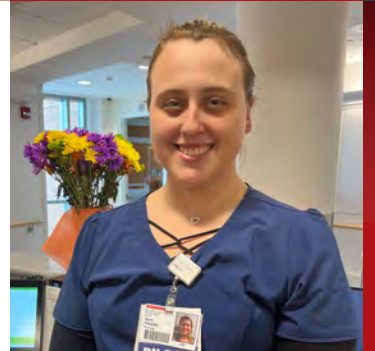




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Hamilton, NJ 08690

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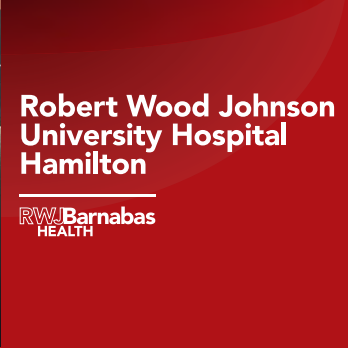
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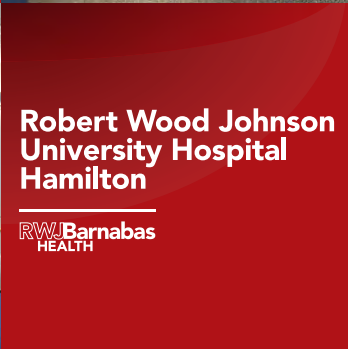
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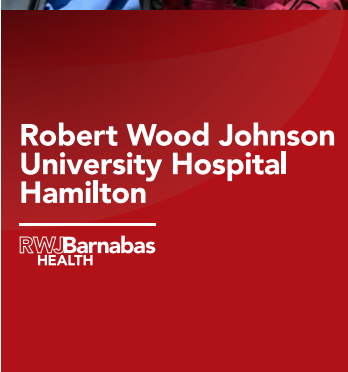
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**Let's shape the
Future of Nursing
together.**



■ Message from our President and Chief Executive Officer



For many, if not all of us, the COVID-19 pandemic was life-altering. However, as we entered its second year, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton nurses continued to deliver exceptional care with extraordinary team spirit.

We are very proud of all our nurses, staff, physicians and others on the frontlines who cared for our patients during these unprecedented times. Our nurses devoted a remarkable amount of time to developing evidence-based practices and plans to ensure that all those who entered our doors were protected and received quality care in a safe environment. At the same time, team members such as volunteers and chaplains supported nurses and helped keep our patients connected to their families.

Despite its difficulties, 2021 also came with celebrations. Our hospital marked its 50th year in Hamilton and we acknowledged what has not changed: our nurses' commitment to providing quality care for this community. In fact, they achieved the highest level of nursing recognition as we earned Magnet® designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

While our quality of care has not wavered, how we provide care continued to evolve to meet changing needs. We adapted staff roles and space to become a COVID-19 testing site for patients and community members, and we vaccinated thousands of eligible people – including staff and physicians – both in the hospital and in the community.

If there is a silver lining to this pandemic, we have found it through the amazing and continued support of our community partners. Our nurses partnered with local nonprofits, churches and our Township to support many needs, including COVID-19 education, vaccination and testing. These partnerships helped us continue our mission despite the financial challenges COVID-19 has presented, and we know that we can count on the continued support of our community to see us through.

Our nurses deserve all the accolades and praise we can give them. Their actions have shown us how to have hope in a time of hardship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Freeman".

Richard Freeman
President and Chief Executive Officer

■ Message from our Chief Nursing Officer



In 2021, RWJUH Hamilton and the world continued to be faced with ongoing challenges and change. Throughout it all, we remained committed to helping patients access excellent and safe nursing care. The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed how we care for our patients and our employees and how we interact with our community. Although the year was full of uncertainty, one constant remained: the dedication and commitment of our nurses to caring for our patients and each other. In fact, they have transcended our expectations when it comes to resiliency.

I am pleased to share with you the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton 2021 Nursing Annual Report. It features highlights and exemplars of nursing excellence, outstanding achievements in nursing and reflections of professional practice. I would like to thank all of our nurses for their unwavering commitment to our patients and our organization. I would be remiss not to acknowledge and recognize the dedication and selfless acts of kindness demonstrated by our frontline nurses and nurse leaders during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am in awe of them – speechless, in fact – and am forever grateful to serve with this team of nurses.

A year of challenge also produced many opportunities for innovation and growth. This report outlines some of the ways we rose to the challenge and supported patient safety while providing excellence in nursing care throughout the pandemic. A few highlights include:

- Magnet® recognition by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) hospital – the gold standard for nursing excellence. We were excited to take nursing staff along with our leaders to the ANCC National Magnet Conference in Atlanta, Georgia to celebrate our first Magnet designation!
- Keeping vital information about the pandemic flowing by maintaining constant contact with our staff and the public
- Developing bold new plans to strengthen our position as leaders in patient safety and nursing care for the future
- Remaining VAP (ventilator-associated pneumonia) free for the 10th straight year
- Remaining CAUTI (catheter-acquired urinary tract infection) free since 2019

Most importantly, we came together as an organization with support from our patients and community to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve. I am proud to acknowledge and celebrate the work of our team and the support of our board, colleagues, volunteers and community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Breza". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice
President, Patient Care Services



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- 23 New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements

Nursing Leadership



**Lisa Breza, MSN, RN,
NEA-BC**
*Chief Nursing Officer
and Senior Vice President,
Patient Care Services*



Joan Bercari, MSN, RN
*Vice President, Quality and
Patient Safety Officer*



**Matthew Benjamin, BSN,
MBA, RN, FACHE**
*Assistant Vice President,
Peri-Operative Support Services*



**Dawn Hutchinson, MSN,
RN, PCCN-K**
Assistant Vice President, Nursing



**Meghan McCord-Zaro, MSJ,
BSN, RN, CPHRM**
*Assistant Vice President,
Risk Management*



Tracee Bachman, BSN, RN-BC
Director, Quality



Amy German, BSN, RN, OCN
Director, Cancer Services PCCN



**Erin Glospie, MSN Ed,
RN, PCCN**
Director, Infection Prevention



Tammy Leigh, MSN, RN
*Director, Emergency Services
and Critical Care*



Connie Mocerri, MSN, AGNP-C
*Director, Disease Management
and Stroke Program*



**Cheryl Prall, MSN,
RN, NEA-BC**
*Director, Center for
Professional Development,
Innovation and Research*



**Lauren Stabinsky, MSN,
RN, CEN, NEA-BC**
*Director, Corporate and
Community Wellness*



Roseann Baker, MSN, RN
*Manager, Emergency Services
and Critical Care*



**Jacqueline Ciccarelli, MSN,
RN, CCRN-K**
*Manager, Magnet Program and
Nursing Performance Improvement*



**Jason Collier, MBA,
BSN, RN-BC**
Manager, Patient Management



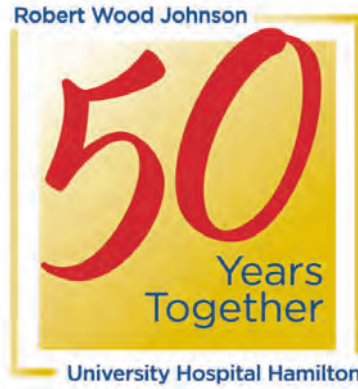
**Christina Delate, BSN,
RN, CNOR**
Manager, Operating Room Services



Lisa Nevius, MSN, RN, OCN
Manager, Medical-Surgical Units



Ceara Philips, BSN, RN
Manager, Telemetry Units



From a Hospital Dedication to the 50th Anniversary: Our History

In the 1960s, as the community of Hamilton grew and expanded, the leaders of Trenton General Hospital looked to move the hospital out of the city and into the suburb of Hamilton Township. Thanks to their vision, Hamilton Hospital was built on a 43-acre piece of land in Hamilton and was dedicated in 1971.

Since that time, the hospital has expanded and added services to meet the needs of the community. In 1994, Hamilton Hospital joined the Robert Wood Johnson Network and System, changing its name to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton. The Outpatient Services Building opened in 1995, housing outpatient testing and treatment that included a same-day surgery center. In 2001, the North Tower opened, adding a new ICU, Telemetry Unit and Emergency Department. Soon after, RWJUH Hamilton became an affiliate of The Cancer Institute of New Jersey, establishing The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Hamilton.

As growth continued, RWJUH Hamilton added the Lakefront Tower with an additional 64 private patient rooms in 2007. In 2016, the hospital system merged with Barnabas Health to become RWJBarnabas Health. This merger made RWJUH Hamilton part of the largest health care system in New Jersey.

In recent years, RWJUH Hamilton has earned 12 “A” Safety Grades from the Leapfrog Group, the gold standard in healthcare safety, and a four-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, making it the only CMS four-star rated hospital in Mercer County.

In 2021, RWJUH Hamilton was designated as a Magnet® hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) for the first time. The hospital received six exemplars for extraordinary nursing work in patient care and patient experience. The year 2021 also marked another momentous occasion: the hospital celebrated its 50th anniversary with many activities and events commemorating its journey and service to the community throughout the past half century.



Mission, Vision, Values

Mission: RWJUH Hamilton is committed to excellence through service and quality. We exist to promote, preserve and restore the health of our community.

Vision: Our vision is to passionately pursue the health and well-being of our patients, employees and the community through our culture of exceptional service and commitment to quality.

Values: SAFETY

Speak up for safety

- Accurately communicate
- Focus on the task
- Exercise and accept a questioning attitude
- Thoughtfully interact
- You and me together

Magnet® Recognition Program





TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

While nursing leadership at RWJUH Hamilton is truly engaged with staff, all nurses at the hospital are called upon to be transformational leaders. They have the ability to effect change through their involvement on various fronts, from committee participation to influencing policies and practices that impact all levels of care.

Achieving the Highest Nursing Honor: Magnet® Designation

In 2021, RWJUH Hamilton received nursing's most prestigious honor: Magnet® recognition by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Only about 9 % of hospitals nationwide and just over 30 hospitals in New Jersey have achieved this distinction.

The Planning Stages

The Nursing Division at RWJUH Hamilton started this journey in 2016, when they began instituting structures and committees that empowered nurses to facilitate change and foster improvements. This included focusing on benchmarking of nurse-sensitive indicator data with the National Database for Nurse Sensitive Quality Indicators, measuring patient and nurse satisfaction data, and education and enculturation of Magnet standards. Guided by the Nursing Professional Practice Model, the nursing team worked tirelessly – despite the challenges of the pandemic – to submit the Magnet application in 2020.

In early 2021, RWJUH Hamilton began preparing for a three-day virtual site visit from ANCC. Nursing created and distributed a guide for nurses to better prepare for the virtual site visit titled, “Journey to Magnet Designation – A Nurse’s Guide” detailing the benefits, processes, practice models, exemplars and values of Magnet nursing along with what to expect for the visit. The nursing team collaborated with departments throughout the hospital to prepare, including holding a mock visit in February. In particular, Information Technology was integral to ensuring that WOW (workstation on wheels) computers could be used successfully by designated nurse guides to facilitate the visit. The nursing team also prepared a video to welcome ANCC surveyors prior to the scheduled visit.

The Virtual Visit

ANCC representatives conducted the three-day virtual site visit via teleconference calls and the roving WOW computers in early March 2021, meeting with leadership and nursing councils and interviewing nurses, staff, physicians, Board members

and community members. Every department was involved, from the ICU to Security.

“Serving as a ‘tour guide’ during the site visit gave me the opportunity to showcase what we do well here and what we do for the community,” says orthopedic program coordinator Denise Berdecia, MSN, RN, ONC. “I’m so proud of the inspiring stories I heard from nurses in the departments we visited, and I’m thankful to everyone who helped make the visit a success.”





**TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADERSHIP**



Nurse representatives attend the ANCC Magnet® Conference in Atlanta, Georgia and walked the stage to claim their honors for being Magnet® designated for the first time.

Magnet Designation

On April 15, RWJUH Hamilton received a call from Jeanette Ives Erickson, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN from the Commission on Magnet (COM). In the call, Erickson announced that RWJBH Hamilton had earned Magnet designation with six exemplars.

“Successfully completing the Magnet® journey is a testament to our nurses and a reflection of the exceptional teamwork at RWJUH Hamilton,” says Jacqueline Ciccarelli, MSN, RN, CCRN-K, MPD, Manager, Magnet Program and Nursing Performance Improvement. “Our nurses have extraordinary pride in their profession and commitment to our patients.”

The Magnet process highlighted how RWJUH Hamilton nurses are involved in virtually every area of the hospital, from providing bedside care to serving as educators, researchers, advanced practice specialists and administrators, as well as spearheading information technology and quality improvement initiatives.

Later in the year, a group of RWJUH Hamilton nurses who helped facilitate the site visit had the opportunity to attend the multi-day ANCC National Magnet Conference in Atlanta.

“It was amazing,” adds Berdecia. “The conference reminded me what wonderful goals you can reach when you have incredible people working together.”



Nurses Build Defenses Against COVID-19

When COVID-19 vaccines became available in December 2020, the RWJUH Hamilton Quality Team was ready with a coordinated process for vaccinating employees and people throughout the community. Nursing collaborated with Registration, the Pharmacy, Security and other departments to run the hospital's Vaccine Clinic five days a week, eight hours a day for nearly eight months, with weekly clinics provided thereafter. Nurses from various departments volunteered for four-hour shifts to assist with medical screening, education, vaccination and post-vaccine observation.

In addition, nurses staffed 32 clinics in the community to reach those in need of vaccines, including underserved populations. These clinics were held in partnership with the city of Trenton, Catholic Charities, the local health department, the Trenton Thunder baseball team, Mercer County Special Services, and local high schools and churches. Our nurses provide more than 14,000 vaccines in 2021, including nearly 12,500 at the hospital and nearly 1,800 at off-site clinics.

“Our nurses have taken pride in empowering people to protect themselves against COVID-19,” says Joan Bercari, MSN, RN, Vice President of Quality and Patient Safety. “Making vaccines accessible is important, because it’s part of our mission to help preserve and restore the health of our community.”

“Helping people in this way opened my mind to other interesting roles nurses can have,” adds clinical nurse Josseline Tax, RN, who has provided about 1,500 vaccine doses in addition to COVID-19 education, screening and testing. “It was wonderful to interact with so many different people from so many different backgrounds, and I’m honored that my role made a difference.”



Jennifer Chaiken, BSN, RN, CEN administers Covid-19 vaccine to Richard Freeman, President and CEO

Transition to Practice Program Empowers New Nurses

In August 2021, RWJUH Hamilton launched a Transition to Practice Program designed for any new RN with their Bachelor’s or Associate’s degree and less than one year of experience. This 15-week, 540-hour program acclimates nurses to the acute care environment with weekly sessions that include classroom learning, simulation room activities, case studies and skills-based care.

“The school curriculum includes a clinical component, but it doesn’t fully prepare nurses to hit the ground running in an acute care setting,” says Cheryl Prall, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research. “This program helps nurses effectively make the transition from the education setting to functioning as an independent RN.”

Thirteen nurses participated in the program in 2021, with additional sessions planned for 2022. A nurse preceptor is selected for each nurse participating in the program. Preceptors work with nurses at the bedside for the full shift, and unit-based educators follow them closely in a collaborative approach. Whenever needed, targeted education on specific topics is provided, and educators continue to check in with participants for a full year.

The Transition to Practice Program empowers nurses to embrace their roles and provide the highest-quality care while also giving them the opportunity to shape future program sessions. For example, participants in the first program recommended adjusting the ratio of education and training to provide more time on the floor. As a result, the classroom/simulation component was adjusted from eight hours per week to eight hours biweekly, with more preceptor time added.

“In addition to learning more about patient care and time management, it was great to build connections with other nurses through this program,” says David Dressel, RN, clinical nurse on Lakefront Tower 2. “It helped me better understand the big picture and how team members from various departments work together. The preceptors and clinical educators are amazing – and I hope to grow to be one of them.”



STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT

Through supportive structures and engagement, nurses at various levels can recommend positive change and play a role in bringing those changes to fruition through the collaborative examination of evidence-based practices. Best practices derived from this process are aimed at improving nursing practice and overall outcomes.

Professional Practice Council

The RWJUH Hamilton Professional Practice Council (PPC) encourages nurses at all levels to have a voice in their practice. It enables nurses and nursing leaders to collaborate on patient care, policies and procedures and implementation of best practices. This collaboration ultimately leads to better outcomes and enhances the quality of care that nurses provide every day. The Council empowers nurses to shape nursing practice at RWJUH Hamilton, which fosters the ability to share and celebrate successes, improve on issues that arise, facilitate change, plan for the future direction of nursing and promote continuous learning to enhance knowledge.



The Nursing Professional Practice Model



STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT



Shared Governance Council

Under the Professional Practice Council, the hospital's Shared Governance Council is comprised of nursing representatives from unit-based departmental councils who meet monthly with nursing leadership to exchange ideas and information that promote quality nursing care. Staff throughout the hospital can bring issues or ideas to this Council for review. The Council takes on many of these initiatives, empowering nurses at all levels to drive nursing practice. Nursing staff also participate in unit-based Shared Governance Councils.

Council chair Erica Fidali, BSN, RN, represents RWJUH Hamilton at RWJBarnabas Health Shared Governance Council monthly meetings. In addition to sharing new knowledge and best practices with council members across the system, Shared Governance Council chairs bring back insights that benefit RWJUH Hamilton nurses and lead to process improvements.





Unit-Based Practice Councils

Each nursing unit has a Unit-Based Practice Council that reports to the Shared Governance Council. These councils work on unit-based projects and identify opportunities for evidence-based practice changes. They share their recommendations at the Shared Governance Council Meetings. For example, in 2021, the two Medical-Surgical Unit-Based Councils combined efforts and added a PCT to the team to successfully decrease falls and falls with injury on the units.

Performance Improvement/ Risk Management Committee

The Performance Improvement/Risk Management (PIRM) Committee is the primary coordinating committee for organizational performance and is chaired by Joan Bercari, MSN, RN, Vice President of Quality and Patient Safety. The Quality and Safety Department has the primary responsibility for supporting PIRM initiatives at RWJUH Hamilton. PIRM roles include reviewing performance measurement and assessment projects, monitoring patient-focused and organizational functions, ensuring the performance of required measurement activities, directing actions to improve performance and safety, and overseeing staff competencies.

Patient Safety Council

Chaired by Joan Bercari, MSN, RN, Vice President of Quality and Patient Safety, the Patient Safety Council reports to the Quality and Patient Safety Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Patient Safety Council coordinates the hospital's patient safety program, conducts ongoing analysis and application of evidence-based patient safety practices to reduce the probability of adverse events, and analyzes any near misses and adverse events that occur within the facility. Each month, members discuss medication safety, infection control and patient falls as standing agenda items in addition to topics like Joint Commission patient safety goals and COVID-19 safety considerations.

2021 Nursing Awards

Congratulations to the following individuals, who received these distinct nursing honors at the Nurse's Day Awards ceremony in May 2021.

Nurses of the Year

Jamie Havens, RN, Telemetry
Ann Mancuso, MSN, RN, CHFRN,
Disease Management/Congestive Heart Failure

Bestowed on a staff RN who improves quality outcomes through exemplary professional practice, the Nurse of the Year Award celebrates visionary leadership, committee contributions and an unyielding commitment to obtaining and disseminating new knowledge and/or technology.

Transformational Leadership Award

Dawn Hutchinson, MSN, RN, PCCN-K,
Assistant Vice President

The Transformational Leadership Award recognizes a visionary, committed nurse leader who transforms the organization by leading change through effective communication, passion and motivation. Transformational leaders are known for their integrity and uphold the highest standards in all they do.

Exemplary Professional Practice

Janice Klingele, RN, Same Day Surgery

This award recognizes a staff RN who delivers exemplary evidence-based care to patients and families through the framework of the RWJ Professional Practice Model. Exemplary Professional Practice nurses accomplish improved workplace advocacy and self-reflection.

New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements

Kathy LemMon, BSN, RN, Operating Room and
Jorge Gomez-Diaz, MSN, RN, CNOR

This award recognizes an RN who contributes to the nursing profession by guiding and supporting new team members. In imparting their knowledge and influencing nurses' career development, the awardee enhances the profession in a meaningful, measurable way.

Nursing Quality Award

Kathy LemMon, BSN, RN, Operating Room

With an ongoing focus on accuracy to ensure quality performance, this awardee meticulously manages every key detail of quality measures to render the best possible care for patients, and is a role model for understanding and executing quality standards.

PCT Award

Alexis Denson, Telemetry

This award is given to a PCT who demonstrates keen knowledge in their role and communicates clearly, effectively and in a timely manner. The awardee displays a passion for patients through strong values along with the culture and commitment of RWJUH Hamilton.

Unit Secretary Award

Vera Shevchenko, Telemetry

Awarded to a Unit Secretary who demonstrates keen knowledge of their position, the recipient of this award displays a passion for their role and a stellar commitment to RWJUH Hamilton.

Physician/LIP Collaboration

Anu Adlakha, MD, CHCQM, Physician Advisor

The recipient of this award is a physician/LIP who collaborates with nurses in a professional and positive manner to achieve a common goal of excellence in patient care.

Friend of Nursing

Wayne McClinnon, Distribution

This award recognizes an employee or department that provides exemplary support of nursing services in an effort to advance RWJUH Hamilton's overall mission.





The DAISY Award

FOR EXTRAORDINARY NURSES

IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

DAISY Awards Recognize Extraordinary Nursing Care

The DAISY Foundation™ was formed in 1999 by the family of J. Patrick Barnes, who passed away at age 33 due to complications of idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP). Patrick's family was deeply moved by the kind and compassionate care that his nurses provided as he fought his battle with ITP, inspiring them to establish the DAISY Foundation.

The DAISY Awards® for Extraordinary Nurses recognize the education, training, skill and compassionate care that nurses provide to their patients. First piloted in Seattle, the program has been adopted by health care organizations across the country and around the world. In 2021, the following RWJUH Hamilton nursing were nominated for the Daisy Award.

Rosie Andrews, BSN, RN, Lakefront Tower 2

Raila Austin, RN, Lakefront Tower 2

Allison Baker, RN, OCN, Radiation

Helen Billanes, BSN, RN, Same Day Surgery

Barb DeSalvo, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

Geraldine Dimatulac, BSN, RN, ICU

Crystal Dixon, BSN, RN, PACU

Caren Dubell, BSN, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 1

Karlie Edson, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

Lisa Egbert, BSN, RN, Emergency Department

Michelle Fraser, BSN, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

Lynn Glenn, MSN, MBA, RN, OCN, CBCN, NE-BC, CTR, Cancer Center

Diana Gonzalez, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

Raychelle Grooms, BSN, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 2

Evan Gross, BSN, BA, RN, ICU

Sara Helminger, BSN, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

Lisa Krueger, RN, Telemetry

Christina Lane, RN, OCN, Cancer Center

Natasha Louis, BSN, RN, CCRN, ICU

Tara Mickel, BSN, RN, OCN, Cancer Center

Miriam Obertanova, RN, CCRN, ICU

Loretta Padulchick, RN, OCN, Cancer Center

Nicole Palanca, BSN, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 1

Lashelle Pittman, BSN, RN, OCN, Cancer Center

Andrew Punzo, RN, Telemetry Central

Faviola Seche, BSN, RN, Emergency Department

Tina Snemyr, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

Esther Thomas, RN, Telemetry North

Wisdom Villafuerte, BSN, RN, CCRN, PACU

Of these outstanding nurses, four awardees were selected. Congratulations to these 2021 DAISY Award honorees:

Crystal Dixon, BSN, RN, PACU

Caren Dubell, BSN, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 1

Lashelle Pittman, BSN, RN, OCN, CINJ

Esther Thomas, RN, Telemetry North

In the words of their nominators:

Crystal: When Crystal is working, she puts her whole heart into it. She has gone above and beyond to facilitate kind, heartwarming gestures for patients that are a true testament to Crystal's heart and how she exemplifies the calling to be an extraordinary nurse. Crystal is such a valued member of the team and to RWJUH Hamilton family! She really is one of a kind and deserving of this prestigious award!

Caren: Caren is very special to me because she was the first nurse I had for the night being admitted. Her presence was open and captivating. She sympathized and worked diligently to make sure I was comfortable. She validated my concerns and understood exactly where I was coming from. She made me feel supported and validated...she made my visit a very comforting one.

Lashelle: Lashelle radiates joy and peace. She is concerned with her patients' holistic well-being. She has a calming presence and a warm smile that always makes you feel welcome. She is always happy to see you! As soon as I met Lashelle, I felt a sense of calm, comfort to know I was going to be fine coming here for my treatment. She listened, empathized, was patient, reassuring. Lashelle is skillful, compassionate and so much more. She is everything you would want in a nurse.

Esther: Esther made the entire intake process easy. She was easy to talk to and to ask questions to understand the process and next steps for my mother. Esther went the extra mile to come see my mom and my family to check on her and her well-being. It's hard to find people these days with such compassion for their patients and such caring that exemplifies what a great and caring nurse she is. She is a true asset to RWJ community.



Left to right: Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services, and Natalie Jones, DNP, MSN Ed, RN, CCRN, NEA-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator, congratulate PACU nurse Crystal Dixon, BSN, RN for earning the DAISY award.

Nurses Promote Community Outreach

At RWJUH Hamilton, the role of nurses in improving the health and well-being of the community is undeniable. They work throughout the community to support population health and deliver preventive health care services. Outreach efforts include a focus on cultural competency that enables effective practice with diverse individuals, families and groups within the community of care. Outreach continued to be creative in 2021 given the ongoing challenges of COVID-19.



Community Health Outreach

Despite pandemic-related challenges, the Community Education Department – which includes several nurses – coordinated in-person, hybrid and virtual community outreach events and classes that reached more than 7,000 people in 2021.

Food Drives Provide Essentials

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., team members throughout the hospital contributed to a food drive that supported Mercer Street Friends. In addition, the disease management team organized a food drive in lieu of exchanging holiday gifts. They delivered two carloads of food to the Bromley Civic Center in Hamilton, including a special holiday meal kit. Participants included:

Connie Mocerri MSN, RN, AGNP-C – Director, Disease Management & Cardiovascular Services

Ann Mancuso MSN, RN, CHFNP – Heart Failure Program Coordinator

Sandra Haas BSN, RN, CBN – Bariatric Program Coordinator

Denise Berdecia MSN, RN, ONC – Orthopedic Program Coordinator

Marylyn Ortiz LPN – Lead EEG Technician

Zaida Morales – EEG Technician

“I’m so proud of our team for choosing to help our community in this way, especially with so many people struggling to meet basic needs for their families,” says Mancuso. “Our hearts were full knowing that we exceeded our initial goal – and we started a wonderful new tradition.”

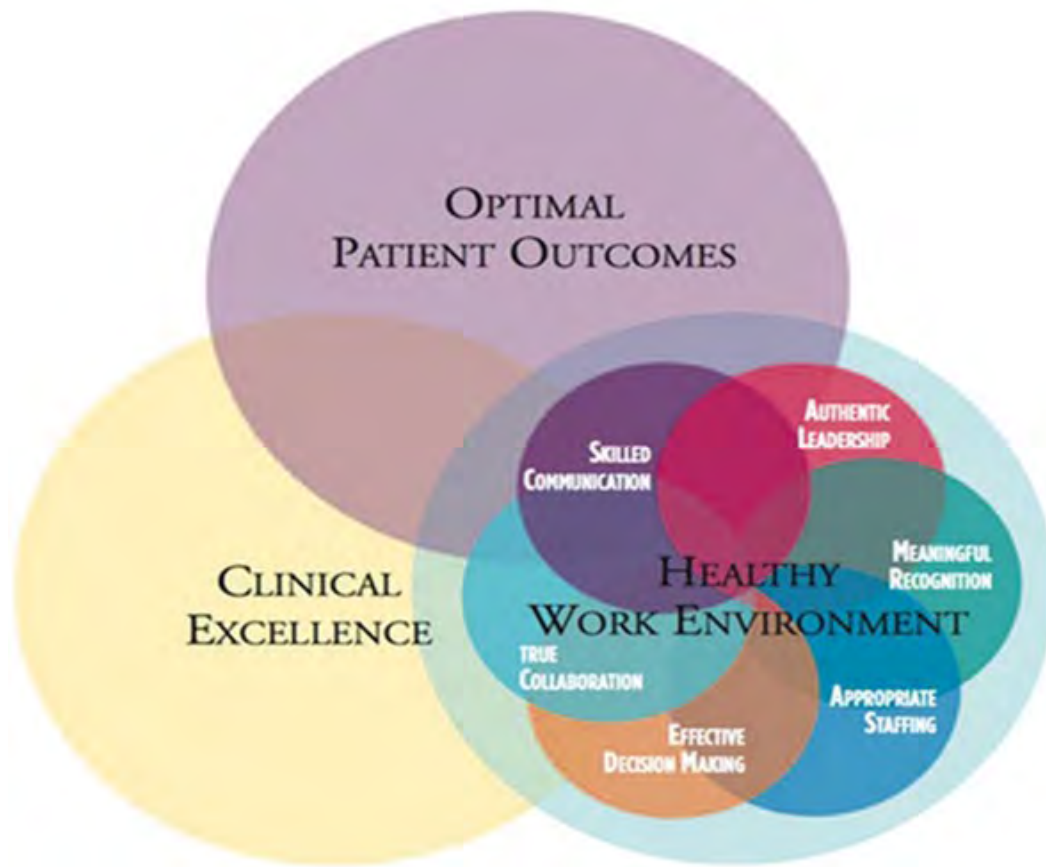
Oktoberfest Features Nurse Volunteers

RWJUH Hamilton was a sponsor for Hamilton Township’s 2021 Oktoberfest, which featured health education tables staffed by nurses and other team members along with free blood pressure screenings provided by the Community Education Department. RWJUH Hamilton nurses provided 36 volunteer hours for the event.

Running With the Devils Supports Healthier Communities

Last October, RWJUH Hamilton team members participated in the annual RWJBarnabas Health Running with the Devils 5K Run and Wellness Walk in collaboration with the New Jersey Devils Hockey team. The event took place in both live and virtual formats, with RWJUH Hamilton hosting a virtual event in mid-October. The event honors RWJBarnabas Health’s 35,000 Healthcare Heroes across New Jersey, who continue to provide essential care for communities throughout the state while navigating the pandemic, and proceeds support Healthcare Heroes in their efforts to protect and build healthier communities.





EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Exemplary practice at RWJUH Hamilton centers on interprofessional collaboration among disciplines, along with input from our patients and families, that together support patient outcomes. Mutual respect and opinions are valued among all disciplines in the interest of achieving quality care and improving patient outcomes. The RWJUH Hamilton Professional Practice Model is the overarching framework for nurses, nursing care and interprofessional patient care, describing how nurses practice, collaborate with others and develop professionally to provide high-quality care.

NWESC Focuses on Nurse Well-Being

To foster a healthier workplace environment, clinical nurses and nurse leaders across all departments meet regularly as part of the hospital's Nursing Workplace Environment and Staffing Council (NWESC), an initiative developed by the Organization of Nurse Leaders of NJ (ONL). The council's efforts focus on the six pillars of the ACCN standards, which include skilled communication, true collaboration, effective decision-making, appropriate staffing, meaningful recognition and authentic leadership.

In 2021, the NSWEC council continued to promote the importance of nurses taking a 30-minute, uninterrupted break during their shifts to help reduce burnout, improve well-being, and enhance performance. A survey developed by the council revealed that the number of nurses taking breaks increased since these awareness efforts began.

The council also began focusing on providing more opportunities for nurses across the hospital to get to know each other. A survey to determine their preferences provided options ranging from "walk in my shoes" days to outdoor summer barbeques.

"When you can link faces to names and better understand how different departments function, it creates a more supportive environment," says Council Co-Chair Ryan Brevogel, RN, BSN, clinical nurse on Telemetry Central. "Broadening our perspectives through these activities can reduce stress and enhance collaboration and communication among nurses."



**EXEMPLARY
PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICE**



Infection Prevention Continues to Encompass COVID-19

In 2021, RWJUH Hamilton nurses and the infection prevention team maintained its strong focus on keeping patients and staff safe from COVID-19 and other infections. This included team-based accountability for handwashing, ensuring appropriate PPE use, and continued collaboration with Environmental Services on patient room disinfection with the addition of a third TRU-D UV light robot.

“We continued to reinforce the proper fitting and wearing of PPE as well as handwashing measures,” says Erin Glospie, MSN Ed, RN, PCCN, who transitioned to serve as Director of Infection Prevention in 2021 and brings 20 years of clinical nurse educator experience at RWJUH Hamilton to this role. “We also examine patient charts each day to ensure that various parameters are moving in the right direction, which contributes to infection prevention as well as recovery.”

Setting the Bar for Zero Infections

With an ongoing commitment to patient safety and evidence-based practices, RWJUH Hamilton ICU/critical care nurses and respiratory therapists achieved a remarkable 10 years of zero ventilator-associated pneumonias (VAPs) in 2021. In addition, 2021 marked the second year of zero catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs), thanks to nurses and other caregivers.

“Sustaining ten years without a VAP is remarkable, and it’s due in part to constant communication,” says Natalie Jones, DNP, MSN Ed, RN, CCRN, NEA-BC, Clinical Educator for the ICU, Cath Lab, Cardiology and Interventional Radiology. “Along with daily nurse charting, we round every morning with an interdisciplinary team in the ICU to ensure all components of the ventilator bundle are being performed.”

“These achievements relate to education, empowerment, accountability and teamwork,” adds Cheryl Prall, who coordinates an annual Skills Day that incorporates hands-on catheter insertion skills. “As part of a nurse-driven protocol, our nurses are experts in catheter care and are empowered to determine if a catheter is needed or if one needs to be removed, contributing to successful outcomes.”

Falls Awareness and Prevention

Each year, the Falls Prevention Committee help to educate the staff on ways to prevent falls and falls with injury. Lakefront Tower 1 nurses Kelly Eppolito, BSN, RN (left), and Barbara DeSalvo, RN, held a falls prevention trivia raffle outside the café to celebrate Falls Awareness and Prevention Week in September 2021.

Nurse-Sensitive Quality Indicators

Nurse-sensitive quality indicator data includes nationally benchmarked data that is compared against similar hospitals, with the goal to achieve results superior to benchmarks. Indicators submitted are falls with injury, hospital-acquired pressure injuries (HAPI) stage 2 or greater, catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI) and central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI). In 2021, RWJUH Hamilton achieved results that were superior to benchmarks in most cases, with extraordinary zero-instance outcomes.



Twelve “A” Grades for Patient Safety

In 2021, RWJUH Hamilton was awarded its 11th and 12th “A” Hospital Safety Score rating by the Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit run by employers and other large purchasers of health benefits. This marks nine consecutive “A” ratings from the Leapfrog Group – four of which were received amidst the immense

challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses more than 30 national performance measures to assign grades to nearly 3,000 U.S. acute care hospitals twice per year.

“With our HRO journey as our foundation, nurses and staff across the hospital have maintained a laser focus on both quality and safety, despite the difficulties we’ve faced over the past two years,” says Joan Bercari, MSN, RN, Vice President of Quality and Patient Safety. “Nurse-driven protocols play a key role in keeping our patients safe and in contributing to these elite recognitions.”

Nursing Residency Program Quality Presentation

The Nursing Residency Program at RWJUH Hamilton, now accredited as a Practice Transition Program by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), helps nurses with BSN degrees and less than one year of acute care experience develop their clinical and leadership skills while acquiring a higher level of training and experience. The program incorporates three graduate level credits from the Rutgers University School of Nursing and features a unit-based quality improvement project.

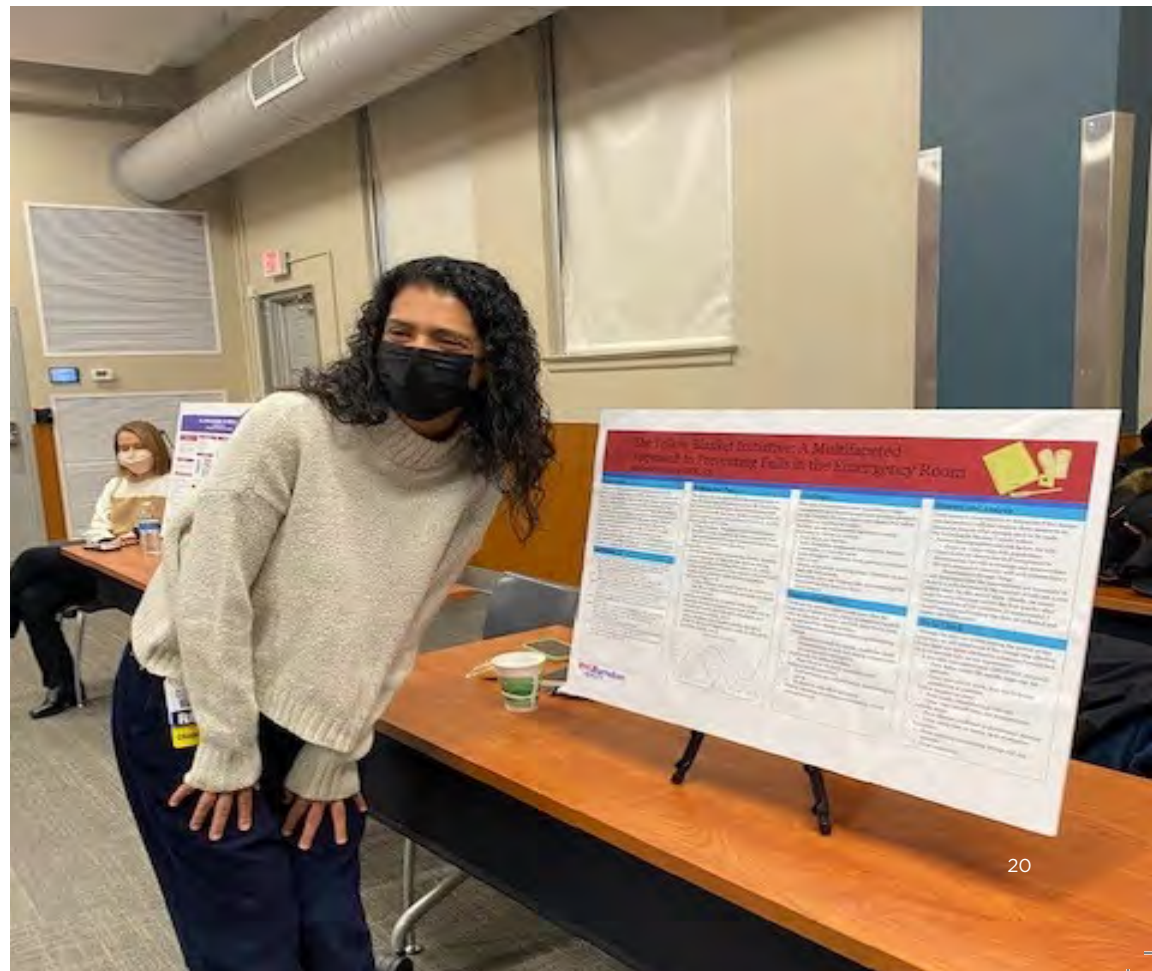
Melissa Wachino, RN, BSN, clinical nurse in the Emergency Department, completed the Nursing Residency Program in 2021 and saw an opportunity to focus her quality improvement project on falls prevention in the Emergency Department. Her project, entitled “The Yellow Blanket Initiative: A Multifaceted Approach to Preventing Falls in the Emergency Room,” was one of about a dozen posters presented by program graduates last December.

“I joined the Nursing Residency Program not just to serve in a leadership role, but also to develop myself as a better nurse, a more supportive team member and a stronger advocate for patients,” she says. “The quality improvement component is a great opportunity to share ways to improve our nursing core indicators. Next steps include education and data collection as we roll out the project.”

Measuring How Education Impacts Burnout

In a project assessing whether enhanced communication can reduce the risk for burnout and improve morale for RWJUH Hamilton ICU nurses, Natalie Jones, DNP, MSN Ed, RN, CCRN, NEA-BC, Clinical Educator for the ICU, Cath Lab, Cardiology and Interventional Radiology, secured a smart TV for the ICU breakroom through a grant from The Beryl Institute and began streaming ongoing updates, education and policies relevant to nursing care. Streaming content was updated at least weekly via a PowerPoint presentation.

Jones administered the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) survey to measure risk for nursing burnout prior to implementation and three months later. While results showed no change in risk for nursing burnout, incident reports – particularly blood bank documentation errors – improved. In addition, nurses noted that they liked the visible, easily accessible updates, especially when they may be too busy to access email updates.



■ Professional Nursing Certifications

Congratulations to the following nurses for achieving certifications in their specialties in 2021:

Shaiful Ali, BSN, RN-BC, LFT 2

Tara Muni, BSN, RN, CEN, Nursing Supervisor

Portia Cuffe, BSN, RN-BC, LFT

■ Educational Achievements

Congratulations to the following nurses, who earned degrees in 2021:

Doctorate in Nursing Professional Practice

Natalie Jones, DNP, MSN Ed, RN, CCRN, NEA-BC

Master's in Nursing

Zarrina Akhmedova, MSN, APRN

Denise Berdecia, MSN, RN, ONC

Dawn Hutchinson, MSN, RN, PCCN-K

Tammy Leigh, MSN, RN,

Lisa Nevius, MSN, RN, OCN

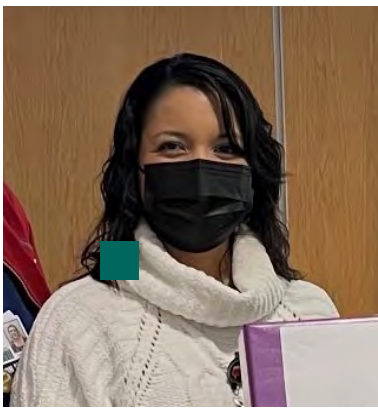
Timothy Ryan, MSN, RN, CEN

Agatha R. Taylor, MSN, RN

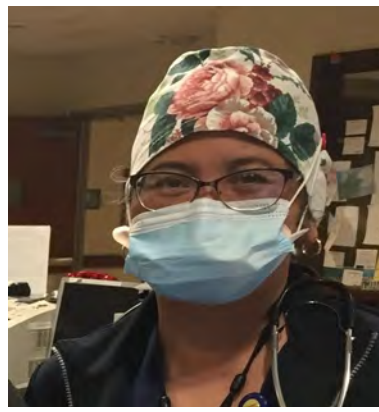
Bachelor's in Nursing

Augustus Brown, BSN, RN

Heather Nolan, BSN, RN



Nancy Baeza, BSN, RN-BC
Lakefront Tower 2



Ma Teresita Ravago, BSN, RN, PCCN
Telemetry



Ann Mancuso, MSN, RN, CHFRN, Disease
Management/Congestive Heart Failure



Denise Berdecia, MSN, RN, ONC
Orthopedics

Professional Advancement

The Professional Advancement System at RWJUH Hamilton provides clinical nurses with an opportunity to advance their careers through expertise and professional development. Achieving Clinical Nurse Level III and Level IV requires experience, extensive knowledge, clinical insight and strong mentorship abilities. Qualification includes numerous prerequisites, such as participating on a hospital committee and submitting a portfolio that demonstrates how they meet established criteria. Congratulations to the following nurses, who achieved these distinctions in 2021.

Clinical Nurse Level III

Roseann Baker, MSN, RN, Emergency Department

Caren Dubell, BSN, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 1/Ortho

Kelly Eppolito, BSN, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

Raychelle Grooms, BSN, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 2

Katlyn Laba, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 1/Ortho

Kathy LemMon, RN, Operating Room

Peter Liptak, RN, CNOR, Operating Room

Megan Rolston, BSN, RN, CCRN, ICU

Clinical Nurse Level IV

Nancy Baeza, BSN, RN-BC, Lakefront Tower 2

Denise Berdecia, MSN, RN, ONC, Orthopedics

Ma Teresita Ravago, BSN, RN, PCCN, Telemetry

Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN, Bariatrics

Linda Palad, BSN, RN-BC, Telemetry

Gwen Pownall, BSN, RN-BC, Cardiac Catheterization Lab

Ann Mancuso, MSN, RN, CHFRN, Disease Management/Congestive Heart Failure



Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN, Bariatrics



Linda Palad, BSN, RN-BC, Telemetry



Gwen Pownall, BSN, RN-BC,
Cardiac Catheterization Lab



NEW KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Nurses at RWJUH Hamilton continually seek opportunities for innovation and new knowledge. This includes an expanding focus on research aimed at improving outcomes. Whenever possible, these new findings are shared across the system, regionally and nationally.

Proning and Nutrition Practices for Patients with COVID-19

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when elective surgeries were cancelled, OR staff provided education for nurses and respiratory therapists on effective daily proning techniques, which can lead to better outcomes for severely ill patients with COVID-19. In 2021, nurses and respiratory therapists continued to perfect and teach peers these techniques, including the appropriate padding of pressure points and the protection of airways. Continuing education featured a nurse-developed education module assigned to ICU nurses.

In addition, to ensure the best care for patients, nurses and dietitians reviewed the literature on low-dose feeding for ICU patients who are hemodynamically unstable or on paralyzing medication. In the past, feeding was not deemed beneficial due to concerns about non-absorption. In alignment with new information from the Society of Critical Care Medicine, RWJUH Hamilton nurses and dietitians collaborated to develop and introduce a trickle feed protocol for these patients, as it may be beneficial for gut lubrication.

Nurses Participate in Annual Research Day

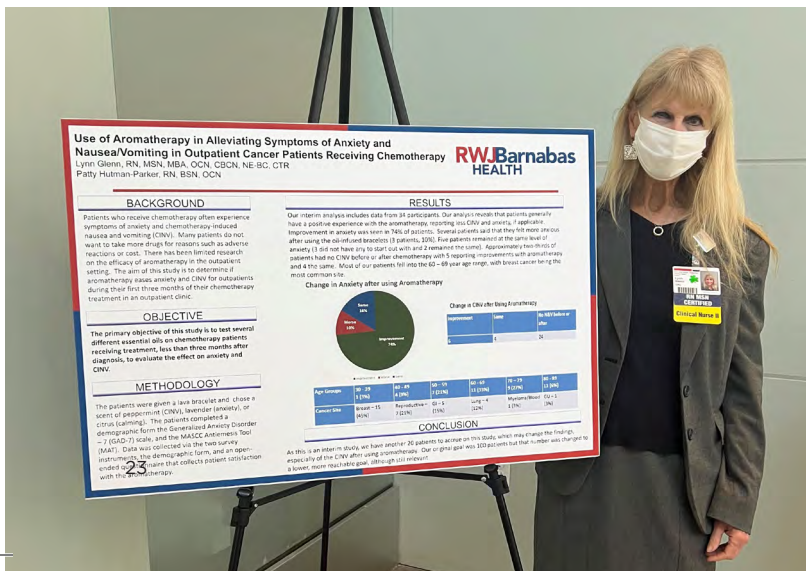
RWJBarnabas Health held its 16th Annual Nursing Research Symposium on November 19 in collaboration with the Rutgers University School of Nursing. This virtual celebration of nursing research was attended by several hundred nurses across RWJBarnabas Health. The event included the following RWJUH Hamilton presentation:

Use of Simulation to Enhance Healthcare Providers' Empathy and Understanding of Geriatric Loss

Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer

Cheryl Prall, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Director, The Center for Professional Development, Innovation & Research

Focusing on geriatric care that is grounded in awareness and empathy, this study compared the degree of empathy reported by 100 nurses and patient care technicians toward geriatric patients before and after participation in an activity that simulated the type of loss often experienced by older adults. Pre- and post-survey results for RN staff did not show a statistically significant difference, validating that the team is comprised of highly empathetic nurses. The survey did identify a statistically significant difference in empathy measurements for patient care technicians, which presented an opportunity to help further educate PCTs about geriatric sensitivity. As a result, this topic has been incorporated into the RWJUH Hamilton orientation program for PCTs.





**NEW KNOWLEDGE,
INNOVATIONS AND
IMPROVEMENTS**