



Robert Wood Johnson | **RWJ**Barnabas
University Hospital HEALTH
Hamilton

2022 Nursing Annual Report



CONTENTS

- 3 NURSING LEADERSHIP
- 4 ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
- 5 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
- 9 STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT
- 15 EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
- 25 NEW KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Message from our President and Chief Executive Officer

As we reflect on the achievements of 2022, the new year is well upon us and promises to be very exciting. I look forward to what the future holds working with such an incredible team of nurses and clinicians.

The challenges of the past few years have been unique and difficult, yet they have taught us so much about our team's resiliency and determination. Like no other time in our history, our nurses rose to these challenges to create a healing environment for all those we encountered, while continuing to focus on professional growth and development. I am proud to mention just a few of our many accomplishments throughout 2022.

We successfully implemented Epic, the preferred electronic health record system in the nation. In focusing on the growth of our Geriatric Program, our nursing division maintained NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) certification, with the completion of their first-year practice portfolio. We have sustained our quality track record with no VAPs (ventilator-associated pneumonias) for an impressive 11 years, and our hospital-acquired pressure injury rate is zero. All of these successes are tributes to our quality nursing care.

Once again, we worked collaboratively to achieve Leapfrog "A" Hospital Safety Grade status last fall, and we successfully earned Disease-Specific Joint Commission certifications for primary stroke, spine surgery and total joint replacement surgery for hip/knee. In addition, our nursing staff received the Community Corporate Award from St. Gregory the Great parish at its annual gala, an honor that recognizes their exceptional care of this community.

Our ongoing focus on quality and patient experience is vital to the success of our hospital. Looking ahead, we will continue to expand services to ensure we meet the needs of our community. As we grow, we will maintain a keen focus on patient safety, quality, patient experience and financial stewardship.

I want to thank you for your continued commitment to providing high-quality care for our patients and tireless service to our communities. Wherever you work, and whatever your role at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, you are making a positive impact. We are advancing health care together, and I feel a deep sense of pride and commitment to all those who place their trust in our care. I am confident that we will continue to achieve great things in 2023, and I can't wait to see what the future holds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light gray circular background.

Richard Freeman

President and Chief Executive Officer



Message from our Chief Nursing Officer

Each year as we produce our nursing annual report, I am overwhelmed by the outstanding work of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton staff – especially its nursing team. When patients and families walk through the doors of our hospital, they can expect to receive the highest quality nursing care given by some of the most phenomenal nurses.

As we enter the fourth year of the pandemic, we continue to see the effect of COVID-19 on our community and staff, but I am grateful for the research and vaccines that enable us to move forward. It will take several years to recover as we heal and regain our strength both as individuals and as an institution, but our team remains determined and resilient.

The nurses at RWJUH Hamilton follow evidence-based guidelines to provide care for those in need at their most vulnerable times, and they also serve as the voice of the customer in patient advocacy. We encourage professional development by supporting higher learning, professional education and nursing certification to ensure that our nurses are prepared to facilitate excellent outcomes for our patients. Our nurses are active in professional development, research and shared governance, enabling them to have a voice in their professional practice environment. The decisions we make now and the path we forge forward will help determine how health care is delivered for generations to come.

One of our biggest challenges and perhaps one of our strongest competitive advantages has been recruiting exceptional nurses. We have been extremely creative in our recruitment processes in examining career flexibility. Retention plans have also been a top priority for boosting employee morale and patient safety. Placing a focus on increased diversity in nursing is another way we're combatting the nursing shortage and addressing our community's needs.

In the following pages, you'll see examples of how the RWJUH Hamilton team is taking steps to become stronger and more efficient. We have adapted our work environment in ways that make it safer, more rewarding and less stressful, along with building in flexibility and resilience for improved work-life balance. As you'll note from the variety of accomplishments highlighted in this report, it certainly has been a busy year filled with many opportunities and rewards.

Looking back on the past year makes me anticipate the future even more, and I hope you feel the same way. I'm honored to work with you, and I look forward to seeing what RWJUH Hamilton nurses will accomplish in the coming year.

Sincerely,

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

Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Chief Nursing Officer
Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services

NURSING LEADERSHIP



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



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



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, MSN, RN, OCN
Director, Cancer Center



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



Stephanie Harvilla, BSN, RN, CNOR
Director, Cardiology Services



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



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



Jennifer Pirozzi, MSN, RN, CNOR
Director, Patient Care
Perioperative Support
Services



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



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



Denise Berdecia, MSN, RN, ONC
Orthopedic Program
Coordinator



Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN
Bariatric Program
Coordinator



Kelly Knox, BSN, RN, CWCN
Wound Care Specialist



Ann Mancuso, MSN, RN, CHFRN
Heart Failure Program Coordinator

About RWJUH Hamilton

Founded in 1971, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton is a 248-bed community hospital located in Mercer County, New Jersey. It is a proud member of RWJBarnabas Health, the largest, most comprehensive academic health care system in New Jersey.

RWJUH Hamilton provides a network of comprehensive health care services including hospital care, prevention and wellness, primary care and specialty practices, and outpatient diagnostic and treatment services to the community – along with nursing and allied health training for 13 surrounding colleges and universities. The hospital is an affiliate of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey in New Brunswick, the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in New Jersey. Patients also have access to the latest surgical technologies, such as minimally invasive and robotic surgery for general, bariatric, colorectal, gynecologic, orthopedic and urologic procedures.

As part of its national recognitions for outstanding safety and quality, RWJUH Hamilton has received 13 “A” Hospital Safety Grades from the Leapfrog Group, the gold standard in health care safety. In addition, the Joint Commission has awarded RWJUH Hamilton a Top Performer for stroke care, spine surgery and hip and knee replacements.

In 2021, RWJUH Hamilton was designated for the first time as a Magnet® hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). The hospital received six exemplars for extraordinary nursing work in patient care, quality outcomes and patient experience.

RWJUH Hamilton served nearly 5,000 inpatients in 2022, with more than 32,000 patients visiting the Emergency Room. The hospital performed more than 4,500 surgical procedures. More than 650 patients underwent procedures in the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory, with that number increasing each month since the hospital began performing elective angioplasties. In addition, the Cancer Center had more than 8,000 patient visits to the radiation, infusion and medical practice areas.



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



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.

An Epic Transition

On June 3, 2022, after extensive interprofessional preparation in collaboration with Information Technology, RWJUH Hamilton transitioned to the Epic electronic health record (EHR) platform. As the chosen platform for implementation across RWJBarnabas Health, Epic supports high-reliability

journey goals to streamline workflows, improve patient experience and enhance quality and safety.

To facilitate the transition to Epic, RWJUH Hamilton subject matter experts - including nurses - worked tirelessly behind the scenes with staff from across RWJBarnabas Health and the Epic support team to form a consensus on evidence-based protocols that should be streamlined and integrated into the platform. Prior to Go Live, nurses and other team members received in-depth Epic training, including self-paced eLearning and sessions conducted by certified trainers. Nurses also had the opportunity to become champions or super users for their units, acting as conduits and resources for their peers. When Epic went live, eight trained supervisors rounded to every unit around the clock to reiterate workflows, answer questions and address any concerns.



“Go Live was extremely successful thanks to the large-scale collaboration and preparation involved,” say Charlene Hendrickson, Director of Information Systems.

Epic helps users avoid duplication in workflows and documentation, enables information sharing, and enhances communication among providers as well as between providers and patients. Device integration allows for real-time data integration, reducing manual data entry and the risk for errors.

“Every end user has access to real-time reporting to ensure that documentation is complete, and portable rovers allow us to document at the bedside while interacting with patients,” says Edna Cabrera, BSN, RN, Clinical Informatics Support Clinician. “Another big benefit is the secure chat option, which facilitates faster feedback from physicians and other care providers.”

Nurses are empowered to submit enhancement requests through an Epic help desk option, enabling improvements from all levels of nursing.

“Nurses are paramount to innovation and technological advancements,” says Kavita Ali, MSN, RN, Clinical Informatics Liaison. “Engagement from every nursing role, from the bedside to the boardroom, has been integral to this transition. Epic’s capabilities align with providing patient-centered care and reducing the burden for our nurses, allowing them to spend less time at the computer and more time with patients.”

As part of the Epic implementation, RWJUH Hamilton launched a patient engagement platform called MyChart that provides digital tools for patients while helping providers better coordinate their care. Using this centralized platform, patients can easily and securely access their health information, get test results, schedule appointments, communicate with providers and more.

Epic Implementation Achieves Two Perfect 10 Scores

RWJUH Hamilton contributed to the successful rollout of Epic across RWJBarnabas Health, and these efforts earned two “Perfect 10” scores from Epic during its Gold Star review of the health system’s Wave 2 and Wave 3 implementations in 2022. The Epic Stars Program grades hospitals and health systems on patient access, patient experience, clinical quality, safety, population health, physician and nursing productivity and value from data. Level 10 is the highest level of recognition a health system can achieve.

RWJBarnabas Health achieved the Gold Stars distinction faster than any other customer in Epic’s 43-year history. In 2022, the system was one of only 17 health systems in the world with a Gold Star 10 ranking, placing it in the top 0.3% of all Epic users and higher than providers such as Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins, Cleveland Clinic and Cedars-Sinai.



Transitions to Practice Program Evolves

Open to any new nurse with a bachelor’s or associate’s degree and less than one year of experience, the New Graduate Transitions to Practice Program empowers participants to effectively make the transition from the education setting to functioning as an independent nurse. It combines classroom learning with hands-on skills to enable new nurses to confidently provide the highest level of care. The program includes an initial 15-week educational component, with preceptor guidance throughout the first year.

In 2022, RWJUH Hamilton nurse educators expanded the program from a quarterly to a bimonthly initiative with cohorts running simultaneously to increase acclimation opportunities for new nurses. By the end of the year, the program had started its eighth cohort and facilitated the hiring of 30 nurses. Based on feedback from participants, it also now incorporates a higher ratio of case studies, simulation room activities and skills-based care.

“Many of our cohort participants had limited opportunities for clinical experience during school due to the pandemic, making it even more important to provide them with the transition support they need,” explains Nursing Education Specialist Timothy Ryan, MSN, RN, CEN. “As experienced nurses retire, we also want to empower the next generation of nurses with the tools to practice safely, effectively and confidently at the bedside.”

Medical-surgical nurse John Sieg, RN, chose to start his nursing career at RWJUH Hamilton because of its robust new graduate program.

“I felt confident in my clinical knowledge after graduating, but I wanted the time to develop and hone the skills needed at the bedside,” says Sieg, who earned his BSN through a Rutgers School of Nursing accelerated program in May 2022. “After completing the new graduate program under the guidance of a preceptor, I felt completely comfortable in managing multiple patients and knowing what I needed to do.”

RWJUH Hamilton was proud to celebrate its first graduating cohort from the Transitions to Practice Program in 2022, with positive feedback from participants on how it helped them increase confidence and competency. Ryan is now working with Cheryl Prall, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research, on an evidence-based research study measuring competency levels and the value of participating in the program, with data collection upon hire, at 90 days and at one year.

Pride Day Highlights Diversity and Inclusion

The RWJUH Hamilton Diversity and Inclusion Council promotes culturally competent care and creates engagement opportunities that support diversity and inclusion within and beyond the hospital setting. The Council is comprised of a diverse array of team members – including nurses – who bring a wide range of perspectives to the table.

In 2022, the Council facilitated a Pride Day event in which Lakefront Tower 1 nurse (and now Emergency Department nurse) Robert Cassidy III, RN shared his personal experience about how welcomed he felt in joining the RWJUH Hamilton team, despite facing inclusivity challenges in the past. Attended by staff from throughout the hospital, the event also included the raising of the Pride flag.





STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT

Through supportive structures and engagement, nurses at all 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.

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 Naykis Sarvary, 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 solicit local feedback for policies and 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. In 2022, these recommendations included:

- A standard operating procedure solution to create greater consistency in patient weighing times and scale acclimation
- Streamlined throughput to move patients more efficiently from the Emergency Department to the floor and facilitate discharge in a timely manner
- Implementation of more consistent, effective timing for fingerstick checks, meals and insulin administration in patients with diabetes

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

Led by Joan Bercari, MSN, RN, Vice President of Quality and Patient Safety, and Tracee Bachman, BSN, RN-BC, Director of Quality, 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.



2022 NURSING AWARDS

Congratulations to the following individuals, who received these distinct honors at an awards ceremony during National Nurses Week in May 2022.



Nurse of the Year

Natasha Terilus, BSN, RN, CCRN, ICU

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

**Jorge Gomez-Diaz, MSN, RN, CNOR,
Center for Professional Development,
Innovation and Research**

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 Award

**Jessica Bucci, BSN, RN,
Emergency Department**

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 Award

**Jennifer Chaiken, BSN, RN, CEN, Center for
Professional Development, Innovation and Research**

Recognizing a staff RN who is involved in research, evidence-based practice and/or technological innovations, this award is given to an individual who develops and implements structures and processes to integrate new knowledge into nursing practice to improve patient outcomes.

Nursing Mentor Award

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

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

Chona Garcia, BSN, RN, Case Management

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

Matt Wolverton, PCT, Telemetry North

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 patient care through strong values along with the culture and commitment of RWJUH Hamilton.

Unit Secretary Award

Lynn Duncan, Emergency Department

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

Umer Khan, MD

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

Susan Brown, LPN, Surgical Services

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 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. The program has been adopted by health care organizations across the country and around the world.

DAISY Awardees

Congratulations to the following RWJUH Hamilton nurses, who earned DAISY Awards in 2022.



Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services (left), congratulates Telemetry Central nurse Noreen Garcia, BSN, RN, for earning the DAISY Award.

Noreen Garcia, BSN, RN, Telemetry Central

In the words of her nominator: Noreen often mentors and guides nursing students as they are assigned clinical rotations in the Telemetry Central Unit. The students enjoy working with her, as she is patient and compassionate. She is a kind and helpful nurse and is always willing to help. Noreen takes the time to educate the nursing students in a way a novice nurse can understand. The students expressed sincere gratitude for her guidance and direction, with one reporting that Noreen made her clinical experience very fulfilling. Noreen is an amazing nurse who makes her patients a top priority.

Jenna Rutkin, BSN, RN, Lakefront Tower 1

In the words of her nominator: Jenna had cared for a patient who was extremely pleased with the care she provided. The patient expressed sincere gratitude saying, “Jenna could not do enough for me.” She would stop in frequently to check on the patient to see if they needed anything. Because the patient had been experiencing a great deal of pain, Jenna addressed the cause and contacted the doctor. Orders were placed and the pain was relieved. The patient wanted Jenna to be recognized for her kind and compassionate care.

IRIS Awards

An acronym for Inspiring Respect in Service, the IRIS Awards recognize and honor patient care technicians for their contributions and service excellence. These awards were established in 2022 through the support of the nursing team. Congratulations to the following 2022 awardees.

Iris Davila-Melendez, Emergency Department

Iris was nominated multiple times by several of her colleagues. Each nomination endorsed her strong work ethic, kindness and compassion, and willingness to always help however she can. Iris continuously takes exemplary care of her patients. Her colleagues report that she is a pleasure to work with.

Calvin Melendez, Surgical Services

Calvin Melendez was nominated by his colleagues for his efficient work and sincere efforts. They appreciate his dedication to patients and the surgical team. They noted that he promptly prepares the surgical rooms and includes everything that is needed. The Surgical Services team greatly appreciates all that he does.



Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC (right), congratulates Emergency Department patient care technician Iris Davila-Melendez for earning the IRIS Award.



Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC (left), congratulates Surgical Services patient care technician and IRIS awardee Calvin Melendez.

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.

Community Health Outreach

In 2022, the RWJUH Hamilton Community Education Department - which includes several full-time nurses - facilitated in-person, hybrid and virtual community outreach events and classes that reached more than 9,000 people. This included more than 130 education and screening events led or coordinated by nurses on health topics ranging from cancer awareness and prevention to chronic disease management and behavioral health.

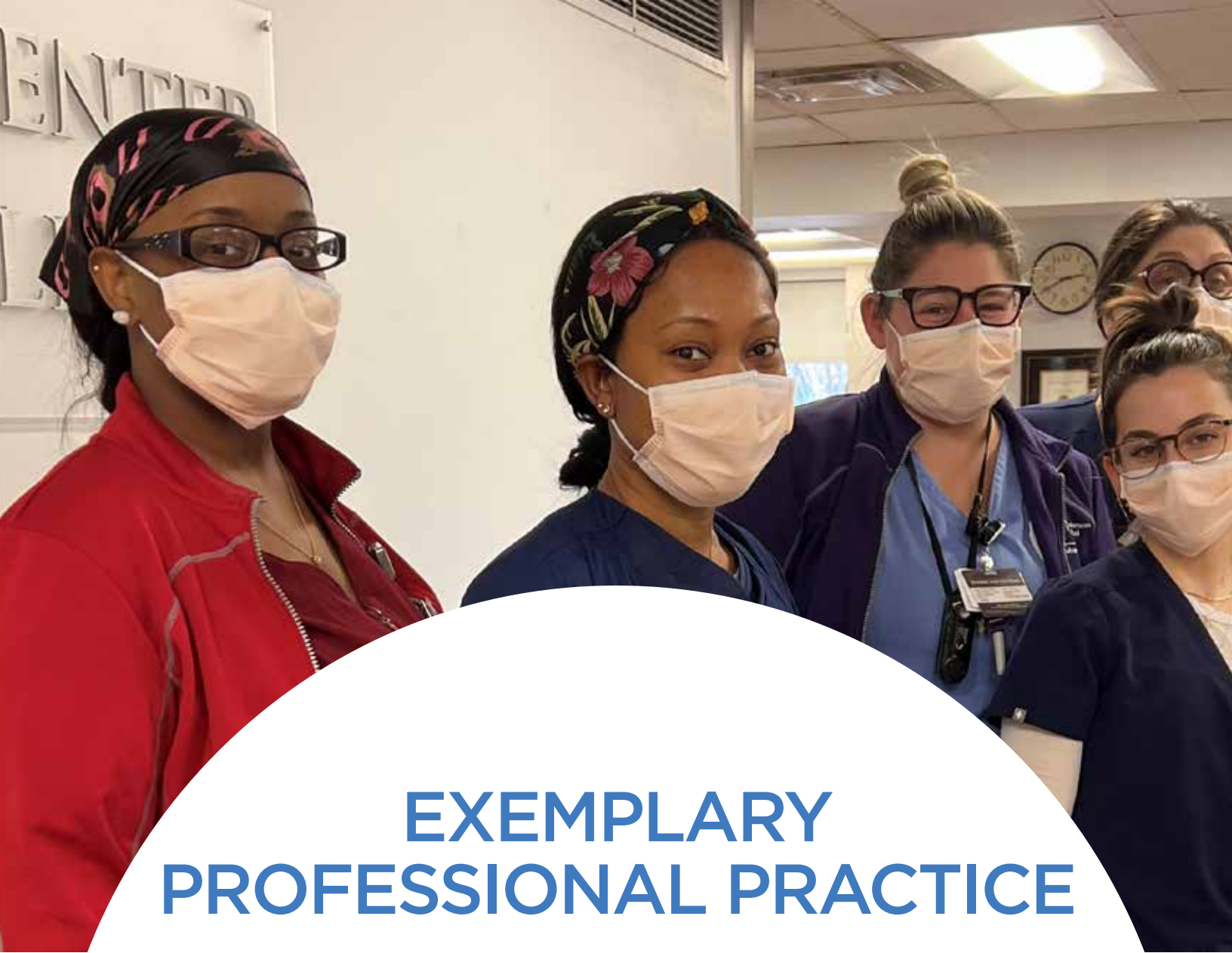
Nurses Support Those in Need

Throughout 2022, RWJUH nurses and other team members participated in various drives to support those in need throughout the community. Together, they collected school supplies for Mercer Street Friends Community Schools, winter coats to benefit Trenton Public School students, new toys for the Toys for Tots program, and 125 holiday gift bags for homebound seniors in partnership with Truist Bank and Mobile Meals of Hamilton Township. In addition, RWJUH team members participated in a fall food drive that collected more than 300 pounds of food to benefit the Mercer Street Friends Food Bank "Send Hunger Packing" initiative for local children.

Running With the Devils Honors Healthcare Heroes

In October 2022, RWJUH Hamilton team members gathered on the hospital campus to participate in RWJBarnabas Health's Running with the Devils 5K Run and Walk virtual event. Held in partnership with the New Jersey Devils Hockey team, the system-wide event consisted of both live and virtual formats to honor RWJBarnabas Health's 38,000 Healthcare Heroes across New Jersey, who provide essential care for communities throughout the state. Proceeds supported 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 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.

Nurses Endorse Recognition for Technicians

Based on an idea first discussed in a Unit-Based Council meeting for Lakefront Tower 1 and a search of the literature, RWJUH Hamilton nurses proposed developing specific ways to recognize the contributions of patient care technicians (PCTs) while promoting their career development. With approval from the Shared Governance Council and Professional Practice Council, this resulted in the creation of the PCT Clinical Ladder and the IRIS (Inspiring Respect in Service) Awards.

“Patient care technicians are our counterparts in caring for patients at the bedside,” says Dawn Hutchinson, MSN, RN, PCCN-K, Assistant Vice President of Nursing. “Our nurses want them to have the opportunity to be recognized at an organizational level and to know that they are highly valued.”



Similar to the Professional Advancement System for clinical nurses, the PCT Clinical Ladder provides an opportunity for PCTs to progress in their roles and enhance their knowledge. Achieving PCT Level I and Level II requires prerequisites such as participating on a hospital committee and completing learning modules, along with the completion of tasks in four areas: caring, outreach, research/evidence-based practice and education. Since the program began, 24 PCTs have achieved Level I status.

Launched in spring 2022, the IRIS Awards honor and celebrate the skill and compassion of PCTs, with the colors of an iris symbolizing the qualities of wisdom, friendship, faith, hope, passion and purity. Any staff member can nominate a PCT for an IRIS Award, and awardees are recognized at a hospital ceremony.

To ensure that these efforts to recognize and support PCTs have an evidence-based component, Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services, and Cheryl Prall, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research, have initiated a research study examining the impact on job satisfaction and retention.



Taking Action to Prevent CAUTIs

In 2022, Director of Infection Prevention Erin Glospie, MSN Ed, RN, PCCN, partnered with Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services, and spearheaded a plan to reduce and prevent catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs) across the hospital. After gaining input from nursing leadership and clinical coordinators, the plan was implemented with an interprofessional approach that included a closer examination of when Foley catheters are needed and how efficiently they can be removed to decrease overall utilization.

In a variety of multifaceted efforts, Glospie provided medical staff, nursing and PCT education and shared information at various unit, staff, professional practice and shared governance meetings. Two-nurse verification for Foley insertion and pre-transfer STAR moments to consider removal were initiated, along with an Epic enhancement on insertion processes. Sixty nurses and PCTs underwent hands-on training on alternatives to urinary catheters, and Foley Rounds are now included in bedside huddles.

Glospie also facilitated interactive initiatives and contests to further engage staff, including a “CAUTI roadshow” on each unit and a CAUTI board contest in which units could customize portions of these communication boards in creative ways. Jennifer Chaiken, BSN, RN, CEN, Clinical Nurse Educator, helped create the winning display board for the Emergency Department. Chaiken, who has a theater background, also composed an original song to the tune of “As It Was” by Harry Styles as a fun way to focus attention on catheter use.

Following the implementation of this action plan, the hospital had no CAUTIs for the remaining four months of 2022. In addition, the catheter utilization rate decreased from 0.25 to .10.

“Keeping patients safe is our number one priority,” says Glospie. “Part of this includes working together to ensure that catheters are used only when needed and are removed in a timely manner to prevent potential infections.”

Ebola and Monkeypox Training Modules

In an interprofessional collaboration that included the Security Department, RWJUH Hamilton nurses and other team members held an Ebola drill to simulate an exposure in the Emergency Department and walk through best practices for staff and patient safety. This included donning and doffing of high-risk PPE. Additional one-on-one PPE training drills were held in the fall.

In addition, Clinical Nurse Educator Jennifer Chaiken, BSN, RN, CEN, adapted RWJBarnabas Health education modules for Ebola and monkeypox to meet the needs of RWJUH Hamilton staff. All nurses completed online learning modules, and education was provided across disciplines on signs and symptoms, treatment and isolation protocols.



High Marks in Infection Prevention

Thanks to the work of the interprofessional team, RWJUH Hamilton handwashing compliance rates ranged from 93% to 98% during 2022 – a key tactic for preventing infection. In addition, RWJUH Hamilton ICU/critical care nurses and respiratory therapists achieved a remarkable 11 years of zero ventilator-associated pneumonias in 2022.

A Focus on Preventing Falls

RWJUH Hamilton has interprofessional processes in place to prevent falls among patients at risk, including regular Falls Friday meetings. In 2022, Jacqueline Ciccarelli, MSN, RN, CCRN-K, Manager of the Magnet Program and Nursing Performance Improvement, helped coordinate a falls prevention poster contest and awareness event in conjunction with the RWJUH Hamilton Falls Committee. Each unit developed a poster, with the winning entry taking a unique angle: Lakefront Tower 1 nurse Barbara DeSalvo, RN, focused on the emotions that care providers feel should a patient fall occur.

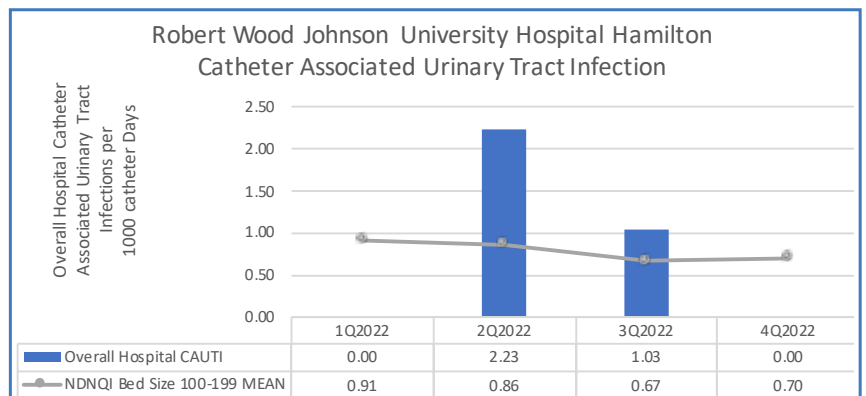
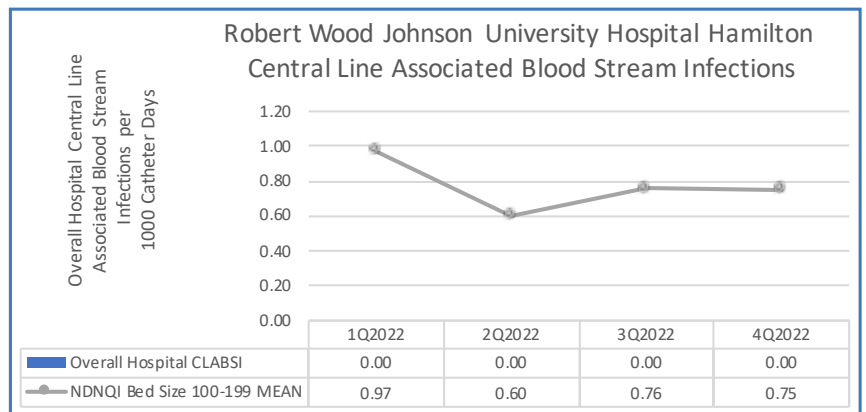
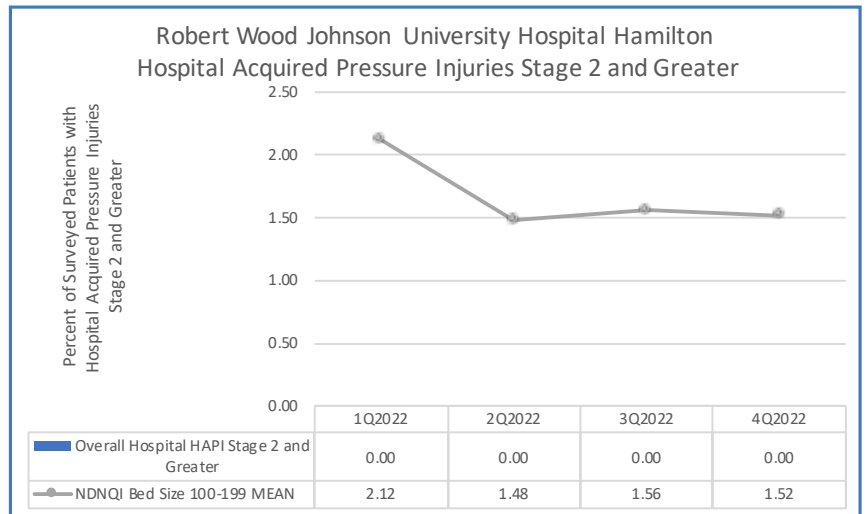
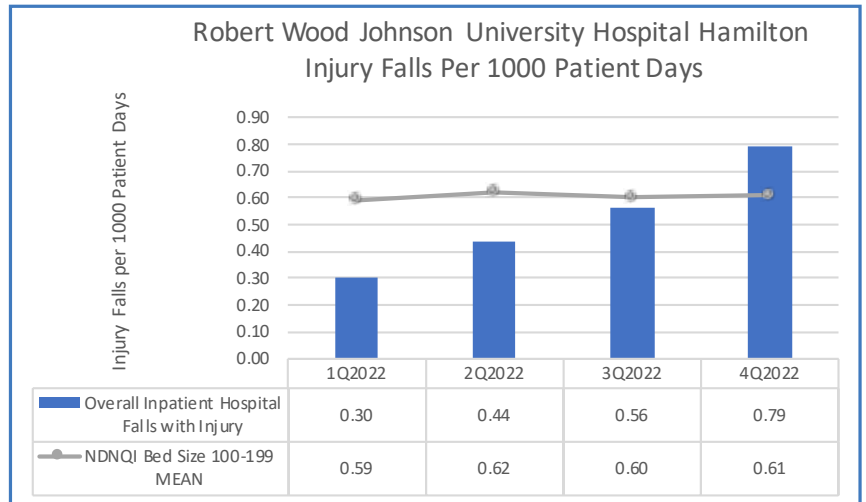
“A fall is a scary experience not only for patients, but also for nurses and patient care technicians,” explains DeSalvo. “It’s stressful and upsetting to the point where you can lose sleep over it, so I expressed these feelings in the branches of a tree. No one wants to have those feelings – and the poster is a good reminder to continue placing a strong focus on the wonderful interventions we have to safeguard our patients.”



Barbara DeSalvo, RN, and Lisa Nevius, MSN, RN, OCN, Nurse Manager for the Medical-Surgical Units

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 better than the national benchmark. In 2022, RWJUH Hamilton achieved results that were superior to benchmarks in most cases for the following four indicators: falls with injury, hospital-acquired pressure injuries stage 2 or greater, central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) and catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI).



Skills Days Feature Resuscitation Documentation

When RWJUH Hamilton transitioned to Epic, one of many protocols requiring new learning was electronic resuscitation charting. To facilitate this education, Clinical Nurse Educator Jennifer Chaiken, BSN, RN, CEN, helped team members practice documentation by aligning their efforts with a mock code played on YouTube in real time. The Epic Playground practice site was available in the RWJUH Hamilton I.S. training room during RWJUH Hamilton Skills Days where the video was displayed, and nurses could practice at a bank of computers. More than 300 nurses across all departments and shifts practiced Epic charting using this mock video, and the training was very well received.

“The ACLS gold standard is to switch compressors every two minutes – and two full minutes is longer than you think when you’re calm,” explains Chaiken. “This drill has given nurses the opportunity to practice charting a mock code in Epic when they’re not feeling the intense pressure of an emergency.”

Periop 101 Class Supports Transition to OR

The training for an Operating Room nurse is unlike training for any other nursing specialty, according to Cheryl Prall, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research. At RWJUH Hamilton, OR nurses must be trained in scrubbing and circulating, an orientation that requires a full year.

In 2022, three RWJUH Hamilton nurses completed the year-long Periop 101 training program to become OR nurses. During the first part of this training, they attended Periop 101 classes facilitated by RWJBarnabas Health. Using the curriculum created by the Association of Operating Room Nurses (AORN), these classes include an online didactic portion and an in-person skills-based program that features simulation opportunities. Once they completed the online portion, they each passed a comprehensive final exam to continue with the clinical portion of their training.

“Over the course of a year, I was able to learn a significant amount through a repertoire of different cases that provided a well-rounded experience,” says Periop 101 participant Daniel Schenker, BSN, RN, who has held telemetry and ICU roles in the past and has always been interested in working in the OR. “The course gives you the time and repetition needed to learn how to efficiently run an OR, along with the ability to build relationships with surgeons and fellow nurses. It’s been a great opportunity on my career path.”



Nurses completing the Periop 101 program in 2022 included (left to right) Daniel Schenker, BSN, RN, Michele Baldwin, BSN, RN, CAPA, and Mary Voorhees, BSN, RN.



Schwartz Rounds Address Emotional Challenges

Through the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, RWJUH Hamilton offers Schwartz Rounds™ to help reduce caregiver stress, address emotional challenges and reflect on the human connections in health care. With facilitation by interprofessional team members, the program provides an opportunity to express feelings through presentations and dialogue while fostering support.

In 2022, nurses helped facilitate the following Schwartz Round presentations:

- Racism and our Clinical Practice - an open forum with several nurses and nurse leaders participating
- Feeling Undervalued: Hero to Zero - a panel that included Jennifer Chaiken, BSN, RN, CEN
- Caring While Living with Grief and Loss - a panel including Cheryl Prall, MSN, RN, NEA-BC and Naomi Hurley, BSN, RN, CCRN
- Caregivers as Caregivers: The 2nd Shift at Home - an open forum with several nurses and nurse leaders participating

“The Schwartz Rounds help us understand that we’re not alone in our struggles,” explains Hurley, who discussed the challenges of losing patients during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the grief and loss panel. “We’re really not all that different, and these perspectives can bring people together and build camaraderie. It’s also an opportunity to share different coping strategies and sometimes even laughter.”

RWJUH HAMILTON QUALITY AND SAFETY RECOGNITIONS

The following awards and recognitions mark the dedication and efforts of the entire RWJUH Hamilton team – including nurses throughout the hospital – in maintaining a strong focus on patient safety and quality.

Thirteen “A” Grades for Patient Safety

In fall 2022, RWJUH Hamilton was awarded an “A” Hospital Safety Grade by the Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit that serves as a voice for patient safety, quality and transparency. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harms to patients.

“An ‘A’ Hospital Safety Grade means that we have protocols and standards in place for preventing errors, and we are fully focused on patient safety,” says Joan Bercari, MSN, RN, Vice President of Quality and Patient Safety. “Thanks to the efforts of the entire team, we have a very strong track record in earning ‘A’ ratings.”

The fall rating marks 13 “A” ratings achieved by RWJUH Hamilton in recent years – four of which were received amid 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.



CHIME Most Wired Recognition

RWJUH Hamilton earned 2022 Digital Health Most Wired recognition from the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME) with a Performance Excellence Level of 8 in the Acute category. CHIME surveys assess the adoption, integration and impact of technologies in health care organizations at all stages of development. The Digital Health Most Wired survey and recognition program serve as a comprehensive digital health check-up for health care organizations around the world.

Bariatric Surgery Accreditation

The Bariatric Surgery Center at RWJUH Hamilton was accredited by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP) of the American College of Surgeons following an independent, voluntary and rigorous peer evaluation in accordance with nationally recognized bariatric surgical standards. This accreditation recognizes the hospital's excellent quality standards and commitment to continuous quality improvement. RWJUH Hamilton's bariatric team includes certified bariatric nurse Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN, who has specialized training in bariatric surgery.



Pictured are RWJUH Hamilton senior leadership, nursing leaders, Ragui W. Sadek, MD (center/blue scrubs), Lisa Siracusa, Surgery PA and Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN, Bariatric Nurse Navigator/Program Coordinator.

Disease-Specific Certifications from The Joint Commission

Following rigorous on-site surveys in March 2022, RWJUH Hamilton received two-year Disease-Specific Certifications from The Joint Commission for primary stroke, spine surgery and total joint replacement surgery for hip/knee. These certifications demonstrate continuous compliance with performance standards in each of these areas, and they are a testament to the team's commitment to patient safety and high-quality care.

Best Healthcare Planning Project

RWJUH Hamilton was awarded a 2022 PeRCy award for Best Healthcare Planning Project for the hospital's geriatric efforts, including the inpatient NICHE program and outpatient geriatric work through the Better Health Program. Presented by the Healthcare Planning & Marketing Society of New Jersey, this award recognizes any major or minor building project, service line enhancement or special program for the community in which a hospital planning team brings the concept to reality.

Nursing Team Honored

The RWJUH Hamilton nursing team was honored for the care they provide by the Community of St. Gregory the Great at its 5th Annual Gala, "Denim & Diamonds," in Hamilton in November 2022.



Pictured at the St. Gregory the Great Gala are (left to right) Stephanie Harvilla, BSN, RN, CNOR, Tammy Leigh, MSN, RN, Natasha Terilus, BSN, RN, CCRN, Lisa Breza, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, and Joan Bercari, MSN, RN.



Accepting the PeRCy award are (left to right): Nivi Pillai, Director, Planning, Lisa Nevius, MSN, RN, OCN, Manager, Medical-Surgical Units, Sara Ali, MD, Joyce Cantalice, Manager, Better Health, Richard Freeman, President and CEO, Diane Grillo, MS, Vice President, Community Relations, Tammy Leigh, MSN, RN, Director, Emergency Services and Critical Care, and Dawn Hutchinson, MSN, RN, PCCN-K, Assistant Vice President, Nursing.

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 2022.

Clinical Nurse Level III

Dave Baldwin, BSN, RN, ONC	PACU
Portia Cuffe, BSN, RN-BC	Lakefront Tower 1
Caren Dubell, BSN, RN-BC	Lakefront Tower 1
Lisa Egbert, BSN, RN	Emergency Department
Elizabeth Forcellini, BSN, RN-BC	Lakefront Tower 1
Danely Gonzalez, BSN, RN	Lakefront Tower 2
Raychelle Grooms, BSN, RN-BC	Lakefront Tower 2
Kathy Lemmon, BSN, RN	OR
Peter Liptak, RN, CNOR	OR
Colleen Petitt, BSN, RN	Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory
Elizabeth Restuccia, BSN, RN	Lakefront Tower 1
Caroline Voorhees, BSN, RN, CEN	Emergency Department

Clinical Nurse Level IV

Nancy Baeza, BSN, RN-BC	Lakefront Tower 2
Denise Berdecia, MSN, RN, ONC	Orthopedics
Kelly Eppolito, BSN, RN	Lakefront Tower 1
Sandra Haas, BSN, RN, CBN	Bariatrics
Katlyn Laba, RN-BC	Lakefront Tower 1
Ann Mancuso, MSN, RN, CHFRN	Congestive Heart Failure
Linda Palad, BSN, RN-BC	Telemetry Central
Gwen Pownall, MSN, RN-BC	Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory



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.

NICHE Training Enhances Care of Older Adults

As a hospital that has earned Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) designation, RWJUH Hamilton recognizes the unique needs of seniors and understands that patient- and family-centered care is imperative to creating a positive patient experience. The largest geriatric nursing program available, NICHE imparts principles and tools to help nurses implement evidence-based, interprofessional approaches that promote better outcomes, positive experiences and improved care for older adults.



Nurses and patient care technicians who completed geriatric modules were awarded certificates and NICHE designation pins.

In 2022, Lakefront Tower 1 geriatric nurses and patient care technicians underwent 16 hours of classroom-style and hands-on NICHE training to earn geriatric resource nurse (GRN) and geriatric patient care associate (GPCA) status, hallmarks of the NICHE model. At the completion of training, participants attended a ceremony where they received pins and certificates.

RWJUH Hamilton also celebrated the accomplishment of submitting its first-year practice portfolio to NICHE, with feedback placing the hospital in the early to progressive category. Continuing education is ongoing on Lakefront Tower 1, and the initiative will soon be expanded to the Emergency Department.

“Our team is committed to serving the community in the best ways possible, and this means meeting the needs of an aging population as demographics change,” says Dawn Hutchinson, MSN, RN, PCCN-K, Assistant Vice President of Nursing. “NICHE offers very specific evidence-based protocols that encompass so many care factors for older populations, from reducing the risk of complications to preventing falls. Having access to these resources is a win-win for our care team and our patients.”



Rapid Response EEG Technology Training

As part of a nurse-driven initiative to identify and implement technology that helps detect non-convulsive seizures in patients, nursing staff in the Emergency Department, Critical Care and Telemetry received education/training in the use of the Ceribell® Rapid Response EEG. This headband-style EEG technology helps health care providers triage and continuously monitor patients at risk for seizures, enabling quicker diagnosis and earlier treatment. The detection of seizures in real time can help improve patient outcomes and minimize neurological damage associated with prolonged seizure activity.

Nurse and provider education included web-based and hands-on training sessions, along with additional opportunities to use the technology at an RWJUH Hamilton Skills Day. Ceribell will be implemented in 2023.

“Often, it’s difficult to determine whether certain symptoms could be due to seizure activity without the use of a traditional EEG, which takes time and technician availability,” says Connie Mocerri, MSN, AGNP-C, Director of the Disease Management and Stroke Program. “This technology bridges that gap, empowering nurses to quickly identify seizure activity and ensure prompt, accurate treatment.”



NURSES CONTRIBUTE TO RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Newly Renovated Cancer Center Advances Care

RWJUH Hamilton unveiled its newly renovated medical oncology exam rooms at the hospital's Cancer Center with a ribbon cutting and open house hosted by the RWJUH Hamilton Foundation. The event marked the final stage of a six-year renovation plan, including the construction of a new Radiation Oncology Suite, updates to the Infusion Center and a high-tech makeover for the conference room and main lobby. The renovations at the Cancer Center were made possible by the generous support of The Joshua Harr Shane Foundation and the Young Professionals Group of RWJUH Hamilton.

"Our nurses have provided valuable input throughout the renovation process, including recommendations that ensured a clear view of all infusion chairs from the nurses' station, smart TVs for patients, supply organization for easy access and the creation of an aromatherapy room to help patients feel calmer prior to treatment," says Amy German, MSN, RN, OCN, Director of the Cancer Center. "Their insight has made our positive interactions with patients even better."

The ribbon-cutting event included guided tours from the Cancer Center team, who showcased the state-of-the-art cancer services and technology available to patients at RWJUH Hamilton, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Expanded Cardiac Services

Through the support of a generous donor, RWJUH Hamilton opened the H.H. Tuchman Cardiac Interventional Suite (CIS) in December 2022 to provide patients and families with first-class, private patient rooms for both pre- and post-operative cardiac care. Nurses on the CIS unit assisted with the design, organization and development of workflows to ensure a seamless encounter for cardiology patients.

In addition, RWJUH Hamilton received approval from the New Jersey Department of Health to perform nonemergency, elective angioplasty in its Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory. This designation expands on the hospital's longstanding ability to perform emergency angioplasty, which enables team members to restore blood flow to the heart in patients experiencing a heart attack or other cardiac issues.

"Having the capability to perform elective angioplasty is so important to our community and surrounding areas," says Stephanie Harvilla, BSN, RN, CNOR, Director of Cardiology Services. "The procedure is minimally invasive. It can open blocked arteries, improve symptoms such as chest pain and shortness of breath, and reduce damage to the heart. It also lowers the risk of a future heart attack."



Celebrating the Cancer Center opening are (left to right) Rachana Singh, MD, Meera Yogarajah, MD, RWJUH Hamilton President and CEO Richard Freeman, Medical Oncology Director Malini Patel, MD, Cancer Center Director Amy German, MSN, RN, OCN and Firas G. Eladoumikhachi, MD.



@rwjhamilton



@rwjhamilton



rwjuh_hamilton



Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton



@RWJBarnabasHealth

Robert Wood Johnson | RWJ Barnabas
University Hospital HEALTH
Hamilton

1 Hamilton Health Place
Hamilton, NJ 08690

609-586-7900

rwjbh.org/hamilton



Use your smartphone camera to hover over **the QR code** to learn more and stay connected.