nursing care and reported a high degree of satisfaction with the encounters. Nurses found the virtual nursing role exciting and provided excellent insights to inform continued development of this innovative initiative. As a result, the team will focus efforts in the oncology clinical area to support not only patient care, but also new-to-practice nurses with the virtual nursing role.

Supporting Older Adults at Risk (SOAR)

SOAR represents HUP's overarching approach to geriatric programming and is continuing to evolve. In February 2023, the Center launched the first-ever primary care geriatric nurse practitioner (GNP) team at HUP to co-manage these complex patients alongside the acute admitting teams. This innovative program brings a primary care approach to ensure timely and efficient implementation of evidence-based geriatric care during hospitalization and promotes continuity across settings of care. GNPs collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to address common geriatric syndromes during hospitalization and anticipate post-acute needs. GNPs also oversee Student Geriatrics Associates in the delivery of interventions aimed at preventing delirium and functional decline. The person-centered approach provides consistent high-quality care to older adults and their loved ones.



Dr. Trotta, Director of Nursing Research and Innovation and Director of Geriatric Programming at HUP, was recently featured in an Innovation Spotlight by the **Penn Medicine Center for Health Care Innovation** for leadership of the SOAR program. This forum highlights innovators who have made significant contributions to the transformation of care delivery.



This team of adult-gerontology primary care certified nurse practitioners includes (pictured from left to right) Jackie Carroll, Alice Ekobeni, Hadas Horenstein, Katherine Brucker, Jessica Bechini, and Colleen Werkmeister (team lead).

Additional Noteworthy Accomplishments and Work in Progress

This year, the Center restructured a previously existing bi-monthly nursing research grand rounds series to be a monthly co-sponsored activity by the Center and **HUP's Shared Governance Nursing Research Core Council**. This format and sponsorship ensure timely dissemination of research and scholarship supported by the Center. Recent highlights include the following:

- ▶ October 2023: Dr. Trotta presented on an upcoming multi-site research study titled, "Evaluating Novel Healthcare Approaches to Nurturing and Caring for Hospitalized Elders (ENHANCE) Trial."
- ▶ September 2023: **Lindsey Zinck, PhD, RN, OCN, NEA-BC**, Chief Nursing Officer for the Abramson Cancer Center, Cancer Service Line, presented her dissertation research titled, "Oncology Patients' Satisfaction and Quality of Life: A Comparison of Three Care Delivery Models."



The Writing Lab continues to develop as a mechanism to deploy internal and external resources to support nurses in scholarly writing for publication. **Brooke E. Trigiani, RN, MSN, OCN®** was selected to participate in a competitive writing mentorship program through the Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing (CJON). Her manuscript, "A Review of the Literature: Standard of Care for Psychiatric Assessment of the Allogeneic Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant Population," was accepted for publication in the January 2024 issue of CJON. Several other nurses have manuscripts in progress representing their work in the Madlyn Abramson Nursing Research Fellowship and the CEP Practicum in Evidence Synthesis, which are on track for submission in 2024.