It was June 17, 1963 when Barbara Reese, RN, started her career at the old Princeton Hospital on Witherspoon Street, John F. Kennedy was President. The Beatles were still only famous in Europe. Vaccines were a hot topic — though, back then, it was about measles and polio, not COVID-19.

Reese graduated from Hartwick College in upstate New York — holding a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), which was relatively rare at the time for RNs entering the field — and took the position at Princeton Hospital, serving as a staff nurse on the medical and psychiatric floor.

In 1971, psychiatric care was moved to the brand-new Princeton House Behavioral Health, and the hospital’s medical-psychiatric unit became medical-surgical, better known as med-surg.

For the next half century, minus four months in telemetry, Reese was a mainstay at med-surg. She served as assistant nurse manager of the unit for 45 years until retiring in July 2021. Along the way, Princeton Hospital — known today as Princeton Medical Center (PMC) — increased in size and capabilities until it outgrew the site on Witherspoon Street and moved in 2012 to a state-of-the-art campus in Plainsboro.

Reese was closely involved in the move, being responsible for planning and carrying out the transition for her unit. She lists the move as one of the most memorable developments during her career at Princeton, along with the introduction of bedside computers in 1992.

Embracing new technology was typical of her time at the hospital, particularly in surgical care. Even when it was a relatively small community hospital, Reese said, PMC was always looking to invest in new surgical capabilities and provide new and better procedures for its patients.

“I stayed in med-surg because I loved the work, and I think it’s an important aspect of nursing,” Reese said. She was particularly proud of how her unit would consistently strive to provide a higher level of care — for example, by pursuing advanced certifications or centers of excellence designations for specialties such as bariatric surgery and joint replacement.

For many years, Reese was a preceptor — a veteran nurse who helps to orient new nurses to the hospital, the unit, and their professional responsibilities. It was very rewarding, she said, when she saw people she had mentored progressing to leadership positions.

She also filled an important though less formal role in med-surg, helping to arrange celebrations of co-workers’ birthdays as well as professional achievements and other occasions. Reese joked that she got to know the lady who ran the cake counter at McCaffrey’s very well over the years. Toward the end of her career, though no longer a preceptor, Reese continued to pay close attention to the new staff members joining the unit and the hospital as a whole.

“I am really impressed with the caliber of the nursing staff we are hiring — very bright, committed, compassionate, and caring,” Reese said. “It bodes very well for the future. The hospital will be in good hands.”

“Barbara is a true devotee of the nursing profession who worked selflessly and tirelessly caring for others,” said Carolina Biala, RN, nurse manager of the Surgical Care Unit at PMC. “She was the very essence of what a nurse should be. Her longstanding dedication and passion for nursing was inspiring. I will always emulate her work ethic and pursuit of excellence.”

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Top Performer:

PRINCETON MEDICAL CENTER EARNS QUALITY RECOGNITION

Princeton Medical Center (PMC) was recognized as a top performer in this year’s Bernard A. Birnbaum, MD, Quality Leadership Rankings by Vizient Inc., the nation’s largest healthcare performance improvement company.

Vizient evaluated 365 of its member hospitals in this year’s rankings. Those hospitals were grouped into four cohorts and rated on outcome measures in five areas:

- MORTALITY
- SAFETY
- EFFECTIVENESS
- EFFICIENCY
- PATIENT-CENTEREDNESS

The analysis accounts for performance measures from the Vizient Clinical Data Base, as well as data from the HCAHPS patient experience survey, the CDC National Healthcare Safety Network, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

PMC ranked No. 12 out of 117 hospitals in the large, specialized complex care medical center cohort.

Craig Gronczewski, MD, acting senior vice president for medical affairs, said PMC’s high rating resulted from significant gains in performance related to mortality, safety, effectiveness, and patient-centeredness.

The Vizient rankings are a valuable tool, Gronczewski said, because they provide a broad-based analysis of the hospital’s performance in Fiscal Year 2021, which ended June 30. Other major rating systems are typically based on older data.

“At PMC and throughout Princeton Health, we are committed to providing high-quality care and an exceptional patient experience,” Gronczewski said. “The Vizient rankings give us a real-time, evidence-based overview of how we are doing, and that enables us to be nimble in identifying and addressing opportunities for improvement.”

Congratulations to all Princeton Health employees and medical staff members whose work supports clinical care and the patient experience at PMC.

Congratulations to all other Penn Medicine hospital entities, which similarly received high ratings from Vizient for performance in their comparative groups.
GOONIES!
What could be more nostalgic than a drive-in movie? How about if that drive-in movie is a timeless, family-friendly adventure like The Goonies?

Released in 1985, The Goonies was a smash hit with Generation X and Millennials kids, first in the multiplexes and later on home video. Last month, now-grown Gen Xers and Millennials at Princeton Health got the chance to see the movie again on the big screen and share the experience with their families.

All Princeton Health employees and medical staff members were invited to a pop-up of outdoor screenings, held September 24 and September 25 in an employee parking lot at Princeton Medical Center.

Jodi Paltoruk, assistant vice president, Princeton House Behavioral Health–Outpatient, and her husband Kevin Paltoruk, a Network Operations Center analyst at, Princeton Health, brought their sons Hayden and Chase to one of the screenings (Kevin, Hayden, and Chase are pictured above.)

"Just wanted to thank the organization for hosting this," Jodi wrote in an email shared with the event organizers. "It was super fun and our kids had a blast. Great fall family night out."

This is the second year in a row that Princeton Health hosted outdoor screenings to give staff members a safe night out at the movies. Thank you to staff members at Transportation and Community Wellness who worked behind the scenes bringing it all together.

THE FACTS ON COVID-19 VACCINE BOOSTER SHOTS

AM I ELIGIBLE?
Employers and medical staff members are eligible for booster shots if they received:
- their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least six months ago; OR
- a single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago.

WHERE CAN I GET A BOOSTER SHOT?
Health staff can help correct that issue. Email PMPH-COVID19VaccineQuestions@ pennmedicine.upenn.edu for assistance.

ARE BOOSTER SHOTS REQUIRED?
No, the shot is optional at this time. CAN I GET A COVID-19 BOOSTER SHOT AND FLU VACCINATION AT THE SAME TIME?
Yes. There is no recommended waiting period between vaccinations.

QUESTIONS?
Email them to PMPH-COVID19VaccineQuestions@ pennmedicine.upenn.edu.

Seasonal Influenza

All employees, physicians, allied staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants, and students working at Princeton Health facilities must receive a flu shot or document a medical or religious exemption by Tuesday, November 23, 2021.

Exemptions for medical and religious reasons that were approved last year will carry over to this year. Individuals also have the option to receive their mandatory flu shots elsewhere.

Forms to document outside vaccinations or to request new medical or religious exemptions can be found on the Princeton Health intranet.

Once you are on the intranet, navigate to Princeton HR Resources Forms and Information. My Forms.

You can also download the forms directly using the links below—
  —Vaccinated elsewhere: https://tinyurl.com/3y6t6fjy
  —Medical exemption: https://tinyurl.com/2myj6yjk
  —Religious exemption: https://tinyurl.com/3ihf7tw

Completed forms may be emailed to PMPH-fluforms@pennmedicine.upenn.edu or delivered by mail or in person to:
  Occupational Health, 5 Plainsboro Road, Suite 570, Plainsboro, NJ 08536.

More than Pink: Princeton Health Team Raises Funds, Awareness

Thank you to the staff members and special guests who represented Penn Medicine Princeton Health at this year’s Komen New Jersey MORE THAN PINK Walk, held October 3 at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, N.J. The walk raised more than $639,000 to support breast cancer research, education, screening, and treatment.

Princeton Health staff on the walking team included, in alphabetical order: Maria Bonerovic; Cynthia Cabanasso, RN; Karen Davidson, RN; Kelly Gray, PT; RN; Craig Harley; Adrienne Karon; Mary Kicienski, RN; Lori Leonard, RN; Jennifer Lister, RN; Michelle M. Mauzy; RN; Debbie Miller, RN; Suzanne Njoluck; and Patricia O’Donnell, RN.

They were joined by family members, along with Daisy Newsom and Terry Berheitha, two representatives of Ovarians at Riverwalk, an age-restricted community on the Princeton Medical Center campus.