



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

2022 Nursing Annual Report





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FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Transition and Transformation

Throughout 2022, nurses across the region and throughout the country continued to face ongoing pandemic-related challenges that have impacted nursing practice. Yet our 650 Magnet nurses at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset have remained engaged, patient-focused and quality-driven, paving the way for ongoing advances in nursing care.

RWJUH Somerset took the lead as the pilot RWJBarnabas Health site for patient rounding with a web-based platform that enables us to track and trend daily rounding in real time. Using this tool in collaboration with the Patient Experience Department and Information Technology, our nurses can proactively anticipate feedback and efficiently address patient needs. In addition, as the first hospital in our health care system to transition to the Epic electronic health record, nurses continued to drive enhancement requests that improved workflow and desired outcomes across care processes. We're also proud to be one of only a handful of hospitals in the Northeast to now offer gender affirmation surgery, a highly specialized, complex and collaborative undertaking that has already been life-changing for numerous patients.

In placing an even stronger focus on the support of our nurses, we've added unit-specific and hospital-wide tools that have helped stabilize and grow our workforce. The expansion of our Transitions to Practice Program has filled a gap for those who lost in-person learning opportunities due to the pandemic, and it now supports all nurses who are new to acute care throughout their first year. In another nurse-driven initiative, we've added unit-specific nurse leaders on the night shift to serve as a valuable resource for our staff while further promoting teamwork and a sense of camaraderie. This initiative and many others have research components that are examining outcomes to ensure the highest level of evidence-based care.

In terms of quality and safety, RWJUH Somerset received numerous national honors and accreditations made possible through the work of our nurses and interdisciplinary team. We earned a full slate of Healthgrades quality achievements, and we proudly celebrated our third Magnet® designation. Falls with injury are at the lowest point in five years, while hand hygiene compliance hit record numbers.

We're incredibly honored to work alongside our dedicated nurses who continually seek personal and professional development and are empowered at all levels to drive positive change. They are not only guided by quality, but they also care for our patients and their families and engage with our community with an extraordinary level of commitment and compassion.

Sincerely,

Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN

Chief Nursing Officer and
Vice President of Nursing

Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC

Assistant Vice President
of Nursing



Professional Practice Model

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



NATIONAL MAGNET CONFERENCE® CELEBRATES THIRD DESIGNATION

In October 2022, 16 RWJUH Somerset nurses and nurse leaders joined 11,000 nurses from more than 26 countries to attend the American Nurses Credentialing Center National Magnet Conference®/Pathways to Excellence Conference® held in Philadelphia. As part of this dynamic educational event, RWJUH Somerset participants had the opportunity to take the stage on behalf of nurses across the hospital for the resounding recognition of its third Magnet designation.

“The Magnet conference was emotional and inspiring, especially given the challenges nurses have faced since the pandemic. It reinforced why I love nursing so much, why we come together to continually learn and how we all make such a difference.”

- Jennifer Higgins, BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care

“I love to help people be the best versions of themselves, and that’s what Magnet is all about. Achieving our third designation came with a lot of effort, dedication and passion. Our nurses are empowered to maintain a gold standard of excellence.”

- Ma. Arlene Azores, MSN, RN, RNC-LRN, 1-South

“In my 31 years of nursing here, this was my proudest moment. I’m in awe of our nurses and what they have accomplished.”

- Eileen Allen, MSN, RN, RN-BC, Magnet program coordinator

“The conference was a truly amazing, rewarding experience – I even had the opportunity to meet the Barnes family who founded The DAISY Foundation™. It’s an honor to see the value in the care I can deliver to patients based on what we’ve gained through Magnet.”

- Theresa Powell, BSN, RN, Infusion Center

“The conference helped me realize the magnitude of what we’ve all accomplished. The little things we do every day to go the extra mile all add up to build something special, in the same way that grains of sand become a beautiful beach.”

- Alison Hosler-Koemm, ASN, RN, Same Day Center

“For our community, a third Magnet designation means that people are cared for at the highest level in every aspect possible, including mentally, emotionally and socially. It was wonderful to celebrate that with nurses from all over the world.”

- Deslin Jackson, BSN, RN, Pre-Admission Testing

“I was grateful for the opportunity to gain perspectives and exchange ideas with nurses from different states and countries – and to show everyone how hard our entire nursing team works to provide the best care for our patients.”

- Hong Zhang, BSN, RN, SCRNP, 4-West





TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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.

“Stay with Me” Pledge Reduces Falls

As co-chairs of the Falls Prevention Committee, Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN, NE-BC, CDP, director of Oncology Services, and Yesenia Zwiren, BSN, RN, RN-BC, director of the 2-West Cardiac Pavilion, have spearheaded several initiatives in the past few years that have contributed to a reduction in falls at RWJUH Somerset. The Committee is comprised of an interprofessional team with champions from each unit and department, including Nursing, Transport, Pharmacy, Quality, Physical Therapy, and Environmental Services. Positive results have been achieved through the engagement of nurses and staff across all levels throughout the hospital.

In 2022, the Committee’s examination of data revealed that one of the biggest challenges in falls prevention had been related to toileting and privacy

considerations. The group agreed that a pledge would be an effective tool to educate nurses and clinical care technicians about the importance of staying with at-risk patients during toileting. The co-chairs developed the language for the “Stay with Me” pledge, which was approved by the Falls Prevention Committee and shared with the Professional Practice Council.

“Patients at risk for falls receive a safety agreement that includes information about staff accompanying them when toileting, but caregivers didn’t have a similar tool,” says Omabegho. “With this pledge, there’s no question that when they walk a patient to the bathroom, they must stay with them during toileting. It empowers them to better protect our patients.”

Education on the pledge was rolled out at nursing practice councils, reinforced in safety huddles and incorporated into onboarding materials. The initiative includes talking points to use with patients before they go to the bathroom, helping them understand

the rationale for this protective measure. It is designed for patients at high or moderate risk for falls, but it can also be used whenever there’s a concern about falls in the caregiver’s judgment.

From January to December 2022, data showed a 15 percent reduction in the rate of patient falls across the hospital.

“It’s a great achievement for everyone,” adds Omabegho. “The pledge has helped put us all on the same page with falls reduction efforts.”

Enhancing Night Shift Nursing Support

RWJUH Somerset 2-East Cardiac Pavilion nurses recently developed an evidence-based initiative to provide better structure, resources, support and retention for night shift nurses. It now benefits nursing staff across the hospital.

“We’ve had the capacity to provide one-on-one manager time for nurses working through 11 p.m., and we knew that our night shift team deserves a similar level of support – especially with so many new nursing graduates coming into hospital positions,” says Kashawna Still, BSN, RN, PCCN-K, director of 2-East Cardiac Pavilion.

With approval from nursing leadership, Still gained input from nursing directors on effective manager-staff models. Using this feedback, they developed a staffing model in which the day and night nurse manager schedules mirrored each other and provided effective hand-off opportunities at shift changes, with two 12-hour and two eight-hour shifts Monday through Friday. They created guidelines of expectations for the night nurse manager role, yet also built in flexibility for certain decisions to be made at the unit level. This includes whether the nurse manager has patients or solely manager responsibilities.

RWJUH Somerset has initiated a research study for this initiative examining nurse perceptions prior to the introduction of night nurse managers and 90 days later. Still reports that the 2-East team has been very receptive to the additional support, and she’s noticed a reduction in the need for nurses to stay beyond their shift to finish work in the morning. Beyond its implementation on 2-East, the model has been extended to the Ortho Pavilion, Oncology, 1-East, 2-West Cardiac Pavilion, 4-West, and Critical Care.

“The load becomes lighter when we help each other, and we’re seeing that so far,” says Aiko Makino, BSN, RN, CCRN, 2-East night shift nurse manager. “Plus, with a greater level of teamwork, newer nurses don’t feel that they’re on their own.”

“I’m grateful and feel more comfortable going to work having a skilled nurse manager like Aiko readily available,” says Acela Rambaud, BSN, RN, RN-BC, 2-East night shift clinical nurse. “She answers questions, troubleshoots issues and mentors new nurses. It’s a happier unit with everyone working in harmony under her leadership.”



Left to Right: Acela Rambaud, BSN, RN, RN-BC, 2-East night shift clinical nurse, Kashawna Still, BSN, RN, PCCN-K, director of 2-East Cardiac Pavilion, Aiko Makino, BSN, RN, CCRN, 2-East night shift nurse manager



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.

Neuro Nurses Implement Patient Medication Guide

In examining the breakdown of patient satisfaction scores, the 4-West Unit-Based Practice Council identified an opportunity to provide patients with more detailed, accessible information on medication side effects. To expand on the unit's "M in the Box" initiative that includes medication education signage in patient rooms, nurses conducted a literature review on best practices in communicating with patients about medications, and suggested developing a visual tool that patients could take with them after discharge.

Working together on this evidence-based initiative, they compiled the most commonly prescribed medications on the unit through staff input and a month-long chart



auditing process, and presented the idea to the Patient and Family Education Council. With additional input from the Pharmacy and collaboration with Marketing, they produced a visually pleasing, easy-to-understand brochure that details medication side effects while also promoting the Stroke Support Group.

Clinical nurse Tina Horton, MSN, RN, SCRNP, CNL, and Unit-Based Council Chair Kathleen Marsh, ASN, RN, SCRNP, who helped coordinate the project, note that patients are given this tool upon admission and nurses refer to it during rounds and other points of contact throughout the day - including times when families are in the room - to reinforce the information in a tangible way. They also encourage patients and families to use the brochure as a resource after discharge, since patients often continue taking the same medications at home.

“Within a short time of implementation, we began hearing positive feedback from patients and families during rounds - and we’ve also seen increased participation in the Stroke Support Group,” says 4-West Stroke Center manager Jennifer Lettieri, BSN, RN, CCRN. “We all feel passionate about ensuring that patients are well informed about their health care, and we’re excited to see the difference this tool makes in patient satisfaction.”



Patient Experience Coordinator Irene Dela Cruz, BSN, RN, RN-BC, demonstrating the white noise machine to nursing staff.

White Noise Pilot Project Benefits Patients

Hospital noise is often cited as an issue that impacts patients' ability to gain quality rest, and it can be particularly unsettling for patients with dementia. Based on a review of the literature and an examination of patient satisfaction scores related to noise, patient experience director Alexandra Rodriguez, CPXP, MHA, and patient experience coordinator Irene Dela Cruz, BSN, RN, RN-BC, proposed that white noise machines may improve rest/sleep quality and promote an environment more conducive to healing.

With approval from leadership and the Nursing Performance Improvement Council, they developed a pilot project that provided 16 white noise machines to patients on 1-East and the Oncology Unit. Dela Cruz facilitated orientation on their use on the floors, education in nursing huddles, and follow-up to assess outcomes. Use of the devices, which can be offered by a nurse or requested by a patient or family member, has generated positive feedback.

"The white noise machines have made a noticeable difference for our patients with confusion and dementia in particular," says Irish Villaflor, BSN, RN, clinical nurse on 1-East. "They're less agitated and more relaxed, and the calmer environment helps promote better sleep. Their families have been thankful that we can offer this service."

Through a Somerset Health Care Foundation grant proposal, Rodriguez and Dela Cruz are now focusing on expanding the project more broadly throughout the hospital. They also hope to examine potential longer-term outcomes, such as whether the white noise machines could help reduce the use of medications or decrease length of stay.

Reducing Stress Through Team-Based Artwork

Nurses across the country have faced countless challenges since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many reporting increased mental health symptoms such as anxiety and stress. To help reduce stress and improve overall well-being, RWJUH Somerset Ortho Pavilion nurses suggested and implemented a mindfulness-focused, team-based art initiative in 2022 with the help of nursing director Angela Daly, MSN, RN.

With markers and 24 x 48 posters available in the staff room, the team collectively completed the first poster in three days. Several finished works are now hanging on the wall in the unit for patients, family and staff to enjoy.

“Our nurses were able to remove themselves from high-stress situations and take a few moments to be more present and calm,” says Daly. “We were able to laugh and enjoy the process, and the finished pieces are beautiful. It required a personal investment and fostered teamwork that we continue to carry forward on the unit.”

With nearly 60 staff participating, the evidence-based project exceeded Daly’s expectations. Survey data before and after participation demonstrated that most respondents felt that their overall anxiety level was more reasonable and their ability to manage challenges on the unit and work together as a team improved. Using this data, nurses developed a research article that has been submitted for publication.



Nursing Director Angela Daley, MSN, RN checks in with nurses on the unit.



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 family-centered care, shared decision-making, autonomy and clinical excellence. By incorporating high reliability organization (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.



Education Council

Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRN, Chair

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.



Patient/Family Education Council

Susana Veranga, BSN, RN, CEN, Chair

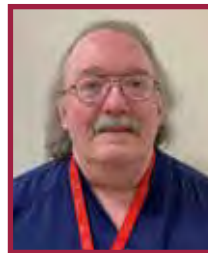
This council provides a forum for a systematic, multidisciplinary approach to facilitate the assessment, design, planning, implementation and evaluation of patient and family educational resources, materials and programs. The council strives to ensure appropriate literacy levels in educational materials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



Magnet Enculturation Council

Deslin Jackson, BSN, RN, Chair

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.



Professional Practice Council

Sean Mullen, ASN, RN, OCN, CNRN, SCRN, Chair

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.



Nursing Performance Improvement (PI) Council

Heather Davis, BSN, RN, OCN, Chair

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.



The Lynn Kearney Memorial Scholarship Recipients

This scholarship, established in memory of RWJUH Somerset's former chief nursing officer, carries on Lynn Kearney's legacy by supporting a new generation of nurses who are pursuing nursing programs.

2022 recipients included:

Kenya Allen, ASN, RN, RNC-LRNN, 1-South

Hannah Hoffman, 1-East

Kaitlyn Kwasnik, BSN, RN, RN-BC, Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research

Erin Maselli, Emergency Department

Megan Nash, Ortho Pavilion

Thainara Ramos, Emergency Department

Naira Ruelas, Emergency Department

Yuliya Voznyuk, BSN, RN, 2-West

Aneta Wnek, ASN, RN, 1-East

NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

In May 2022, RWJUH Somerset held a celebration to honor recipients of the Nurse Excellence Awards, present the Lynn Kearney Memorial Scholarships and Magnet Enculturation Scholarships, and recognize Nurse Residency Program graduates.



Magnet Nurse of the Year Award Hong Zhang, BSN, RN, SCRNP, 4-West

Dedicated to delivering high-quality care, Hong Zhang, BSN, RN, SCRNP, has a passion for improving nursing practice. She was one of the first nurses at RWJUH Somerset to achieve CNIV status on the clinical ladder and is one of the hospital's first certified stroke nurses. In nominating Zhang, her colleagues noted that she ARCCs up safety concerns, obtains and disseminates new information to her leaders and peers, is recognized by patients for her responsiveness and is a resource for younger nurses.

Professional Development and Magnet Enculturation Scholarship Awards

Marlaina Mykytok, ASN, RN, Emergency Department, BSN Scholarship Recipient

Sunitha John, MSN, RN, RM, CNOR, Perioperative Services, MSN Scholarship Recipient

Nurse Residency Program Graduates

Melissa Plock, BSN, RN, Oncology | Emily McVerry, BSN, RN, 1-East | Lorraine Rocha, BSN, RN, 2-West

Transformational Leadership Award

Kimberly McKeivitt, BSN, RN, CWON, WCC, OMS, Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research

Structural Empowerment Award

Infection Prevention Council

Exemplary Professional Practice Award

Jennifer Higgins, BSN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care

New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements Award

Patricia Perna, ASN, RN, RNC-OB, Labor & Delivery

Community Outreach Award

Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, 4-West

Advanced Practice Provider Award

Daisy Cardoso, MSN, RN, APRN, FNP-BC, Pre-Admission Testing

Nursing Technician/Technologist Award

Christian Salazar, Oncology

Friend of Nursing Award

Kirk Laurence, Performance Improvement/ Infection Prevention



The DAISY Award

FOR EXTRAORDINARY NURSES

IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

DAISY Awards Recognize Extraordinary Nursing Care

Established by the DAISY Foundation™ and coordinated at RWJUH Somerset by the Magnet Enculturation Council, the DAISY Award® recognizes the extraordinary, compassionate care that nurses provide for patients and families. The following nurses received DAISY Awards in 2022:



Joseph Mazzone, BSN, RN, 2-West Cardiac Pavilion

Joseph Mazzone was nominated by a Chamberlain University Professor who was on the unit with her senior nursing students. She wrote, “Joe was not only a role model to the students assigned to him each week; he was a role model to all of my students. His therapeutic communication skills were front and center with everyone he talked to on the unit. Joe demonstrated his assessment expertise and critical thinking skills, showing my students how a strong and skillful nurse should look. All my students requested to be assigned to Joe on our clinical day. I knew that if they were following Joe, they would learn and see more in a few hours with him than they could ever learn in a classroom.”



Theresa Powell, BSN, RN, Infusion Center

In nominating Theresa Powell, her manager wrote, “Terry went above and beyond in comforting a patient and his wife. They were so pleased with the care they received that they had to tell me themselves. Terry impacted their experience in such a positive light – so much so, that the patient’s wife took the time to send me a detailed card thanking and praising Terry again. The card stated, ‘I am writing to tell you again how pleased we were to have a nurse as caring and professional as Terry Powell. My husband had much trepidation about his infusion on Tuesday, but Terry made them all disappear. She is beyond caring and so skillful. Such a devoted, patient nurse is a joy to know.’”



Khaila Tan, BSN, RN, 2-East Cardiac Pavilion

Khaila Tan was recognized by a patient’s granddaughter, who is also a nurse. She wrote, “After discovering that Grandma was a rapid response throughout the night, I became nervous and scared. When I called the unit, Khaila went above and beyond in ensuring I was fully informed about Grandma’s care. She was extremely passionate, caring, and supportive. I felt at ease knowing Khaila was the nurse. Thanks to Khaila’s compassionate care, I received a call [from the physician] ten minutes after our conversation. I know how important it is to take the time and speak to families and patients, updating them and going that extra mile comforting them, and she did just that! She is a true example of what nursing is about.”

Employees of the Month

Congratulations to the following nurses, who earned Employee of the Month recognition in 2022:

Rosielynn Borja, BSN, RN | Kaitlyn Kwasnick, BSN, RN, RN-BC | Kinara Patel, BSN, RN
Theresa Powell, BSN, RN

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 it 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



Reaching Out and Giving Back

Throughout 2022, RWJUH Somerset nurses participated in nearly 80 outreach events ranging from health fairs and screenings to webinars and in-person presentations on a variety of health topics. In addition, they served those in need through many hospital initiatives, including food, diaper, toy and back-to-school drives.

Setting Sights on a Lions Club World Record

As members of the Somerville Metro Lions Club, Ma Nelda Bernales, BSN, RN, Maria Theresa Domider, BSN, RN, RN-BC, Justina Juan, BSN, RN, RN-BC, Emelie Comanda, Unit Clerk, and Jussara Nicholson, Respiratory Therapist, participated in an NJ Lions Clubs initiative to break the Guinness Book of World Record for the longest chain of spectacles (eyeglasses) ever created. This “Liberty for Sight” initiative celebrated the NJ Lions 100th Anniversary and promoted the importance of eye health, the preservation of eyesight and the eradication of preventable blindness as well as the benefits of recycling used eyeglasses.

RWJUH Somerset team members contributed eyeglasses via collection boxes placed in the hospital through the efforts of the Somerset Health Care Foundation, a sponsor of the initiative. The record-breaking chain of eyeglasses was comprised of 100,000 pairs stretching more than eight miles. Once processed, the eyeglasses are distributed to people in need around the world.



The Guinness World Records Certificate was presented to the RWJUH Somerset team for the longest chain of spectacles ever created.



Celebrating Juneteenth

RWJUH Somerset's Black Professionals Network (BPN), which includes several RWJUH Somerset nurses, organized an outdoor Juneteenth celebration featuring food trucks, music, a reading of Amanda Gorman's poem "The Hill We Climb" and a presentation by Rutgers University visiting scholar Guy Weston. BPN members also participated in North Plainfield's Juneteenth Celebration at the North Plainfield Middle School, with several nurses providing blood pressure screenings and health information.

PROUD Outreach for World AIDS Day

In conjunction with World AIDS Day on December 1, RWJUH Somerset's Babs Siperstein PROUD Center helped promote greater awareness of HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment through an educational webinar for the community and a series of media interviews. Nurse practitioner Sean Patrick Riley, MSN, RN, APN, CNL, clinical lead for the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center, shared his perspectives during interviews with 101.5 FM and WMBC-TV (Mountain Broadcasting Corporation).



A Focus on Breast Cancer Awareness

Beyond broader cancer awareness efforts, RWJUH Somerset nurses helped promote breast cancer awareness and encourage mammogram screenings, particularly among women of color. This included outreach at church communities and interacting with hundreds of attendees at the New Jersey Natural Hair and Beauty Expo in Edison. At this event, five RWJUH Somerset nurses helped build trust, convey the importance of early detection and provide mammogram scheduling information.



Safeguarding Hearts for Young Athletes

Cardiac athletic screenings can help detect underlying heart disorders that can trigger sudden cardiac arrest. In 2022, RWJUH Somerset offered free cardiac athletic screenings for 41 athletes ages 14 to 18 in the hospital's Cardiac Diagnostic Testing Department, with one athlete referred to a cardiologist for additional testing. Cardiologists, technicians and ten nurses conducted the screenings, which included a cardiovascular history and physical exam, a blood pressure screening, body metrics, an electrocardiogram and an echocardiogram if indicated. Over the past 13 years, the hospital has provided these screenings for more than 1,100 young athletes.

RWJUH Somerset nurses were also involved in the following outreach activities in 2022:

Jocelyn Accetta, BSN, RN

COVID Vaccine Clinic Volunteer,
RWJUH Somerset

Linnet Angir, BSN, RN, CCRN

Shirley Cuaresma, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Alison Hosler-Koemm, ASN, RN

Patty Kasher, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Patricia Kerwin, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Ann Elise Poiani, BSN, RN

Ceres Reynera, BSN, RN

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

Marybeth Strange, RN

Christine Woolf, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Maria Yavornitski, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Same Day Center Back-to-School
Supply Drive

Nana Akua Asomani, BSN, RN

Volunteer, QFC Manhattan Saved
Youth Church, New York

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

Angela Daly, MSN, RN

Irene Dela Cruz, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Megan Madara, MSN, APN-c

Deborah Myers, BSN, RN, RN-BC,
ACM, CCM, MCG

Marcella O'Herlihy, BSN, RN

Helene Pasteur, BSN, BSPH, RN, FN-LSA

Build - A - Bike® Initiative,
RWJUH Somerset

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

Harvinder Singh, BSN, RN, RNC-MNN

Blood Pressure Screenings, Rehab at
River's Edge Health Fair, Bridgewater

Kimberly Braun, BSN, RN

Urenna Colaie, BSN, RN

Tara Drumgool, BSN, RN, RNC-LRN

Edna Estrada, BSN, RN, CCRN

Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNL

Cynthia Lisk, BSN, RN, CSN-NJ

Conchita Marcara, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Peachie Miranda, BSN, RN

Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC, CPPS

Falguni Patel, BSN, RN

Sophia Viamonte, BSN, RN, IBCLC

Blood Pressure Screenings,
Somerset County 4H Fair, Bridgewater

Sheila Castro, BSN, RN

Elizabeth Villalobos, ASN, RN

Aneta Wnek, ASN, RN

Woan-Hsiang Yeh, BSN, RN, RNFA,
CNOR

Blood Pressure Screenings, Montgomery
Township Employee Health Fair, Skillman

Maria Claude Cethoute-Taghuae, BSN,
RN, IBCLC

Moderator, The Encyclopedia Girls
Book Club, Pottstown

Environmental Education, Hunterdon
County 4H Fair Algae Bloom Project

Volunteer, 5th Annual Delaware River
Clean Up

Anne Marie Chelak, MSN, RN, RNC-OB,
NE-BC

Animal Fostering, Miss Pat's Cat,
East Orange

Tatiana Costa, MSN, RN, RN-BC, OCN

Interactive Games, Somerset
Patriots Copa De La Diversion Night,
SALUD BRG

Kimberly Cromwell-Piniella, BSN,
RN, CBCN, OCN

Breast Cancer Awareness/Breast
Health Education Events,
Bridgewater Commons Mall

Shirley Cuaresma, BSN, RN, RN-BC

Edna Estrada, BSN, RN, CCRN

Welda Joseph, MSN, RN, APN,
A-GNP-C, CDCES

Tenagne Lakew, BSN, RN

Cynthia Lisk, BSN, RN, CSN-NJ

Maria Novoa Besteiro, BSN, RN

Phyllis Owens, BSN, RN

Elizabeth Villalobos, ASN, RN

Blood Pressure/Glucose/Cholesterol
Screenings, RWJUH Somerset

Angela Daly, MSN, RN

Shamia Mickens, BSN, RN, CCM

Attiyyah Muhammad-Callaway, BSN, RN

Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN, NE-BC,
CDP

Simona Schneider, MSN, RN, APN,
ANP-BC, CBEC

Breast Health and Mammogram/Lung
Screening Education, New Jersey Natural
Hair and Beauty Expo, Edison

Katie Edge, BSN, RN, PCCN, CCRN

Lesly Garro, BSN, RN

David Granda Carpio, BSN, RN

Thao Nguyen, BSN, RN, CV-BC

Eshley Pinto, BSN, RN

Cardiac Athletic Screenings,
RWJUH Somerset

Karen Guarino, MSN, RN, RNC-OB,
C-EFM

Save The Animals Volunteer,
North Brunswick

Rosemarie Gungon, BSN, RN

Maria Novoa Besteiro, BSN, RN

Hispanic Health Fair Volunteer, United
Methodist Church, Bound Brook

Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNL

Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN,
NE-BC, CDP

Health Education, Juneteenth
Celebration, North Plainfield

Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNL

Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN,
NE-BC, CDP

Tracy Smith-Tinson, MPA, MHA, BSN,
RN, ACM

Health Education, Franklin Days, Franklin

Karen Jahn, BSN, RN, RN-BCCVN
Cynthia Lisk, BSN, RN, CSN-NJ
Flu Vaccine Clinic Volunteer,
RWJUH Somerset

Karen Jahn, BSN, RN, RN-BCCVN
Theresa Powell, BSN, RN
Blood Pressure Screenings,
Gurudwara Health Fair, Bridgewater

Sunitha John, MSN, RN, CNOR, RM
Volunteer, Steeplechase Distance Run

Welda Joseph, MSN, RN, APN,
A-GNP-C, CDCES
Health Screenings, Jewish Community
Center of Central NJ, Somerset County

Sarah Kish, BSN, RN
Aneta Wnek, ASN, RN
Blood Pressure Screenings, Jewish
Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon &
Warren Counties, Bridgewater

Jennifer Lettieri, BSN, RN, CCRN
Maria Novoa Besteiro, BSN, RN
Laura Smith, BSN, RN, CNRN
Stroke Screenings, Steeplechase
Cancer Center

Cynthia Lisk, BSN, RN, CSN-NJ
Maria Novoa Besteiro, BSN, RN
Phyllis Owens, BSN, RN
Health Screenings, El Poder Sobre la
Diabetes: Alumni, RWJUH Somerset
Family Practice

Megan Madara, MSN, APN-c
Conchita Marcara, BSN, RN, RN-BC
Maria Novoa Besteiro, BSN, RN
Blood Pressure Screenings, Indian
Health Camp, Bridgewater Temple

Pamela Monostra, BSN, RN, RN-BC
Virtual Family Support, Eating
Disorders Support Group

Maria Novoa Besteiro, BSN, RN
Blood Glucose Screenings, National
Walking Day, Bridgewater
Volunteer, Franklin Township
Youth Center Grand Opening

Marcella O'Herlihy, BSN, RN
Joint Replacement Education, Somerset
County Business Partnership Biz Fest
and Wellness Expo, Bridgewater;
Amazon Employee Health Fair, Somerset

Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC, CPPS
Hand Hygiene Education, World Hand
Hygiene Day, Bridgewater Commons
Mall; Youth Wellness Fair, First Baptist
Church of Lincoln Gardens, Somerset;
Montgomery Township Employee
Health Fair, Skillman

Marianna Phelan, BSN, RN
Health Education, Somerset Patriots
Health Night, Bridgewater

Lenore Rubino Rogers, MSN, RN, OCN,
CHPN

Maria Scibilia, BSN, RN, CCRC
Cancer Services Education, Wellness
for Women, RWJUH Somerset

Kerstin Scheper, DNP, RN, RN-BC, OCN,
CHPN

Breast Health Education, Breast Cancer
Community Hub Event, Bridgewater
Commons Mall

Maria Scibilia, BSN, RN, CCRC
Prostate Cancer Screenings,
Steeplechase Cancer Center

Laura Smith, BSN, RN, CNRN
Health Education, Somerset County
Business Partnership Biz Fest and
Wellness Expo, Bridgewater
Stroke Support Group,
Steeplechase Cancer Center

Tracy Smith-Tinson, MPA, MHA,
BSN, RN, ACM

Blood Pressure Screening, Health
Assessments and Education, Mid
State Black Nurses Association of NJ,
Somerset

Blood Pressure Screenings, Health Fair
with Central New Jersey Jack and Jill Inc.,
Highland Park

Patricia Sonsiadek, MSN, RN, ACM, CCD
Religious Instruction,
Our Lady of Peace Church, Fords

Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN

Blood Pressure and Blood Glucose
Screenings, Fiesta in America, East
Rutherford

Sweet Meet and Greet Member
Recruitment/Day of Appreciation,
PNANJ Somerset County Subchapter,
Bridgewater



Sophia Viamonte, BSN, RN, IBCLC
Health Education, Baby Show Expo, Edison
Blood Pressure Screenings/Health Education,
Let's Be Healthy Together Wellness Day, Iron Peak
Sports Complex, Hillsborough

Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP
Board Member, Somerville/Branchburg
Youth Football and Cheer Program





Comprehensive LGBTQ+ Care

The Babs Siperstein PROUD Center at RWJUH Somerset, the first in the state to provide specialized primary care services for the LGBTQ+ community, marked its fifth anniversary in 2022. Through an interdisciplinary team that includes nurses, it now serves more than 1,400 patients to offer medical care, hormone therapy and monitoring, HIV care, health education, counseling and support groups.

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.

Gender Affirmation Surgery Now Available

In 2022, RWJUH Somerset began performing gender affirmation surgery for transgender women, making the hospital one of only two in New Jersey and a handful in the Northeast to perform "bottom surgery." This very complex surgery requires extensive interdisciplinary collaboration that includes nurses, technicians, sterile processing staff, anesthesiologists, surgeons and other team members.

Nurse involvement begins with scheduling, pre-admission testing and validation of medical and psychological evaluations. A nurse patient navigator from the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center is with the patient through every step of their hospital experience. Same Day Surgery nurses prepare patients for surgery and OR nurses prep the OR and assist plastic surgeon Jonathan Keith, MD and urologist/robotic surgeon Nitin Patel, MD, during the six-hour procedure, which uses the da Vinci Robotic-Assisted Surgical System. PACU nurses oversee recovery, and inpatient nurses provide specialized care for patients during a seven-day hospital stay that also includes a second surgical procedure.



A Note of Gratitude

"It's been almost 6 months now [since surgery] and Hannah is a very happy, healthy college student, living as her authentic self and feeling better than ever! Thank you all so much for all that you did for us and all that you continue to do for the entire LGBTQ community."

- Hannah's parents

EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Throughout the process, the team is sensitive to unique needs and provides emotional support for patients and families.

"Just like a flight taking off and landing, every detail is beautifully coordinated," says Sunitha John, MSN, RN, RM, CNOR, director of Perioperative Services. "It's a huge success story for our team and our patients."

In addition to the foundation of knowledge provided by Drs. Keith and Patel, who have performed more than 100 gender affirmation surgeries, preparation included sharing information across other hospital systems to gain insight and perspectives. RWJUH Somerset nurses helped develop protocols to ensure optimal care, and surgical and inpatient nurses were specially trained in the care of gender affirmation surgery patients.

"I had the opportunity to observe gender affirmation surgery at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center and then meet with the RWJUH Somerset nursing team to discuss how best practices could be applied here," says Woan-Hsiang Yeh, BSN, RN, CNOR, RNFA, OR nurse, lead robotics specialist and RN first assistant. "Our

team has worked together to create efficiencies that benefit our patients, which is important since it's a long, complex surgery."

"It's such an honor to be a part of this transformation," says Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN, NE-BC, CDP, nursing director of the Oncology Pavilion, where patients recover after their surgery in private rooms. "We're helping our patients go on to live their best lives."

The OR Nursing team joined in celebrating Drs. Keith and Patel's 100th Gender Affirmation Surgery.



Transitions to Practice Program Expands

Since the pandemic, nursing graduates have faced unique struggles in adjusting to the care environment: many did not have the opportunity to gain hands-on inpatient or acute care experience, and patients are now typically at a higher level of acuity. To better meet their needs, RWJUH Somerset nurses have expanded and extended the New Graduate Program into the Transitions to Practice Program.

The new program is designed for new graduates as well as nurses with less than six months of experience in an inpatient or acute care hospital setting. It features a 12-week unit-based orientation with monthly educational sessions that incorporate more simulation and role-playing opportunities along with Epic documentation sessions. Six cohorts are offered each year, and a strong focus is placed on critical thinking and time management skills. The program provides support throughout the first year and encouragement to become involved in committees and other opportunities that elevate nursing practice. In 2022, 74 nurses were hired and began the program.

“By building more flexibility into our curriculum, we’re better able to meet the changing needs of our workforce,” says Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, director of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research. “Our goal is to give new nurses the support they need, an arena to ask questions, and a strong comfort level to interact confidently with patients and families.”



Transitions to Practice Program participants



Surpassing the Goal for Hand Hygiene

Despite a COVID-19 wave in January 2022 and the “triple-demic” challenges of COVID-19, an early flu season and increased RSV cases later in the year, RWJUH Somerset nurses and staff worked diligently to maintain and improve quality indicators related to infection prevention. In particular, the hospital achieved its goal of greater than 95% hand hygiene compliance.

Since 2017, hand hygiene compliance has held strong above 90%. In 2022, with the help of the Hand Hygiene Task Force and engagement from all staff, RWJUH Somerset achieved a hospital-wide compliance rate of 95.5% and a nursing compliance rate of 96.7%.

“Hand hygiene is one of the simplest things staff can do to protect patients and families, yet it requires a constant focus,” says Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC, CPPS, director of Infection Prevention. “This tremendous performance cements the fact that it’s become part of our culture no matter what challenges come our way.”

Through evidence-based infection prevention measures and continued reinforcement of best practice, the RWJUH Somerset team also achieved these quality indicator improvements:

- The hospital-acquired *Clostridioides difficile* (C. diff) infection rate continued to decrease from 0.51 in 2021 to 0.47 in 2022. Overall, the team has achieved a 37% decrease in this rate since the height of the pandemic.
- Surgical site infection rates for hip and knee replacement remained extremely low at 0.61 and rates for colon procedures decreased by 38% to 2.22.
- Between 2021 and 2022, the possible ventilator-assisted pneumonia (PVAP) rate decreased by 34% from 1.07 to 0.71.

RWJUH Somerset Awards and Recognitions

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



Healthgrades Quality Achievements

In quality ratings announced last fall, RWJUH Somerset received the 2023 Coronary Intervention Excellence Award™ from Healthgrades, ranking in the top 10% of hospitals across the country for cardiology services and among the top 10% of hospitals in the nation for coronary interventional procedures. The hospital was also recognized as being among the top 10% in the nation for GI medical treatment. In addition, RWJUH Somerset earned five-star Healthgrades ratings in coronary interventional procedures; treatment of heart failure, stroke, pneumonia, GI bleed, bowel obstruction, sepsis and diabetic emergencies; cranial neurosurgery; and colorectal surgery.



U.S. News & World Report Ratings

In *U.S. News & World Report's* 2022-2023 Best Hospitals rankings and ratings, RWJUH Somerset was rated “high performing” in the treatment of five procedures and conditions: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, heart failure, kidney failure and stroke. Only 36% of hospitals nationwide earned an award in these rankings, and only 10% to 34% of the hospitals evaluated were rated “high performing” in the specialty, procedure and condition categories.



Best Hospital for Maternity Care

RWJUH Somerset has been recognized by several entities for excellence in maternity care:

- *Money* and The Leapfrog Group ranked RWJUH Somerset as one of the nation's Best Hospitals for Maternity Care, an honor granted to only 259 hospitals (5%) nationwide
- *U.S. News & World Report* also ranked the hospital as one of the nation's best for maternity care, with a “high performing” rating for uncomplicated pregnancies
- Healthgrades awarded RWJUH Somerset 5-star ratings for vaginal and C-section deliveries in its 2022 OB/GYN quality ratings, marking the seventh consecutive year for the 5-star C-section delivery rating and the second consecutive year for the 5-star vaginal delivery rating





Most Wired Recognition

RWJUH Somerset earned the 2022 College of Healthcare Information Management (CHIME) Digital Health Most Wired recognition with a certified level 9 status. As the first RWJBarnabas hospital to go live with the Epic electronic health record system, RWJUH Somerset is a leader in the use of advanced digital health technologies to improve patient safety, promote patient engagement and enhance business functions.



National Recognition for Stroke-Related Care

The American Heart Association awarded RWJUH Somerset its Get With the Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus Award, recognizing the hospital’s commitment to ensuring that stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment following research-based guidelines, which helps save lives and minimize long-term effects. The hospital also received the American Heart Association Target: Type 2 DiabetesSM Honor Roll award for ensuring that patients with type 2 diabetes, who may be at higher risk for stroke complications, receive the most up-to-date, evidence-based care when hospitalized due to stroke.



Joint Commission Accreditations

RWJUH Somerset successfully completed a four-day, unannounced triennial Joint Commission survey in June 2022, with six surveyors confirming high-quality standards across the hospital. In addition to this hospital-wide reaccreditation, the Joint Commission held separate rigorous on-site reviews to reaccredit the following specialty programs:

Acute Myocardial Infarction (MI) Program: Surveyors were impressed with care quality and the engagement of staff in the Cardiac Cath Lab, Emergency Department, ICU and Cardiology Pavilions. They lauded patient education materials and efforts to address health care disparities.

Primary Stroke Center: This one-day survey highlighted the outstanding teamwork of the stroke care staff and their commitment to ensuring that stroke patients receive prompt treatment for the best possible outcomes.

Joint Surgery Program: The hospital was awarded disease-site certification for total hip and total knee replacement surgery. The surveyor was impressed by the enthusiasm of the care team, noticing how they love what they do and enjoy working with each other.

Emergency Department nurses play a key role in caring for stroke and acute MI patients.



Professional Nursing Certifications

Congratulations to the following nurses for achieving certifications in their specialties in 2022:

Anne Marie Chelak, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, NE-BC, Nurse Executive Board Certification

Melissa Frey, BSN, RN, PMH-BC, Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Certification

Welda Joseph, MSN, RN, APN, A-GNP-C, CDCES, Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist

Kerry Myers, ASN, RN, PMH-BC, Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Certification

Sarah Salih, ASN, RN, CCRN, Critical Care Certification

Kaitlyn Stiefel, BSN, RN, CNOR, Certified Perioperative Nurse

Samantha Wagner, BSN, RN, CNOR, Certified Perioperative Nurse

Professional Appointments

Congratulations on these professional appointments:

Ma. Arlene Azores, MSN, RN, RNC-LRN, Board of Directors, Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey (PNANJ); Adjunct Faculty at William Paterson University in Nursing Leadership and Professional Practice

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

Tracy Smith-Tinson, MPA, MHA, BSN, RN, ACM, President of the Mid State Black Nurses Association of New Jersey

Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN, Membership Chair/Assistant Treasurer of the Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey (PNANJ); President of the East Coast Chapter, University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center College of Nursing Alumni Association USA

Educational Achievements

Congratulations to the following nurses who earned degrees in 2022:

BSN Degrees

Hashim Ahmed, BSN, RN, La Salle University

Linnet Angir, BSN, RN, CNOR, Cedar Crest College

Sisir Biswas, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Karen Cherkas, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Elaine DeCarlo, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Lesly Garro, BSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Arlene Holsinger, BSN, RN, Aspen University

Megan Kilkenny, BSN, RN, William Paterson University

Karyn La Canna, BSN, RN, Western Governors University

Gideon Laxamana, BSN, RN, Thomas Edison State University

Joseph Mazzone, BSN, RN, Grand Canyon University

Eshley Pinto, BSN, RN, Rutgers University

MSN Degrees

Ma-Arlene Azores, MSN, RN, RNC-LRNN, William Paterson University

Mariama Bah, MSN, RN, Chamberlain University

Ondrea Hart, MSN, RN, Capella University

Maria Jalandoni, MSN, RN, RN-BC, Grand Canyon University

Sunitha John, MSN, RN, RM, CNOR, University of Phoenix



NEW KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

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.

RENOVATIONS ENGAGE NURSES AND ADVANCE CARE

Eating Disorders Unit Renovations

With the second phase of renovations to the RWJUH Somerset Eating Disorders Unit completed in early 2022, the hospital received approval from the New Jersey Department of Health to move patients into the new inpatient space. Based on interdisciplinary input, the unit features natural-based lighting and aesthetics to create a calming and relaxing environment that promotes healing. Ongoing renovations will expand the number of patient rooms from 14 to 20, create distinct areas for adult and adolescent patients and create a new, state-of-the-art eating disorders outpatient center.

New Diabetes Center Space

The Diabetes Center at RWJUH Somerset recently moved from South Fuld to newly renovated space near the hospital's main lobby. This modern center features amenities such as telehealth capabilities and large-monitor televisions that patients can use to select and view educational content recommended by the team. In addition, Diabetes Center advanced practice registered nurse Welda Joseph, MSN, RN, APN, A-GNP-C, CDCES proposed elements to help ensure patient privacy and safety, including curtain placement for private weighing at the scale area and locked cabinets for sharps.

Planning for a New Outpatient Office Suite

Nurses have been integrally involved in the planning and design of the Steeplechase Cancer Center's new outpatient office suite, set to open in 2023. Their recommendations have included creating a discharge lounge to increase chair utilization and promote patient flow, providing schedule recommendations for additional infusion chairs, selecting the most appropriate stock supplies to decrease waste of expired items, determining the best locations for hand sanitizer stations to ensure hand hygiene, and choosing artwork that promotes a calm, comfortable atmosphere.

Refreshed Critical Care Rooms

In a renovation driven by nurse input, 28 ICU/IMCU patient rooms and several nursing stations were refreshed to provide a brighter, more comfortable space with easier cleaning capability. Four critical care rooms were converted to negative pressure rooms to better accommodate patients requiring isolation and protect staff. In addition, nurses provided recommendations for the design of a Zen room, which now serves as a quiet, calming space for team members to decompress when respite is needed.





Diagnostic Cardiology Renovation

To enhance patient safety, convenience and continuity of care, nurses provided input on the flow and room setup for a new diagnostic cardiology area, now located on 2-North with distinct areas to meet the needs of inpatients and outpatients. The inpatient area features new exam rooms, stress test rooms, and holding bays, and incorporates a nuclear camera within the space. The outpatient area includes new exam rooms, physician space, a conference room and a waiting area.

Innovative Pacemaker Technology

In 2022, RWJUH Somerset began offering its patients the world's smallest pacemakers, the Micra™ VR and Micra™ AV Transcatheter Pacing Systems (TPS). Comparable in size to a large vitamin, Micra is less than one-tenth the size of traditional pacemakers and delivers advanced pacing technology to patients via a minimally invasive approach. Studies have shown a significant reduction in complications with this leadless pacing system compared to traditional transvenous single chamber pacemakers.

Rather than creating a surgical pocket in the chest to place the device and connecting leads to the

heart, Micra is passed through a vein in the groin to the heart and attached with small wires. Nurses and other members of the cardiology and surgical teams received hands-on training in the use and insertion of the device.

“In addition to caring for patients with these new pacemakers, our nurses scrub in to aid surgeons in the implant procedure and ensure best practice and appropriate documentation throughout the process,” says Kathleen Edge, BSN, RN, CCRN, PCCN, director of Cardiovascular Services. “We’re proud to provide our patients with access to the latest innovations in cardiology treatment.”

A Pilot Site for High-Tech Rounding

RWJUH Somerset is piloting advanced web-based technology that offers nursing directors and the Patient Experience team the ability to track and trend daily rounding and patient feedback in real time. Accessed via an app on a work cell phone or unit iPad, the technology is designed to further engage staff, increase process efficiency and enhance the patient experience.

Through a secure patient feed from the Epic electronic health record, the app provides tools and checklists for prompting effective conversations, ensuring that patients understand their care plan and medications, tracking how actions influence outcomes and providing opportunities to recognize staff and obtain feedback.

“This technology empowers nurses and Patient Experience staff to be proactive in anticipating needs,” explains Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN, chief nursing officer and vice president of nursing. “It facilitates actionable feedback that can be used to address any issue right away, rather than hearing about it in a patient survey at a later date.”

Nurses from our Cardiac Catheterization Lab





Epic Improves Chemotherapy Ordering

The implementation of the Epic electronic health record across RWJUH Somerset has helped ensure a safe platform for delivering chemotherapy services to patients at the Steeplechase Cancer Center by improving communication and incorporating measures to prevent errors.

Chemotherapy orders are now selected from pre-built evidence-based treatment plans that are reviewed by providers and pharmacists. Nurses take part in the initial review of chemotherapy orders prior to the patient's arrival. They can validate the entered protocol and selected orders against the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) protocol and view a synopsis of treatments to verify when prior medications were administered. The system also builds in a safety measure that allows chemotherapy orders to be released only on the day designated for treatment. The new system fosters a culture of patient safety while promoting communication among nurses, pharmacists and physicians.

"Our nurses are involved in every aspect of the workflow," says Kerstin Scheper, DNP, RN, RN-BC, OCN, CHPN, interim assistant vice president of Oncology Services. "This includes participating in initial review and serving as the final checkpoint to ensure that patients are receiving the appropriate chemo orders and the safest, most effective care."

Expanding Simulation Opportunities for Nurses

A strategic goal of the Center for Professional Development, Innovation and Research (CPDIR)

is to integrate more simulation opportunities in competency assessments so that nurses can become more proficient and confident in their roles. This nurse-driven objective led to the hiring of trained Laerdal expert and mobile intensive care paramedic Kevin Kurzweil as director of simulation at RWJUH Somerset.

Kurzweil, who has collaborated with RWJUH Somerset in the past, conducted a mock code at the hospital in November and is available to set up simulation and role-playing scenarios specific to the needs of individual nurses. Plans are also underway to develop a Simulation Center at RWJUH Somerset.

"In nursing, we need to be proficient at even the smallest things, and now we can dig in deeper on many levels - from the use of high-fidelity mannequins to head-to-toe assessments," says Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, director of CPDIR. "Having someone with this level of expertise who can design interactive scenarios around our needs is already making a growing impact."



Research at All Levels

From planning and initial data collection to analysis and submission for publication, research involving nurses is continually evolving at all stages of the process at RWJUH Somerset. Some research highlights in 2022 included the following:

Exploring the Impact of Boxed Breathing on Anxiety and Pain in Total Hip Replacement (THR) and Total Knee Replacement (TKR) Patients on the Orthopedic Unit

Matthew Salvent, BSN, RN, Orthopedic Unit
Emily Althamer, MSN, RN, RN-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator
Jazmin Cruz, MSN, RN, RN-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator
Angela Daly, MSN, RN, Director of Orthopedic Unit
Kimberly Braun, BSN, RN, Orthopedic Unit
Marcella O'Herlihy, BSN, RN, Joint Coordinator
Helene Pasteur, BSPH, BSN, RN, FN-CSA, Orthopedic Unit
Cesar Torres, CCT, Orthopedic Unit
Jezlyn Jimenez, CCT, Orthopedic Unit
Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, Director of CPDIR

In an initiative proposed by clinical nurse Matthew Salvent, BSN, RN, an application was submitted to the IRB in 2022 for this research study, with data collection to begin in 2023. Based on positive feedback from a small subset of patients in a pilot study conducted on the Orthopedic Unit, this formalized study will examine whether incorporating boxed breathing into care routines helps decrease anxiety and pain while improving well-being among patients.

Exploring the Impact of Expanded Nurse Manager Coverage on Job Satisfaction for Nurses and their Perception of Leader Support and Engagement

Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, Director of CPDIR
Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN, Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer
Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC, Assistant Vice President, Nursing Administration
Tatiana Costa, MSN, RN, RN-BC, OCN, Clinical Nurse Educator
Jazmin Cruz, MSN, RN, RN-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator
Ryan Norman, MI, AHIP, Medical Librarian
Oriana St. George, MSN, RN, RN-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator

Initiated in 2022, this research study is in the data collection phase. Because leaders help shape the professional practice environment to empower nurses, provide support and ensure safe, effective patient care, this study's hypothesis is that adding night shift nurse managers to the medical-surgical units will improve reported job satisfaction and perceptions of quality patient care for staff nurses.

Exploring Coping Strategies Used by Registered Nurses Working in a Community Medical Center During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP, Director of CPDIR
Oriana St. George, MSN, RN, RN-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator
Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN, Clinical Nurse Educator
Kimberly Bates, BSN, RN, CCRN-CMC, Clinical Nurse Educator
Maria de Roma-Ragaza, MSN, RN, CNOR, Clinical Nurse Educator
Anita Ramen, BSN, RN, Clinical Nurse Educator
Kaitlyn Kwasnik, BSN, RN, RN-BC, Clinical Nurse Educator

Initiated in 2021, this research study is now in the data analysis phase. As part of efforts to create and maintain a healthy workforce, this study is designed to offer a far-reaching understanding into coping strategies used by frontline nurses during the pandemic. Data will be used to enhance or create new strategies that focus on providing care in stressful situations.



RWJUH Somerset Nurses Disseminate New Knowledge in 2022

Nursing Research Studies

Staff	Title of Study
Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP (principal investigator) Oriana St. George, MSN, RN, RN-BC Nellie Sun, MSN, RN, CEN Kimberly Bates, BSN, RN, CCRN-CMC Maria de Roma- Ragaza, MSN, RN, CNOR Anita Ramen, BSN, RN Kaitlyn Kwasnik, BSN, RN, RN-BC	Exploring Coping Strategies Used by Registered Nurses Working in a Community Medical Center During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP (principal investigator) Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC Tatiana Costa, MSN, RN, RN-BC, OCN Jazmin Cruz, MSN, RN, RN-BC Ryan Norman, MI, AHIP Oriana St. George, MSN, RN, RN-BC	Exploring the Impact of Expanded Nurse Manager Coverage on Job Satisfaction for Nurses and their Perception of Leader Support and Engagement

Internal Poster Presentations

Staff	Title of Presentation	Venue
Emily Baez, MSN, RN, APN, AGNP	Dobhoff Insertion	RWJUH Somerset Advanced Practice Provider Skills Day
Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP	Sickle Cell: It's All in the Blood	RWJUH Somerset Nursing Education Council
Shankari Ravichandran, DNP, RN, APN, ANP-C	Rhino Rocket Insertion	RWJUH Somerset Advanced Practice Provider Skills Day

Internal Podium/Virtual Presentations

Staff	Title of Presentation	Venue
Sheryl Ciccarelli, MSN, RN, APN, ANP-BC	Palliative Care and End of Life	RWJUH Somerset Virtual Grand Rounds; Advanced Practice Provider Skills Lab
	Epic Education on Palliative Care	RWJUH Somerset Medical Staff Presentation
Corinne Gregor, BSN, RN, CNOR	OR Hazards	RWJUH Somerset Operating Room
Tina Horton, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN, NE-BC	Sickle Cell: It's All in the Blood	RWJUH Somerset Grand Rounds
Sean Patrick Riley, MSN, RN, APN, CNL	World AIDS Day	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar

External Poster Presentations		
Staff	Title of Presentation	Venue
Wilma Aquino, MSN, RN, CPAN	IV Certification of Emergency Department Technician	RWJBarnabas Health Quality Fair, Pines Manor, Edison

External Podium/Virtual Presentations		
Staff	Title of Presentation	Venue
Kathy Easter, MSN, RN, CCRN-K	Closing the Gap: First Steps in Developing a Nursing Educational Needs Assessment	Magnet4Europe Conference, County Cork, Ireland
	How Magnet4Europe Has Highlighted the Benefits of Strengthening the Bonds Between the International Family of Nursing	Magnet4Europe Learning Collaborative Virtual Presentation
Jennifer Lettieri, BSN, RN, CCRN	Wellness for Women RWJUH Somerset Panel Discussion	Women's Health Conference, Bridgewater Women's Club
Lauren Michaels, BSN, RN, CCRN	The Gift of Life: Organ Donation	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar
Attiyyah Muhammad-Callaway, BSN, RN	Breast Health	Make Time for Mammography Virtual Presentation
Marcella O'Herlihy, BSN, RN	Replacement Surgery: A Mobile Approach to Joint Health	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar
	Aromatherapy: The Sweet Smell of Joint Pain Relief	Senior Center Group, Somerville Elks Lodge
	Musculoskeletal Aches & Pains? Replace Discomfort with Relief	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Presentation
	Joint Health Program	Quail Brook Senior Center, Somerset
Marilyn Omabegho, MSN, RN, NE-BC, CDP	Falls Prevention Education	Warrenbrook Senior Center
Sharon Parrillo, BSN, RN, CIC, CPPS	COVID Causes Cognitive Confusion?	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar
Sean Patrick Riley, MSN, RN, APN, CNL	LGBTQIA+ Healthcare	Boonton PRIDE Virtual Presentation
	Monkeypox	NJ Society of Medical Assistants Virtual Presentation
	PrEP/Monkeybox STI Prevention	JP Morgan Chase Worldwide Virtual Presentation

External Podium/Virtual Presentations <i>(continued)</i>		
Staff	Title of Presentation	Venue
Melissa Rivers-Richardson, DNP, APN, RN, FNP-BC	Building Trust with Your Healthcare Provider	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar
Kerstin Scheper, DNP, RN, RN-BC, OCN, CHPN	COPD and Cancer: At the Top of One's Lungs	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar
Laura Smith, BSN, RN, CNRN	Different Strokes for Different Folks	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar
	Wellness for Women RWJUH Somerset Panel Discussion	Women's Health Conference, Bridgewater Women's Club
Sophia Viamonte, BSN, RN, IBCLC	Positive Pandemic Pregnancies	RWJUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar for National Maternal Health Awareness Day
	Breastfeeding Basics & Benefits	RWUH Somerset Community Health Education Webinar



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