

**B** BLESSING  
HOSPITAL  
MAIN ENTRANCE

**B** BLESSING  
HOSPITAL

# BLESSING HOSPITAL NURSING ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Fiscal Year 2020: October 1, 2019  
through September 30, 2020

**Alison Cantrell, RN**, is one of the many nurses who responded to the COVID-19 pandemic at Blessing Health System in heroic fashion. **Read about Alison and some of our other heroic RNs on pages 18-19.**

## NURSING MISSION STATEMENT

Nursing excellence—touching the lives  
of our community one person at a time

## NURSING MISSION

### Nursing Excellence:

Touching the lives of our communities, one person at a time

## NURSING VISION

### Leading the way for professional excellence in nursing by:

Having a professional practice environment that attracts and retains highly qualified nursing staff

Being recognized for providing superior holistic care to the communities we serve

Striving for safety, excellence and quality patient outcomes through innovative nursing care with the advancement of evidence-based practice and research

## NURSING EXECUTIVE TEAM

Lori Wilkey, John McDowell, Angela Culbertson, Jessica Booth, Tim Tranor

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# PROGRESS MADE AS VIRUS RAGED

By Tim Tranor, DNP, MBA, RN, Chief Nursing Officer

**Blessing Health System nurses weathered the COVID-19 pandemic through all of its ebbs and flows over the last year.** Early in March 2020, tents were being placed outside the Emergency Department to triage COVID patients, and nurses began managing the 24/7 COVID hotline. As I reflect over last year, nursing has accomplished so much.

Nursing Professional Development collaborated with leaders throughout the organization to cross-train 477 staff members to assist in clinical areas during patient surges. The 28th & Chestnut location was converted from a meeting center to the COVID-19 drive-thru testing center. The hospital landscape was changed to implement negative pressure isolation rooms to accommodate the increase in patients with COVID-19. Together, nurses and leaders worked side-by-side to staff and operate the units to care for patients.

During the surge, Blessing Health System banded together to provide needed care to patients. Blessing Physician Services and non-clinical Blessing Hospital departments united to help the clinical floors on all shifts. High-quality nursing care never wavered and continued to be the driving force throughout the organization throughout the last year.

Throughout the last year, nurses have continued to make strides in shared governance, evidence-based practice, nurse-sensitive quality outcomes, patient satisfaction, clinical excellence, and professional development. Nurses continued to impact quality outcomes in areas such as central-line bloodstream infections, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, falls with injury, venous thromboembolism prevention, and *Clostridium difficile* infections.

Shared governance has been busy making improvements to the electronic health record by implementing auto-enter functionality to decrease the time nursing spends charting, creating customized clinical summaries to improve hand-off communication, a professional development platform to improve the collection of education, certification and annual evaluations, and adding visual cues to alert staff of potentially violent patients. These improvements have enhanced patient outcomes and nursing practice in the organization as we continue to build a culture of safety.

Evidence-based practice has continued to make leaps and bounds in the organization. Over the last year, four Blessing Hospital nurses were published in statewide and national publications sharing the successes of Blessing Hospital. Nurses continue to find new and creative ways to improve the culture of nursing and quality care throughout the health system.

The annual nursing report will feature not only Blessing Hospital this year. This report will also celebrate nursing across the health system with nursing features from Hannibal Clinic, Blessing Physician Services, Illini Community

(Continued on next page)

# WHERE IN THE MAGNET® WORLD ARE WE?

**B**lessing Hospital is well on its way to Magnet® designation! With the official application submitted in August 2019, **Sara Sullens MSN, RN, Practice Manager**, has been busy writing stories of nursing excellence.

"It's the best part of my job," said Sara. "I have the honor of writing the stories about nursing here at Blessing. I get to experience all the outstanding work being done on every unit firsthand."

The next step for Blessing will be to submit the Magnet® document to the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) on August 2, 2021. After a successful document submission, a site visit from ANCC will occur sometime after the first of the year in 2022. Tim Tranor, DNP, MBA, RN, Chief Nursing Officer is excited about how the journey is progressing.

"To be able to highlight the teamwork, compassionate care, and quality outcomes is truly amazing," he stated.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have made the journey more challenging, but it truly put nursing in the spotlight. Tim went on to say, "I am so proud to be part of the nursing team here at Blessing. We are elevating nursing practice, nursing culture and patient outcomes, and that is something we need to celebrate." ■

*Sara Sullens, MSN, RN, Practice Manager, Nursing Administration*



*(Continued from previous page)*

Hospital, and our newest member, Keokuk Hospital. I want to welcome Keokuk Hospital to the Blessing Health System. We look forward to sharing successes and growth with the Keokuk community and becoming the provider of choice in their region.

Nurses continue to be the driving force of the ever-evolving health care landscape. The continued growth of shared governance, professional development, and evidence-based practice will drive nursing patient outcomes and successes at Blessing Health System. This annual report will highlight all the amazing feats and endeavors nurses accomplished across the health system last year. ■

**The Magnet Recognition Program focuses on advancing three goals within each Magnet organization:**

1. Promoting quality in a setting that supports professional practice
2. Identifying excellence in the delivery of nursing services to patients
3. Disseminating best practices in nursing services

**The Magnet Recognition Program measures quality in five ways:**

1. Transformational Leadership
2. Structural Empowerment
3. Exemplary Professional Practice
4. New Knowledge, Innovation, and Improvement
5. Empirical Quality Results

**Application for Magnet recognition is a series of steps:**

1. Submission of an electronic application
2. Submission of written documentation demonstrating qualitative and quantitative evidence regarding patient care and outcomes
3. An on-site visit followed by an appraisal report
4. Review of the appraisal report and a vote by the Commission on Magnet Recognition



# Safely continuing community outreach during pandemic



## Despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Blessing Hospital nurses found ways to give back to the community.

Prior to the pandemic, in November 2019, Blessing Health System hosted its first-ever Family Fun Day and Health Fair at the Quincy University Health and Fitness Center. The event brought together more than 200 community members for no-cost health screenings, hands-on activities, and health education. More than a dozen Blessing Health System nurses were on hand to help coordinate activities and screenings, including a no-cost hemoglobin A1C screening offered by staff of the Blessing Diabetes Center. The hemoglobin A1c is a blood test that can help diagnose diabetes or can be used to monitor blood sugar control by providing an average of blood sugar levels during the previous three months.

“Offering a no-cost A1c screening to the community opens the door to target prevention and education,” explained **Deb Derhake, RN, Program Coordinator** for the Blessing Diabetes Center. “Engaging with health professionals in community outreach services such as no-cost screenings is a leading way in which adults obtain health

information and can be the start of connecting those in need with the services they require, which can lead to better health outcomes,” she concluded.

No-cost blood pressure screenings, education on how to recognize a stroke, and a stroke risk assessment were also part of the health fair activities. Nurses also took the opportunity to train children and adults on the signs and symptoms of a heart attack, as well as how to perform hands-only CPR.

Beyond screenings and hands-on activities, health education was also a prime focus with topics discussed, such as the dangers of smoking, car seat safety, and child and adolescent mental health resources. “We wanted the event to be fun and engaging for families, but we also want to provide our community members with information and resources to better understand and manage their own health,” explained event organizer **Laura Wietholder, MSN, RN, Blessing Health System Community Outreach Coordinator**.

Blessing Health System nurses also stepped up to help out with a number of events in February 2020 in honor of Heart Month, including a no-cost community cholesterol screening. However, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020,



traditional community outreach came to a halt. Despite the challenges, Blessing Health System nurses found innovative methods to ensure outreach and health education continued in the community. A series of virtual educational events was launched, and critical education on stroke and heart attack was incorporated into mailed marketing pieces. Social media also became an outlet for outreach.

“We looked for ways to maintain our community connection and ensure we were providing people with timely and relevant information, while still being conscious of the concerns and precautions related to COVID-19,” said Wietholder.

In total, nurses volunteered more than 100 combined hours serving at events and health screenings to benefit the community. ■

**“NO ACT OF KINDNESS,  
NO MATTER HOW SMALL  
IS EVER WASTED.”**

AESOP



**Blessing Hospital Professional Practice Model is a schematic that symbolizes beliefs, values, theories and systems for nursing practice.**



# SHARED GOVERNANCE, SHARED SUCCESS



Blessing Hospital's shared governance structure has continued to soar after a 2019 reboot. While nurses were on the frontline of the pandemic response, they also continued work on initiatives behind the scenes.

- The Professional Practice Council has been working on a mentoring program for nurses. Blessing has always had a robust, unofficial mentoring program, but feedback from nurse residents suggested looking at a formal mentorship program to give extra support to new nurses during their transition to practice. A focus of the council has been creating a healthy work culture through understanding compassion fatigue and how to reduce nursing burnout.
- The Nursing Practice Council devoted its time to early mobility of patients. Early mobility is an evidence-based intervention to reduce length of stay and improve patient outcomes. Early mobility has been a collaborative approach with the CNA/PCA Council.
- The Outcomes Team continued to impact nursing sensitive outcomes. During 2020, *C diff* and VTE rates remained low. There has been a continued downward trend of CAUTI and CLABSI with new initiatives emerging to keep rates low. The team is very proud that it has been able to sustain a low falls with injury rate over the last year. The team has been very dedicated to keeping our patients safe, and that has shown in maintaining our improvements from last year.
- The CNA/PCA Council formed in the fall of 2019 as a way to empower nursing assistive personnel in their work. They have had a busy year partnering with the Nursing Practice Council on mobility and improving documentation of intake and output.
- The Evidence-Based Practice and Research Council transitioned to a working council by splitting into two teams: EBP and research. The EBP team worked on implementing new practices for wound documentation and mentoring nurse residents on their EBP projects. The research team is working on studies surrounding nurse retention and joy in the workplace.
- The Clinical Documentation Council restarted and has focused on documentation practices and implementing changes to improve documentation in the electronic health record. ■

# The Nursing Shared Governance Councils that help empower us all

**The Nursing Practice Council** focuses on the practice of nursing. The council works to continuously improve the care and service provided to patients and their families. The council focuses on hospital-wide improvements based on strategic goals and how to best coordinate patient care and nursing standards between departments and councils.

**Professional Practice Council** nurtures the growth of the nurse professional practice environment as defined by the Five Components of Magnet, including the implementation of nursing standards of practice, nursing specialty certification, attainment of BSN and higher degrees, and the healthy work environment. This council also focuses on recruitment and retention of nurses. The council conducts an annual review of scope and standards and the nursing peer-review process.

**Evidence-Based Practice/Research Council** builds and maintains the organizational infrastructure for evidence-based practice and research. The council's goal is to improve patient care through innovation.

**Clinical Documentation Council** develops, revises and implements the electronic documentation system at the point of care. This council ensures that the nurse has a documentation process that enhances patient care delivery.

**Outcomes Team Council** is an interdisciplinary committee that focuses on increasing patient safety and nurse-sensitive outcomes. The committee specifically looks at the SAFE program including fall scale and interventions, SAFE patient handling, falls data including but not limited to trends, increase or decrease in overall falls and falls with injury, hospital-acquired pressure injuries and preventable DVT occurrences.

**CNA-PCA-Tech Council** is the newest council and is a specialty council for CNAs, PCAs and techs. This council discusses the workflow for support staff, how to reduce silos and assist with standardization of processes and focuses on role responsibilities. ■



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### SHARED GOVERNANCE MODEL DEPICTING OUR COUNCIL STRUCTURE

\*Interprofessional Councils include (but are not limited to):

- Falls Committee
- Stroke Team
- Heart First and Chest Pain Committee





# CAREER CARE: Process added to enhance reaching development goals

**Professional development is ingrained in the culture of Blessing Hospital. The Career Care Clinical Ladder Program has grown each year.**

While the Career Care Program is designed for clinical RNs, the PRIDE program is for non-clinical RNs. The last year saw many participants achieve their professional development goals.

This year, the Career Care Program added a process to help RNs meet their professional development goals more quickly. If nurses obtain certification or their BSN after their letter of intent was placed, they can submit an addendum to their letter of intent. This addendum allows the nurse to move up to a new level rewarding them for their hard work.

We saw many new participants in 2020, like **Jessica Maggart, BSN, RN, RN-BC**, who were able to take advantage of the addendum. Jessica originally qualified for a Level 3 when she first applied, but was able to submit her addendum to advance to a Level 5.

“The Career Care Program inspires nurses to strive for more opportunities, like certification,” said Jessica. “The Career Care Program is a valuable part of professional development at Blessing Hospital because it holds you accountable to your profession to grow and advance your career. I am thankful that Blessing Hospital was able to offer this program to push me to complete my BSN and certification.” ■



## CAREER CARE 2020

### LEVEL 3

Gussie Conoyer  
Kendra Harris  
Lacy Nichols

### LEVEL 4

Sarah Andrew  
Leah Boyer  
Kristen Devine  
Lisa Farrell  
Dawn Gamble  
Alice Glasgow  
Erica Hilgenbrinck  
Abbie Hochgraber  
Laurie Jansen  
Lisa Kerker

Brandi MacArthur  
Ann St. Clair  
Shane Stanford  
Ben Thompson  
Karrie Voss

### LEVEL 5

Stacy Adams  
Alicia Ahern  
Callie Asmann  
Julie Cassens  
Dawn Crabtree  
Teresa Darnell  
Deb Derhake  
Kaylan Drebes  
Mandy Edmunds  
Bethany Haage  
Angie Hancox

Kellea Hendrian  
Jennifer Hermann  
Cindy Hoewing  
Ashley Huber  
Jessica Maggart  
Lisa Neisen  
Tonya Newell  
Jessica Nuebel  
Amy Oshner  
Megan Paul  
Emily Robinson  
Rita Schaefer  
Wendy Walker  
Nicole Walton  
Diana Weatherford  
Laura Wietholder  
Shanna Winter

## PRIDE 2019

### LEVEL 3

Michael Richard  
Melissa Roush  
Sheryl Sullivan

### LEVEL 4

Jennifer Dickhut  
Helen Zimmerman

## PRIDE 2020

### LEVEL 3

Michael Richard  
Sheryl Sullivan

### LEVEL 4

Becky Charlton  
Jennifer Dickhut  
Dolores  
Haschemeyer  
Angie Loos  
Melissa Roush  
Eydie Tipton  
Helen Zimmerman

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

1. Provide an opportunity for staff nurses to develop a career path that recognizes professional practice excellence.
2. Promote leadership and development of frontline staff.



## RECOGNITION

1. Attract and retain high-quality nursing staff at the bedside.
2. Recognize and reward frontline staff who engage in clinical inquiry, education, research projects and evidence-based projects to improve empirical outcomes.

## AUTONOMY

1. Expand nurses clinical accountability and decision-making authority.
2. Empower nurses through shared governance.



## CAREER CARE for clinical RNs, C3s and UBEs

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## EDUCATION

1. Promotes lifelong pursuit of expertise of the clinical nurse.
2. Encourages exemplary practice, new knowledge and innovation.



### 3. Compensation Recognition

Staff RN 3 \$1500 = \$.82/hr\*

Staff RN 4 \$3000 = \$1.65/hr\*

Staff RN 5 \$5000 = \$2.75/hr\*

\*Over 26 pay periods on hours worked; total may vary based on FTE status.

WHAT'S  
NEW?



# Blessing offers new caregiving opportunity

EMPLOYMENT OF  
CNAs IS PROJECTED  
TO GROW **8%**  
THROUGH 2029

UNITED STATES BUREAU  
OF LABOR STATISTICS

*CNA student, Daelin DeWeese,  
and instructor, Jonna Egan*



The need for health care workers is growing. To meet the demand for a particular category of employee, Blessing Hospital has established a new certified nurse assistant (CNA) training program, offered at no cost to those hired by the hospital to be nursing assistants.

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics says that overall employment of CNAs is projected to grow 8% through 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. As the baby-boomer population ages, nursing assistants will be needed to help care for an increasing number of older patients.

A CNA helps patients with activities of daily living and other health care needs under the direct supervision of a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse.

To take the tuition-free Blessing CNA training program, a person must first be hired as a full-time or part-time Blessing Hospital nursing assistant. Then, as part of their job orientation, they will take the training program during their workday, with no tuition, while getting paid to learn. Books are also provided.

Requirements to be hired as a nurse assistant at Blessing Hospital and to take the tuition-free certification course are to have a high school diploma or equivalent and good verbal communication skills.

Upon completion of the tuition-free program, the employee is required to take the state certification exam and is responsible for the \$75 exam fee.

"Becoming a CNA can be a worthwhile, fulfilling career goal for a person, or it can be the first step in a health care career," said **Jonna Egan, RN, CNA program coordinator**, Blessing Hospital. ■



# NURSES FIND SUPPORT ON CERTIFICATION JOURNEY

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*“As a nurse, we have the opportunity to heal the heart, mind, soul and body of our patients, their families and ourselves. They may not remember your name, but they will never forget the way you made them feel.”*

*Maya Angelou*

## **Blessing Hospital is proud to employ more than 200**

**certified nurses.** Blessing has a culture rich in professional growth and development. After two years of experience, nurses are able to consider taking a test for certification. Being certified is a great way to sum up your clinical experience, dedication to patients and personal commitment to excellence. Certification contributes to optimal patient outcomes and advances personal and professional growth.

There are two ways Blessing Hospital promotes certification within the organization. Organizationally, there is the Clinical Certification Reimbursement policy that refunds the cost of certification after passing the exam. For nursing-specific certifications, a voucher program offsets the cost for taking the exam.

Recently **Amy Wingerter, BSN, RN, CNML**, achieved Certified Nurse Manager and Leader (CNML) status. Becoming a certified nurse was a professional development goal of Amy's. She knew she had met all the eligibility requirements, she just needed to carve out time to study and test.

“Working in nursing professional development and as a coordinator of the Nurse Residency Program was the push I needed to achieve my goal,” she said. “We are role models for our staff and new nurses. I wanted to be able to provide them resources in all aspects of nursing including professionalism and finding opportunities to grow.”

Amy shared that being certified is a great way to validate your knowledge and demonstrate your dedication to the profession of nursing. “Blessing Hospital supports nurses in achieving certification through reimbursing fees and with professional time to take the exam,” she concluded. ■

# Blessing Hospital nurse retention program earns two national accreditations



## The Blessing Hospital program to retain new nurses in its workforce, known as a Nurse Residency Program, has earned two national accreditations.

One accreditation was granted by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). The ANCC certifies and recognizes health care organizations that promote nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes while providing safe, positive work environments. Of 663 nurse residency programs in the country, Blessing is one of only 194 to hold ANCC accreditation.

The United States Department of Labor awarded a separate accreditation to the Blessing program through the ANCC. This is the first year the Labor Department awarded nurse residency program accreditation to those programs that provide individuals with opportunities to obtain workplace-relevant knowledge and progressively advancing skills.

Nurse residency programs are designed to reduce the turnover rate among newly graduated registered nurses (RNs). National figures show 18% of new RNs will change jobs or even professions within the first year after graduation. An additional one-third leave within two years.

The double-digit turnover rates can affect delivery of patient care and labor costs.

Over the course of a year, the Blessing Nurse Residency Program provides support and continuing education in a variety of ways to assist new RNs in the transition from college into their first professional caregiver role. Blessing began its Nurse Residency Program in 2015. To date, nearly 400 RNs have completed the program.

Each nurse residency participant across the country takes a survey at the end of their program to rate their perceived nursing competence and intention to stay at the organization for which they work. Blessing Hospital's survey results consistently exceed those of similar nurse residency programs.

To earn the accreditations, Blessing submitted a 170-page report on its program and its outcomes and passed an on-site survey.

"This is a great honor for the Blessing Hospital Nurse Residency Program to be recognized with dual accreditations because it relates directly to our commitment to

quality care, the nurses who provide that care and the patients who receive it," said **Maureen Kahn, RN, MHA, MSN**, president/chief executive officer, Blessing Health System and Blessing Hospital.

"The fact that we were able to earn these recognitions in the middle of a global pandemic, makes this even more meaningful," she concluded. ■

## GOALS OF NURSE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

- ✓ Assist new graduate nurses in making the transition from advanced beginner nurse to competent professional nurse
- ✓ Develop effective decision-making skills related to clinical judgment and performance
- ✓ Provide clinical nursing leadership at the point of care
- ✓ Strengthen the commitment to nursing
- ✓ Form a professional development plan
- ✓ Incorporate research-based evidence linked to practice outcomes into the care he or she provides

# THE YEAR OF THE NURSE

Each Nurse Week celebration at Blessing Hospital is built on a foundation of its history of nursing excellence, as the excellence of the current staff is honored.

Funds from the estate of **Lauretta M. Eno**, who spent 23 years shaping nursing practice at Blessing Hospital, are used each year for selected Nurse Week activities, including the Advanced Nursing Symposium named after her, and the cash award that goes to the nurse who receives the annual Eno Distinguished Nurse Award.

Lauretta was in the United States Navy Nurse Corps and on duty in Hawaii on December 7, 1914, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. She was on the team that treated the first casualties of the attack that would lead the country into World War II.

After the war, Lauretta earned a double major in nursing education and public health nursing, followed by a master's degree in nursing administration. After earning those degrees, she was hired as Director of Nursing Services and Nursing

Education by Blessing Hospital in 1957. In 1972, she was promoted to the position of the hospital's Assistant Administrator.

"Miss Eno" as she was known affectionately by her coworkers, shaped nursing education and practice at Blessing. Her accomplishments in nursing education include establishing a student loan

program; admitting married students, male students, African American students and older, non-traditional students and the Blessing nursing education program earning full accreditation from the National League for Nursing in 1958.

Her accomplishments in nursing practice at Blessing included starting the intensive care unit, design of medication carts and the charting system, establishing a disaster plan and developing Blessing's Child Care Center, the first on-site center at an Illinois hospital. It was part of Miss Eno's effort to recruit nurses and continues to

attract staff to Blessing today.

Lauretta retired in 1980 and passed away in 2005. She continues to touch the hospital with the donation from her estate that helps fund select Nurse Week activities. ■





# NURSE WEEK 2020 EXCELLENCE AWARD

## Winners

**Congratulations to ALL the Blessing Health System RNs nominated for the 2020 Eno Distinguished Nurse Award!**

The following are some of the words used in the nomination forms submitted for the RNs, LPNs, and ancillary staff who earned recognition for their attitudes and actions during Nurse Week 2020 at Blessing Health System.



### **Lauretta M. Eno Distinguished Nurse Award**

*Jim Wells—Surgical Services*

*"I trust Jim's nursing abilities. He can definitely save you when the ship is sinking. Jim is always getting mentioned in follow-up calls, just proving how wonderful of an impression he leaves on those he cares for. Most recently he actually went to a patient's house who did not have a ride to the hospital to have their surgery and brought them to have their surgery! An amazing coworker." ■*

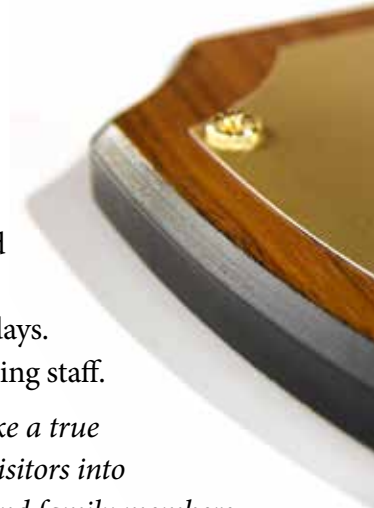


## One Year Wonder Award

### *Katelyn Ufkes, RN—Progressive Care Unit*

This is a new award in 2020, recognizing a registered nurse at Blessing Hospital/Blessing Physician Services who has graduated from nursing school in or after December 2018, and has been at Blessing Hospital/Blessing Physician Services for more than 90 days. This nurse shows promise as an exceptional member of our nursing staff.

*“Katelyn has excellent communication skills that allow her to make a true human connection to ensure each patient has a great experience. She incorporates family and visitors into communication and education. Katelyn has been recognized in rounding by multiple patients and family members. It is obvious that Katelyn is a great role model for her peers and lives the Vision of Blessing Hospital.” ■*



## LPN Excellence Award

### *Shay Dugal, LPN—Blessing Hospital Medical Oncology*

*“Working in the oncology department can be quite challenging, especially emotionally challenging as many of our patients are very ill. We see most of our patients weekly and develop a special bond with each of them. When we have patients who become depressed or sad, Shay came up with the idea to provide our patients with a “sunshine basket.” Shay has presented baskets to a few of our patients, and it truly brightened their days. The sunshine baskets contain a few simple items like candy, snacks, stress ball, etc., and always put a smile on their faces. Shay’s act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention to our patients. I appreciate everything Shay does for our department and patients. She is a true example of an excellent nurse.” ■*



## Partner in Caring Award

### *Tanya Hunt—Ultrasonographer, Non-Invasive Cardiology*

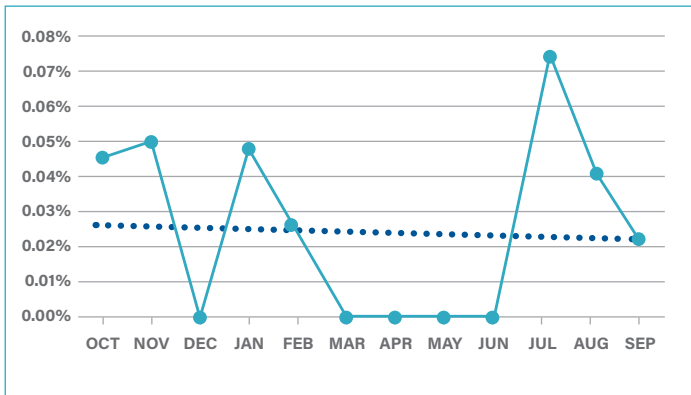
*“A gentleman presented to the non-invasive cardiology department for an echocardiogram. He was loud, agitated, and upset, so much so that it was frightening and upsetting to the other people in the waiting room. Tanya assisted the other sonographer, staying in the room while the exam was being performed, just talking to the patient and soothing him. She discovered that the person had an intellectual disability and was usually accompanied to his appointments by his brother. Due to weather, he was sent to the hospital by bus. Tanya was able to connect with him and assure him, so the test could be completed. During the exam, she noticed a very infected area on his abdomen. Tanya contacted the brother, and he wanted this checked out in the Walk-In Clinic. Tanya explained this to the patient, escorted him to the Walk-In Clinic and stayed with him throughout his wait and exam. Tanya saw past the agitated patient to the true person and made a difference in this patient's hospital visit by ensuring he received the cardiac and medical care he needed. Additionally Tanya gifted this gentleman with paying for his prescriptions to ensure he had needed medications, as well as movie gift cards because going to the movies is his favorite activity.” ■*

# NURSING QUALITY—MAKING A DIFFERENCE

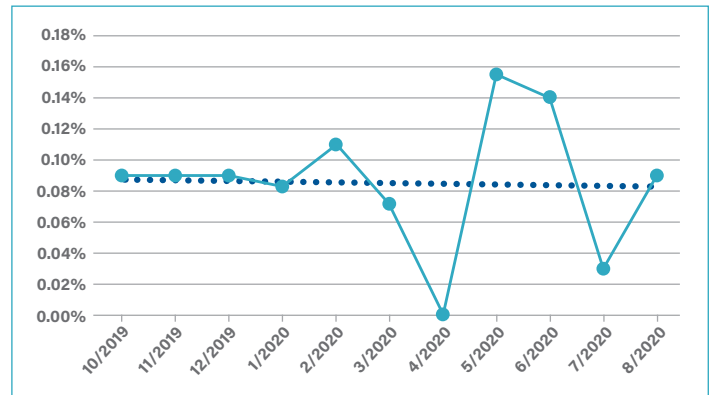
## Nursing-Sensitive Quality Indicators FY2020

Nursing-sensitive indicators are patient care and patient outcomes that are directly affected by nursing practice.

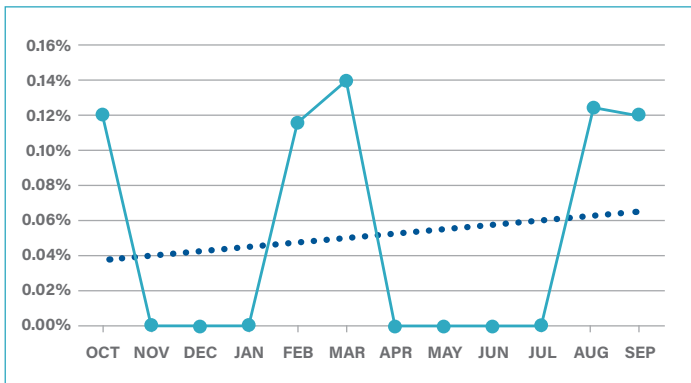
**C. diff rates per 1000 patient days**



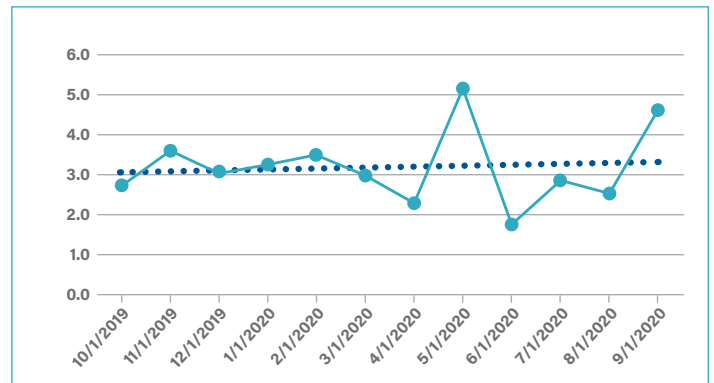
**VTE Rates by month**



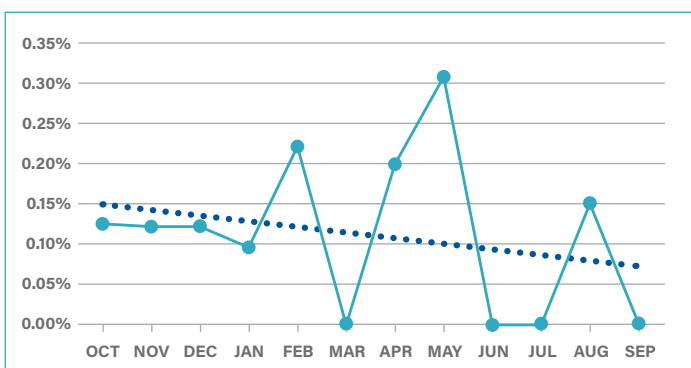
**CAUTI rates per 1000 patient days**



**Falls with injuries per 1000 patient days**



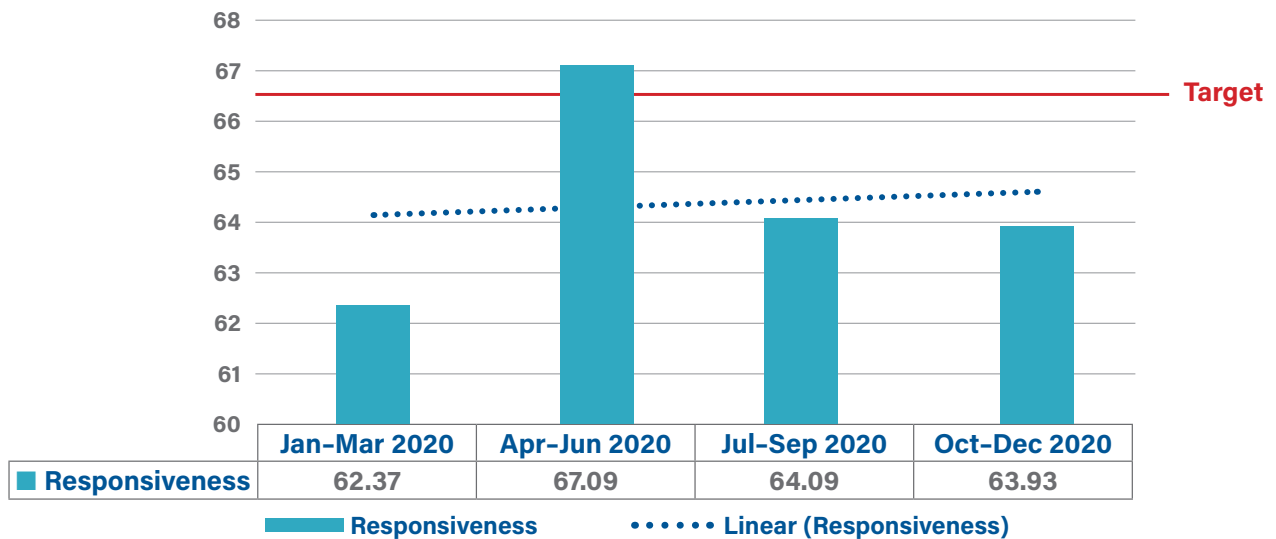
**CLABSI rates per 1000 patient days**



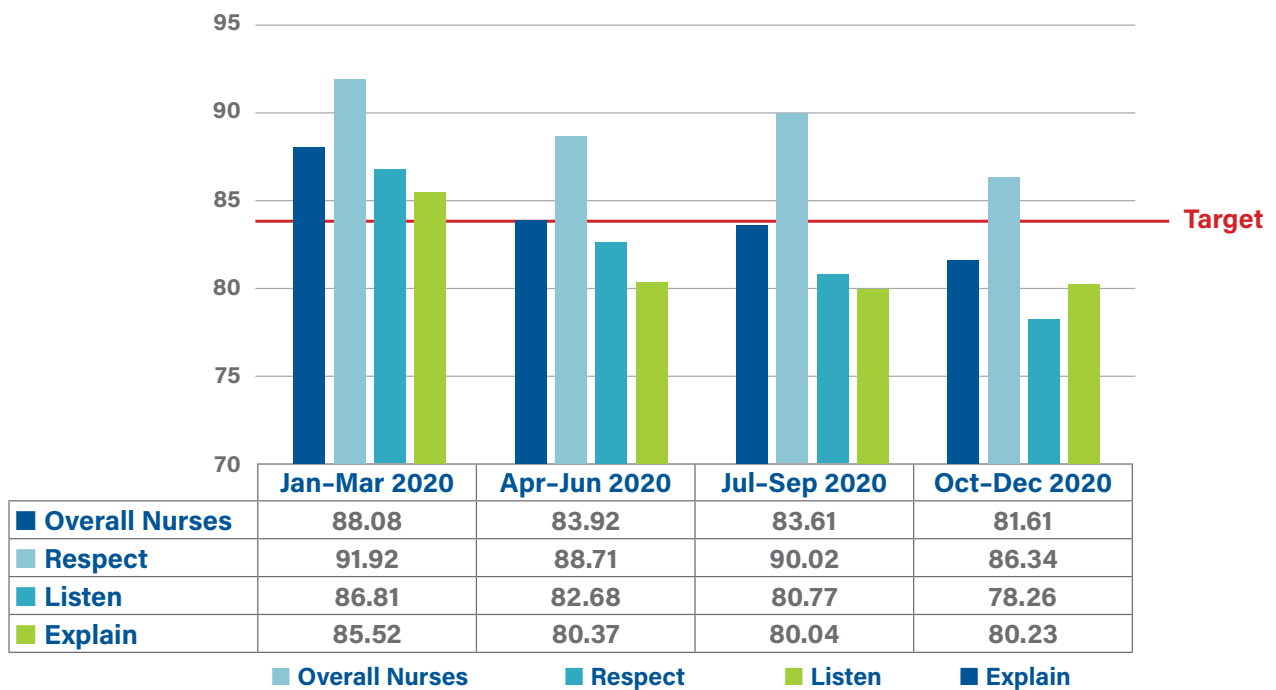


# IN THE LIVES OF OUR PATIENTS

## Nurse responsiveness (HCAHPS Domain)



## Nurses HCAHPS Domain (Includes Respect, Listen, Explain)



# DAISYs

## *Nothing stops excellence*

The outstanding care provided by Blessing Hospital nurses and nursing support staff continued to be recognized through the pandemic with the presentation of DAISY and Honey Bee awards.

DAISY stands for "Diseases Attacking the Immune System." The family of a 33-year-old man, who died of an immune system disorder, began the program in 1999 to honor his memory by recognizing the extraordinary nurses everywhere who make a difference in the lives of people by the work they do every day.

More than 4,500 health care providers worldwide participate in the DAISY award program, and to date, over 135,000 nurses have been recognized with the award.

Patients and their family members, visitors, hospital staff members, doctors and volunteers may recognize the extraordinary care provided by a nurse through submitting a nomination on their behalf.

Here are the 2020 DAISY award winners and a comment from the nomination submitted on their behalf.

### **Oct 2019 Cindy Hoewing, RN — Emergency Center**

Cindy was nominated by family for the care she provided them in the Emergency Center upon the death of the family's father: "In the moment of our family's greatest grief, this professional provided the only care that was left to provide. And it was deeply appreciated. Cindy's service to this family was more than I could have expected."

### **Nov 2019 Angie Buss, RN — Progressive Care Unit**

Angie was nominated by a patient who also was a nursing student: "I was tearful in thinking that I was going to have to drop out of nursing school due to my surgery, but Angie made me feel that I could do anything and told me that I would do well."

### **Dec 2019 Angie Klinner, RN — Adult Psychiatric Services**

Angie was nominated by a person who had never been a Blessing Behavioral Center patient, but had a negative experience during a hospitalization at another provider: "She made me feel at ease in a new situation, in a new hospital when I didn't want to be a patient. Angie introduced me to Blessing with kindness and caring I had never before received."

### **Jan 2020 Pete Condol, RN — Intensive Care Unit**

Pete was nominated by two patients, one who was suffering from blood clots in his lungs: "He was a saint and pulled no punches with the questions I asked. Pete made me feel better that he was there with me. He talked me through that night as I had never gone through pain and lack of breathing like this before. He is top notch."

### **Feb 2020 Sarah Gunder, RN — Blessing Hospice**

Sarah was nominated by the families of two Blessing Hospice patients. One nomination read, in part: "Sarah always greeted him with a smile when she arrived and gave him a hug, even when he wasn't able to respond. The last few weeks of Roger's illness were stressful, but with Sarah's help, we were able to keep Roger from being in pain, and at the end, his passing was peaceful."

### **Mar 2020 McKenna Uplinger, RN — 2 North**

McKenna was nominated by a patient whose foot was being checked regularly after surgery because it felt cold and looked blue. The patient said: "McKenna saved my life that night. I will be forever thankful for her dedication and pray she will continue nursing and listening to that small whisper that urges her to follow her instincts in life-and-death situations."

**Apr 2020** No presentation due to COVID-19 pandemic response.



**May 2020 Macy Waterkotte, RN —**  
*Blessed Beginnings/Obstetrics*

Macy was nominated by a mother who had previously experienced a miscarriage. The nomination stated: "It was her attitude and energy that made me believe that I really could do this and there was absolutely no reason to worry because she had us. I would not have been able to have such an amazing birth experience without her."

**June 2020 Chassidy Schroder, RN —**  
*Blessing Home Care*

Chassidy was nominated by the wife of a man to whom she provided care. The man, who lives with Alzheimer's disease, had suffered a heart attack and required home care: "Chassidy is well educated and is able to bring that information to us in words we understand. With my husband's condition, he has good days and bad days. She uplifts us in a very positive way."

**July 2020 Becky Bliefnick, RN —** *Emergency Center*

Becky was nominated by the wife of a man who came to the Blessing Emergency Center for treatment of a spider bite. Because of COVID-19 visiting restrictions at the time, the woman could not accompany her husband into the ER: "After a few hours and multiple tests, he called saying they were taking him to surgery and I needed to come right away. I got to kiss him and tell him how much I loved him, all because of Becky."

**Aug 2020 Alison Cantrell, RN —** *5 South*

Alison was nominated by family members of a woman who passed away as the result of complications from a stroke during the early portion of the COVID-19 pandemic and restricted visiting guidelines: "Alison

held the phone so everyone could have a moment to talk to Mom, share memories and say their final goodbyes. What Alison has done is nothing short of amazing, and she definitely went above and beyond what her job entails. She is truly an angel."

**Sept 2020 Hilary Davis, RN —** *One Day Surgery*

Hilary was nominated by the daughter of an 88-year-old man to whom she provided care before and after his lung biopsy, during a week when he underwent other medical tests and was exhausted. The nomination read, in part: "I have seen many nurses while helping both my elderly parents through many years of tests and hospital stays. Hilary stood out to me in my dad's tough journey."

**NEW AWARD**

During 2020, the first-ever Team DAISY Award was presented to more than 30 people, registered nurses and support staff, for their work in creating and executing a program that cross-trained hundreds of Blessing Health System employees in the early days of the pandemic to meet the needs of the expected surge of COVID-19 patients and families.

The Team DAISY nomination, written by **Kendra Meany, RN, BSN**, manager, Nursing Professional Development said, in part, "This cross-training process required multi-department collaboration. Just one piece of the puzzle missing could break the experience for a staff member. I could not be prouder of our health system's response to a difficult situation and the actions that the team took to do its part in safeguarding our community." ■

The **Honey Bee Award** is a Blessing Hospital-initiated program to complement the DAISY Award, because as we say at Blessing, "You can't have DAISYs without Honey Bees!" Honey Bee honorees personify Blessing Hospital's remarkable patient experience.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO FISCAL YEAR 2020 BLESSING HOSPITAL HONEY BEE AWARD WINNERS!

**Oct 2019 Sheila White, CNA —** *Observation Decision Unit*

**Nov 2019 Matt Kroner, CNA —** *2 North*

**Dec 2019 Tammy Haggerty —** *Cafeteria Assistant,  
Food & Nutrition*

**Jan 2020 Jenny Engelmeyer —** *Inpatient Physical  
Therapist, Rehabilitation Services*

**Feb 2020 Bobbi Calkins —** *Psychiatric Technician,  
Blessing Behavioral Center*

**Mar - May 2020 Canceled due to COVID response**

**June 2020 Katie Schroeder —** *Physical Therapist  
Blessing Home Care*

**July 2020 Laurie Dietrich —** *Staffing Clerk, Centralized Staffing*

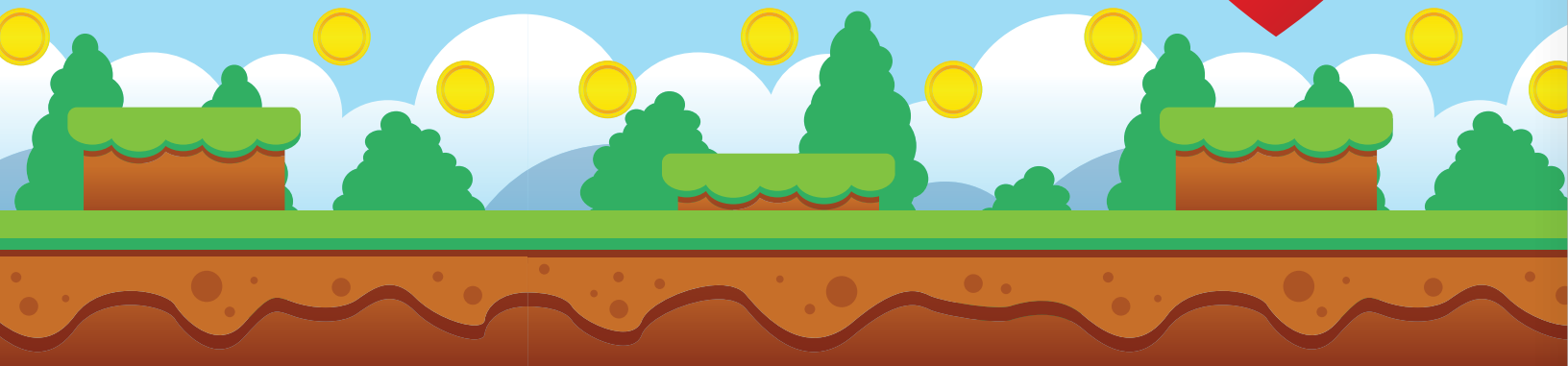
**Aug 2020 Adam Bailey —** *Surgery Support Tech,  
Surgical Services*

**Sept 2020 Bridget O'Bryan, CNA —** *Centralized Staff*





# PEDS FOR THE WIN!



## **Carrie Gramke planned to become a pre-school teacher or a nurse after high school.**

Fate offered her another opportunity. Carrie became a mother. To provide for her daughter, she took a job in the quality control department of a Quincy industry. After 10 years in quality control, Carrie's employer experienced a downturn in business, and she was laid off.

"Myself and two other girls I worked with decided we were going to go to nursing school. We all became nurses," Carrie said proudly. She loved children, as the mother of four with the eldest in nursing school now, and looked forward to working in pediatrics as a licensed practical nurse.

Again, fate offered her another opportunity. "I applied several places, and Good Samaritan Home called me back first. I said okay, we'll try it," Carrie stated.

After two years in long-term care, she joined Blessing Physician Services and eventually the pediatrics team.

While most every patient has at least one loved one involved in their health care, in pediatrics the patient-loved one relationship is unique. Carrie understands the needs of both her "customers," child and parent.

A coworker of Carrie's observes, "Carrie is loved and appreciated by her patients' parents, always staying a bit late to finish phone calls and contact parents who are waiting on test results, or to answer a question. Many times I have answered the phone, and parents request to speak to Carrie because she is their "go to" person. She knows these families and can always find

a way to comfort a concerned parent."

The coworker says patients feel the same way about Carrie: "When Carrie comes out to get them, we have had kids get excited that she is the one who gets to take them back to the exam room, or kids walk in the office and are already talking about Carrie."

"The way she connects with her patients and their parents is what really draws people to our office, and through positive word of mouth and experiences, that are the result of her character and

dedication to her job," the coworker concluded.

As Carrie has learned, fate has a way of offering new and different opportunities. But at least for now, there is no place like pediatrics.

"I tried long-term care. I was a float when I first started at Blessing. I just feel like Peds is my home. We have really good teamwork here," Carrie concluded. ■



**Carrie Gramke, LPN, Pediatrics**  
*Blessing Physician Services*

# RELATIONSHIPS MAKE NURSING TICK



**Whether it's interactions with patients or with coworkers, it's relationships that keep Tricia Bryson in the nursing field and in the cardiology department at Hannibal Clinic.**

"I enjoy the patients, but the people that I work with are wonderful, in every department, in every aspect of this place," she said.

"The cardiologists we have here, Drs. Ha, Valencia and LaRue, are fantastic, too. They make it really easy to work for them. They are just nice people along with being great doctors," Tricia added.

Working with heart patients keeps her day moving.

"I like the multitude of things I get to do. I work for all three Hannibal Clinic cardiologists. I do the pacemaker clinic. I do stress testing. I put on heart monitors. It's a variety every day and not the same old thing every day," she stated.

After making the decision in high school to pursue a career in the medical field, Tricia narrowed the choices down to nursing and worked eight years in a hospital intensive care unit before joining Hannibal Clinic 14 years ago. In that time, she says there has not been one memorable moment.

"I think there are lots of moments, each time you have a patient thank you," she observed. "There are patients that I see quite often. When they know your name and know who you are, or they call and want to talk to you, it makes you feel like you are doing something right," she said.

Tricia works to make sure her patients know her name and who she is.

"I think it's important to establish a rapport right off the bat. For patients that I know, it's looking them in the eye when I meet them in the waiting room. For patients that I don't know, it's telling them who I am, what I am going to do for them, and it's not going to be that bad. It kind of sets people at ease a bit. Small talk and humor helps, too," she stated.

Tricia looks forward to many more years building relationships with patients and coworkers.

"It's been very rewarding for me," she said of her career and recommending nursing to young people. "There are times when everyone dislikes their job. But those moments are few and far between. Most of the time you are pretty content and pretty happy with what you are doing. I have been." ■



**Tricia Bryson, RN, Cardiology**  
*Hannibal Clinic*

# It's ALL IN THE FAMILY *at* Illini Community Hospital



## **Katie Couch, RN, VA-BC, says she did not find a career in nursing. It found her.**

"When I was a child in Beardstown, probably around 6 or 7 years old, I was a nurse for Halloween," she said. "I guess the profession chose me."

Her career began at the age of 15, working in a nursing home where she passed water and made beds. She remained working in long-term care through high school and after earning her LPN license.

Upon achieving RN status, Katie joined Illini Community Hospital where she found a perfect fit professionally and personally for a mother of three.

"I could be a nurse and a mom. That was wonderful for me," Katie said of Illini.

In her 11 years at Illini, Katie's coworkers have become family, too.

"It's a family environment. I work with my friends," she stated. "And at Illini, you can wear multiple hats. You are not just part of one floor or unit. On any given day, you can see nurses from around the hospital in the ER, in outpatient, helping on acute care. We help each other out."



*"If there is an area of nursing practice that is near and dear to a nurse, I think specializing and becoming certified can make you a better nurse."*

**Katie Couch, RN, VA-BC  
Illini Community Hospital**

Katie is Illini's only vascular access (VA-BC) certified nurse. She uses her special knowledge to place peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) lines for all the hospital's patients who need more complex care by intravenous means.

Katie was supported by Blessing Health System in that accomplishment and in the continuing education

her certification requires. She encourages fellow nurses to take advantage of that support and to seek specialty certification. "If there is an area of nursing practice that is near and dear to a nurse, I think specializing and becoming certified can make you a better nurse," she said.

As Katie's son considers a nursing career and traveling the world with the United States Navy, she looks forward to continuing her career at Illini Community Hospital.

"I love patient care. I want to be hands on. I can't see myself spending a lot of time in meetings and board rooms. You are going to see me at the bedside. I am happy to come to work every day. I am good right where I am at." ■





*Shelly Marshall, RN, (center) huddles with members of the Blessing Health Keokuk emergency room staff whom she manages.*

## **Shelly Marshall, RN, learned her approach to nursing as a young girl.**

"I grew up in a small community in Hancock County. You treated others with respect and courtesy," she said.

"Particularly in a rural hospital, if you are respectful to your patients from day one, they will be respectful to you, and you can have an amazing relationship over the years with many patients," Shelly continued.

"My approach now that I am in a leadership role is the same with my staff. You have to give respect. I am truly grateful for all of my staff and all of the work they put in every day," she concluded.

Shelly's career began as a CNA at Keokuk Area Hospital, now known as Blessing Health Keokuk, and she has been there ever since. After 15 years as a bedside nurse, Shelly is proud to be a hospital leader. She serves as director of the emergency room, the medical-surgical unit, critical care unit and emergency preparedness; as trauma program manager, a house supervisor, an ACLS/PALS instructor

and PICC certified nurse.

"I wear many hats as most people do who work in small, rural hospitals," she said.

Shelly had never been in a hospital when she decided to study nursing. She made the decision because of a love of science and a desire for job security. It was the right decision for her. Today Shelly is an advocate for the profession. Her three nieces are in the health care field as a result of her influence.

"I am excited when I see young people come into health care. I like seeing the excitement in their face. I like watching them learn and grow. That is one of my favorite parts of nursing," she said.

Shelly is honest. She shares with young people that a career in health care can be difficult and challenging, but also that it is never boring and offers many options.

"We make a lot of sacrifices. It's a 24/7 career. You have to want to do this every day. But there is nothing else I would rather do," Shelly concluded. ■

# EXPERIENCING *the Blessing* DIFFERENCE

*"I am excited when I see young people come into health care. I like seeing the excitement in their face. I like watching them learn and grow. That is one of my favorite parts of nursing."*

*Shelly Marshall, RN*



## TREATING COVID-19 *with compassion*

With no cure for COVID-19, the ability of Blessing Health System's nursing staff to establish true human connections with each patient hospitalized, and their loved ones, was vital in addressing the fear and loneliness caused by the virus.

Here is how that care was described by the wife of a patient who was hospitalized for 33 days: "We put our faith in God and our trust in Blessing, and he came home. In the worst situation, Bob received the best care."

The pandemic provided people a unique chance to see how nurses approach their work, with a heroic level of commitment and compassion. *Your sacrifices opened the eyes and warmed the hearts of people around the region.*

