



**Robert Wood Johnson
University Hospital
Somerset** | **RWJBarnabas
HEALTH**

110 Rehill Avenue
Somerville, NJ 08876

2020



Nursing Annual Report

**Robert Wood Johnson
University Hospital
Somerset**

**RWJBarnabas
HEALTH**

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

RESILIENCY IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGE

As we are all too aware, 2020 was a year of significant health care and personal challenges across our country and throughout the world. Despite the turmoil and heartache, our nurses – together with the entire team at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset – rose to the occasion with an incredible level of resiliency, ingenuity and compassion.

Throughout the hospital, nurses stepped up to serve where they were needed most. Advanced practice nurses were key members of the COVID-19 response teams coordinating care for patients, and nurses with critical care backgrounds refreshed their skills to support the ICU team and patients with COVID-19. The float pool helped us manage surge areas, while nurse liaisons linked patients, families and providers during an isolating time. In fact, RWJUH Somerset was a pilot site for iPad virtual rounds and family visits, with nurses going above and beyond to make these healing connections. Working with various departments, nurses provided critical input to enhance safety and maintain a high level of care, including transitioning IVs outside ICU patient rooms and championing the appropriate use of protective equipment.

Even with the enormous challenges of 2020, we never lost sight of our strategic initiatives. We achieved improvements in nursing-sensitive indicators and outcomes. Patient satisfaction levels significantly increased in overall hospital experience and nurses explaining concepts in understandable ways.

We continued our journey to our third Magnet® designation by submitting an extremely comprehensive application last fall. This highest honor in nursing practice is a recognition designated by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), but the Magnet components are



part of our culture and something we embody every day, as showcased in this report. Likewise, our Nursing Residency Program earned ANCC accreditation, speaking to the high quality of this program that helps transform new nurses into nurse leaders. On that front, we also restructured our New Graduate Program to incorporate more experience-based learning and peer support opportunities relevant to the current health care environment.

Our connections with the community were especially moving last year. Nurses and other team members focused on infection prevention outreach and education, particularly among communities hardest hit by the pandemic. And the community's outpouring of support on so many levels as we battled the COVID-19 virus carried our entire team forward during the most difficult days.

While we never expected 2020 to unfold as it did, this "Year of the Nurse" truly showcased the profession in countless ways. Our nurses put themselves in harm's way to provide the highest quality care in an atmosphere of unknowns, underscoring the remarkable level of compassion and strength that they demonstrate for patients and their colleagues every day. We are incredibly proud to serve alongside such a courageous and dedicated team.

Sincerely,

Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing
RWJUH Somerset

Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Assistant Vice President of Nursing
RWJUH Somerset

IN MEMORIAM

Lynn Kearney, MS, BSN, RN, NE-BC, FABC, former chief nursing officer and vice president of nursing at RWJUH Somerset and RWJUH Rahway, passed away on February 18, 2021 after a courageous battle with cancer. Lynn exemplified the many ideals we hold close in nursing practice. She set high expectations for herself and others and helped us raise the bar in patient quality and safety.

During her five years as chief nursing officer at RWJUH Somerset, Lynn helped us achieve dramatic improvements in nursing outcomes. She fully embraced our journey toward becoming a High Reliability Organization to further improve patient safety. She helped ensure that the needs of patients were always at the forefront, and she promoted the professional growth and development of our nurses while guiding the hospital to its second Magnet designation in 2016.

Lynn's leadership continues to inspire us, and she leaves behind a legacy of nursing excellence to be carried forward by the many people she impacted throughout her life's work.

In Lynn's memory, a nursing scholarship fund has been established through Somerset Health Care Foundation.



Lynn Kearney, MS, BSN, RN, NE-BC, FABC was presented with a Distinguished Service Award during the annual Nurses Week Awards Luncheon in 2019.

Forever and Always a Nurse

By Kaitlyn N. Kwasnik, BSN, RN-BC

*Caring concept, caring tree
So many versions for all to see.
But what does caring in nursing mean,
And can it be truly felt and seen?
In the year of the nurse, the virus, the mask,
How can we keep up with this incredible task?
A gesture, a touch through a gloved hand,
A calming voice when things don't go as planned.
A connection for families unable to be there
Advocating always to remain just and fair.
To continually assess, monitor and treat
Individualizing goals until their trust we can meet.
The expectation to be competent isn't anything new
And the importance to be thoughtful, and compassionate too.
The patient and family in the center of it all,
With the strength of the nurse continuing to stand tall.
No pandemic, nor fears could pull the nurse away
For their caring heart and dedication will forever stay.
Some may ask, how can they persist if the situation gets worse?
We just say, it's what we do and who we are; forever and always a nurse.*

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ROOTED IN EXCELLENCE

The RWJUH Somerset professional practice model, “Our Caring Tree,” represents the Ten Carative Factors of the nursing professional practice model defined by Jean Watson, RN, PhD. This approach sees nursing as a human science that focuses on the process of caring for individuals, families and groups. Through caring transactions, nurses assist people in gaining a higher degree of harmony within the mind, body and soul.

The tree image represents how nurses are rooted in excellence and continually seek to transform, empower and inspire. It reflects nurse, patient and family relationships, the foundations of professional practice, the standards of care that ensure a nurturing environment and the shared governance structure that supports patient care delivery.

- Based upon sound judgment, competence, evidence-based research and ethics, adaptation is key in our ever-changing health care environment.
- Methods of quality improvement, research and innovation refine our practice.
- Nurses serve as leaders, aspiring for the highest level of judgment, ethics and standards. Leadership is recognized through accountability and accepting the responsibilities, privileges and rights within our professional practice.



MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

The nursing team at RWJUH Somerset embraces the mission, vision and values of the hospital, which are:

Mission

To improve the health and well-being of the patients and communities we serve by:

- Fostering an environment of excellence in all areas, including the highest quality, evidence-based care
- Advancing patient care by the diffusion of medical knowledge
- Facilitating medical discovery that improves patient care
- Promoting and engaging in community outreach activities to enhance the health of the residents of our region
- Exhibiting stewardship of all available resources

Vision

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, in partnership with Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, will be a leading, nationally distinguished academic medical center.

Values

- S**peak up for safety
- A**ccurately communicate
- F**ocus on the task
- E**xercise and accept a questioning attitude
- T**houghtfully interact
- Y**ou and me together

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP



Katie Edge, BSN, RN, PCCN, CCRN, left, director of Cardiology Services, also provided oversight of Critical Care during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Megan Madara, MSN, APN-c, left, was a member of the hospital's COVID-19 medical team.



Jocelyn Dimagmaliw, BSN, RN-BC, checks on a patient on the 2-West Cardiac Pavilion.

At RWJUH Somerset, 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.

LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Working in tandem with departments across the hospital, nurses were critical to the COVID-19 response at RWJUH Somerset. Nurses served as transformational leaders in countless capacities, from Command Center input and direct patient care to education and infection prevention.

With the help of Megan Madara, MSN, APN-c, director of allied health professionals and house coverage, floor-based interdisciplinary COVID-19 teams that included advanced practice nurses (APNs) were up and running quickly. Madara creatively sourced six additional APNs as well as four physician assistants from as far away as Georgia, and RWJUH Somerset APNs oriented them to hospital processes.

“The pandemic hit like a tsunami and everyone was overwhelmed, but they worked tirelessly to ensure that all needs were covered,” says Madara. “Our nurses are the eyes and ears for the rest of the interdisciplinary team, and that role really came to the forefront. They excelled at detecting subtle changes and providing recommendations that made a difference in outcomes.”

With a background in critical care, Katie Edge, BSN, RN, PCCN, CCRN, director of Cardiovascular Services, never expected to see so many patients become acutely ill so quickly. As such, nurses were empowered to help transform care.

“Nurses provided a full circle of care, from helping drive decision-making with physicians to enabling a bond between patients and families during some of the most difficult moments in life,” she says. “The incredible level of hospital and nursing leadership and the ongoing support of the community helped us push through.”

Clinical nurse Jocelyn Dimagmaliw, BSN, RN-BC, who helped care for patients with COVID-19 on the 2-West Cardiac Pavilion, believes that many patients were saved thanks to the high level of collaboration and keen listening among nurses, physicians and other team members. Peer support was also critical in helping team members share concerns and stay informed.

“We’re always learning through our experiences, but this was education by fire,” says Dimagmaliw. “I’ve been a nurse for 42 years, and I know that when we stick together, we make a difference.”

During the height of the pandemic, nurse educators and infectious disease experts provided continuous education amidst constantly evolving protocols and CDC recommendations, tapping into resources across the state and country and relaying information as quickly as it became available. All levels of nursing staff made recommendations that were often put into practice, such as converting a procedure area into a changing area so that staff didn’t need to wear soiled scrubs home.

“With the constant support of the leadership team, everyone came together to do what was needed to protect and care for our patients and each other,” adds Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, director, the Center of Professional Development, Innovation and Research. “We truly strengthened our foundation through this experience.”

The application for Magnet designation was officially submitted electronically on Oct. 1, 2020.

RWJUH SOMERSET PURSUES THIRD MAGNET® DESIGNATION

RWJUH Somerset is one of a select number of hospitals across the country to achieve Magnet® recognition – the highest designation in nursing excellence – two times from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). After months of intense preparation of a document spanning several thousand pages, RWJUH Somerset submitted the application for its third Magnet designation to ANCC on October 1. The application demonstrated how the Magnet components have become an integral part of the culture and care provided at RWJUH Somerset.

“Magnet designation is more than something we receive – it’s something we embody,” says Eileen Allen, MSN, RN-BC, Magnet program coordinator. “Nearly every department across the hospital was represented in the application, speaking to the interdisciplinary nature of nursing practice. It was truly an honor to showcase what our nurses and our team exemplify every day.”



STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT



Solid structures and processes have been developed at RWJUH Somerset to support nurses’ professional development, promote participation in community and population health 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.

Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research

The Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research (CPDIR) provides staff with opportunities to practice, learn and grow professionally in an increasingly complex and challenging health care environment. The team is committed to providing structural empowerment for patient/family-centered care, shared decision-making, autonomy and clinical excellence. By incorporating the HRO principles, CPDIR helps ensure that outcomes and safety are always a priority.

Shared Governance Councils

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.



Cathy Smith, BSN, RN-BC, CAPA, Chair



Danica de Guzman, BSN, RN, PCCN, Chair



Heather Davis, BSN, RN, OCN, Chair



Patricia Kerwin, BSN, RN-BC, Chair



Sean Mullen, ASN, RN, ONC, CNRN, SCRNP, Chair

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.

Magnet Enculturation Council

Members of the Magnet Enculturation Council support the Magnet framework of facilitating professional growth and continuous lifelong learning by increasing the academic progression of education in nursing, promoting continuing competencies, developing leaders and facilitating educational opportunities supporting the advancement of the profession through evidence-based practice.

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.

Professional Practice Council

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

NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

In lieu of an in-person nursing awards ceremony during the COVID-19 pandemic, several members of the leadership team and a representative of the Magnet Enculturation Council presented plaques to awardees on their units and sent flowers to their homes. Awardees were selected from nominations submitted by their peers.

2020 MAGNET NURSE OF THE YEAR:

Danica de Guzman, BSN, RN, PCCN, Cardiac Catheterization Lab

Clinical nurse and chairperson of the Magnet Enculturation Council, Danica de Guzman demonstrates an unyielding commitment to nursing excellence through her passion and motivation to improve quality outcomes. These efforts have included serving as team leader on an interprofessional quality improvement project designed to improve outcomes among patients undergoing percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) in the Cardiac Catheterization Lab, as well as spearheading the development of a post-procedure communication tool that helped streamline care and enhance patient safety. Danica consistently goes above and beyond to make a difference for patients and their families.



Transformational Leadership Award

Katie Edge, BSN, RN, PCCN, CCRN, Cardiovascular Services

Exemplary Professional Practice Award

Geraldine Contreras, MSN, RN, APN, RN-BC, FNP-C, 2-East Cardiac Pavilion

New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements Award

Sophie Robicheau, ASN, RN, OCN, Infusion Suite

Structural Empowerment Award

The DAISY Award® Committee

Community Outreach Award

Maria Theresa Domider, BSN, RN-BC, Critical Care

Advanced Practice Provider Award

Shankari Ravichandran, DNP, RN, APN, FNP-BC, Allied Health Professionals and House Coverage

Friend of Nursing

Kristoffer Bryans, Information Technology

Nursing Technician/Technologist Award

Mariselda Oyola, CCT, Float Pool

In addition, the following nurses received RWJUH Somerset Professional Development and Magnet Enculturation Scholarships to be used toward the pursuit of their MSN degrees:

Beth Vergara, BSN, RN, 1-East
Danielle Davis, BSN, RN, Critical Care



Transformational Leadership Award

Exemplary Professional Practice Award



Structural Empowerment Award

Community Outreach Award



New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements Award

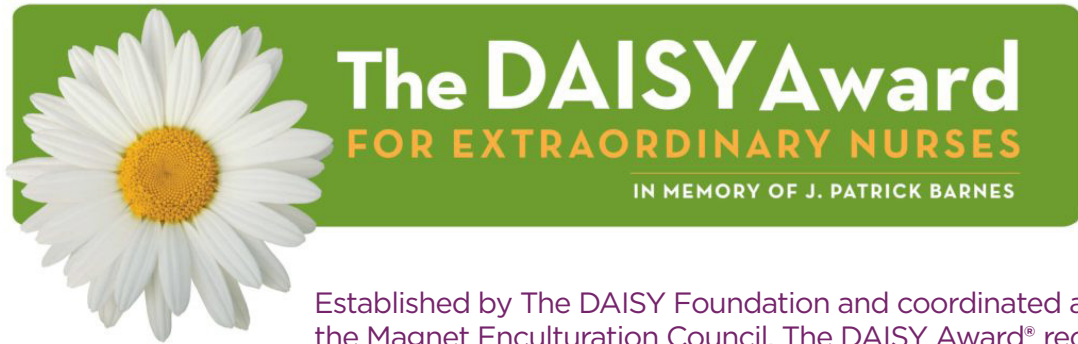
Advanced Practice Provider Award



Friend of Nursing Award

Nursing Technician/Technologist Award

Jocelyn Dimagmaliw, Rima Liascauskait, Mary Jane Sibayan and Hong Zhang



Established by The DAISY Foundation and coordinated at RWJUH Somerset by the Magnet Enculturation Council, The DAISY Award® recognizes the extraordinary acts of compassion or relationships nurses have established with patients that have truly made a difference. The following nurses received DAISY Awards® in 2020.

Jocelyn Dimagmaliw, BSN, RN-BC, 2-West Cardiac Pavilion

The care that Jocelyn “Joy” Dimagmaliw, BSN, RN-BC provided for a patient on the 2-West Cardiac Pavilion was recognized by a family member, who indicated that her calm, professional, nurturing demeanor was a saving grace for their family during a time when they were scared and anxious. Joy constantly provided reassurance that their loved one was getting stronger every day while praising the patient for his achievements. According to the family member, “Joy is a true credit to her profession...she delivered all of this exceptional care while mentoring and teaching a new nurse. She is truly an exceptional human being and nurse!”

Rima Liascauskait, ASN, RN, Oncology

When Rima Liascauskait, ASN, RN came to the Oncology Department through the New Graduate Program, her department director knew she was destined to be an oncology nurse. A dedicated team player, Rima is always open to learning and developing clinical skills. She is recognized by patients of all ages and has a special talent for connecting with patients on a personal level. As one patient wrote: “She made life matter to me again, by her simple acts of kindness and her heartfelt words. She represents a true nurse who took an oath to show compassion, excellence, to deliver nursing care non-judgmentally, to be respectful and caring. She does an extraordinary job and I am incredibly grateful for each night she works, especially on the nights she is my nurse.”

Mary Jane Sibayan, BSN, RN, CAPA, CPAN, Pre-Admission Testing

With more than 30 years of solid exemplary professional nursing experience across various disciplines, Mary Jane Sibayan, BSN, RN, CAPA, CPAN, possesses a wealth of knowledge that is evident in the appropriate interventions and care she displays to help ensure the safe delivery of surgical care. She embodies exemplary customer service and puts everyone at ease, as evidenced by countless recognitions from patients and family members. When one patient presented for testing with her son and had an abnormal EKG, Mary Jane helped communicate the urgency of a transfer to the Emergency Department with immediate activation of the Medical Alert MI Response. Her knowledge and commitment to patients, family members and colleagues make her an extraordinary DAISY Nurse.

Hong Zhang, BSN, RN SCRNP, 4-West

The epitome of the word “dedication” and the first CNIV at RWJUH Somerset, Hong Zhang, BSN, RN SCRNP always goes the extra mile for her patients and her colleagues. She provides a listening ear when her patients need it and a voice when they cannot speak for themselves. Taking the challenges of the night shift in stride, she is often the charge nurse on 4-West and approaches the role with genuine determination and the simple goal to make each shift as delightful as she possibly can. Her tenacity is equally matched by her passion for her professional advancement, and she has inspired her colleagues to advance on the clinical ladder. Patients entrusted to her care have a true advocate in Hong.

Additional 2020 Awards Presented to Nurses

Ma. Arlene Azores, BSN, RNC-LRN
Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey (PNANJ) Outstanding Board Member Award and Nursing Excellence and Scholarship Award

Brianne Orzepowski, BSN, RN
Monmouth University Community Outreach Award and Unsung Hero Award

Samantha Pendleton, BSN, RN
Radiology Department Employee of the Month, October 2020

Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN
Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey (PNANJ) Presidential Award for Education Committee

NURSES EMBRACE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

RWJUH Somerset 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 encourages and supports 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.

Latino COVID-19 Community Outreach

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the Latino community hard throughout the country and in New Jersey. At RWJUH Somerset, Latinos represented 70% of inpatients with COVID-19 during the height of the pandemic. To provide targeted education about COVID-19, Community Health and Diversity & Inclusion staff formed a Latino outreach and educational initiative with Spanish-speaking staff from Community Health and the hospital's SALUD (Service and Advocacy for Latinos United for Development) BRG (Business Resource Group). Pre-Admission Testing advanced practice nurse Daisy Cardoso, MSN, RN, APRN, FNP-BC helped this team make more than 4,000 individual calls to Latino community members to discuss COVID-19 symptom awareness and prevention. Outreach also included mailings and community events.

In addition, Cardoso joined a panel of RWJUH Somerset experts to facilitate a COVID-19 educational webinar presented in Spanish and attended by more than 40 members of the Latino community. Topics included how COVID-19 affected the Latino population in Central New Jersey, the hospital's efforts to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and tips for staying healthy and helping prevent another COVID-19 surge.

Black Professional Network Kickoff

In honor of Black History Month in February 2020, RWJUH Somerset held a kickoff event for the Black Professionals Network (BPN) Business Resource Group (BRG). Developed under the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, the group was created to foster and encourage the betterment and equal recognition of all Black and African American employees and community members, promote a diverse and welcoming workplace that delivers inclusive care, create awareness for health issues that exist among the Black and African American population and cultivate community relationships to minimize health disparities.

In partnership with Community Health, an outreach event was held on June 27th at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset to provide “drive-through” COVID-19 education for 1,670 people. Nurses and other members of the RWJUH Somerset BPN group distributed 5,590 masks, 1,670 bottles of hand sanitizer and educational materials about the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 in people of color and tips for decreasing the spread of the virus.



Free Cardiac Screenings for Young Athletes

Each year, sudden cardiac death claims the lives of about 3,000 young athletes. To help detect abnormal heart rhythms and other issues that can trigger sudden cardiac death, RWJUH Somerset cardiologists, nurses and technicians offered free cardiac screenings for teen athletes in February 2020. Screenings included a cardiovascular history and physical exam, blood pressure screening, body metrics, an electrocardiogram and an echocardiogram when indicated.

Zumba Event Raises Funds for Cardiology

With the assistance of clinical nurse Geraldine Contreras, MSN, RN, APN, RN-BC, FNP-C, the 2-East Cardiac Pavilion nursing team organized a “Zumba for a Healthier Heart” fundraiser held in Fuld Auditorium in February 2020. More than 40 participants included nurses, staff and members of the community. Through ticket sales and donations, the event raised \$2,230 in support of the RWJUH Somerset cardiology program through Somerset Health Care Foundation.

Same Day Center Donates Back-to-School Supplies

The Same Day Center has coordinated back-to-school drives for three consecutive years, but as clinical nurses Patricia Kerwin, BSN, RN-BC and Patty Kasher, BSN, RN-BC noted, the 2020 drive was particularly important for giving back in light of the incredible community support for the hospital during the pandemic. In partnership with the Community Health Department, the Same Day team put together 20 backpacks full of supplies to provide students with learning tools for the fall academic year. Together with contributions from the Community Health Department and other individuals, a total of 50 backpacks were donated to the Bound Brook School District.

Build-a-Bike® Promotes Teamwork and Service

In February 2020, nurses and other RWJUH Somerset team members participated in a Build-A-Bike® Team Building Event led by The Leaders Institute and coordinated by RWJ Somerset Strong's team-building chairperson Angela Daly, MSN, RN, nursing director of the Orthopedic Pavilion, along with other teamwork committee members. Fifty-five RWJUH Somerset participants split into groups to solve challenges in order to acquire bike pieces to put together. Once the challenge was completed, the Community Health Department donated the eight bikes to children in the Bound Brook School District.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

RWJUH Somerset nurses were also involved in the following outreach activities in 2020

Linnet Angir, RN, CCRN
Shirley Cuaresma, BSN, RN-BC
Alison Hosler-Koemm, ASN, RN
Patty Kasher, BSN, RN-BC
Patsy Kerwin, BSN, RN-BC
Ann Elisse Poiani, ASN, RN
Lisa Redler, BSN, RN, OCN
Ceres Reynera, BSN, RN, OCN
Cathy Smith, BSN, RN-BC, CAPA
Marybeth Strange, RN
Christine Woolf, BSN, RN-BC
Maria Yavornitski, BSN, RN-BC

Back-to-School Supply Drive

Kimberly Bates, BSN, RN, CCRN, CMC
Oriana St. George, MSN, RN-BC

Cardiac Athletic Screening

Marchelle Boyd, BSN, RN

Multiple programs for Middlesex Regional Black Nurses Association

Patricia Gribbon, MSN, RN

RWJBarnabas Health Maternal Health Awareness Day volunteer, Trenton Soup Kitchen volunteer, Easel Animal Shelter foster

Martha Kelly, MSN, APN, RN, ACNP-BC
Lenora Rubino-Rodgers, MSN, RN, OCN, CHPN
Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP

Build-a-Bike® Team-Building Event

Marcella O'Herlihy, BSN, RN

Panelist for Somerset County Business Partnership Virtual Health and Wellness Expo-Joint Surgery Center, panelist for community health webinar: The Osteo, Trifecta-Penia, Porosis and Arthritis

Brianne Orzepowski, BSN, RN

Organized dinners for Ronald McDonald House, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School toy drive, Blessing Bag Brigade daily necessity donor, soup kitchen volunteer for St. Luke's in Long Branch

Anita Raman, BSN, RN

Bowery Mission serving food for the homeless and hungry in New York City, sponsored one year of education for two children in India via the HELP Foundation

Laura Smith, BSN, RN, CNRN

Piscataway Community TV Health Talk participant, Stroke and COVID-19 community webinar presenter

Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN

Peanut Butter and Tuna Drive for Somerset Food Bank via Zarepath Christian Church and Reformed Church of Highland Park, Samaritan Homeless Interim Program (SHIP) Adopt-a-Family

Joseph Welda, MSN, RN, APN

Blood glucose screening, Bonnie Brae and Arc of Somerset diabetes presentation, Chronic Disease Series for the Black and Brown Community diabetes presentation, Diabetes Community Group virtual presentation on continuous glucose monitoring

Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research (CPDIR) Nurses

RWJUH Somerset Adopt-a-Family Program

EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE



The true essence of a Magnet® organization stems from the nurses' exemplary professional practice. RWJUH Somerset 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.

NURSING RESIDENCY PROGRAM ACHIEVES ANCC ACCREDITATION

In 2020, RWJUH Somerset's Nursing Residency Program was accredited as a Practice Transition Program by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Commission on Accreditation in Practice Transition Programs. Helping transform new BSN nurses to nurse leaders, the residency program fosters the development of clinical and leadership skills, incorporates three graduate level credits from the Rutgers University School of Nursing and features a unit-based quality improvement project.

"The ANCC accreditation recognizes the structure and quality of our residency program, which really serves as a major stepping stone for nurses entering their careers," says Critical Care clinical nurse Jennifer Tinn, BSN, RN, CCRN.

Tinn served as a Nursing Residency Program preceptor for clinical ICU nurse Amy Voss, BSN, RN, CCRN, whose quality improvement project was featured in the ANCC application. The project, "Transforming Care at the Bedside," demonstrated how the use of a TruVue boot for sedentary patients decreased heel pressure injuries by at least 50%. As a result of this research, the boot is now used at RWJUH Somerset and RWJUH New Brunswick.

"I'm so grateful for the residency experience," says Voss, who now serves as co-chair of the RN Collaborative Council of all past and present nursing residents. "It not only prepared me to handle the responsibilities of a charge nurse within two years of graduating, but it also opened my eyes to broader opportunities in nursing, including being a nurse educator."



Michelle Hensley-Jennings, BSN, RN, explains the Fall TIPS poster to 1-East staff.



NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM
RESTRUCTURED

With many new nurses starting their careers during such a challenging time, RWJUH Somerset nurses identified an opportunity to update the New Graduate Program. This 12-week orientation now includes four education sessions attended in cohorts, which encourages building a peer support system. In addition to covering specific topics ranging from nursing-sensitive indicators to cardiac arrest simulation, the sessions include documentation review and a structured support group.

“New graduates complete the standard classroom orientation at the start of their employment, but it’s often difficult for them to grasp some concepts or policies when they have never practiced as an RN,” explains Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research. “By scheduling the education sessions throughout their 12 weeks of unit-based orientation, we teach to real life experiences and create a safe space for them to ask questions and further explore policies and procedures that they may have seen in practice.”

FALLS PREVENTION PROJECT
ON 1-EAST

Using appreciative inquiry and evidence-based risk assessment tools, chief nursing officer and vice president of nursing Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN, 1-East director Beth Vergara, BSN, RN, and 1-East manager Michelle Hensley-Jennings, BSN, RN implemented a research-based project designed to reduce the rate of patient falls on the 1-East Geriatric Unit. The project, “Use of Appreciative Inquiry to Decrease Patient Falls with Injury on their Unit,” was featured at the RWJUH Somerset Quality Fair, the RWJBarnabas Health Quality Fair and the RWJBarnabas Health Annual Research Symposium.

In addition to gathering falls-related feedback from staff, the project focused on collaboratively reviewing the Johns Hopkins Fall Risk Assessment Tool (JHFRAT) and updating the Fall TIPS (tailored interventions for patient safety) poster. Following the intervention, the rate of patient falls with injury on the unit decreased significantly.

“As nurses, we continually look for new ways to prevent falls, especially for our older patients who are at higher risk,” says Hensley-Jennings. “In this case, heightened awareness and better communication across the unit were the keys to success. Every nurse and CCT now knows the risks for every patient, and this information has become part of the daily conversation.”

INFECTION PREVENTION
DURING THE PANDEMIC

From the beginning, one of the cornerstones for battling the COVID-19 pandemic was infection prevention. With all disciplines working together – and with the help of the community – staff had the PPE they needed to deliver care safely.

Director of Infection Prevention Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC, CPPS, and infection preventionist Tory Zancocchio, MPH, CIC, CPPS, adopted a shift schedule that ensured 16/7 on-site coverage for nine consecutive weeks at the height of the pandemic. As circumstances and guidelines continually changed, they were present to facilitate rounding, answer questions, anticipate issues, alleviate fears, provide education and gather feedback.

PPE education throughout the hospital was a key focus for leadership. Chief nursing officer and vice president of nursing Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN worked with Parrillo, Zancocchio and Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research, to develop an education plan for the appropriate use of PPE based on isolation type and donning/doffing best practices. As a result, they designed an online HealthStream® Education module featuring schematics, a presentation and a video accessible to all clinical and nonclinical staff.

“Thanks to teamwork, education, rounding and various departments ensuring that nurses and staff had what they needed in real time, we were able to achieve one of the lowest staff COVID-19 infection rates across RWJBarnabas Health,” says Parrillo. “The entire team did an unbelievable job despite the rapidly changing circumstances.”

QUALITY INDICATOR
IMPROVEMENTS

Even with the challenges of 2020, adherence to infection prevention protocols and collaboration among the multidisciplinary team resulted in a positive impact on specific quality indicators. In particular:

- Through the efforts of the perioperative team – including nurses, physicians and sterile processing staff – RWJUH Somerset achieved a colon surgical site infection rate of zero in 2020.
- Surgical site infection rates for hip and knee replacement decreased by 25% from an already low 0.25 to 0.18.
- Hand hygiene performance remained very strong at 93.9% compliance.

“Achieving these impressive rates while managing the complexities of COVID-19 is truly something to celebrate,” says Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC, CPPS, director of Infection Prevention. “We’re also proud that everyone maintained very high standards in hand hygiene under extremely stressful circumstances.”

QUALITY AND SAFETY AWARDS AND CERTIFICATIONS

From hospital quality and patient safety to specific program recognitions, nurses played a key role in the awards and recertifications earned by RWJUH Somerset in 2020.



Top Marks for Patient Safety

RWJUH Somerset achieved an “A” Hospital Safety Grade from the Leapfrog Group in its spring and fall 2020 ratings. The hospital has received five consecutive “A” ratings and 11 overall. The Hospital Safety Grade is one of the nation’s gold standard measures of patient safety, and an “A” is a testament to the continued commitment of physicians, nurses and staff to providing patients and their families with the highest quality care and the safest hospital experience. This achievement also underscores the hospital’s work in making safety a focus as part of its role as a High Reliability Organization (HRO).

Joint Commission Recertifications

In September, RWJUH Somerset completed successful site visits from the Joint Commission to achieve the following recertifications. This process, held every two years, involves a rigorous onsite review of the hospital’s compliance with national disease-specific care standards.

Total Knee and Total Hip Replacement Surgery. Areas assessed included orthopedic consultation and pre-operative, intraoperative and post-surgical orthopedic surgeon follow-up care. The surveyor was particularly impressed with the surgical program’s multidisciplinary approach and the high number of nurses with advanced certifications in orthopedic care.

Acute Myocardial Infarction (MI) Program. Clinical practice guidelines and performance measures were assessed in addition to compliance with disease-specific standards. Nurses were very engaged and eager to share their work with the surveyor.

U.S. News & World Report High Rankings

In its 2020-21 hospital rankings and ratings, *U.S. News & World Report* rated RWJUH Somerset “high performing” for the treatment of two conditions: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart failure. Only a third of all hospitals nationwide receive recognition in these prestigious ratings. Methodologies used in the rankings include discharge-to-home rates, volume, quality of nursing and other care-related indicators.



American Heart Association Recognitions

- RWJUH Somerset earned several recognitions from the American Heart Association (AHA) in 2020:
- **The AHA/American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award.** This certifies that the hospital meets quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients.
 - **The AHA’s Target: StrokeSM Honor Roll award.** To qualify for this recognition, hospitals must meet quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient’s arrival at the hospital and treatment with tPA.
 - **The AHA’s Target: Type 2 Honor Roll award.** This signifies that the hospital met quality measures with more than 90 percent compliance for 12 consecutive months for the Overall Diabetes Cardiovascular Initiative Composite Score.



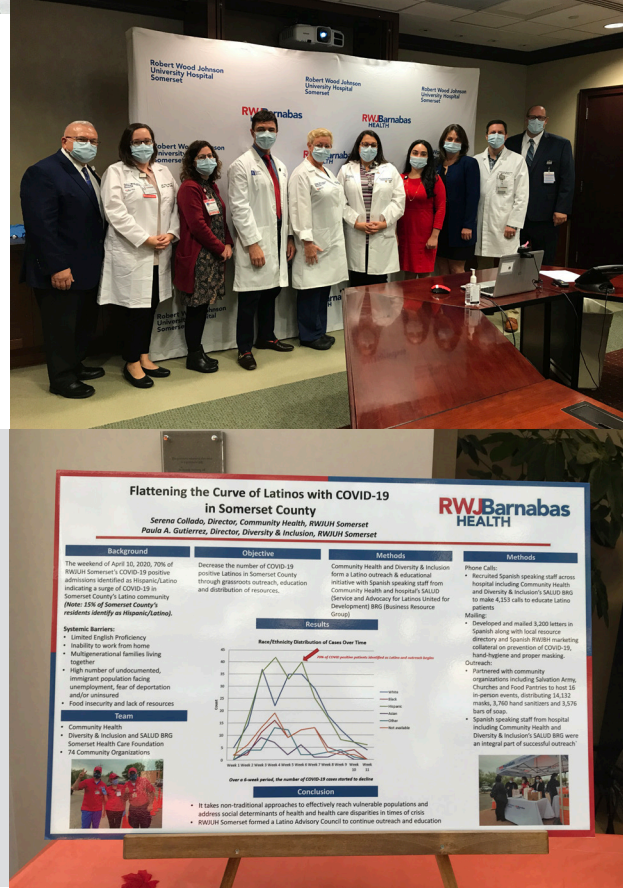
“Most Wired” Recognition

The College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME) awarded RWJUH Somerset 2020 CHIME Digital Health Most Wired recognition as a certified level 9 status. CHIME conducts an annual survey to assess how effectively health care organizations apply core and advanced technologies into their clinical and business programs to improve health and care in their communities. At level 9 status, RWJUH Somerset is considered a health IT leader that has displayed among the highest and most innovative uses of technology.



Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality

For the sixth consecutive year, RWJUH Somerset has been recognized as a **Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality** by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the country’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization. To earn this honor, the hospital received top marks in meeting non-discrimination 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 health care they need and deserve.



QUALITY FAIR GOES VIRTUAL

In October, RWJUH Somerset held its 5th annual Quality Fair in a virtual format to highlight various quality improvement initiatives underway throughout the hospital. Seventeen poster presentations were submitted and displayed at the Tarantino Pavilion during Patient Safety Week. Six finalists were chosen during the virtual Quality Fair, including the following nurse presentations:

Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Denise Gerhab BSN, RN, WCC, OMS
Cost Effectiveness of a Hospital Based Bed
Specialty Support Surface Replacement Plan

Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN
Beth Vergara, BSN, RN
Michelle Hensley-Jennings, BSN, RN
Use of Appreciative Inquiry to Decrease Patient
Falls with Injury: A Quality Improvement Project

The presentation on “Use of Appreciative Inquiry to Decrease Patient Falls with Injury: A Quality Improvement Project” was also selected for inclusion at the RWJBarnabas Health Quality Fair.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING CERTIFICATIONS

Congratulations to the following nurses for achieving certifications in their specialties in 2020:

- Sandra Calado, MSN, RN, CBN, BCS, Certified Bariatric Nurse
- Geraldine Contreras, MSN, RN, APN, RN-BC, FNP-C, Family Nurse Practitioner Certification
- Danielle Davis, BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Registered Nurse
- Heather Davis, BSN, RN, OCN, Oncology Certified Nurse
- Rhea Ethelyn Goleta, BSN, RN, RN-C, CEN, Certified Emergency Nurse
- Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, Stroke Certified Registered Nurse and Clinical Nurse Leader
- Gionna Letostak, BSN, RN, RNC-OB, Registered Nurse Certified Inpatient Obstetrics Nurse
- Caren Mamaradlo, BSN, RN-BC, Medical-Surgical Certification
- Camille McLawrence, BSN, RN, OCN, ACM-RN, Accredited Case Manager
- Jeffery Modola, BSN, RN-BC, Medical-Surgical Certification
- Kelly Morales, BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Registered Nurse
- Joseph Naples, ASN, RN, CEN, Certified Emergency Nurse
- Caitlyn Newell, BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Registered Nurse
- Chizoba Nnenkwo, RN-MSNBC, Medical-Surgical Certification
- Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC, Nurse Executive Board Certification
- Melissa Pesarchick, BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Registered Nurse
- Tara Rappleyea, BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Registered Nurse
- Vivian Sarmiento, BSN, RN, SCRNP, Stroke Certified Registered Nurse
- Maria Yavornitzki, BSN, RN-BC, Medical-Surgical Certification

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Kathy Easter, MSN, RN, CCRN-K,
Appointed to Board of Directors/Treasurer for the New Jersey Council of Magnet Organizations (NJCOMO)

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to the following nurses who earned degrees in 2020:

BSN Degrees

Erin Allair, BSN, RN, Thomas Edison University

Jill Blanco, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Priscilla Cisneros, BSN, RN, Western Governors University

Brianne Devries, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Jacqueline Eustis, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Stefany Jones, BSN, RN, Thomas Edison State University

Sarah Lallier, BSN, RN, New Jersey City University

Kelly Merten, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Jeffrey Modola, BSN, RN-BC, Rutgers University

Caitlyn Newell, BSN, RN, CCRN, Chamberlain University

Samuel Olesinski, BSN, RN, Felician University

Loretta Orelie, BSN, RN, New Jersey City University

Brianne Orzepowski, BSN, RN, Monmouth University

Jessica Perpignan, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Lisa Shrodo, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Rosarito Vazquez, BSN, RN, Grand Canyon University

MSN Degrees

Geraldine Contreras, MSN, RN, APN, RN-BC, FNP-C, University of Southern California

Jazmin Cruz, MSN, RN-BC, Chamberlain University

Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, Rutgers University

Tina Marie James, MSN, RN, Walden University

Charlie Mahoney, MSN, RN, APN, Rutgers University

Monique Whalen, MSN, RN-BC, Kean University

Masters of Science in Public Health Degrees

JoAnn Hussey, MSPH, BSN, RN, Southern New Hampshire University

DNP Degrees

Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN, University of South Alabama

NEW KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS



Leticia Rodriguez, BSN, RN, a nurse on 2-East Cardiac Pavilion, says cross-training in caring for ICU patients has piqued her interest in ICU nursing.

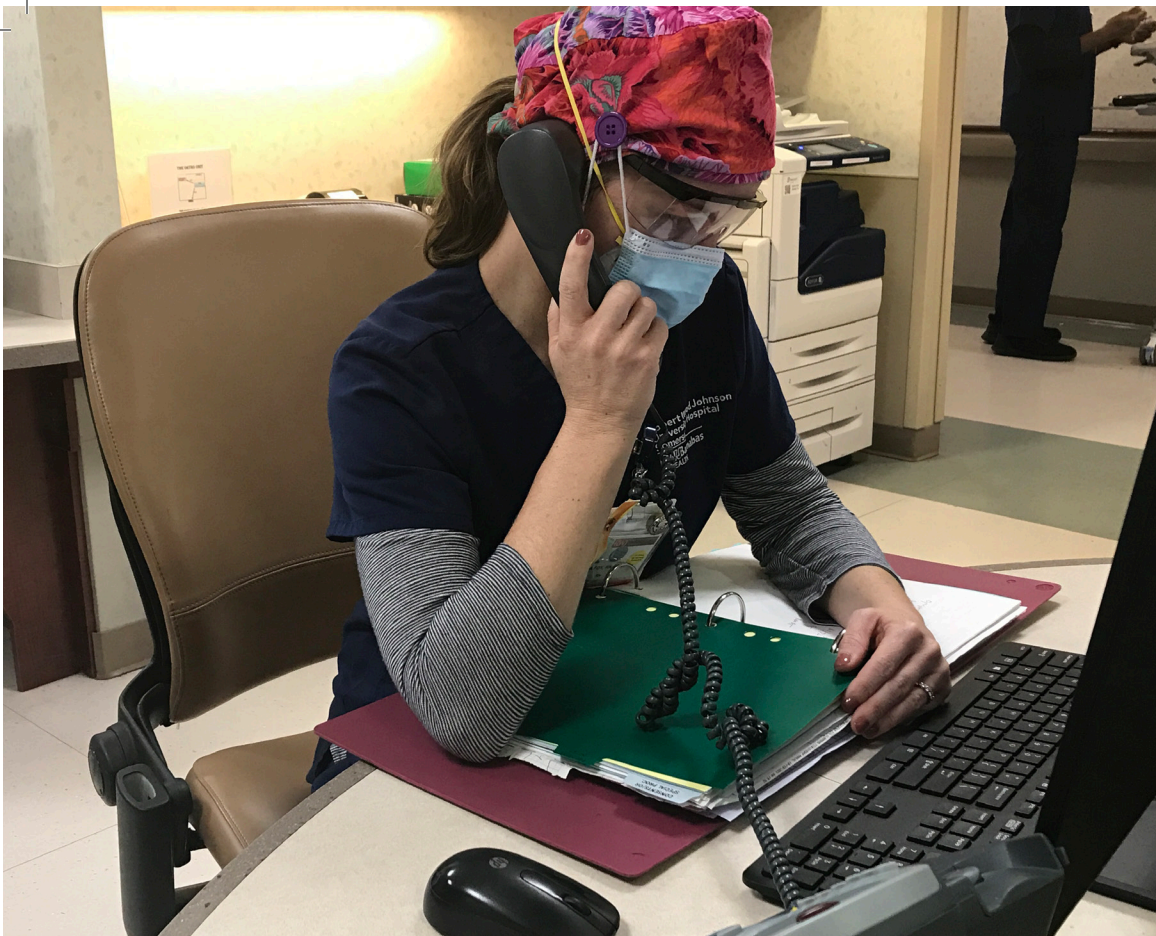
RWJUH Somerset promotes a research-intensive environment and a culture of inquiry and innovation. Nurses at all levels participate in the Nursing Research Council, monthly Journal Club meetings and Nursing Informatics end-user teams to collaborate, plan, implement and evaluate practices, knowledge and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

CROSS-TRAINING TO PREPARE FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS

With its recent renovation, the 2-East Cardiac Pavilion's capacity includes eight IMCU overflow beds, which were needed for COVID-19 patients during the height of the pandemic. In addition, PACU and Endoscopy staff with a critical care background were needed to help in the ICU. To provide 2-East and PACU staff with a refresher on caring for high-acuity patients, Oriana St. George, MSN, RN-BC and Kimberly Bates, BSN, RN, CCRN-CMC, clinical nurse educators with the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research, quickly developed an education module targeted to these needs. More than 30 staff attended the four-hour class, completed four hours of shadowing with an ICU nurse and partnered with respiratory therapy staff for ventilator management education. In preparation for a potential fall surge, this class was repeated in September along with a 12-hour shadowing experience with an ICU nurse.

For 2-East Cardiac Pavilion clinical nurse Leticia Rodriguez, BSN, RN, who joined the RWJUH Somerset nursing team in August 2019 after receiving her nursing degree, the training and her role during the pandemic has piqued her interest in ICU nursing.

"I couldn't imagine that a pandemic would be my first experience right out of nursing school, but this experience has made me stronger and I was truly honored to be a part of it," says Rodriguez, who is also a member of the Resuscitation Committee. "It's amazing to see what goes into critical care and the dedication of our nurses and physicians. It inspired me to want to grow in my nursing career."



Lisa Bonk, BSN, RN, served as a nurse liaison to enhance communication with patients' families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

IMPLEMENTATION OF NURSE LIAISONS

With a very limited visitation policy during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Patient Experience Department at RWJUH Somerset instituted a new position of nurse liaison to help provide consistent and efficient communication on behalf of patients, families, caregivers and health care providers. This also provided an opportunity for nurses whose areas were not open or who could not provide direct patient care during the pandemic to fulfill a much-needed role.

Five RWJUH Somerset nurses took on these roles to become an extension of the Patient Experience Department in the RWJUH Somerset Command Center. Serving as the point of contact between a patient's designated caregiver and the hospital staff from admission to discharge, they conducted virtual rounds, answered questions, connected patients with providers as needed and provided support and information. They also used translation teleservices to meet the needs of non-English speaking patients and families and worked in collaboration with the Care Management team.

"During a very isolating and stressful time for patients and families, we were happy to serve as a bridge to communication wherever we could," says Lisa Bonk, BSN, RN, a 1-East Geriatric Unit clinical nurse who served as a nurse liaison to limit her exposure to COVID-19 based on physician recommendations regarding her daughter, who is immunocompromised. "I didn't want to be on the sidelines, so it was the perfect opportunity to contribute - and I was so relieved that I could be safer for my daughter."

"Patients need their loved ones as part of the healing process," adds Joanne Arico, BSN, RN, director of Patient Experience. "When they were isolated, our nurses helped bring the world to them."



CJ Cruz, director of operations, right, displays new pulse oximetry adaptors for telemetry units.

PULSE OXIMETRY CAPABILITIES ADDED TO TELEMETRY

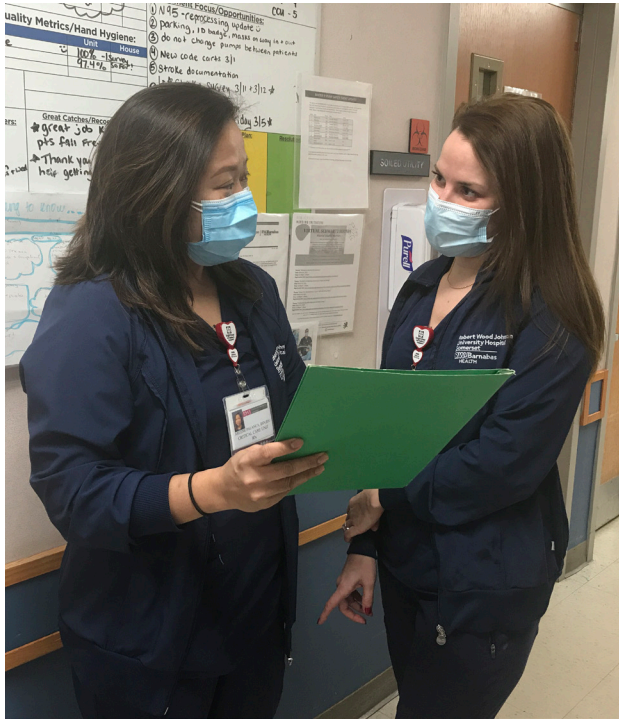
Following the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, RWJUH Somerset identified an opportunity to further streamline care by adding pulse oximetry capabilities to units beyond Critical Care, ICU and IMCU. In an initiative coordinated by director of operations CJ Cruz, nursing leadership approved a solution to retrofit existing telemetry units with pulse oximetry adaptors, providing convenient, cost-effective functionality for a large number of patients. The nursing team, Clinical Engineering Department and Central Monitoring collaborated to incorporate the adaptors on all medical/surgical units, and the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research provided training on their use for nurses across the hospital.

NEW ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL PROTOCOL EDUCATION

In early March 2020, a new Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol (CIWA-Ar) protocol went live at RWJUH Somerset and has been standardized across RWJBarnabas Health. With a scoring change in the protocol, patients are not automatically admitted to the IMCU when the CIWA is ordered unless they reach a specific score. As a result, the new protocol engages nurses in various departments throughout the hospital in the standardized assessment and care of patients at risk for or undergoing withdrawal from alcohol use.

Familiar with the treatment of patients undergoing withdrawal, Critical Care clinical nurse Arlene Palanca, BSN, RN, provided one-on-one education about the protocol and related patient care for nearly 50 nurses and residents. This included information about withdrawal medications and how they work, what to expect in caring for patients struggling with addiction, and when a higher level of care is needed.

"For withdrawal and any type of treatment, understanding the latest standardized care is important - and so is a holistic approach that includes sensitivity," says Palanca, who included the education she provided as part of her clinical ladder process. "This protocol empowers nurses to be more proactive before symptoms of withdrawal escalate, which benefits our patients."



Arlene Palanca, BSN, RN, left, educates a Critical Care nurse on the new alcohol withdrawal protocol.



Geraldine Contreras, MSN, RN, APN, RN-BC, updates the huddle dashboard that enhances communication across the care team on 2-East.

Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, left, demonstrates the new IV infusion pumps.

NEW 2-EAST MEDICATION EDUCATION TOOLS

Providing education for patients and families about medications, their purpose, how often to take them and potential side effects can improve health outcomes. In 2020, 2-East Cardiac Pavilion clinical nurse Geraldine Contreras, MSN, RN, APN, RN-BC, FNP-C helped her unit design the following tools to reinforce patient education about current medications and common side effects:

- A more user-friendly, customized dry erase medication education board in English and Spanish that was then implemented throughout the hospital's inpatient units
- A take-home medication side effects refrigerator magnet with a clip designed to hold medication education sheets

"The key to medication side effects education is repetition and reinforcement," says Contreras. "Most patients need to hear and visualize the same information multiple times for good comprehension and recall. When patients understand common side effects, they are more engaged in their care. They know what to expect and when to alert their health care provider about any issues."

Contreras also helped design a centralized assignment and huddle dashboard for both the 2-East and the 2-West Cardiac Pavilion that can be continuously updated for each individual patient, enhancing communication across the care team.

"The huddle tool highlights any safety and resource concerns that could affect the smooth running of the unit in the coming 24 hours," she adds. "Our goal as a unit is to focus on safety, flow, nursing-sensitive indicators and patient-centered care."

IV INFUSION PUMP CONVERSION

In early 2020, RWJUH Somerset nurses, technicians and pharmacy staff received education and training on a new IV infusion pump selected for standardization across RWJBarnabas Health. The pump was selected with nursing input following the evaluation of several options in 2019. Staff worked with the Pharmacy to review and expand drug libraries and ensure safety and consistency. Following the week-long, hands-on training sessions, the IV pumps were converted on each unit by an interdisciplinary team.

"Standardizing the pumps has helped streamline care and promote continuity, which is particularly important if a patient needs to be transferred to another RWJBarnabas Health hospital," says Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research. "Staff can also go between sites and have access to common functionality, enhancing safety."



RENOVATED UNITS FEATURE NURSING INPUT AND EXPERTISE

1-East Geriatric Unit Redesigned

RWJUH Somerset completed a redesign of the 1-East Geriatric Unit work environment, thanks to a \$1 million donation to Somerset Health Care Foundation from Steve and Suzanne Kalafer of Flemington Car and Truck Country Family of Brands and the Somerset Patriots. Upgrades included installing new floors and bathroom fixtures and creating a more modern nurses' station, including adding a pneumatic tube system connected to the Laboratory and Pharmacy that helps expedite lab tests and medications.

"The redesign has improved time management, patient privacy, and patient comfort, which is especially important for our older patients who need a great deal of support," says 1-East night shift clinical nurse Olive Mallari, BSN, RN. "Even the little things make a difference, like additional sinks in the hallways for handwashing and the ability to dim the hallway lights at night so our patients get better rest. It's a unit we can be proud of, and we were happy to have had input into the process."

Nurses on the unit are specially trained in the care of older adults, earning national recognition as a NICHE Facility (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) from New York University's Rory Meyers College of Nursing.

Behavioral Health Services Expand on 5-West

With the support of a \$500,000 donation from the Far Hills Race Meeting Association, RWJUH Somerset renovated its Far Hills Race Meeting Behavioral Health Unit (5-West) to add 12 beds, increasing the unit's capacity to 28 beds. This expansion helps meet the growing need for behavioral health services while ensuring that patients in acute stages of psychiatric illness get prompt evaluation, stabilization and intensive treatment.

The unit's multidisciplinary team includes psychiatric advanced practice nurses and psychiatric nurses who specialize in behavioral health. During the renovation, nurses were integral to decision-making processes ranging from new workflows to mobile workstations that enable them to chart and provide medications at the bedside, which has enhanced nursing presence and improved safety for those at risk for falls.

"We've doubled our capacity during a time when the pandemic has doubled the number of people with anxiety and depression," says clinical nurse Michael de Guzman, BSN, RN-BC. "Those with acute behavioral health needs no longer have to travel to find this level of care. We're proud to be able to help fulfill this crucial need."



Michael de Guzman, BSN, RN-BC, unlocks new doors installed on 5-West that allow staff to access the door if barricaded by a patient.



Renata Kalinowski, RN, SGNA, prepares scopes for a procedure.

Streamlining Care in New Endoscopy Suite

RWJUH Somerset renovated its third floor Endoscopy Suite to enable patients to receive all of their care in one convenient location, from registration and pre-procedure care through recovery and discharge. The renovated space includes:

- Three procedure rooms, five pre-operative patient bays, six post-operative patient bays and one private isolation room
- New endoscopy equipment, scopes and processing units
- An open nursing station design that provides a better view of patients and helps patients feel more supported
- A new family waiting area with a private space for meeting with physicians

“Nurses are involved in every aspect of care on the unit, so we were able to provide input designed to streamline care and improve patient satisfaction,” says clinical nurse Renata Kalinowski, RN, SGNA, who has maintained gastroenterology certification for the past 25 years and encourages other nurses to seek advanced certifications. “Not only does this make our jobs easier, but it also helps ensure the comfort, privacy and support of our patients.”

IMPROVING PATIENT EXPERIENCE OUTCOMES

Charged with tracking and trending patient satisfaction, the Patient Experience Department continually seeks ways to enhance the care experience for patients and their families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this included new processes like hardwiring the bedside shift report and incorporating emergency contact information into electronic health history forms so the information is more easily accessible.

Based on patient and family feedback, RWJUH Somerset saw a significant increase in satisfaction for the following measures in 2020:

- Overall hospital experience
- Overall cleanliness
- Nurses explaining things in a way patients can understand
- A good understanding of how to manage one’s health
- A good understanding of the purpose of taking medications
- Recommending the hospital to others

“These accolades are especially impressive because health care staff were put to a trial they’ve never been through before during the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Joanne Arico, BSN, RN, director of Patient Experience. “Despite all the new challenges, our team maintained exceptional performance levels every day.”

RWJBARNABAS HEALTH ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

In November, nurses across RWJBarnabas Health participated in the 15th Annual Research Symposium, held in collaboration with the Rutgers University School of Nursing. The theme for this virtual 2020 symposium, which featured 21 presentations, was “Rockstar Researchers: A Virtual Concert.” Presentations were organized according to the Magnet principles. RWJUH Somerset nurse presentations included:

Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN
Beth Vergara, BSN, RN
Michelle Hensley-Jennings, BSN, RN
Use of Appreciative Inquiry to Decrease Patient Falls with Injury: A Quality Improvement Project

RWJUH SOMERSET NURSES DISSEMINATE NEW KNOWLEDGE IN 2020

Clinical Research Studies

Title of Study	Staff
Exploring the motivational benefits of using an electronic activity tracker on post-operative hospitalized patients: A pilot study	Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNI Kathleen Evanovich Zavotsky, PhD, RN, CCRN, CEN, ACNS-BC, FAEN, FCNS Jazmin Cruz, MSN, RN-BC Maria de Roma-Ragaza, MSN, RN, CNOR Deslin Jackson, BSN, RN Samuel Olesinski, BSN, RN

Publications

Title of Publication	Staff	Journal
Community-based clinical trials: The role of nurses in increasing enrollment	Siby Varughese, MA, MBA, BSN, RN, OCN, CCRP Stacey Alphas, BSN, RN, OCN	<i>Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing</i> , 24(2), 205-207



Internal Poster Presentations		
Title of Presentation	Staff	Venue
Body Mechanics in the Operating Room: Workplace Musculoskeletal Disorders	Theresa Fineza, BSN, RN	Operation Room Virtual Presentation
Cost Effectiveness of a Hospital Based Bed Specialty Support Surface Replacement Plan	Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC Denise Gerhab BSN, RN, WCC, OMS	RWJUH Somerset Virtual Quality Fair RWJBH Virtual Quality Fair RWJBH 15th Annual Research Symposium Virtual Event
Pathology Specimens- Handling and Disposition	Carol Reid Grevious, BSN, RN, CNOR	Operation Room Classroom
Preparing Your Patient for Surgery	Cathy Smith, BSN, RN-BC, CAPA Patty Kasher, BSN, RN-BC	Connecting the Dots Education Council Fair
Use of Appreciative Inquiry to Decrease Patient Falls with Injury: A Quality Improvement Project	Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN Beth Vergara, BSN, RN Michelle Hensley-Jennings, BSN, RN	RWJUH Somerset Virtual Quality Fair RWJBH Virtual Quality Fair RWJBH 15th Annual Research Symposium Virtual Event

External Podium Presentations		
Title of Presentation	Staff	Venue
Leading your Magnet4Europe Team	Kathy Easter, MSN, RN, CCRN-K	International Virtual Presentation: Belgium, Germany, UK, Ireland, USA
Abdominal Pain in Regard to COVID-19	Shankari Ravichandran, DNP, RN, APN, ANP-BC	NewYork-Presbyterian Virtual Presentation

