

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset Nursing Annual Report



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Defined by Quality, Distinguished by Service



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At Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset (RWJS), quality underpins the Magnet® tenets our nurses uphold every day in caring for our patients. Our nurses are empowered to share in decision making, inspire quality improvements, enhance safety and strive for excellence both personally and professionally. From their vantage point on the front lines of patient care, they contribute heavily to the quality and safety recognitions earned by RWJS – including the highest mark in Hospital Safety Scores from The Leapfrog Group for the third consecutive time.

Yet the commitment of RWJS nurses extends beyond quality to also encompass compassion and service. Backed by the support of our leadership team, our nurses believe that they have a responsibility to meaningfully serve people throughout our community by identifying and addressing areas of need.

As part of their service efforts in 2017, our nurses coordinated outreach activities on many fronts, ranging from hurricane relief fundraising to collecting winter supplies for the homeless.

They partnered with Babies ‘R Us to offer free educational classes for expectant parents. In a nurse-driven project, a VETS Business Resource Group was launched to offer support to veterans and their families. And when RWJS critical care nurses recognized how important it was for a son to have his mother present for his marriage ceremony, they were instrumental in helping to coordinate a wedding on the unit.

From our many new nurses to those who have cared for our patients for decades, we are proud to embrace a culture that is just as passionate about personal connections and social impact as it is about quality. Please join me in celebrating our nurses for the many accomplishments outlined in this report – along with the extraordinary role they play every day at the bedside and far beyond.

Lynn Kearney, MS, BSN, RN, NE-BC, FABC
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset



4 Transformational Leadership

6 Structural Empowerment

8 Awards

10 Community Outreach

14 Exemplary Professional Practice

20 New Knowledge, Innovation and Research



At RWJS, nurses at all levels and in all roles serve as transformational leaders who share in decision making to achieve the organization's mission and to inspire nursing practice across the care continuum. Exemplary safety, service and quality outcomes are achieved through open communication, execution of a well-defined nursing strategic plan, application of a well-articulated nursing philosophy and a vision that supports nursing excellence in an ever-changing health care environment.

“M in the Box” Increases Medication Knowledge

As part of ongoing efforts to improve safety and educate patients about their health care, RWJS nurses implemented a best practice on medication communication called “M in the box” – an approach that has been successfully used by other hospitals across the country. When a patient is prescribed a new medication, nurses write the medication name and potential side effects on a white sign with a large M prominently displayed in patient rooms. They also explain the information to patients. At each shift change, nurses reiterate the information after asking patients if they can recall it.

“The process is both verbal and visual, and it also includes a teach-back component,” says Lynn Kearney, MS, BSN, RN, NE-BC, FABC, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing at RWJS. “By explaining this information, we engage patients in helping to monitor for any medication side effects. Understanding medications and what to watch for can mean greater peace of mind and potentially lower readmission rates.”

A High-Reliability Organization

RWJS has partnered with Healthcare Performance Improvement (HPI), part of Press Ganey Associates, in a comprehensive process called “Safety Together” to further improve its culture of reliability and safety. This process builds upon past successes in safety and quality, and is designed to transform the way staff members think about improving the health of patients and the community.

“Being a high-reliability organization means having a laser focus on safety, error prevention and performance excellence,” explains Lynn Kearney, MS, BSN, RN, NE-BC, FABC, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing at RWJS. “Part of this approach is to empower nurses and staff at all levels across our system to share observations and make recommendations about patient safety. The idea is to create a unified culture of safety that helps ensure top-tier clinical outcomes while improving patient satisfaction.”



VETS Business Research Group Launched

In November, RWJS launched a new VETS Business Resource Group (BRG) with a special flag-raising ceremony outside the hospital. The event also featured a luncheon for veterans and those interested in joining the VETS BRG. In addition to fostering a sense of pride and appreciation for U.S. military veterans, the group is designed to support current veteran employees, reserve personnel, veteran patients and their family members.

“Our goal is to be recognized as a vet-friendly hospital; we honor and thank all of our military heroes who turn to us for care, and we help connect

them to services available to them as veterans,” says Diane Applebaum, DrPH, MSN, RN, CIC, NE-BC, Assistant Vice President of Nursing at RWJS and the group’s executive sponsor. Dr. Applebaum’s husband, Geoff Darling, is a vet, a Purple Heart recipient and a community representative on the BRG committee.

The group is co-chaired by Glen Bielic of the Patient Experience Department and Leo Figueroa, MSN, MBA, RN, Cardiac Pavilion Nursing Director, both of whom are veterans.



Helping to launch the VETS BRG are (left to right) Tony Cava, president, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, Diane Applebaum, DrPH, MSN, RN, CIC, NE-BC, Assistant Vice President of Nursing, Glen Bielic, Patient Experience Department and VETS BRG Co-Chair; and Leo Figueroa, MSN, MBA, RN, Cardiac Pavilion Nursing Director and VETS BRG Co-Chair.



The Falls Committee at RWJS

Solid structures and processes have been developed at RWJS to support nurses' professional development, promote participation in community and population health care outreach activities and recognize nurses for their contributions in achieving strategic priorities. Interprofessional collaboration and participation in shared governance councils are encouraged to promote an innovative and research-intensive professional practice environment in which nurses, patients, families, colleagues and the community at large flourish.

Falls Friday Implemented to Improve Safety

Throughout 2017, nursing leadership, nurses and team members from departments throughout the hospital convened each Friday to promote a learning-focused environment centered around falls reduction. These multidisciplinary meetings presented an opportunity to analyze the circumstances of any patient falls that met the NDNQI definition of a fall, to determine whether any trends or patterns exist and to develop action plans aimed at a further reduction in falls.

Co-chaired by Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN, OCN, NE-BC, Oncology Nursing Director, and Leo Figueroa, MSN, MBA, RN, Cardiac Pavilion Nursing Director, the initiative has succeeded in reducing the falls rate through numerous safety improvements. These include house-wide education provided by nurse educators, fall TIPS posters, ceiling tiles encouraging patients to call when they need help, the use of special socks for at-risk patients and the adjustment of medication times to reduce the need for nighttime bathroom use by at-risk patients.

PROUD Family Health Opens

To address the growing needs of New Jersey's LGBT community, RWJS opened PROUD Family Health – the first specialized primary care center of its kind in New Jersey. Staffed by RWJS physicians and nurses, PROUD Family Health provides safe and convenient health care for LGBT children and adults. Services include primary medical care and specialized treatments ranging from hormone replacement therapy (HRT) monitoring to HIV care. The hospital also offers a transgender family support group in collaboration with the Pride Center of New Jersey.

“There’s no longer a need for members of the LGBT community to travel long distances to receive the health care services they need,” says Jackie Baras, MSN, MBA, RN, Quality Nurse Manager, Perioperative Services, who was instrumental in helping to launch the office. “PROUD Family Health offers a safe and welcoming location close to home.”

At RWJS, all employees have received LGBT sensitivity training. The PROUD Family Health team is dedicated to providing high-quality care that meets the individual health care needs of patients of any identification or affiliation in all stages of life.



Members of the PROUD Family Health team at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the center in January



Nursing Performance Improvement (PI) Council



Practice Council

Promoting Professional Development

The Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research (CPDIR) staff provide educational resources and training for nurses at the RWJS and New Brunswick campuses.

Shared Governance

Shared governance provides an organizational framework that empowers clinical nurses to participate in and lead decision-making processes. Through unit-based departmental councils, the shared governance model provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information that enhances the quality of nursing care, and promotes clinical excellence through accountability and collaboration.

Education Council

Education Council representatives disseminate current and ongoing educational activities and updates to their nursing units while serving as a resource to identify and address unit-specific educational needs.

Nursing Performance Improvement (PI) Council

As part of shared governance efforts, the Nursing Performance Improvement (PI) Council meets monthly to recommend appropriate actions for quality assurance and performance improvement activities across the organization.

Patient/Family Education Council

This council provides a forum for a systematic, multidisciplinary approach to facilitate the assessment, design, planning, implementation and evaluation of patient and family educational resources, materials and programs. The council strives to ensure appropriate literacy levels in educational materials for patients and families.

Practice Council

Members of the Practice Council ensure that nursing practice standards are ethical, current, evidence-based, theoretically sound and aligned with the RWJS mission, vision and strategic goals.



Education Council



Patient/Family Education Council



Doris Crowell, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC (third from right) receives the 2017 Magnet Nurse of the Year Award.

Awards for Nursing Excellence

During a special Nurses' Day Awards Ceremony at RWJS held in honor of National Nurses Week, Doris Crowell, *MSN, RN, RNC-NIC*, a nurse in the Level II Nursery, received the hospital's 2017 Magnet Nurse of the Year Award. A champion of multiple performance improvement initiatives, Crowell is Chair of the Nursing Performance Improvement Council and an active member of numerous shared governance councils. Her quality improvement efforts have included an initiative that increased breastfeeding rates among new mothers at RWJS, and she played an instrumental role in the most recent Magnet® designation process.

Also at the Nurses' Day Awards, the Medical/Dental Staff presented the first-ever Professional Development and Magnet Enculturation Scholarship Awards to Karen Pacaldo, *BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care*, and Christy Heckman, *BSN, RN, Emergency Department*. Each were awarded \$2,500.

Additional Nursing Excellence Awards

Community Outreach Award:

Jackie Baras, *MSN, MBA, RN, Quality Nurse Manager, Perioperative Services*

Friend of Nursing Award:

George Jonkoski, *Director of Food and Nutrition*

Nursing Technician/Technologist Award:

Louis Szabo, *Patient Care Technician, Neuroscience Pavilion*

Advanced Practice Provider Award:

Kelly Scott, *APN, PMHNP-BC, Psychiatric/Mental Health*

Transformational Leadership Award:

Linda Przybylko, *MSN, RN, Director, Neuroscience Pavilion and Maternal Child Health*

Structural Empowerment Award:

Critical Care Unit-Based Practice Council

Exemplary Professional Practice Award:

Christina Reilly, *BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Unit*

New Knowledge, Innovation and Improvement Award:

Karen Pacaldo, *BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Unit*

Critical Care Nurse Finalist for March of Dimes Award

Maria Elena Holguin, *BSN, RN*, a critical care nurse (pictured second from left), was a finalist for the March of Dimes New Jersey Chapter's Adult Critical Care Emergency Nurse of the Year Award. A leader on many levels, Holguin consistently demonstrates problem-solving, critical thinking and resource management skills while serving as an advocate for patients and their families.



RWJS respects and celebrates the unique backgrounds of its nurses and all employees. The hospital has earned national recognition for its diversity and inclusion efforts, and we encourage and support related outreach initiatives. Through various community outreach initiatives, nurses and other health care providers partner to promote healthy behaviors, improve access to primary and preventive care and reduce health disparities.

Tony Cava, President, RWJS, and Carolyn Welsh, Chief Clinical Officer of the New Jersey Sharing Network, unveil the “Tree of Life” outside the Critical Care Unit.

Tree of Life Honors Organ and Tissue Donors

In October, RWJS held a moving ceremony to dedicate its first “Tree of Life” Organ Donor Wall, located outside the Critical Care Unit. The event, which featured remarks from donor families and transplant recipients, remembered and honored the 42 heroes memorialized on the display who gave the gift of life through organ and tissue donation. Moving forward, the names of future organ and tissue donors will be added among the leaves.

“RWJS works closely with the New Jersey Sharing Network to promote awareness of organ and tissue donation, but we wanted to do more to share the legacies of the heroes in our midst,” says

David Pinsky, RN, BSN, MPA, NE-BC, Nursing Director, Critical Care. “They all have a unique story, and through their amazing gifts, they have given many others a second chance at life.”

At RWJS, critical care nurses and physicians provide support and compassion for family members who are making the decision about organ donation on behalf of a patient, and organ donation awareness efforts also extend to staff and the community. In addition, when a donation takes place, RWJS holds a ceremony to raise the Donate Life flag outside the hospital to honor that individual.



Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset Vital Statistics:

Employees: 2,148	Volunteers: 778	Emergency Department Visits: 52,220
Physicians: 702	Admissions: 13,929	Outpatient Visits: 60,969
Nurses: 559	Births: 816	Surgeries: 6,000

Running for a Reason: The Steeplechase Distance Run

Each year, more than 1,000 community members including cancer survivors, physicians, nurses, family members and friends – participate in the Steeplechase Distance Run to raise funds for the Steeplechase Cancer Center at RWJS and to honor cancer survivors and the memory of loved ones. In 2017, Melissa Rivers-Richardson, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Manager at Somerset Family Practice, ran for the fifth year in honor of her husband, Carlton, who received care at the Steeplechase Cancer Center.

“I’ve progressed from the 2-mile walk to the 5K run, and I hope to run the 10K next year,” says Rivers-Richardson. “Honoring and remembering my husband inspires me to keep going – as does supporting the unbelievable team and the courageous patients at the Steeplechase Cancer Center.”

Medication Assistance and Diaper Collections

In supporting the Magnet® framework of enhancing professional growth, the Magnet Enculturation Council works to advance nursing education, promote continuing competencies, develop leaders and facilitate educational opportunities. In addition, it develops strategies to maintain Magnet culture by identifying and meeting specific needs.

In 2017, the Magnet Enculturation Council kicked off a “Quarters for Meds” campaign at the annual Magnet Fair. Staff were encouraged to help fill empty medication bottles with \$10 in quarters, which can pay for a two-month supply of medication for someone in need. The Committee collected 51 medication bottles of quarters, raising \$510 for the RWJUH Foundation’s Medication Assistance Program.

In addition, because so many families struggle to afford diapers for their infants and more than half of homebound older adults experience incontinence, an adult and child diaper drive was coordinated by the Magnet Enculturation Council in collaboration with the RWJS Community Health Department. The drive collected 1,372 infant diapers for the Food Bank Network of Somerset County and 294 adult diapers for the Medical Equipment Ministry of Pluckemin Presbyterian Church.

Members of the Magnet Enculturation Council coordinated a medication fund collection and a diaper drive for those in need.





Thanksgiving turkeys were delivered to the Salvation Army in Bound Brook.

Warm Meals for Thanksgiving

RWJS donated 140 turkeys for Thanksgiving to the Samaritan Homeless Interim Program (SHIP) in Somerville, Somerset County Food Bank and the Salvation Army in Bound Brook. Oriana Calo, MSN, RN-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator, Cardiac Pavilion; Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research; Angela Daly, MSN, RN, Nurse Manager, Ortho Pavilion; and Eileen Allen, BSN, RN-BC, Magnet Program Coordinator, helped distribute the turkeys along with members of the Somerset County Sheriff's Department.

Community Blood Pressure Screenings

RWJS nurses conducted blood pressure screenings at a variety of community events in 2017, including at the Somerset County 4-H Fair in August. Members of the Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey, Somerset Chapter, also conducted blood pressure screenings at the hospital's LGBT conference in October at Raritan Valley Country Club.

In addition, Vanessa Nazario, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, and members of the Philippine Nurses Association represented RWJS at the Pride Center of New Jersey's Pride Experience in June in Woodbridge, where they provided free blood pressure screenings and information about services offered at PROUD Family Health.



Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC (left), Assistant Director of Infection Prevention at RWJS, conducts blood pressure screenings at the Somerset County 4-H Fair.



Moving to the Beat for Hurricane Relief

As one of its many activities to address community needs, the Somerset Chapter of the Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey held a "Zumbathon" at RWJS that raised \$1,000 for victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

The Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey raises funds for hurricane victims.

Care Packages for the Homeless

To provide much-needed aid to those in need during the cold winter months, the RWJS Same Day Surgery Unit donated 50 bags containing toiletries, snack bars, hats and gloves to the Samaritan Homeless Interim Program (SHIP) in Somerville.

Community Service Activities

RWJS nurses were also involved in the following outreach activities in 2017.

Eileen Allen, BSN, RN-BC

Far Hills Race volunteer

Ma. Arlene Azores, BSN, RN, RNC-LRN

Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey (PNANJ) Health Screening Fair

Diane Bautista, BSN, RN

Steeplechase Distance Run volunteer

Oriana Calo, MSN, RN-BC

Cardiac and concussion screening at RWJS, blood pressure screening at the Somerset County 4-H Fair, Far Hills Race volunteer

Jodi Castiglia, MSN, RN-BC

Taking Care of Cancer Patients presentation for EMT Juniors, Doctors of Tomorrow Somerset Healthcare Career Program

Doris Crowell, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC

March of Dimes volunteer

Cynthia Douyon-Marconi, MSN, RN, CNOR

Perioperative Nursing presentation for Somerville High School Honor Students enrolled in Science Academy Program

Martha Kelly, MSN, APN, RN, ACNP-BC

Somerset County 4-H Fair blood pressure screening, Swim Across America cancer fundraising

Maternity Nurses Teach Babies 'R Us Classes

The RWJS Maternity Department established a partnership with Babies 'R Us to hold free classes for expectant parents at the Bridgewater store. Led by maternity nurses, these monthly classes focus on breastfeeding advice and newborn care. Classes were held from June through December in 2017, with an average of 8 to 10 parents attending each session.

Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC

Blood Borne Pathogen and Right to Know Training for Bound Brook Fire Department, Lyme disease presentations for AkzoNobel and Lilly

Laura Smith, BSN, RN, CNRN

Stroke education at the Somerset County 4-H Fair and Franklin County Fair

Rebecca Weber, BSN, RN, CNRN, RN-BC

Stroke education at Somerset County 4-H Fair, Bridgewater Senior Center, Ortho Clinical Diagnostics Employee Health Fair and Somerset County Seniors Expo

Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP

Blood pressure screening at the Somerset County 4-H Fair, Far Hills Race volunteer

Community Service Awards

The following nurses were recognized for community service in 2017.

Ma. Arlene Azores, BSN, RN, RNC-LRN

Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey (PNANJ) Clinical Excellence Award

Kathy Connolly, PhD, MSN, APN, RN, ANP-BC

Mother Seton Award

Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC

Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology (APIC) Chapter Leader Award



Salvatore Moffa, MD, Chief Medical Officer, presents the Sepsis Hero Award to Megan Allen, MSN, CCDS, CCM, RN-BC.

Implementing ED Code Sepsis The Sepsis Committee, a multidisciplinary committee that includes 14 nurses, is committed to improving early recognition and care for patients identified as possibly having sepsis. Through focused efforts in education, electronic screening and advocacy, several milestones were reached in 2017. This included the implementation of ED Code Sepsis, an orchestrated effort to help identify potentially septic patients in the Emergency Department.

As part of the ED Code Sepsis initiative, RWJS adopted the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) screening tool and trained staff throughout the Emergency Department. Clinicians and nurses use this electronic NEWS tool together with their clinical insight as part of a comprehensive, coordinated approach to sepsis recognition in the ED.

Nursing education on sepsis was provided through Health Stream and by Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN, Clinical Nurse Educator of the Emergency Department. Additional efforts included ongoing staff education and mentoring, the implementation of improved documentation practices, weekly committee updates, a system learning collaborative to discuss best practices and an analysis and adjustment of medication protocols.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions to the system-wide sepsis initiative, Megan Allen, MSN, CCDS, CCM, RN-BC, Performance Improvement Coordinator and Co-Chair of the Sepsis Committee, was presented with the RWJS Sepsis Hero Award.

“Through focused teamwork and initiatives orchestrated by this committee, our efforts are paying off in the care of our patients,” says Allen. “Early recognition of sepsis is saving lives.”



The RWJS team coordinates a wedding in the Critical Care Unit.

The true essence of a Magnet® organization stems from the nurses’ exemplary professional practice. RWJS nurses are competent, accountable, autonomous practitioners who uphold ethical, safety and regulatory standards while striving for excellence through the application of evidence-based practice. Our nurses embrace the principles of exemplary professional practice as evidenced by our professional practice model and overarching care delivery model that places the patient and family in the center of all that we do.

A Wedding Celebration in Critical Care

In November, nurses in the Critical Care Unit worked to make the wish of a patient’s son a reality when Eric Jones of South Plainfield married his fiancé, Erin, at his mother’s bedside. The Critical Care team helped coordinate the wedding in collaboration with Pastoral Care, Patient Experience and Food and Nutrition staff.

New Bariatric Coordinator Joins Team

As part of ongoing efforts to assist bariatric surgery patients through every step of their journey, RWJS now offers a full-time Bariatric Coordinator. Sandra Calado, MSN, RN joined RWJS in August in this position, coordinating care with the multidisciplinary bariatric team while providing patient education and support. The hospital’s Bariatric Surgery Program is designated as a Center of Excellence by the Surgical Review Corporation.

Practicing Safe Patient Handling

The Safe Patient Handling Committee helps protect both staff and patients from injury by educating staff on moving patients safely among beds, stretchers and chairs, including the safe use of patient handling equipment such as lifts. The committee’s 2017 education efforts included a Safe Patient Handling Obstacle Course event in which teams of employees competed in safely and quickly moving their colleagues.



Bariatric Coordinator
Sandra Calado, MSN, RN



Wound Care Rounding Increases Confidence Level

To enhance new nurses' knowledge and confidence level in wound care, RWJS instituted a performance improvement project that educated 78 new nurses in wound care. These full-day sessions included a pre-test, an educational component, patient rounds and a post-test. An interim analysis found that 16 percent of nurses increased knowledge, while 48 percent increased their confidence levels in wound care.

"We found that many nurses were already knowledgeable in wound care, but this program made great strides in improving their confidence levels," says Kimberly McKevitt, BSN, RN, WCC, OMS, Clinical Nurse Educator, Wound/Ostomy at the RWJS Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research. "We plan to build on this initiative by offering monthly wound care workshops for new nurses and any nurses who wish to refresh their knowledge."



Emergency Crisis Center Opens

In March, RWJS opened an Emergency Crisis Center as part of the Emergency Department. Staffed by behavioral health nurses, crisis therapists and mental health associates, the center provides evaluation services for patients in crisis. It connects them to any needed resources, which may include the RWJS inpatient psychiatric unit, the Eating Disorders Program, outpatient treatment or other resources available in the RWJ system and beyond. In 2017, the new center provided assistance to more than 2,600 patients.

AHA Award



Quality, Safety and Equality Awards

RWJS nurses are instrumental in creating a culture of exemplary patient care that is recognized by third-party organizations.

"Ensuring ongoing patient safety, clinical quality and inclusivity is a team effort, and our nurses are on the front lines in their unwavering commitment to this culture," says Lynn Kearney, MS, BSN, RN, NE-BC, FABC, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing at RWJS. "From the highest scores in patient safety to a focus on compassionate care, these efforts are being recognized nationally."

Third Consecutive "A" Rating for Patient Safety



RWJS earned its third consecutive "A" Hospital Safety Score – the highest patient safety rating – from The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit run by employers and other large purchasers of health benefits. Only one-third of the more than 2,600 hospitals analyzed nationwide earned an "A" for meeting the highest safety standards in the U.S.

American Heart Association Mission Lifeline Designation

Thanks to the commitment of RWJS emergency and cardiac care physicians, nurses and team members, the hospital has received the Mission: Lifeline® Silver Quality Achievement Award and the Mission: Lifeline® NSTEMI Silver Quality Achievement Award for implementing specific quality improvement measures outlined by the American Heart Association for the treatment of patients who suffer severe heart attacks. The Mission: Lifeline program's goal is to reduce system barriers to prompt treatment for heart attacks, beginning with the 9-1-1 call and continuing through hospital treatment.

Siby Varughese, MA, BSN, RN, OCN, CCRP (left), Director, Oncology Research, RWJUH Somerset and Hamilton, and Stacey Alphas, RN, BSN, Oncology Clinical Research Nurse, review clinical research protocols.



Leadership in LGBTQ Equality Award

RWJS and RWJ New Brunswick have been recognized as "Leaders in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality" for the third consecutive year by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the country's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization. Both RWJUH facilities earned top marks in meeting nondiscrimination and training criteria that demonstrate a commitment to equitable, inclusive and compassionate care for LGBTQ patients and their families, who often face significant challenges in securing the medical care they need and deserve.

Commission on Cancer Designation

The Commission on Cancer (CoC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), has granted Three-Year Accreditation as a Comprehensive Community Cancer Center to the Steeplechase Cancer Center at RWJS. To earn voluntary CoC accreditation, a cancer program must meet 34 CoC quality care standards, be evaluated every three years through a survey process and maintain levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered care. The cancer center earned seven commendations – the maximum number – for clinical research accrual led by its clinical nursing research team, cancer registrar education, public reporting outcomes, oncology nursing care, Rapid Quality Reporting System participation and data submission.





2017 RWJS Infection Data

Ventilator-Associated Pneumonias (VAP):
1, equating to a rate of 0.74

Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI):
2, equating to a rate of 0.35

Central Line-Associated Blood Stream Infections (CLABSI):
2, equating to a rate of 0.46

Hand Hygiene Compliance:
91 percent for all disciplines
and 92.5 percent for nursing

Improvements in Quality Indicators RWJS nurses had a positive impact in maintaining and improving quality throughout 2017, as evidenced by specific quality indicators. In particular, the catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) rate dropped by 66 percent from 2016 to 2017, and hand hygiene compliance improved significantly. “Proper hand hygiene helps prevent hospital-acquired infections, and our team continues to make great progress in this area,” says Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC, Assistant Director of Infection Prevention at RWJS. “Through device management and education efforts, including a 2017 CAUTI Fair, we’ve also seen a reduction in device-related infections.”

Professional Nursing Certifications

Congratulations to the following nurses for achieving certification in their specialty in 2017.

Kimberly Cromwell-Pinella, BSN, RN, CBCN

Certified Breast Care Nurse

Danica DeGuzman, BSN, RN, PCCN

Progressive Care Certified Nurse

Esther Ramirez, ADN, RN, CCRN

Critical Care Registered Nurse

Paul Solomon, ASN, RN, CCRN

Critical Care Registered Nurse

Dhara Patel, BSN, RN, CVRN

Cardiovascular Nurse

Elise Figler, MSN, RN, CNL

Certified Nurse Leader

Pamela Moss, ASN, RN, CVRN

Cardiovascular Nurse

Nahisha Espinal, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Cardiovascular Nurse

Educational Achievements

Congratulations to the following nurses, who earned nursing degrees in 2017.

BSN Degrees

Maryann DeStefano, BSN, RN, CCM

Chamberlain University

Kimberly Delbrune-Mitter, BSN, RN-BC

Chamberlain University

Natasa Livelli, BSN, RN

Seton Hall University

Onika Carmicheal-Jean, BSN, RN

Chamberlain University

Swapna M. Kandathil, BSN, RN, ONC

University of Phoenix

MSN Degrees

Charlene Vojnyk, MSN, RN

Felician University

Maryna Matys, MSN, RN, FNP

Chamberlain University

Debra O'Connor, MSN, RN

Excelsior College

Jessi McConaghy, MSN, CNS, RN-BC

Chamberlain University

DNP in Nursing Leadership Degree

Georgia Harrison, DNP, RN, CCRN

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey





RWJS promotes a research-intensive environment and a culture of inquiry and innovation. Nurses at all levels participate in the Nursing Research Council, monthly Journal Club meetings and Nursing Informatics end-user teams to collaborate, plan, implement and evaluate practices, knowledge and innovations new to the organization.

The Research Journey at RWJS

With the support of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research and nursing councils at RWJS, the emphasis on nursing research has expanded dramatically over the past few years. Research in 2017 covered a wide range of topics, including ensuring contemporary approaches to care.

For example, one study compared perceived knowledge of diabetes to actual knowledge among hospital nurses, identifying a knowledge deficit in certain aspects of this complex disease for which treatment strategies continually evolve. This research will serve to ensure that nurses are fully equipped with the contemporary knowledge to better advocate and care for patients with diabetes while educating them about effective self-management strategies.

“The research journey at RWJS has been an amazing one,” says Kathleen Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN, Assistant Vice President of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research. “With a little support, our nurses have stepped up to the

plate and really flourished in their research efforts – disseminating new knowledge within our organization and far beyond it. When you have this level of commitment, the future holds great promise.”

In 2017, RWJS also created a new three-year strategic plan to guide research efforts under the umbrella of the RWJ mission, vision and philosophy, the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Magnet® model and the hospital-specific professional practice model. Guiding principles include:

- Patient and staff safety
- Nursing sensitivity indicators
- Person/patient/family-centered care
- Innovations in nursing
- Promoting a healthy nursing workforce/environment

Quality Fair Showcases Research

In October, RWJS held its annual Quality Fair, with 19 quality improvement posters on display. The winning presentation, which advanced to the system Quality Fair competition, was “Utilization of a Comprehensive Ventilator Liberation Strategy Markedly Reduces Ventilator Length of Stay,” presented by Michael Rodricks, MD, Georgia Harrison, DNP, RN, CCRN, Steve Mahler, RRT, and Jose Mujia, RRT.

The three posters chosen as finalists were:

- “Discussing our Emotions: Implementing Schwartz Center Rounds at RWJ Somerset,” by Christopher Duffy, MLIS, Christine Davies, MDiv, Paula Augustyniak, RN, and Salvatore Moffa, MD.
- “Safety Huddle: Improving Communication and Patient Safety,” by Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN, OCN, NE-BC, Ceres Reynera, RN, Hope Tai, RN, and Marjorie Pomerantz, BSN, RN, CMSRN.
- “ONS Oncology Pain Management,” by Lisa Landon, AAS, RN, OCN and Bogda Wawzkowicz, BSN, RN, OCN.

12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium

In November, nurses and other team members from across the RWJBarnabas Health system convened to present their research efforts as part of the 12th annual Nursing Research Symposium at Rutgers University in collaboration with Rutgers University School of Nursing. This half-day event, which featured more than 375 attendees, was focused around the theme “Nursing Research, Academia and Practice: Better Together.” Participants had the opportunity to share their research and evidence-based practice findings, and RWJS nurses were involved in more than half of the lecture presentations along with numerous posters.



Quality Fair winners at RWJS



Members of the robotic surgery team demonstrate the new da Vinci Xi® Surgical System.

New Professional Advancement System

In December, RWJS implemented a Professional Advancement System (PAS) that recognizes and rewards nurses for clinical excellence in nursing and contributions to the hospital's mission of caring, outreach, research and education. This framework for professional advancement encourages continuing education, active participation in nurse councils and leadership roles, evidence-based practice and community service. Through professional growth, it is also designed to enhance the quality of patient care. RWJS ensures a supportive environment in which nurses can progress through the four steps of the PAS clinical ladder.

The Latest Robotic Technology

RWJS now offers the da Vinci Xi® Surgical System, the latest technology available for robotic minimally invasive surgery. This boom-mounted system features revolutionary anatomical access, 3D HD vision, a mobile platform equipped with thinner arms and instruments and laser guidance that ensures the system will position the boom at optimal configuration for each procedure. Robotic nurse team members completed online training modules along with hands-on training in the use of this new robot.

Nursing Research Studies

RWJS nurses disseminate new knowledge to internal and external audiences. The following nurses participated in research studies, poster presentations and podium presentations in 2017.

Clinical Research Studies

The following new research studies were approved by the IRB in 2017.

Oriana Calo, MSN-RN-BC

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Perceived Knowledge of Diabetes Care Versus Actual Knowledge in Hospital Nurses

Kyala Pascual, RN, ONC

Angela Daly, MSN, RN

Stephanie Gutierrez, RN

Peggy Roxbury, BSN, MHA, RN

Henal Shah, BSN, RN

Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Effects of Aromatherapy on Pain in Total Hip and Total Knee Arthroplasty

Denise Gerhab, BSN, RN, WCC-OMS

Kimberly McKevitt, BSN, RN, WCC-OMS

Doris Van Dyke, BSN, RN-BC

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Exploring the Benefits of a Structured Hands-On Skin and Wound Care Education Session with New Graduates

Georgia Harrison, DNP, RN, CCRN

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Utilization of a Comprehensive Ventilator Liberation Strategy to Markedly Reduce Ventilator Length of Stay and Improve Quality Outcomes

Publications

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Claudia Pagani, MSN, RN, RN-BC

Myrna Young, MSN, RN, CNOR

Kelly S, Zavotsky KE, Delany E, Pagani C, Duffy C, Haqq-Stevens E, & Young M. (2017). Motivation and personal challenges while enrolled in higher education: The pathway to becoming a baccalaureate nurse. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*. 7(11) 14-18.

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Wolf L, Deleo A, Perhats C, Moon MD, & Zavotsky KE. (2017). Triageing the emergency department, not the patient: United States emergency nurses' experience of the triage process. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*. 42(3) 1-10.

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Claudia Pagani, MSN, RN, RN-BC

Myrna Young, MSN, RN, CNOR

Lori Colineri, DNP, RN, NEA-BC

Haqq-Stevens E, Zavotsky KE, Kelly S, Pagani C, Duffy C, Young M, & Colineri L. (2017). New paths to professional nursing: Utilizing encouragement to prepare a minority workforce to enter the nursing profession. *Creative Nursing*. 23(3) 158-166.

Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNC-BC, FAEN

Wolf LA, Perhats C, Clark PR, Moon MD, Zavotsky KE. (2017). Workplace bullying in emergency nursing: Development of a grounded theory using situational analysis. *International Emergency Nursing*

External Poster Presentations

Presenter	Name of Presentation	Organization/Sponsor
Jodi Castiglia, MSN, RN, BC	Combining Educational Resources for Chemotherapy Skill Competency	ONS Congress: The Oncology Nursing Society's Annual Conference
Denise Gerhab, BSN, RN, WCC-OMS; Cynthia Douyon-Marconi, MSN, RN, CNOR; Kimberly McKeivitt, BSN, RN, WCC-OMC	Don't Forget to Look! A Perioperative Skin Assessment Initiative	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists; Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses
Maria Krolicki-Riehle, BSN, RN	Nursing Protocol to Boost Tobacco Quit Center Referral Real Time Chart Audits + Real Time Education for Staff = Higher Patient Safety	RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Kimberly McKeivitt, BSN, RN, WCC-OMC	Wound/Ostomy Resource Reboot	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Claudia Pagani, MSN, RN-BC; Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN	CLOSE the Door - CNS Impact in Quietness Program to Improve Hospital Environment Noise	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC	Hand Hygiene Adherence - It Takes a Village	Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)
Marjorie Pomerantz, BSN, RN, CMSRN	Safety Huddle	ONS Congress: The Oncology Nursing Society's Annual Conference; RWJBH Quality Forum
Siby Varughese, MA, BSN, RN, OCN, CCRP	Oncology Clinical Trial Accrual - From Zero to Hero at the Steeplechase Cancer Center Relationship Between Cancer Health Literacy and Hope in Outpatients Receiving Cancer Treatment	Society of Clinical Research Associates RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Jean Weber, BSN, RN-BC; Joan Aversa, BSN, RN-BC; Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN; Kathleen Mahoney, PhD, APN, NR, OB-EFM; Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CE	Psychiatric Nurses' Perception of the Climate of Care in an Academic Medical Center	RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNI; Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN	"KEEP IT MOVING" and Remember to P.A.C. (Pharmacology, Ambulation, and Compression) for VTE Prevention	American Nurses Association; National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses; The American Nurses Credentialing Center Pathways
Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNI	Walking the Path to Joint Commission Success: Joint Surgery Center Total Knee Replacement Outcomes Collaborative Competency Validation Across the Continuum of Care	National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses

Internal Poster Presentations

Presenter	Name of Presentation	Organization/Sponsor
Marjorie Pomerantz, BSN, RN, CMSRN	Safety Huddle	RWJS Quality Forum
Siby Varughese, MA, BSN, RN, OCN, CCRP; Stacey Alphas, BSN, RN	Role of Oncology Research Nurse in Community Cancer Setting	RWJS Magnet Fair
Boguslawa Wawszkiewicz, BSN, RN, OCN; Lisa Landon, AAS, RN, OCN	Pain Management	RWJS Quality Forum

External Podium Presentations

Presenter	Name of Presentation	Organization/Sponsor
Oriana Calo, MSN, RN-BC	Don't Miss a Beat: Creating Multi-Campus BAC Breathing Life into a Stagnant SPH Program	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists Safe Patient Handling Program
Jodi Castiglia, MSN, RN-BC	Can You Hear Me Now? Listening to our Older Adults to Improve Care	Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders Conference
Cynthia Douyon-Marconi, MSN, RN, CNOR; Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN	Should I Stay or Should I Go? Exploring the Concept of Moral Distress in Operating Room Nurses	RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Kathy Easter, MSN, RN, CCRN-K	Magnet: Journey to Nursing Excellence The Nuts and Bolts of Meeting within a Shared Governance Structure 2019 Magnet® Application Manual	Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus Community Medical Center RWJBH Nurse Executive Council
Denise Gerhab, BSN, RN, WCC/OMS; Kimberly McKeivitt, BSN, RN, WCC/OMS; Doris Van Dyke, BSN, RN-BC	Exploring the Benefits of a Structured Hands-On Skin and Wound Care Education Session with New Graduates and their Caregiver Confidence	RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Georgia Harrison, DNP, RN, CCRN	Inspiring Change: Thriving...Not Just Surviving a Hospital Merger!	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists

External Podium Presentations *(continued)*

Presenter	Name of Presentation	Organization/Sponsor
Georgia Harrison, DNP, RN, CCRN; Megan Allen, MSN, RN-BC, CCDS, CCM; Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN	Analysis of Pharmacy Response to In-Hospital Cardiopulmonary Arrests at a Community Academic Hospital: A Pilot Study	2017 American College of Clinical Pharmacy Annual Meeting
Kathleen Mahoney, PhD, APN, RN, OB-EFM; Georgia Harrison, DNP, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN; Oriana Calo, MSN, RN-BC	Resilience and Coping after Hospital Mergers: CNSs and CNEs Taking the Nurses' Vital Signs	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Claudia Pagani, MSN, RN-BC	Evidenced-Based Practice, Research & Performance Improvement: A Continuum of Excellence	RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Kyala Pascual, RN, ONC; Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRN; Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN	Effects of Aromatherapy on Pain in Total Hip and Total Knee Arthroplasty	RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Laura Smith, BSN, RN, CNRN	Stroke Core Measure	RWJ Annual Stroke Nursing Conference
Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRN; Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN	"KEEP IT MOVING" and Remember to P.A.C. (Pharmacology, Ambulation, and Compression) for VTE Prevention	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Myrna Young, MSN, RN, CNOR; Oriana Calo, MSN, RN-BC	Breathing New Life into a Stagnant Safe Patient Handling Program	2017 ANCC Pathway to Excellence National Conference
Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN	Creating a Culture of Safety in the Emergency Department Women Leading in Healthcare in the 21st Century	Emergency Nurses Association #Leadlikeagirl Conference, Stuart Country Day School
Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN; Oriana Calo, MSN, RN-BC	Comparing Perceived Versus Actual Knowledge in the Nursing Staff Caring for Patients with Diabetes	RWJ 12th Annual Nursing Research Symposium
Kathleen E. Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN; Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN	Challenges and Creative Solutions in Caring for the Acutely Ill Mental Health Patient in the Emergency Department	New Jersey Emergency Nurses Association

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