Twice as Nice: PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL EARNSMAGNET DESIGNATION again!

At 9 a.m. on September 16, Pennsylvania Hospital’s nursing team heard the words they’d been waiting for. “It is my absolute honor and privilege to officially notify you that the commission has unanimously voted to confer Magnet designation,” said Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, DNP, chair of the Commission for the Magnet Recognition Program®, prompting whooping cheers and resounding claps to erupt in Zubrow Auditorium and across the hospital. The call — which coincidentally came on the one-year anniversary of Chief Nursing Officer Elizabeth Craig, DNP, RN, FACHE joining the hospital — confirmed that after four years of diligent work, three days of site visits, and seven weeks of anticipation, PAH successfully earned the nation’s gold-standard designation for nursing excellence for the second time.

“This is a really special occasion in a very unusual time,” Craig said. “Words truly can’t express my gratitude for our clinical nurses, nurse managers, clinical nurse educators, nursing coordinators, directors — everybody. We couldn’t have achieved this without the relentless commitment of every member of the Pennsylvania Hospital team.”

Only about nine percent of hospitals nationwide have earned Magnet designation, which recognizes elite nursing cultures characterized by quality patient care, innovation, evidence-based practice, empowerment, and professionalism. Led by Florrie Vanek, MSN, RN, NE-BC, director of Nursing Professional Practice and the Magnet Program, PAH’s nursing team embarked on their second Magnet journey almost immediately after the hospital received its first recognition in 2016. This rigorous process began with the meticulous development of a document that laid out more than 70 unique examples of how PAH pursues excellence every day.

PAH excelled in each of the criteria areas and earned high praise for the expertly crafted document, which meant it was time to move onto the next stage: a site visit. Shortly before the July visit, PAH learned that it would be virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The appraisers noted that Pennsy truly set the standard for virtual visits, remarking that they could feel the team’s camaraderie and the hospital’s familial atmosphere through their screens. “They said that they really felt like they were here with us, and we heard time and time again that they wished they could be part of our team,” Vanek said.

The appraisers complimented several of PAH’s innovative projects and praised the professional development and education opportunities available for nursing staff. Above all, though, the Magnet team was extremely impressed by PAH’s interprofessional collaboration — so much so that they awarded a special exemplar recognition.

In their final report, the appraisers pointed to the COVID-19 Response Team co-led by Craig and chief medical officer Dan Feinberg, MD, as an example of this exemplar-worthy teamwork, noting that PAH’s redeployment efforts, comprehensive communication strategies, and support provided to staff aligned with multiple best practices and could serve as an effective blueprint for similar challenges in the future.

The appraisers also lauded PAH’s “strong collaborative” teams and their utilization of “creative and out of the box thinking towards ensuring care coordination,” pointing to examples like the TeamsSTEPPS® training that taught Women’s Health Division staff how to prevent adverse events from reaching patients, the de-escalation programs developed by the nursing and Behavioral Health teams, and the interprofessional makeup of teams like the Surgical Liaison Program and Patient Progression Task Force.

“I’m very proud that we were able to illustrate the value we place on interprofessional collaboration. The exemplar that we received really speaks to how hard we work to break down silos and deliver coordinated care,” Vanek said. “Yes, the fact that we achieved this success after leadership transitions and in the middle of a global pandemic speaks to the incredible resilience of our nursing team and partners.”

Congratulations to everyone who played a part in this outstanding achievement — and keep up the momentum for Magnet journey 3.0!

MAGNET RECOGNIZED ANNUALLY FOR EXCELLENCE IN NURSING

Penn Medicine

WHAT’S NEW

VANTAGE POINT

THERESA LARIVEE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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So much has changed due to the pandemic, but the Good Samaritan spirit that drives our work at Pennsylvania Hospital has only strengthened. Every day and in all corners of the hospital, our staff consistently go the extra mile and prioritize the safety and care of our patients. And even amid the era of COVID-19, our employees continue to engage with the people that we serve through community outreach.

Our Penn Medicine CARES Grant winners are still helping their underserved neighbors thrive, and generous donations have poured into the Pennsy Pantry, ensuring that every staff member can put food on the table. Employees championed the Penn Votes initiative and helped patients register to vote and request mail-in ballots. The teams at Hall-Mercer Community Mental Health Center have also overcome countless obstacles to ensure community members struggling with mental health issues, homelessness, and behavioral health crises can still get the care they need — with one case manager even calling an Uber for her client and remaining on the phone with him throughout his ride to offer support as he traveled to take a COVID-19 test. Our staff have shown time and time again that no barrier can keep them from helping those in need.

An exemplar of this was Helena E. Boyle, a longtime Hall-Mercer outreach specialist and advocate who passed away in September. Helena touched so many lives, and it is my hope that as you read about her incredible work in this month’s issue, you will be inspired to make meaningful connections in your own communities. These are especially difficult times for all of us. Remember that as you continue to serve and care deeply for others, please extend this same empathy to yourself. As we mourn those lost and continuously adapt to professional and personal changes, I encourage everyone to look through the mental health and wellness resources offered by Penn COBALT, an online support hub that also offers connections with peers, resilience coaches, therapists, and psychiatrists. Our Employee Assistance Program also offers confidential, 24/7 support. While the pandemic may require us to remain physically apart, we will all get through this time together.

Penn Medicine
**PMX WEEK 2020: A SPOTLIGHT ON “SHOWING UP”**

Social distancing was no barrier to “being present” during Penn Medicine Experience (PMX) Week at Pennsylvania Hospital. Held each October, PMX Week encourages staff across the health system to take time to celebrate their colleagues and renew their commitment to being compassionate, present, empowered, collaborative, and accountable.

This year, PMX Week was focused on being present and engaging thoughtfully with patients, peers, and community members. In a time where we’re all urged to remain separated, finding ways to make connections is more challenging and important than ever.

In addition to thematic system-wide activities scheduled throughout the week—a talk given by author Brad Aronson about his book *HumanKind: Changing the World One Small Act at a Time*, virtual yoga and musical expression therapy sessions, and a webinar focused on mindfulness, for example—Penn’s own PMX Week planning committee worked together to create slates of celebratory activities for their colleagues.

“In a sense, this was the ‘easiest’ PMX Week we’ve ever planned because the pandemic prevented us from organizing a lot of in-person activities, but it also challenged us to get creative because we wanted staff to still feel seen and celebrated,” said Eileen Murphy, MSL, director of Patient & Guest Relations and Volunteer Services, who co-led committee with Carolyn Tobin, director of Food & Nutrition and Environmental Services.

“PMX Week is about recognizing our employees’ efforts and giving back. Even if we had to do it in a different way this year, we were committed to making it special for our staff, all of whom have gone above and beyond this year.”

Though PMX Week had a different feel this year, the committee preserved several annual activities, such as the candy and carnation distributions. After the enthusiastic response to last year’s employee art show, a virtual showcase was also held all week, giving staff the opportunity to get a glimpse of their colleagues’ artistic abilities. More than 20 works were highlighted in an online slideshow, ranging from photographs of the city skyline, to sketched portraits of friends, to vibrant pastel landscapes, to a COVID-19 quilt.

The Patient Advocacy Awards ceremony was also adapted in order to recognize exceptional team members who consistently champion patient- and family-centered care and improve the Penn Medicine Experience. The 10 winners and their managers came together in Zubrow Auditorium, while their peers cheered them on virtually. Congratulations to Terrence Bontell, Jennifer Lee, Rickey Lee, Carrie Maxwell, MSN, RN; Marie McKinney, Julian Slowinski, PsyD; Christine Tiernery, RN, MSN, SPHR; Carolyn Tobin; Ross Weisberg; and Tanya Weston!

The festivities wound down on Friday, and while social distancing guidelines prevented the normal closing celebration in Elmo Garden, the committee ensured that PMX Week 2020 still ended with ice cream, pretzels, and some festive fall fun.

Staff members had another chance to show off their creative chops through a pumpkin contest. The pumpkin that won in a landslide wasn’t painted or carved, though—it was smashed! Titled “If 2020 Was a Pumpkin” and created by Elizabeth Fiorini, DPT, CCI, manager of Occupational and Physical Therapy, the first-prize pumpkin hilariously captured many people’s feelings about this tough year.

Thank you to everyone who made this year’s PMX Week another success and for continuing to show up and be present for your patients, colleagues, and community during such an unprecedented time.

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**In Memoriam:**

**MOURNING THE LOSS OF A COURAGEOUS COMMUNITY Champion**

For nearly 22 years, Helena E. Boyle made life-changing connections with vulnerable people as an outreach specialist for Hall-Mercer Community-Mental Health Center. Day after day, Boyle took to the streets of Philadelphia and worked tirelessly to build relationships with individuals struggling with substance use disorder, homelessness, and mental health crises. On September 9, she passed away suddenly at 57. The son of an unforgettable mentor, loyal friend, and fierce protector of the underdog, Hall-Mercer, Pennsylvania Hospital, and the city hard.

“Helena was never one to back down in the face of a challenging or uncomfortable situation; she wasn’t afraid to go to the top to get the resources she needed. Her focus was on meeting the needs of the people on the streets and educating people who didn’t understand why people are on the streets,” said Patty Inacker, DSW, MBA, administrator of the Behavioral Health Service Line, who worked with Boyle for more than two decades. “She didn’t put on any airs, but she took great pride in who she was, how far she came, and in her work. She was a mentor for so many — the gold standard for community outreach.”

Boyle was committed to meeting people where they were and offering them hope, consistently, but at their own pace. She understood the power of ensuring people felt seen; whether she met someone for the first time or the tenth, she treated them with dignity, respect, and endless compassion. She shared banana bread and coffee with underserved community members in Kensington, helped homeless individuals stay safe during Code Red and Code Blue weather conditions, and became a familiar sight in the Jefferson and Suburban train stations, where she worked alongside SEPTA police. Clad in her yellow safety vest and carrying a backpack filled with fresh socks and Wawa gift cards, Boyle was always ready to strike up a conversation and share information about community resources.

She even temporarily took custody of a baby named Bella. Boyle had previously helped Bella’s father find a shelter, recruited DAV nursing colleagues to teach him how to properly care for her, and provided him with diapers, clothes, and toys. When Bella’s parents were unfortunately arrested, Boyle stepped up again, volunteering to care for her for a few months before she was placed into foster care. “Helena absolutely saved Bella’s life by living on the streets,” Inacker said. “That will stay with me for all my life.”

Boyle frequently noted that if she could connect just one person with the treatment they needed and get them off the streets, she’d consider that a success — and she did need many, many times over. Her legacy of radical love, unconditional empathy, and selfless service will inspire our staff and community for years to come.

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