Beyond Bedside Care:
NURSES USE CLINICAL EXPERTISE TO TACKLE NEW FRONTIERS

In the late nineteenth century, a hospital’s superintendent of nurses had a big job. She was often responsible for educating students in the in-hospital schools that emerged around that time, and more. “She was also in charge of the day-to-day running of the hospital: dietary, housekeeping, supplies, sterilization, managing flow of patients in and out of ORs,” said Patricia D’Antonio, PhD, RN, the Carol E. Ware Professor of Psychiatric Nursing and director of the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing at Penn’s School of Nursing.

But, as hospitals expanded and became more complex — and running them required more than just medical knowledge — hospital administration became its own specialized profession, she said. The number of nurses — and women — in leadership roles decreased dramatically.

But, over the last several decades, the pendulum has swung back. As nurses began expanding into formerly uncharted areas, new opportunities opened that allowed them to put their clinical knowledge to use in new and different ways and take top leadership posts within large hospitals and health systems. This shift can be found throughout Penn Medicine. Two prominent examples are Regina Cunningham, PhD, RN, HUP’s chief executive officer, and Patricia Sullivan, PhD, the Health System’s chief quality officer. Below read about three nurses and the unique career paths they chose.

Technology + Nursing: Impacting Thousands of Patients

Two things from Kevin Bogari’s childhood dictated his career path: an interest in becoming a paramedic from his family’s involvement as volunteer firefighters and a knowledge of technology stemming from his father’s job at IBM. “We had a PC from the time I was in eighth grade,” said Bogari, BSN, MS, executive director of LGH’s Accountable Care Organization.

Bogari ultimately pursued a career in health care by choosing to become a nurse, earning the ACO comprises health care providers and hospitals who deliver high quality of care and provide value-based care to their patients, with each other, and with patients from other health professions are at the foundation of what makes the profession such a powerhouse. Nurses have a proud, long history, and it’s clear — both to their colleagues and to patients — that nurses are at the center of the work we do in our hospitals and clinics. When I speak with patients, I’m reminded that nurses exemplify the best traits of those working in medicine. They bring knowledge and experience directly to the bedside. They lead and direct teams to ensure that patient well-being remains front and center. They conduct research to drive continued improvements in health care and push boundaries in how we can heal our patients. And they offer real human connection in some of the most meaningful moments of our lives, helping new moms bring their babies into the world, supporting patients and families as they near the end of life, and all the times that bring people to us in between.

The roles of nurses have grown and evolved tremendously since the profession’s inception, yet they remain essential to patients — as the stories in this issue about nurses earning advanced practice degrees and moving into specialty clinical roles — and health care’s increasingly supportive environments — nurses have demonstrated their expertise in managing day-to-day activities in complex institutions. “What we’re seeing is nurses having increased recognition of their central role and knowledge of how the hospital enterprise works,” D’Antonio said. In a sense, “it’s a return to nursing’s original role.”

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When management positions that required a strong clinical background took him away from the bedside, his other interest came into play: technology. When he was director of Clinical Informatics at LGH, “I was able to straddle two worlds: clinicians and IT personnel;” he said, interpreting needs on both sides of the fence to design clinical processes and work through problems. That included work on EPIC, Penn Medicine’s electronic health record.

Now, he uses his strengths to improve quality of care and provide value-based care leading LG Health’s ACO

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THE MOVIES!

Take a wide-open parking lot, unreasonably kind weather, free snacks, and a classic adventure film on the big screen and suddenly you have a safe, socially distanced night out that served as a perfect thank-you gift for physicians, employees, and volunteers at Penn Medicine Princeton Health.

Princeton Health hosted two screenings of the much-loved 1987 film *The Princess Bride* early last month on an inflatable screen erected at one end of a staff parking lot on the campus of Princeton Medical Center (PMC). Essentially it was a drive-in theatre. And Princeton Health supplied the movie-appropriate snacks to each car as it entered.

Attendees watched from their vehicles or from lawn chairs set up in open parking spaces. The total attendance was limited to ensure proper physical distancing between groups seated outside.

Reina Fleury, VP of Human Resources, said planning for the movie nights began after president and CEO Barry S. Rabner asked senior leaders to organize an event to express gratitude to staff members. The committee formed to plan the event included representatives of Human Resources, Princeton House Behavioral Health, the PMC Foundation, Community Wellness and Engagement, and Support Services, along with nursing and physician leaders.

“This has been a difficult year on so many levels, especially for health care workers,” said Debbie Millar, RN, director of Community Wellness and Engagement. “With the pandemic still going, we all feel a little cooped up and stressed. Movie night in the open air seemed like a great diversion for everyone.”

Arun Rao, MD, medical director of Care Coordination, attended one screening with his family and emailed Fleury afterward to thank the team for organizing such a fun outing.

“It’s been a momentous day and a trying week,” he said. “This was such a nice way to top off the evening and introduce the kiddos to an all-time classic movie!”

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Beyond Clinical Care: NURSES SEEK OUT UNCHARTED AREAS

Keeping a Close Watch on Patients, From Afar

Although Susan Sparling, BSN, staff nurse at the Center for Connected Care’s Penn E-lert, toyed with the idea of becoming a veterinarian when she was young, her thoughts turned to nursing when she was in high school. She worked as a nursing assistant in a nursing home when she was in high school —

After graduating in 1976, Sparling began work on a med/surg unit at HUP. She found that, with five years of LPN experience, there in 2014, she found that, with five years of LPN experience, she could make a difference. “My first love was being at the bedside and taking care of patients,” she said. But lifting patients — before ceiling lifts were installed in every patient room — was taking a toll on her and on her back. “Nursing is a physical job and we had only one nursing assistant on the floor and many sick patients.” She suffered from herniated discs… but didn’t want to leave nursing.

Penn E-lert — a state-of-the-art electronic intensive care unit that provides remote monitoring as an additional layer of expert medical and nursing support for critically ill patients — provided an alternative. Transitioning there in 2014, she found that, with five monitors, computers and a camera to follow what was going on, “I could see patients and still have input.” Indeed, over the years she has seen — and helped to prevent — many potentially serious events, such as a patient who had pulled out an endotracheal tube.

“My input is still made to a difference in patients’ lives. “As a clinical nurse, you could look back on your shift and know you helped someone that day,” she said. With her input on HUP East, there’s not a daily ‘reward’ but her clinical knowledge and experience “will make a difference for patients and families and clinical staff for many years to come.”

Gallagher isn’t sure what the next chapter of her life will hold once HUP East is up and running. But she knows one thing: With a career in nursing, many opportunities are out there for her.

Trading a Stethoscope for a Hard Hat

In 1982 — newly graduated from nursing school — Kathy Gallagher, MS, BSN, began work on a med/surg unit at HUP. Over the next 30+ years, she progressed to a surgical ICU and also helped to open a vascular and thoracic surgical progressive care unit (a step-down from an ICU) on Rhapsody 1. She eventually became its nurse manager.

During her time as nurse manager, she received her master’s in Strategic and Organizational Leadership and “began thinking about what else I would like to do,” she said. Then, in 2015, the answer appeared in an email announcing the creation of a new role: clinical liaison for the new patient pavilion (HUP East) project. The position needed someone with “in the trenches” experience, i.e., working with staff and physicians, managing equipment, and understanding patient issues, with good collaboration and communication skills. She threw in her hat and got the job.

“I was there from the beginning, collaborating with architects, engineers, construction workers and project managers,” she said. Her input — as well as that of many other clinical and non-clinical staff and patient advisors — resulted in many changes, some of them significant. For example, feedback from a life-size mock-up of a patient unit not only led to changes to clinical spaces but also to the need to develop thepatient building. Since “trading her stethoscope and scrubs for a hard hat and safety vest,” Gallagher has gained a tremendous amount of knowledge — about construction and design but also about working collaboratively with the multidisciplinary team of experts. “How many nurses can say they helped build a hospital?” she said, laughing.

But even more important is her ability to still make a difference in patients’ lives. “As a clinical nurse, you could look back on your shift and know you helped someone that day,” she said. With her input on HUP East, there’s not a daily ‘reward’ but her clinical knowledge and experience “will make a difference for patients and families and clinical staff for many years to come.”

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**Health Through the Holidays**

With daylight disappearing faster and the temperature dropping lower, that means the holiday season cannot be too far behind. As we gear up for celebrations and festivities that will look quite different than they have in years past, making sure we take care of ourselves is more important than ever. Adjusting to life amid a global pandemic — placing additional emphasis on our well-being — is a sound plan for staying healthy.

The Wellness team is supporting employees with Health Through the Holidays, a four-week series that takes a "whole person approach" to thriving this holiday season. The series makes it easier to maintain self-care and health during this unusual holiday season.

**Topics include:**

**COPING WITH COVID THROUGH HOLIDAYS** — an opportunity for people to come together to discuss the challenges of not being able to celebrate the holidays in their customary ways and to come up with some suggestions for how to cope with that. **HOLIDAY FUN WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS** — a discussion about ways to keep traditions alive in time of change. This week will also include a family-friendly Penn Medicine baking class. **FITNESS AND NUTRITION: HOLIDAY STYLE** — how to incorporate healthy swaps with your favorite holiday recipes. This week will also have fitness tips for cold weather and busy schedules. **FINDING THE SILVER LINING WITH EVERY SILVER BELL** — ways to change negative thinking into a positive mindset. This discussion will make the connection between how gratitude and positivity can combat stress.

"We want our employees to think about giving the gift of health to themselves this holiday season," said Emily McPeak, Employee Well-Being coordinator in UPHS. "The Health Through the Holidays series was designed to make these approachable and relatable sessions that will resonate with nearly everyone."

"This pandemic has taken a toll on us all, personally and professionally, in so many ways we couldn't have imagined. So, it's more important than ever to take care of ourselves this holiday season," said Krisda Chaiyachoti, MD, medical director for Penn Medicine OnDemand. "Any chance we can take to focus on ourselves will go a long way towards being better health care professionals, partners, parents, and connect with those we love at home."

Register today for the Health Through the Holidays series: bit.ly/3krI52F

Health Through the Holidays is open to all employees. Please note that LG Health employees will not be able to earn Wellness points for completing.

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**Meet Presby’s Ukulele Virtuoso Volunteer**

Going to the hospital can be tough for overwhelmed patients, worried visitors, and even for staff who have gone above and beyond each day during this stressful year. But imagine that as you entered the main lobby, you heard someone cheerfully strumming "You’ve Got a Friend in Me" from Toy Story on a ukulele — totally changes the mood, right? At Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, volunteer Christian Hopkins has aimed to brighten people’s days and make the hospital feel peaceful and welcoming by filling the halls with music.

Hopkins is a University of Pennsylvania grad and a biomedical research assistant studying regenerative medicine and wound healing who plans to continue his studies next year as a MD/PhD candidate. A longtime singer who participated in the Penn Cilee Club and a Disney a cappella group, Hopkins was excited to find a way to combine his medical and musical interests through community service. In 2018, he taught himself to play the ukulele and started serenading patients at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center, later sharing his talents with the PPMC community. When PPMC started welcoming back volunteers in July after a pandemic pause, Hopkins was one of the first to enthusiastically return.

Every Thursday and Friday morning, he can be found in the lobby, waiting areas, or Abramson Cancer Center running through his set list of jazz standards and Disney tunes like "Fly Me to the Moon" and "A Whole New World." COVID-19 has forced him to take a temporary break from singing — "It’s actually really tough in a mask!" he said — but he is hopeful that soon enough, he’ll be able to give vocal performances and safely visit patients who could really benefit from a calming song. For now, though, his engaged audiences have thoroughly enjoyed his instrumentals. In fact, Hopkins has become such a hospital celebrity that Volunteer Services coordinator Evan Loundas often has to field questions about his whereabouts on the days he isn’t volunteering.

"People have been really sweet, and they make me wish that I could come back every day! I’m always so surprised and grateful when they thank me," Hopkins said. "This experience has helped me gain a better understanding of patients’ and visitors’ vulnerability as they come into the hospital, and I really appreciate being able to soothe their anxieties through music. My volunteer work has also enhanced my passion for getting into this field."

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**LGH Emergency Department EXPANSION PROJECT RESUMES**

As one of the largest investments in facilities and technology in LG Health’s history, the 40,000-square-foot expansion will nearly double the hospital’s current ED to 95 beds, with the capacity to serve 140,000 patients annually. Plans include increasing the number of behavioral-health treatment rooms to five, doubling the number of trauma bays to four, and adding 12 new pediatric-treatment rooms.

After the expansion opens in summer 2022, the hospital’s existing ED will be renovated and adding 12 new pediatric-treatment rooms. To meet the increased demand, LG Health added nine ED beds in a temporary annex building that summer, increasing the total number of beds to 54. That year, the LGH Emergency Department, designed for 90,000 annual visits, saw 118,000 visits.

Aware of the increasingly high demand for emergency services throughout the region, LG Health had already been planning a major expansion of the ED. Despite some delays caused by the onset of the COVID-19, the project is once again in motion. Pending internal and municipal approvals, construction could begin this month.

In early 2019, Penn Medicine Lancaster General Hospital became the sole emergency-care provider in Lancaster City when the city’s one other hospital closed its doors. To meet the increased demand, LG Health added nine ED beds in a temporary annex building that summer, increasing the total number of beds to 54. That year, the LGH Emergency Department, designed for 90,000 annual visits, saw 118,000 visits.

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THE YEAR OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE: FRONT-LINE HEROES OF 2020

To recognize this incredibly important role, as well as that of midwives, the World Health Organization has observed 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. This designation was intended to recognize the extraordinary contributions that nurses and midwives make toward providing quality health services.

The selection of this year proved prescient: Between the COVID-19 pandemic, the rising tide of civic protest against racial injustices, the devastating explosion in Beirut, and destructive hurricanes and fires across the globe, our patients and communities needed heroes. And with our nurses and midwives, heroes are what they got.

These heroes shared their ingenuity to approach the challenges that came before us, their compassion for humanity to unite us regardless of race, religion or creed, and their creativity and leadership to keep us on the path to excellence.

PAH ENJOYS DELICIOUS FOOD, COURTESY OF DOUBLE GOOD

Over the past nine months, individuals and organizations have donated countless meals and snacks to hardworking health care professionals across Penn Medicine in an effort to keep them well-fed and energized as they battle the pandemic on the front lines. The generous Philadelphia-based staff of one business, Ernst & Young (EY), took this charitable act a step further through their new Double Good campaign. In October, the Labor & Delivery and Mother Baby teams at Pennsylvania Hospital were the first recipients.

“EV is grateful to our community’s hospital workers for their tremendous sacrifices during the pandemic, and we also acknowledge that COVID-19 has been difficult for many small businesses. Through the Double Good campaign, we recognize the efforts of local health care heroes while also supporting neighborhood restaurants that are struggling to stay afloat,” said Stephen Chen, managing director of EY’s Health Sciences & Wellness practice.

Penn’s Labor & Delivery and Mother Baby teams haven’t slowed down at all during the pandemic, delivering nearly 4,000 babies since early March and doing their best to ensure that all of their patients feel safe and supported. These tireless staff members were able to enjoy a much-deserved break when EY staff funded the delivery of 135 meals from El Fuego, a local Mexican restaurant and a favorite of many Penn staff members.

“The owner of El Fuego was actually working the line in an effort to get these orders ready for us, and he made the deliveries too. Our staff who [used to] go there all the time were really excited to see him!” said Carolyn Tobin, director of Food & Nutrition and Environmental Services, who coordinated the drop-off with Pennsy’s Labor & Delivery and Mother Baby teams. “We use a Penn Medicine CAREs grant to buy books for all the babies born at Women & Babies Hospital. For the past 20 years, Colleen Hurley, the Chester County area. She got the idea from a report by a patient’s mother, who lived in a shelter and wanted to take a hospital pillow with her.

The pillow drive started in the NICU, but, with the help of CHEO Jackie Felcetti, it became hospital wide. Last year’s Pillow for Purpose Campaign netted 78 pillows, which were donated to four local facilities. “It was amazing to see everyone’s reaction who received the pillows,” Hurley said, adding that the increased need to help families during the pandemic makes this year’s annual campaign even more critical.

At Penn Medicine, we all aspire to be Difference Makers who represent the Penn Medicine Experience (PME) in action. PAX sets a consistent standard across all of our entities and work locations to make every touchpoint an opportunity to build enduring connections with patients, families, visitors and colleagues, which is a foundational part of the UPenn Success Share program.

DIFFERENCE MAKERS

IT’S THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT SOMETIMES MATTER MOST

For the past 20 years, Colleen Hurley, a NUCI nurse and lactation consultant at Chester County Hospital, has shown compassion and care to numerous infants and families during the early and critical stages in the NICU. Colleen is an advocate for her patients and family members, always trying to be empathetic to them while caring for their baby in the NICU,” said Susan Cacciavillano, NICU clinical manager. Hurley also helps connect them to community resources after discharge, making the transition to home as easy as possible. Last year, Hurley created CCHI’s first Pillows for Purpose Campaign, a call for hospital employees to donate pillows that would be donated to local shelters in the Chester County area. She got the idea from a request by a patient’s mother, who lived in a shelter and wanted to take a hospital pillow with her.

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