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2020

Nursing Annual Report

Robert Wood Johnson
University Hospital
Rahway

RWJ Barnabas
HEALTH

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Message from our President and Chief Executive Officer

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a cruel teacher, pointing out the weaknesses and vulnerabilities in healthcare systems across the country. But it has also pointed out many strengths. And one of the biggest strengths at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Rahway is our nursing staff, which demonstrates teamwork, creativity and courage each day.

Our campus includes an acute care community hospital, a 24-bed rehabilitation hospital operated by Alaris Health and a long-term acute care hospital, operated by Kindred Hospital for medically fragile patients. All of these hospitals – and their nursing teams – have played important roles in the care and treatment of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RWJUH Rahway began receiving patients with COVID-19 in mid-March of last year. In a matter of weeks, the flow of acutely ill patients was relentless. Patients would walk into the Emergency Department and their condition would deteriorate in a few hours, sending them to Critical Care.

Within weeks, we were at 110% capacity with every floor occupied with COVID-19 patients. Information came flooding in, and at times it was confusing and contradictory. Staff faced shortages of critical supplies. Yet through it all, our nursing team was able to respond to the physical and emotional needs of our patients and discharge them. Care Connection, the rehabilitation hospital, transitioned to a COVID-19 rehabilitation hospital, helping recovering patients regain strength and stamina, and Kindred Hospital cared for COVID patients who remained acutely ill over the long term.

The surge brought new challenges as the hospital sought to ensure adequate staffing, personal protective equipment (PPE), testing equipment

and medications.

Having enough oxygen was a constant worry. Many of our nurses stayed in local hotels to ensure they were able to staff their shifts and protect their families.

Nurses and staff re-deployed from various closed departments volunteered to distribute PPE to the floors and help connect patients with their families. They used FaceTime, iPads, a special language line phone and even paper signs in the windows to signal families that their loved ones were sending love. Nurses spent time with COVID-19 patients, meeting their needs and getting to know them.

The stress of caring for the very sick while also dealing with personal challenges was mentally and physically exhausting. Staff held the hands of dying patients to ensure they were not alone. Some of our own nursing staff fell ill with COVID-19, with some losing family members. Yet throughout it all, our nurses were courageous and resilient. And we are thankful to our community for serving a true source of support and being extremely generous in providing meals, goody bags, PPE, and cards.

We are incredibly proud of our nursing staff, whose strength and courage continue to inspire us all.

Sincerely,



Kirk Tice
President and Chief Executive Officer



Message from our Chief Nursing Officer

While this report focuses on nursing accomplishments in 2020, there's a broader theme that emerges when we look back on this difficult year. When healthcare professionals pull together, share resources and best practices, and communicate with respect and compassion, amazing things happen.

Collaboration helped get us through the toughest times. As nurses convened their voices with disciplines from across the organization, we were able to solve problems and drive innovations to address staffing, patient care and sourcing issues. Even when supplies were tight, we did not run out of protective equipment thanks to the creative and judicious management of resources. Additional patient care areas were opened, and nurses and staff willingly floated and created new care teams to meet the increased volume of patients. As we learned about the care of COVID 19 patients, care plans were developed and refined to ensure that the most up-to-date treatment paths were in place.

Our nursing practice, workflow and landscape was dynamic and fluid. Nurses and other re-deployed healthcare staff cared for and comforted patients and each other. During a time of no visitation, our nursing team provided emotional support to patients and families alike. In many cases, nurses had the difficult task of helping families say goodbye to their loved ones by phone and video conference. From the bedside of patients with COVID-19, they also facilitated connections with other caregivers.

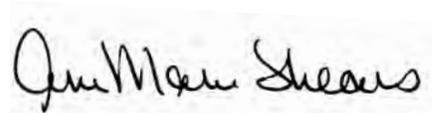
In addition to my official title at RWJUH Rahway, I served as chief reassurance officer, reminding staff that despite what we didn't know, there was a lot we did know. Our team has skills to treat critically ill patients and the will to forge ahead in researching the latest options. Together, we

were able to solve the problems that were hurled at us because we had the ability, the skills, the heart and the will to provide the best care for our patients.

When the vaccines rolled out, teamwork was our mantra as we created our community vaccination clinic. Nursing, pharmacy, plant services, registration and admitting pulled together to create a safe, seamless vaccine clinic that served hundreds of people, including many healthcare professionals. Nurses, pharmacists and members of our staff are still working in the community to encourage and facilitate vaccination.

The pandemic has shown us many lessons, but we've always known its most enduring one: the importance of teamwork in supporting each other and coming through for our community – just as they did for us throughout one of the most challenging years we've ever faced.

Sincerely,



Ann Marie Shears, MA, RN, NE-BC
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President
of Patient Care Services



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NURSING LEADERSHIP



**Ann Marie Shears, MA,
RN, NE-BC**
*Chief Nursing Officer and
Vice President of Patient
Care Services*



**Deborah Gandy, MSN,
MSA, RN, CPHQ**
*Vice President of
Clinical Effectiveness*



Eric Kleinert, BSN, RN
*Administration Director
of Nursing Operations*



Helen Peare, BSN, RN
*Director of Ambulatory
Cardiac Services*



Victor Sanotsky, MS, RN
Director of Perioperative Services



**Randolph Haywood, Jr., DNP,
MSN, RN**
Director of Education and Research



**Mary Muiyk, MBA, BSN,
RN, CCM**
*Director of Medical Management
Case Management &
Social Services*



**Jennifer Brown, MSN,
MPA, RN**
*Magnet Program Manager &
Nursing Practice Outcomes*



**Christine Meo, MSN,
APN, RN-BC**
*Nurse Manager
Medical Unit - 2A*



**Courtney Kovacs, BSN,
RN-C**
*Nurse Manager
Medical Unit - 2E*



Sandra Sanford, BSN, RN
*Nurse Manager Telemetry
Unit - 3C*



Rose Caleen, BA, RN-C
*Nurse Manager
Medical Surgical Unit - 3E*



**Debra Toth, MSN, RN,
CCRN**
*Nurse Manager
Critical Care Unit*



Karen Vargas, BSN, RN
*ED Nurse Manager
Emergency Department*



**Dawn Schanz, MSN, RN,
GNP, CNOR**
Perioperative Nurse Manager



**Marlene Baldinger, RN,
CPHQ, CPHRN, ARM**
Risk Manager

What is a Nursing Professional Practice Model (PPM)?

Professional Practice Models provide a visual representation of nursing's contribution in an organization. Developed by RWJUH Rahway nurses, our model includes values and goals that define the professional nursing identity. It captures the professional elements and relationships that define the complex role of the nurse.

The RWJUH Rahway Nursing Professional Practice Model

The patient and family encompassed by healing hands serve as the anchor for our model. Encircling our center are words that represent our care delivery system, patient-centered care. This model supports the framework of professional nurses in their everyday practice through leadership, collaboration, best practice and professional growth. It fosters the importance of superior patient care and unifies nursing practice and lifelong learning. These elements align with our organizational goals, mission and values.



Nursing Mission

To provide exceptional care and improve the health of our community with excellence in quality, service and access through compassionate care, education and community service.

Nursing Vision

Continuously strive for excellence in clinical quality, safety and service. Consistently provide patient-focused care in a family-oriented environment. We work to be trusted by patients, a valued partner in the community, and creators of positive change.

Nursing Values

Safety - We are committed to delivering our services in a safe environment that protects patients, staff and visitors by promoting high reliability behaviors.

Quality - We are committed to excellence, which is characterized by high performance, innovation, stewardship of resources, teamwork and regular evaluation service outcomes.

Collaboration - We trust our colleagues and physicians as valuable members of our healthcare team and pledge to treat one another with respect.

Dignity and Respect - We strive to meet the healthcare needs of the patients and families who reside or work within our community by affirming the unique and intrinsic work and treat all those we serve with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect, recognizing confidentiality and patient rights in our daily practice.

2020: The Year of the Nurse

Well before the global pandemic affected the normalcy of everyday life, the WHO designated 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. This dedication was to celebrate essential healthcare professionals and bring to light the challenges often deep-rooted in the profession.

This dedication took on special significance as the pandemic began to manifest throughout the globe.

As COVID-19 affected people and the healthcare system, nurses found themselves in uncharted waters fighting to save lives from an unseen enemy. Our nurses joined the front lines of this battle against an unknown, terribly contagious and often deadly disease. Our nursing team frequently struggled with long working hours besides familiar and unfamiliar faces, with evolving guidance on how to care for patients with the virus.

Several nurses slept in isolation from their families for days which turned into weeks and months in nearby or separate lodging, seeking to protect their loved ones from this insidious virus. Collectively, nursing faced struggles and heartache with the loss of lives they worked so hard to save as well as the loss of colleagues and family members.

Through the emotional turbulence, the physical toll and the unknown, RWJUH Rahway nurses arrived every single day with masks up and gowns on to ensure that patients were safe and cared for, all the while tending to each other. Nurses are truly essential and became known to the world as healthcare heroes; yet for nurses, it was just another part of being a nurse.

This 2020 Nursing Annual Report salutes and highlights the remarkable and innovative practices our resilient healthcare professionals and unsung heroes yielded during this unforgiving pandemic.

In celebration of the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, consider these WHO statistics:

- Nurses and midwives account for nearly 50% of the global health workforce.
- For all countries to reach Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well-being, WHO estimates the world will need an additional 9 million nurses and midwives by the year 2030.
- Nurses play a critical role in health promotion, disease prevention and the delivery of primary and community care.
- Nurses provide care in emergency settings and will be crucial in the achievement of universal health coverage.
- Investing in nurses and midwives is a good value. The report of the UN High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth concluded that investments in education and job creation in the health and social sectors result in a triple return of improved health outcomes, global health security and inclusive economic growth.

Source: aonl.org/2020-year-nurse-and-midwife



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

At RWJUH Rahway, nurses at all levels and in all roles serve as transformational leaders. Through their vision, influence, clinical knowledge and strong expertise, they motivate and inspire others to take ownership for their roles, embrace the organization’s vision and foster positive change. They have a unique ability to act as catalysts for change in nursing care practice.

Linking Patients and Families During the Pandemic

As it became evident that the COVID-19 pandemic was going to take its toll on the healthcare system and transform its daily operations, three simple words with a significant impact were “no visitors allowed.” Patients were isolated behind closed doors and family members were far removed. Nurses were disconnected from sources that helped validate patient history and care. In addition, family involvement proved to be a missing component from the patient’s plan of care and education.

On March 17, Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN, Magnet Program Manager, and Ann Marie Shears, MA, RN, NE-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Patient Services, discussed using technology to link patients and families. Mary Jackson, Director of Patient Experience, spearheaded the Patient Family Liaison Communication Team. In tandem with the RWJUH Rahway nursing mission and professional practice model, Mary and Jennifer developed its purpose and operations utilizing re-deployed employees from various departments, including Cardiac Services, Perioperative Services and Physical Therapy.

This initiative served as a bridge for patients and families, re-establishing valuable communication. Nurses held mobile video devices to reunite patients and families in times of joy and to establish important connections in times of sorrow and loss. Some nurses used their personal phones to help connect patients and families that did not have technological capabilities.

RWJUH Rahway recognizes the crucial and pivotal role that our nurses and staff had during these unprecedented times.

Patient Liaisons	Re-Deployed Units
Myrda Barcelona, BSN, RN, Perioperative Services	Backup Coverage
Karen Bingham, RN, Cardiac Services	CCU
Judy Brownstone, BSN, RN, Perioperative Services	ED
Denise Cherepanya, RN, Cardiac Services	3C
Dmitry Eremtchouk, RN, Perioperative Services	3A
Victoria Hourihan, BSN, RN, Perioperative Services	2E
Joanne King, RN, Perioperative Services	Weekend Coverage - 2C
Sue Lasko, BSN, RN-BC, Cardiac Services	CCU
Nataliya Lizanets, BSN, RN, CNOR, Perioperative Services	2A
Carol O'Donnell, RN, Perioperative Services	ED
Kim Polimeni, MSPT, DPT, Physical Therapy	2C
Donna Rogilieri, RN, Perioperative Services	Weekend Coverage - 3A, 3C
Lois Sancho, BSN, RN, CCRN, Perioperative Services	Backup Coverage
Dawn Spinello, RN, Perioperative Services	Weekend Coverage - ED, 2E, 2A



Reflections from Re-Assigned Nurses

As COVID-19 forced the world to shut down, elective and ambulatory services came to a halt. Several nurses from these areas were re-assigned to other roles, such as serving as a contact point for patient and families, managing personal protective equipment (PPE) and acting as support runners for the unit. RWJUH Rahway is honored to share stories from their experiences.



Sue Lasko BSN, RN-BC

"Being reassigned to the ICU was, to be quite honest, terrifying...at least initially. I haven't worked in the ICU for more than 20 years, and I felt woefully inadequate. The physical unit itself was so familiar to me and, at the same time, completely foreign. The bells, the alarms, the monitors, the beds, the med room and the utility rooms were all so different from my ICU days. I felt that I would be in the way, asking too many questions, trying to find my way as the more experienced and highly skilled staff were trying desperately to save lives. It was comforting that so many of the ICU faces belonged to nurses that I have known for many years in the hospital. While my colleagues (dressed head to toe in PPE) administered and carefully titrated lifesaving medications through a myriad of IV lines, while they managed ventilators and cleared airways, while they coordinated care with physicians and dialysis services, while they repositioned patients and treated their wounds, while they carefully inserted NG tubes, while they monitored every breath, every BP, and every heart beat...while they did all of this and so much more, I was given an iPad."

- Sue Lasko, BSN, RN-BC



Myrda Barcelona, BSN, RN of Endoscopy

"Leaving the safety of the OR/Endo and working with other staff to care for patients with COVID-19 was a constant source of fear during those days. Just like everyone, I feared for my life as well as the lives of my family and friends. That fear got me worried that I would not be able to care for my patients to the best of my ability, but fortunately, I overcame this and was able to perform the tasks assigned to me. I was able to work with my friends in the ICU and met new people in the Emergency Department. Everyone worked well together from Administration down to other disciplines, and it made the experience bearable. Now, we are slowly going back to the swing of things, still learning the ropes here and there, but we emerged as winners in the fight against the disease."

- Myrda Barcelona, BSN, RN



Heasun Lee, BSN, RN of Endoscopy

"I want to thank all of Rahway heroes. While Endoscopy outpatient services were closed due to COVID-19, I was working in the ER, where I used to work long time ago. Everyone was wonderful and courageous. They welcomed me and expressed how valuable my role was to them. I felt like I was back to my roots and back home. Because of our hard work and cooperation together, we will win this battle."

- Heasun Lee, BSN, RN



Nataliya Lizanets, BSN, RN, CNOR of Operating Room

"Every day I would go from room to room to help sick patients contact their families, making sure that their phones were charged and they knew their family's phone numbers. I became very familiar with patients and their families - from their names to their routines and even what their kitchens looked like. Although I was geared up in PPE from head to toe, the patients got to know me as well. I was called 'the lady with a video phone,' 'best therapy ever' and 'an angel in a mask.' Sometimes the FaceTime calls were happy and cheerful and we would have a 'fiesta' in the room with family members while music was playing. Sometimes it would be a quiet call with no words and I would sit in the corner and wait until they were done, or I would step out of the room to provide more privacy. Birthdays and final goodbyes were done via FaceTime as well, and the last rites and prayers with the family for deceased patients were the most difficult. However, many times families had the opportunity to say, 'I love you' and 'keep fighting; we are waiting for you at home,' which was a source of encouragement for patients. During my re-deployment I was able to sharpen my bedside skills and be an integral member of the COVID-19 team. As a patient liaison, I had the opportunity to connect patients with their families during this difficult time. It truly was an experience I will never forget."

- Nataliya Lizanets, BSN, RN, CNOR



“To be self-compassionate is not to be self-indulgent or self-centered. A major component of self-compassion is to be kind to yourself. Treat yourself with love, care and dignity and make your well-being a priority. With self-compassion, we still hold ourselves accountable professionally and personally, but there are no toxic emotions inflicted upon and towards ourselves.”

– Christopher Dines, mindfulness teacher/author

Providing Peer Support for Nurses

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant emotional effects on frontline healthcare workers. The American Medical Association (AMA) acknowledges that the emotional effects of this type of crisis can have long-standing consequences for frontline healthcare workers and organizations. Organizational support can directly affect how frontline healthcare workers cope with and recover from the stress of the crisis. The AMA suggests the use of unit debriefs as one way for organizations to acknowledge and care for the psychosocial and mental health needs of their staff.

In 2020, Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN, Magnet Program Manager and Critical Care nurse Martha Mackay, MSN, RN, CCRN collaborated with Psychiatric Services to bring debriefing sessions to each unit as well as pet therapy sessions to the hospital. The initiative, known as Nurses Helping Nurses, focused on ways to help RWJUH Rahway nurses deal with the impact of COVID-19 emotionally and mentally. A survey of nurses conducted during these activities empowered them to provide feedback on what resilience activities were most beneficial. The results yielded continued debriefings, pet therapy and a zen room.



PPE Command Center Ensures Safety and Sustainability

To address challenges related to PPE availability, supply and delivery, RWJUH Rahway nursing leadership proactively created a PPE Command Center at the start of the pandemic. Victor Sanotsky, MA, RN, Director of Perioperative Services, and Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN, Magnet Program Manager, collaborated on an effective plan to store and deliver PPE to units and employees. Under strict scrutiny, every item was counted to ensure a sustainable supply of PPE. Victor and Jennifer worked closely with Cathy Eggert, Director of Supply Chain, to ensure adequate PPE supply levels throughout the crisis.

In addition, they collaborated with Bill Kelly, Director of Engineering and Construction, on appropriate PPE storage and with Peter Bolofof, BSN, CRCST, Manager Sterile Processing Department/OR Supplies, on stocking items in the PPE Command Center. Infection Prevention Manager Emma Kariuki, BSN, RN, CIC played an integral role in educating team members on the reuse and reprocessing of single-use PPE. To help avoid furlough of nurses and other staff, Victor and Jennifer developed an assigned schedule to manage the PPE Command Center utilizing re-deployed team members from various clinical departments. Overall, this collaborative initiative helped ensure the safety and protection of staff and patients throughout the hospital.

Nurse-Led Advocacy Against Workplace Violence

ID badges are required for every employee and must be worn at all times when inside the organization. An item so small can provide so much personal information. In today's world, information like an address or phone number is obtainable by the click of few buttons. Understanding this issue, Emergency Department Nurse Manager Karen Vargas, BSN, RN and Emergency Department nurses have been instrumental in advocating for safety against nursing violence, which in turn has helped better protect all employees of the organization.

ID badge security and safety concerns were brought to the attention of Director of Human Resources Sheila Buthe, SPHR. Nurse advocacy led to a redesign of ID badges to protect employees by updating employee pictures and limiting the visibility of last names. The redesign included larger fonts for first names and job titles for easier readability for patients and families. In addition, a bar code feature made time clock swiping easier while eliminating biometric scanning and reducing infection contamination.



Emergency Department Nurses from left to right Domenica Loffreno, RN, Matthew Kearns, RN, Samantha Lamsis, RN, and Mariel Loaiza, RN.

“To do what nobody else will do, in a way that nobody else can, in spite of all we go through, is to be a nurse.”

—Rawsy Williams, JD, BSN, RN, PhD

STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT

Structural empowerment promotes staff involvement in organizational structures that result in an empowered nursing professional practice. It increases nurse autonomy, promoting the highest levels of clinical excellence and professional practice. At RWJUH Rahway, nurses are supported and encouraged to continue professional development and promote positive change through collaborative partnerships. Recognition and acknowledgment of nursing contributions are celebrated throughout RWJUH Rahway.

Shared Governance at RWJUH Rahway

RWJUH Rahway nursing continues its vision for Magnet designation. Shared governance promotes professional practice environments while empowering nurses to help make decisions affecting themselves, their colleagues and their patients. Participation in shared decision-making has shown to be so important that hospitals seeking Magnet designation must demonstrate effective structures of shared governance.

Tim Porter-O'Grady, the pioneer of shared governance, defines it as a professional practice model founded on the cornerstone principles of partnership, equity, accountability and ownership that form a culturally sensitive and empowering framework, enabling sustainable and accountability-based decisions to support an interdisciplinary design for excellent patient care.

To promote shared governance, nursing supports and encourages clinical nurses to participate in committees at the unit, hospital and system levels. At RWJUH Rahway, these committees include the following.

Hospital Council/ Committee	Purpose	Elected Chair(s)	Facilitator
SCM End User Council	Integrates nursing practice and technology	Adrianna Zamora, BSN, RN	Kachi Festus, BSN, RN
Patient Family Education	Charged to prepare patients, families and caregivers for self-care and management after discharge	Judi Ervin, RN- BC	Mary Beth Puschak, MEd, RD
Professional Nursing Practice Council	Serves as a coordinating and information-sharing forum for all individual unit-based committees to ensure unit goals are in alignment with the nursing and organizational strategic plans and goals	Inga Schwarz, MSN, RN, CNL William Toth, BSN, RN	Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN
Skin and Wound Committee	Provides staff education for the reduction of skin and wound issues for better patient outcomes	Paula Mattis, RN, WCC	Paula Mattis, RN, WCC
Safe Patient Handling Committee	Ensures patient transfer/lifting is done safely and appropriately to protect both employees and patients from injury	Kristy O'Connor, BSN, RN	Ann Marie Shears, MA, RN, NE-BC
Safety Coaches	Upholds our culture as a High Reliability Organization		Jennifer Davila

Professional Nursing Practice Council Initiatives

In 2020, the Professional Nursing Practice Council (PNPC) spearheaded many initiatives impacting nursing practice, including accomplishing the following.

- Created a midline policy to reduce CLABSI
- Developed a DrFirst tool for home medication reconciliation to assist with accuracy and medication safety
- Added a spiritual channel for patients
- Aligned IV policy and procedures with evidence-based practice
- Collaborated with the Pharmacy to adjust delivery times for on-time medication administration

In addition, six PNPC members climbed the clinical ladder in 2020.

SCM End User Council Initiatives

Clinical nurse members of this council continued to enhance and support nursing practice through practical integration and workflow in Sunrise Clinical Management (SCM), our electronic medical record (EMR). 2020 accomplishments include:

- Added targeted Cath Lab pre/post instructions as identified and created by Doreen Miller, BSN, RN
- Enhanced the stroke dysphagia screening to alert nurses of the “pass/fail/deferred” prompt on the EMR before oral medications are given
- Adopted the National Institute of Health Stroke Scale for evidence-based care and incorporated the NIH Stroke Scale flowsheet into the EMR
- Incorporated COVID-19 vaccine screening questions upon admission for staff and patient safety
- Incorporated the Confusion Assessment Method, an evidence-based tool that enables non-psychiatry trained clinicians to identify and recognize delirium quickly and accurately for prompt intervention
- Added documentation for “turn and reposition” every two hours to reduce pressure injuries

Unit-Based Committees

Unit-Based Committees (UBCs) are led by clinical nurses. UBC meetings focus on addressing unit issues and concerns and creating change within nursing practice for better outcomes.

Unit-Based Committee	Elected Chair(s)
2A	Adrianna Zamora, BSN, RN Robin Del Rosario, BSN, RN
2E	William Toth, BSN, RN Samira Castro, BSN, RN-BC
3C	Revelyn Bulaon-Briones, BSN, RN Jessica Ojibara, BSN, RN
3E	Razel Abuan, BSN, RN Theresa Gorringer, BSN, RN
CCU	Martha Mackay, MSN, RN, CNL Inga Schwartz, MSN, RN, CNL
ED	Eileen Parks, MSN, RN-BC
Perioperative Services	Marlene Gamo, BSN, RN, CCRN
Cardiac Services	Rose Tarantino, BSN, RN Doreen Miller, BSN, RN

Nurse Safety Coaches

At RWJUH Rahway, safety coaches uphold our culture as a high reliability organization.

Nurse Safety Coach	Department
Simone Anckle, RN	2E
Denise Cherepanya, RN	Stress Testing
Jennifer Davila, RN	Quality
Maureen Disch, RN	Interventional Radiology
Judith Ervin, RN	Case Management
Beverly Focht, RN	OR
Marlene Gamo, RN	PACU
Patrick McNamara, RN	2E
Denise McTonic, RN	CCU
Blazena Ondrusova, RN	2A
Vidheeben Patel, RN	CCU
Sheela Thomas, RN	2A

Nursing Excellence Awards

These peer-nominated awards are based on the Magnet principles of transformational leadership, structural empowerment, exemplary professional practice and new knowledge, innovations and improvements.



Transformational Leadership Award

Transformational leaders transform their organization's values, beliefs and behaviors. This requires vision, influence, clinical knowledge and strong expertise. Transformational leaders motivate and inspire others to take ownership for their roles, embrace the organization's vision and foster positive change.



2020 Awardee: Eric Kleinert, BSN, RN

Eric Kleinert, BSN, RN, Director of Nursing Operations, received the 2020 Transformational Leadership Award for demonstrating advocacy and support to staff and patients and influencing

organization-wide change beyond the scope of nursing. Eric demonstrates the ability to mentor others, work toward strategic priorities and lead through chaos. His leadership characteristics never wavered throughout the pandemic, when he supported the units, collaborated with departments on initiatives to protect staff and patients, secured supplemental staff and advocated on behalf of his colleagues. His visionary thinking and operational skills helped create protocols for patients with COVID-19 while preparing for surges, and he was able to help move nursing practice forward by helping secure much-needed equipment. Despite his workload, Eric still sought to advance his nursing degree for lifelong learning. He continues to mentor nurse managers and nursing staff, creating opportunities for others to pursue their goals. Eric is a transformational leader who enables others to have their voices heard, input valued and practice supported. He is a true advocate for nursing practice.



2019 Awardee: Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN

Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN, Magnet Program Manager, has acted as an exemplary transformational leader by demonstrating what it means to be a hands-on,

team-oriented, impassioned leader who advocates for the nursing profession and leads change that is nurse-driven and evidence-based. Jennifer challenged her nominator to think critically, own their practice, follow problems to their source and think outside the box when problem-solving. She encourages others to view issues as opportunities for improvement, seek out evidence-based solutions and effectively implement them. She has provided support and advice in a meaningful, compassionate, thoughtful way that encourages and fosters personal and professional growth. Jennifer has served as an example of how transformational leadership can positively affect individuals and organizations. She encouraged her nominator's involvement in their Unit-Based Committee and the hospital's Professional Nursing Practice Council. Thanks to Brown's encouragement and example of positive change, her nominator was elected to leadership roles in both of these councils and is actively utilizing the leadership skills gained while under her mentorship.

Structural Empowerment Awards

Recognizing a committee or council that improves nursing practice, this award focuses on efforts to empower nurses to practice in a professional and autonomous manner to achieve the highest degree of clinical excellence and professional fulfillment.



2020 Awardee:

The Patient and Family Education Council

The Patient and Family Education Council is chaired by the BPCI nurse care coordinator, Judy Ervin, RN and facilitated by Mary Beth Pushack, Dietary Manager, with additional representation from all nursing care units and the Transition of Care nurse. This council was recognized for its many efforts to improve patient experience and quality of care in 2020 in alignment with nursing's strategic plan, mission and vision.

Working as a team, members:

- Revised medication side effect information for patient handouts
- Developed new infection prevention handouts for patients
- Created an educational handout for nursing care units providing proning instructions and discharge guidance for COVID-19 patients
- Added visual imagery to TV channel 16, which also plays calming music
- Collaborated with Psychiatric Services and revised the Behavioral Health Resource Directory for Union and Middlesex County
- Operationalized the use of "Super Ear" to improve communication with the hearing impaired

This interprofessional council provides insight from all care points in the patient's healthcare continuum, going beyond the four walls of the hospital to bridge the gap from inpatient treatment to care in the home.

2019 Awardee: The SCM End User Committee

In 2019, the SCM End User Committee was honored for making improvements that enhanced and supported nursing practice. Integrating nursing practice and



technology, the SCM End User Committee is facilitated by SCM Nursing Informatics nurse Onyekachi Festus, BSN, RN and chaired by Emergency Department nurse Eileen Parks, MSN, RN-BC and 2A nurse Adrianna Zamora, BSN, RN. The committee spearheaded the following improvements:

- Created a nursing progress note section to standardize documentation
- Developed e-ticket for the safer transportation of patients
- Added a notification section for isolation precautions on the patient care summary
- Added exit care instructions and a section for eclampsia warning placed in triage
- Adopted an evidence-based practice to facilitate the PECARN algorithm in the Emergency Department, which has become the standard of care to determine which patients need CT imaging
- Developed a new restraint flow sheet to align with regulations
- Created C. diff order sets to prevent over-testing
- Added the capability for suicide screening for earlier identification and notification to Psychiatric Emergency Services for quicker interventions, resulting in better outcomes

The EMR is the backbone of everything we do, from patient care and safety to finances and revenue.

Exemplary Professional Practice Awards

This individual focuses on excellence, collaboration, quality, safety and best practices to realize extraordinary results through evidence-based care. The awardee provides respectful and compassionate evidence-based care through a comprehensive understanding of the role of nursing with patients, families, communities and the interdisciplinary team to continuously drive practice forward.



2020 Awardees: **Rose Tarantino, BRN, RN and Bill Toth, BSN, RN**

Interventional radiologist nurse Rose Tarantino, BSN, RN and 2E nurse Bill Toth, BSN, RN were recognized for their work in examining PICC line and midline usage

and knowledge to reduce central line infections (CLABSIs). Noticing an increase in PICC line usage in 2019, Rose tracked data and collaborated with Bill, Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN, Magnet Program Manager and the Professional Practice Council to identify gaps in knowledge around the appropriateness of PICC line versus midlines. They also discovered also gaps in knowledge in midline medication administration, how long midlines can remain inserted and the appropriateness for discharging patients home with IV treatment. Together, they helped close those gaps by assessing vendor medication lists and collaborating with the Pharmacy, Case Management and other departments. This led to policies that clarified guidelines and processes that avoided discharge delays and made orders more accessible in the hospital's record system. RWJUH Rahway's inpatient CLABSI rate has since fallen. According to NDNQI, the hospital has outperformed the national benchmark for the last eight quarters.



2019 Ambulatory Setting Awardee: **Shui Chan, RN**

Shui Chan, RN, clinical nurse in the Operating Room and General Surgery service line lead, was recognized for demonstrating exemplary professional

practice in the ambulatory setting. Shui was nominated for her initiative and involvement with the preference card revisions. The selfless sharing of her time and expertise and her active involvement in brainstorming sessions led to an amazing outcome and timely completion of the project. Her nominator wrote, "Her patience, professionalism and helpfulness represent our hospital's values at its core. Her willingness to assist others and her commitment to educating new coworkers is unequaled. As a nurse leader in her specialty, she does a wonderful job by training team members on the newest trends and evidence-based practice in the industry, which make all the difference in patient care."



2019 Inpatient Setting Awardee: **Courtney Kovacs, BSN, RN-BC**

In an effort to decrease CAUTIs in 2019, Courtney Kovacs, BSN, RN-BC worked with nursing staff to develop a simple,

effective solution: a white communication board. This initiative heightened awareness of patients with indwelling urinary catheters in an effort to decrease patient days with the catheter as well as hospital-acquired infections on the unit. Placed at the 2E nurses' station, the whiteboard facilitated universal recognition of indwelling urinary catheter lines, promoted accurate communication among healthcare providers and ensured the use of high reliability safety tools through accurate communication and crosscheck mechanisms. As a result, 2E was CAUTI-free in 2019.

New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements Awards

This individual focuses on innovative practices, developing evidence-based care models to lead the organization in making changes that result in improved outcomes for our patients, their families and the communities we serve.



2020 Awardees: Kaitlyn Malcolm, BSN, RN and Navdeep Kaur, BSN, RN

2E nurses Kaitlyn Malcolm, BSN, RN and Navdeep Kaur, BSN, RN were honored for their work in decreasing catheter-associated urinary tract infections on the unit. Using a whiteboard paired with evidence-based research, they successfully implemented a new practice calling attention to the use, duration and removal of urinary catheters. This whiteboard serves as a cross-check for urinary catheter indications, appropriate removal time

and care documentation. This low-tech visual cue at the nursing station led to improved outcomes and reduced urinary tract infections.



2019 Awardee: Marlene Gamo, BSN, RN, CCRN

Recovery Room nurse Marlene Gamo, BSN, RN, CCRN received this award for developing a nurse-driven initiative to help reduce

CLABSI rates when working in the Critical Care Unit (CCU). She identified issues in the proper technique for the removal of central venous catheters, and used evidence-based research to address gaps in knowledge by creating educational materials and skills demonstrations for CCU nurses. The extensive education she provided decreased the incidence of adverse clinical events resulting from improper techniques. To date, she continues to educate CCU nurses during annual competencies.



Friend of Nursing Award

This award recognizes an individual or department that demonstrates a commitment to the ideals, mission and vision of nursing and contributes to the long-term significance of nursing practice. This person or department is integral and supportive to nursing professional practice, maintains accountability for patient safety and produces positive interprofessional workflow that affects nursing in a significant way.



2020 Awardee: William Kelly

William Kelly, Director of Engineering and Construction, was recognized for fostering collaboration between facility and clinical staff to ensure that the best safety

and prevention strategies were in place during the pandemic. Working with nursing leadership, he pioneered an innovative plan to increase negative pressure rooms from nine to 91 within a month, strategically using HEPA filters during the transition to ensure safety. To limit patient exposure and prepare for surges, he worked with Emergency Management and the ED clinical staff to place tents in the parking lot outside the ED, and created an outpatient clinic space in the ambulance garage by installing required hardware and cables for computer access. Working with Don Evenson, RRT, BS, MPA, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services, he monitored the oxygen farm and developed a process to ensure that oxygen tanks did not freeze. As services resumed, he carefully tracked all environments to ensure social distancing, with staff illness decreasing following these changes. He helped transform Conference Room 1 into a vaccine clinic. Throughout the pandemic, Bill checked in with nursing leadership on a daily basis to ensure needs were met while serving as a link between hospitals to promote consistency between sites.



**2019 Awardee:
Harry Bhagat**

CCU Unit
Administrator Harry Bhagat was nominated by two CCU nurses, who described him as smart, efficient and hard-

working. They noted that he routinely helps staff with everything from fixing computers to cleaning desks, even when those tasks are not part of his job description. His nominators wrote, "He always has a positive attitude and a smile for everybody. This attitude is very contagious and lifts the spirit of the whole unit. He is really an asset to our unit and to the hospital in general. Harry consistently goes above and beyond in his role. Our CCU ship truly sails smoothly whenever Harry is at the helm, and we are all so grateful for his kindness, skills and dedication. Harry is a genuine leader and problem-solver."

Unit Administrator Award

This new award for 2020 recognizes Unit Administrators who maintain a seamless flow of the unit and are essential in keeping the unit centered and in sync with the organization. This team member exhibits leadership characteristics that amplify and strengthen the unit's goals and produce positive interprofessional workflow.



**2020 Awardee:
Michael Aro**

2E Unit Administrator Michael Aro was recognized with a 2020 Nursing Excellence Award in this new category. Despite the difficulties of transitioning into

this role during the pandemic, he has become the "glue of 2E" and has received many nominations for his outstanding performance, positive attitude, anticipation of needs and support of daily operations. His proactive thinking has resulted in a seamless workflow for staff. Michael often

goes above and beyond his day-to-day duties, such as creating HIPAA-friendly ID band privacy sheets for the doors for patients with COVID-19 and keeping the gown stock outside of the rooms filled. He ensures prompt communication between physicians and nurses. 2E has grown since Michael joined the team, and his optimism and determination for better patient outcomes is exemplary.

CCT/Nursing Assistant Award

A new category for 2020, the CCT/Nursing Assistant Award recognizes an exceptional clinical care assistant or nursing assistant who provides support to nurses and patients in the organization through their communication skills, uses HRO tools to promote safety and performs day-to-day tasks with care and kindness. This individual enhances the nursing unit by accepting ownership and accountability of their practice, provides a friendly and professional bedside manner and is a team player for the unit's needs.



**2020 Awardee:
Holgen Pierre**

3E nursing assistant Holgen Pierre exemplifies our mission of excellence by recognizing the value of extraordinary

positive patient outcomes. She is an important contributor to the success of the unit by promoting patient safety and quality when caring for patients. Always kind and helpful, Holgen takes her time and uses a gentle hand when assisting patients with their activities of daily living. She has developed an effective, positive working relationship with her team members by consistently demonstrating a high level of prioritizing and organizing her responsibilities while also lending a hand to her coworkers when needed. For the betterment of the unit, Holgen always volunteers to take on extra work to cover vacant shifts and assist her staff members.



The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses

Established by The DAISY Foundation, The DAISY Award® is an international recognition program that celebrates the extraordinary compassion nurses provide for their patients and families every day. Any RWJUH Rahway nurse who exhibits outstanding kindness may be nominated by anyone who experiences or observes their exceptional level of care. This includes patients, family members, colleagues, physicians and staff.

Examples of The DAISY Award criteria include:

- Exhibiting extraordinary compassion and kindness to patients and their families every day as an essential part of the healing process.
- Communicating in a calm, focused and caring way when patients and families may be experiencing the most difficult situation of their lives.
- Going above and beyond what is expected of nurses.

In 2020, RWJUH Rahway celebrated two nurses for earning DAISY Awards:



Nataliya Lizanets, BSN, RN, CNOR, Perioperative Services

DAISY Award recipient Nataliya Lizanets, BSN, RN, CNOR was recognized for her compassionate and caring nature during the height of COVID-19

pandemic. Her nominator wrote, "The pandemic created an almost unimaginably difficult situation for patients and their families; their separation from each other was torture for both. Nataliya felt this void deeply and did a remarkable job of helping patients through the worst of times with kindness and compassion, with a sense of purpose and with love...She provided a helping hand, important health information, reassuring words, a hand to hold and a shoulder to cry on." When Nataliya contracted COVID-19 from her role, "she got well, returned and jumped right back into the thick of things - helping the nurses, facilitating communication between patients and families, being that one person whose singular focus was to be present for and with the patient... Nataliya was a bright spot and an encouraging connection in an otherwise dark, lonely and scary time in our patients' lives."



Megan Disch, RN, Emergency Department

Megan Disch, BSN, RN, Charge Nurse Coordinator for the Emergency Department, was chosen for her calm and compassionate care during the

COVID-19 crisis and beyond. According to one of her colleagues, "Megan is the nurse I want to be. She is kind and goes above and beyond every single day. During the COVID-19 crisis, Megan not only showed up, but she even took on extra shifts to help ease the burden on fellow co-workers. On the most hectic days in the ER, Megan is calm, cool and collected... She is quick to respond to any patient request, whether it's from her patient or not. This makes perfect sense because you can clearly tell that Megan considers all of our patients as her patients and truly cares about their health and safety...Our department, our hospital, and especially our patients are certainly lucky to have her."

RWJUH Rahway's STAR Performers

The STAR program, RWJUH Rahway's long-standing hospital-wide employee recognition program, celebrates outstanding performance in clinical and non-clinical areas. This monthly recognition program is based on cards, letters and emails sent to the STAR committee from patients, family members and colleagues.

The STAR Committee selects three STAR employees each month, along with a clinical and nonclinical STAR of the Year and a Department of the Year at the end of each year. In lieu of a hospital-wide gathering, the 2020 awards were presented by President and CEO Kirk Tice, the leadership team and the STAR Committee at a special traveling ceremony held on March 24.



STAR of the Year Awards for Clinical Care

RWJUH Rahway Infusion Center Nurse Diana Hopper, BSN, RN and Nursing Assistant Joanne Kelly received the 2020 STAR of the Year Award for clinical care, recognized for their compassionate, attentive care. According to one patient letter read at the ceremony, "This is like my second family. They go above and beyond for me all the time. And during the COVID-19 crisis, I was so impressed I was kept safe. They made me feel comfortable and well cared for."

*"Let us never consider ourselves finished, nurses.
We must be learning all of our lives."*

—Florence Nightingale

STAR Departments of the Year: Emergency Department and Critical Care

In 2020, the STAR Committee selected two departments, the Emergency Department and Critical Care, for their roles during the COVID-19 surges. Hospital President and CEO Kirk Tice praised team members for their tireless work in caring for patients and families, particularly during surges that were difficult, exhausting and emotionally draining. He noted, "Throughout the worst of it, you were there for your patients, for this hospital and for each other. You were there with compassion, innovation and strength."

Nurse Manager Karen Vargas, BSN, RN and Janine Grayson, MD, MPH accepted the award on behalf of the Emergency Department, and Nurse Manager Sandy Sanford, BSN, RN-BC, who served as Interim Manager for Critical Care, accepted the award on behalf of Critical Care.



STAR Awardees Throughout 2020



Awardee **Patrick McNamara, BSN, RN of 2E** was nominated by a family member for the compassionate care and excellent education and information provided to his patient and her family.

2C Nurse Theresa Gorringer, BSN, RN (center) was honored for her willingness to lend a hand, whether to help start a difficult IV or change a wound vac. A colleague wrote, "Terry is always willing to help her co-workers at any time...It is a pleasure to work with Terry."



Critical Care Nurse Inga Schwartz, MSN, RN, CNL was celebrated for her professional, compassionate end-of-life care. A patient's family member wrote, "She tended to my mom with the highest level of tenderness and care to make her comfortable in her final hours of her life. Inga was very attentive and vigilant in making sure my mom was pain free. Inga had outstanding people skills in keeping all of the family informed of what had happened to mom, and what to expect. She is an excellent CCU Nurse and a very professional and compassionate individual."

2C Nurse Amelia Ramlakhan, BSN, RN was honored for her dedication, kindness and professionalism. A patient wrote, "I find Amelia is dedicated to not only her job, but she loves people. She has a kind heart. She is stern when she needs to be. She has a spirit of thoughtfulness and giving. I would recommend her at any time to anyone. She is a very special nurse."

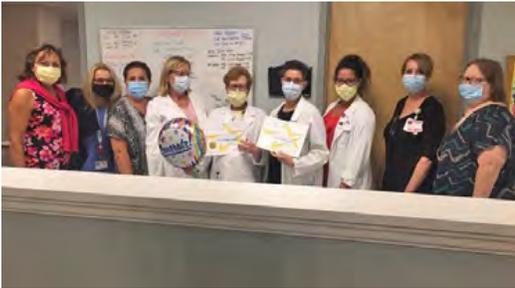


2E Nurse Sue Gelowitz, RN-BC was celebrated for her ability to comfort and soothe a patient who was frightened, angry and in pain. The patient wrote, "After much talking and listening, she settled me down. She treated me like family...Sue was there for me through her whole shift. She comforted me and did whatever it took to ease the pain. Through her experience as a nurse, she knew exactly what to do and say...She is caring, responsible, comforting – just like a mom."

STAR Awardees Throughout 2020



3C Nurse Jessica (Rosa) Ojibara, BSN, RN was honored for her kindness, empathy and ability to connect with a patient, who wrote, “I had just lost my dear husband earlier that month...the entire staff was very kind and loving to me at this bad time in my life. Jessica Rosa and her people were just excellent. She bought me a cup filled with candy along with a card to express sympathy about my husband’s death. I hope Rahway keeps hiring staff like those on 3C.”



Case Manager Carol Kowalik, RN (fifth from left) and **Social Worker Carrie Faraone, LCSW** were honored for their ability to coordinate a host of home services and family education for a medically complex hospital patient who spoke limited English during a time when family members were unable to visit. A nurse who covers several Union County rehabs wrote, “The joy on this man’s face, knowing he would see his son and be going home, was so nice to see during a time of much bad news, as the social isolation of these inpatients is difficult for all.”

Name	Degree	Department
Simone Anckle, BSN, RN	BSN	2E
Vera Baez, DNP, APN-BC, MSN, RN	DNP	CAC
Melody Cerminaro, BSN, RN	BSN	ED
Renee Daly, BSN, RN	BSN	2E
Theresa Gorringer, BSN, RN	BSN	3E
Nataliya Lizanets, BSN, RN, CNOR	BSN	OR
Laura Makras, BSN, RN	BSN	2E
Kaitlyn Malcolm, BSN, RN	BSN	2E
Philip Miraldo, BSN, RN	BSN	ED
Buffy Onyeche, BSN, RN	BSN	CCU
Rose Tarantino, BSN, RN	BSN	IR
Lisa Veira-Alarcon, BSN, RN	BSN	2A

Educational Achievements

Congratulations to the following nurses who have continued lifelong learning in the nursing profession by advancing their degrees in 2020.

Name	Degree	Department
Adrianna Gomez, RN	RN	2E

Congratulations to the following ancillary staff who successfully completed their nursing academics to earn their degree and registered nurse license in 2020.

AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

CELEBRATE CERTIFIED NURSES

2A

Jeanneth Malicay, BSN, RN, WCC
Susan O'Connell, ADN, RN-BC
Sheela Thomas, BSN, RN-BC

2E

Samira Castro, BSN, RN-BC
Emily Durso, BSN, RN-BC
Jerilyn Gascon, BSN, RN-BC
Drupatie Ramlakhan, BSN, RN-BC

3C

Maria Concepcion Domingo, BSN, RN-C
Heather Ramstedt, BSN, RN, PCCN
Arlene Turner, ADN, RN, ONC

3E

Arlene Caparruva, ADN, RN-C
Maria Catalon, BSN, RN-C

Critical Care Unit

Sangeetha Alexander, BSN, RN, CCRN
Raquel Bisda, BSN, RN, CCRN
Arunateja Chennareddy, MSN, RN, CCRN
Theresa Dobbin, BSN, RN, CCRN, WCC
Martha Mackay, MSN, RN, CCRN
Buffy Onyeche, ADN, RN, CCRN
Vanessa Ortiz, ADN, RN, CCRN, CEN, TCRN, CFRN
Meagan Rueda, BSN, RN, CCRN
Inga Schwartz, MSN, RN, CNL
Audrey Silovitch, BSN, RN, CCRN
Bridget Wertz, MSN, RN, CCRN

Cardiac Services & Interventional Radiology

Robert Rosales, BSN, RCIS, RN-BC
Marlene Lopez, ADN, CCRN
Maria Balo, BSN, CCRN
Susan Lasko, BSN, RN-BC
Rose Tarantino, ADN, RN, CNOR

Case Management

Catherine Ayala, BSN, RN, CCM
Judith Ervin, ADN, RN-BC

Emergency Department

Dana Colon, BSN, RN, CEN, TNCC, NVRN
Rey Alam, ADN, RN, TNCC
Myrna Bautista, BSN, RN, TNCC
Ringle Biju, BSN, RN, TNCC
Franklin Calderon, ADN, RN, TNCC, NRP, NIHS
Deanna Chase, BSN, RN, TNCC
Christina Garrison, BSN, RN, CEN
Suzanne Giles, ADN, RN, TNCC
Diane Maiorino, ADN, RN, CEN
Christine Meo, MSN, RN-BC, ANP
Madeline Merced, BSN, RN-BC
Eleanor Molineaux, MSN, RN, FNP
Eileen Parks, MSN, RN-BC
Todd Riccitelli, BSN, RN, CEN
Evelyn Rodriguez, BSN, RN, CEN
Katherine Silva, BSN, RN, CEN
Karolina Zuniga, BSN, RN, TNCC

Perioperative Services

Leonilo Delacruz, BSN, RN, CNOR, RFNA
Beverly Focht, BSN, RN, CNOR
Nataliya Lizanets, ADN, RN, CNOR
Leila Palaganas, BSN, RN, CNOR
Heasun Lee, BSN, RN, CGRN
Dorothy Haywood, MSN, RN, NBCSN
Jane Julao, BSN, RN-BC
Lois Sancho, BSN, RN, CCRN
Marlene Gamo, BSN, RN, CCRN
Brian Golden, BSN, RN, TNCC

Infusion Services

Dianna Hopper, BSN, RN-C

Employee Health

Diane Strickland, MSN, RN, APN, CCRN
Joan Naberezny, ADN, RN, WCC

Education

Paula Mattis, ADN, RN, WCC
Anita Whiting, MSN, RN, ANPD

Bariatric Services

Dianne Errichetti, MSN, RN, ASMBS

Nursing Leadership

Elvera Baez, MSN, RN, APN-CP
Marlene Baldinger, ADN, RN, CPHQ, CPHRN, ARM
Gary Buckalew, MSN, RN, CCRN
Courtney Kovacs, BSN, RN-BC
Rose Marie Caleen, BA, RN-C
Ann Cornell, MSN, RN, CRNP, ONS
Deborah Gandy, MSN, MSA, RN, CPHQ
Mary Mulyk, BSN, RN, CCM
Maria Purez Ruiz, MSM, BSN, RN, CCRN
Sandra Sanford, BSN, RN-BC
Dawn Schanz, MSN, RN, GNP, CNOR
Ann Marie Shears, MA, RN, NE-BC
Deb Toth, RN, MSN, CCRN



2020 Clinical Ladder Recipients

Teresa Gorringer, BSN RN- 3E/2C
Rose Tarantino, BSN, RN- IR
Marie Charles, BSN, RN-3C
Sharanjit Johal, BSN, RN- 3C
Razel Abuan, BSN, RN-3E/2C
Christine Kalil, RN- CCU
William Toth, BSN, RN- 2E
Justina Anighoro-Okezie, BSN, RN- 3C
Inga Schwartz– MSN, RN, CNL- CCU
Jessica Ojibara–, BSN, RN- 3C
Nicole Ferrer–, BSN, RN- 3C
Vidheeben Patel–, BSN, RN- CCU



The Nursing Clinical Ladder

The Magnet framework guides nurses to build the ideal practice environment, with criteria that include valuing professional development and recognition. The clinical ladder program was developed to recognize and promote:

- Professional development
- Quality patient care
- Job satisfaction
- Nurse retention

RWJUH Rahway leaders support and applaud nurses on the clinical ladder program for outstanding nursing practice at the bedside and within the organization. Nurses can climb the clinical ladder by participating in performance improvement and/or nursing research projects and distinguishing themselves as experts in their clinical settings. This advancement recognition improves job satisfaction and increases staff retention.

As a nurse we have the opportunity to heal the mind, soul, heart and body of our patients. They may forget your name, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

—Maya Angelou

Emergency Department Nurses Give Back to Community

During the pandemic, the RWJUH Rahway Emergency Department received generous in-kind donations from our surrounding community. These included nourishments for nurses to maintain strength during long hours and comfort accessory items such as head caps and ear protectors for tight fitting masks that were worn all day as they battled against COVID-19 to save lives.

Because these gestures touched the hearts of our nurses, they wanted to give back to the community. When the Rahway Housing Authority opened an eight-week summer camp program for low-income families due to summer camps closures, RWJUH Rahway Emergency Department nurses donated money to provide healthy meals and snacks for the children.



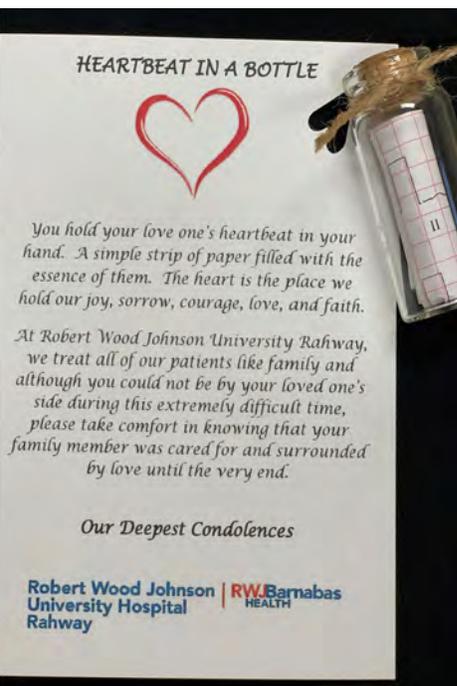
White Coats for Black Lives

On June 5, 2020 at 1 p.m., RWJUH Rahway nurses and other team members took part in a powerful moment of silence as they knelt in solidarity to recognize and support equality and racial justice as part of White Coats Kneel for Black Lives.



Heartbeat in a Bottle for Families

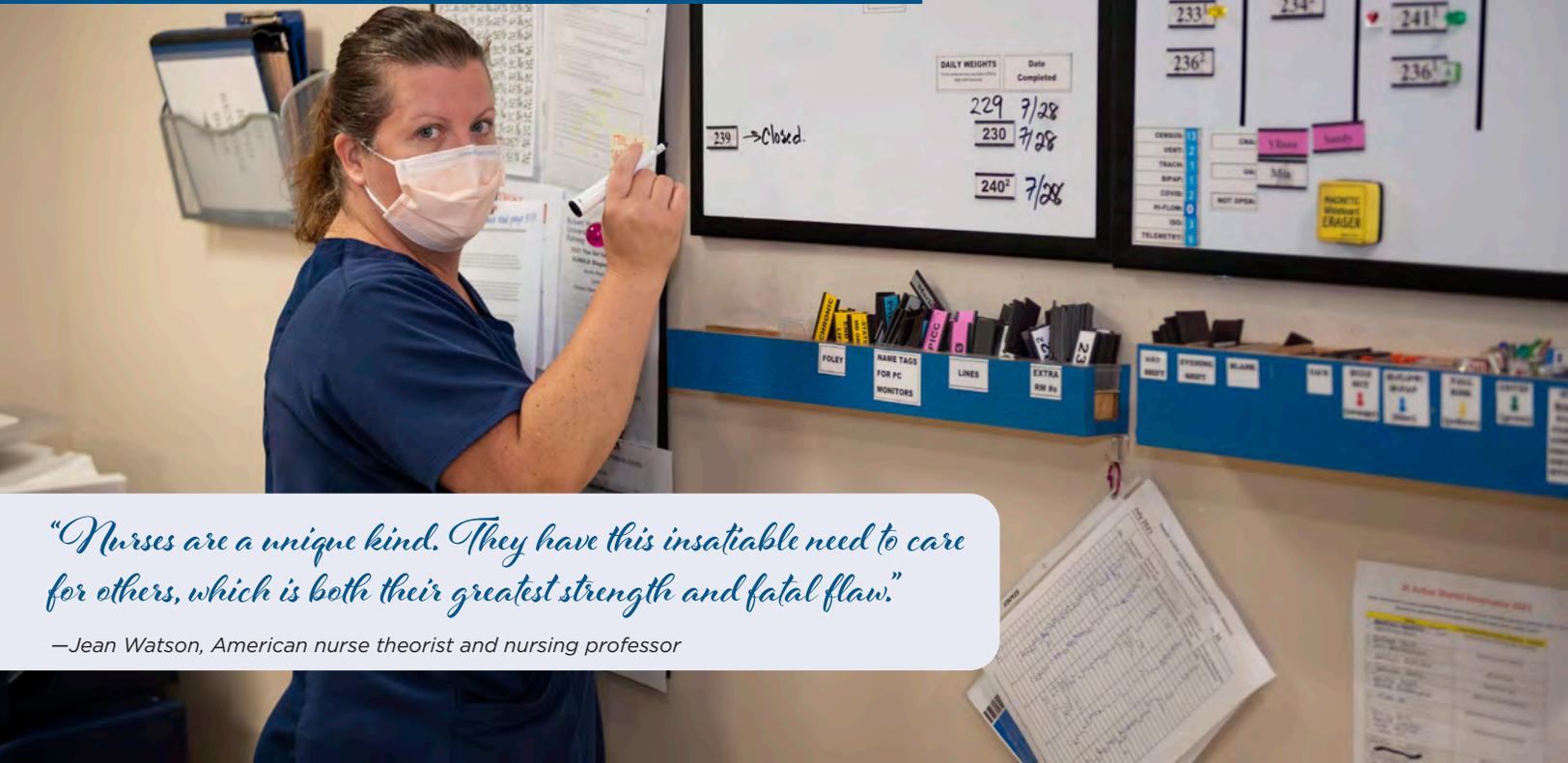
When visits were no longer possible during the pandemic, the use of technology was the only available method for families to communicate their heartbreaking goodbyes as nurses held the devices for video chats. Desiring to do more for these families, RWJUH Rahway Emergency Department nurses created “Heartbeat in a Bottle,” sending families a condolence letter along with their loved one’s last EKG rhythm strip. More than 150 Heartbeat in a Bottle packages were sent to families between April and July 2020.



Promoting Smoking Cessation Through Goody Bags

On June 5, 2020 at 1 p.m., RWJUH Rahway nurses and other team members took part in a powerful moment of When Bariatric Surgery Nurse Clinical Coordinator Dianne Errichetti, MSN, RN, ASMBS noticed that more patients were struggling with smoking addictions, she brought it to the attention of Director of Marketing and Community Education Donna Mancuso. Donna reached out to the Nicotine and Tobacco Recovery Program at the RWJBarnabas Health Institute for Prevention and Recovery (IFPR), which provided quit smoking goody bags to distribute to employees and patients who smoke and are interested in quitting, including those in the bariatric, healthy heart and pulmonary rehabilitation programs. Donna helped promote this initiative and educate patients, floor nurses and department heads about its availability. The kits contain stress relief items and information about RWJBarnabas quitting resources.

EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE



“Nurses are a unique kind. They have this insatiable need to care for others, which is both their greatest strength and fatal flaw.”

—Jean Watson, American nurse theorist and nursing professor

Renee Daly, BSN, RN of 2E

Exemplary professional practice is the basis to move nursing practice forward through nurse empowerment, advocacy and partnering with interprofessional teams, patients and families. RWJUH Rahway nurses uphold safety and regulatory standards while striving for excellence in quality outcomes by facilitating positive practice change.

Maintaining Nursing Sensitive Indicators Despite COVID-19

In continuing its journey toward Magnet recognition, the RWJUH Rahway nursing team created Nursing Dashboards in 2020 to track and disseminate metrics that included nursing sensitive indicators – falls, CLABSI, CAUTIs, HAPIs and throughput – as well as patient experience. Collaborative efforts, nurse-driven evidence-based interventions and redesigned processes were initiated to decrease hospital acquired infections, falls and pressure injuries.

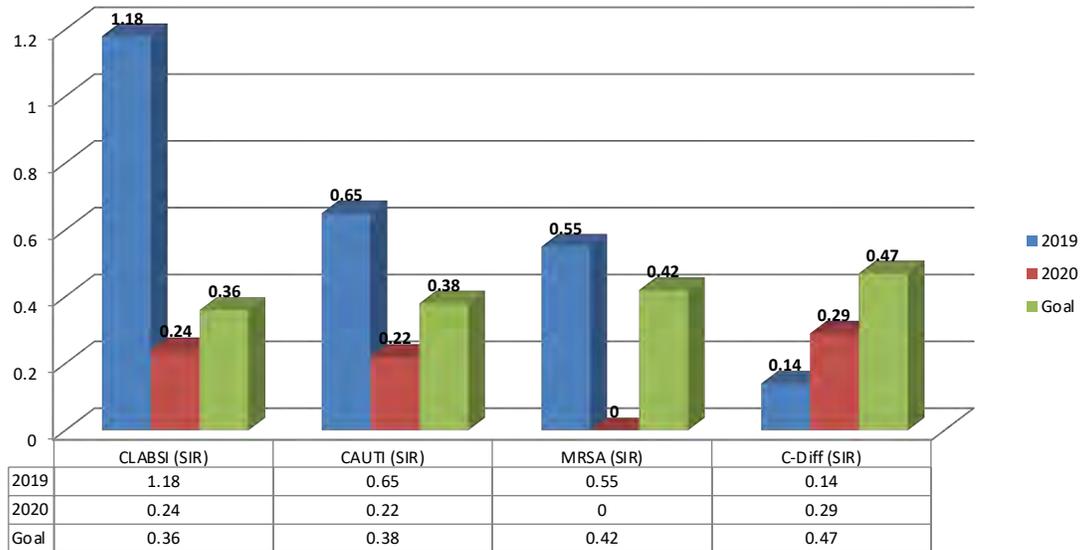
When a global pandemic shifted the focus of care during 2020, changing protocols resulted in closed patient doors, limited staff resources and lack of family support at the bedside. In addition, illness severity, unstable patient conditions and patient acuity was greater due to COVID-19. Despite these circumstances, RWJUH Rahway nurses did not waiver in their efforts to provide quality care for patients.

Nursing was challenged by COVID-19 on many levels and priorities were altered. Yet nurses maintained 2020 goals for hospital-acquired infections. In an amazing feat, hospital falls increased by only one incident when compared to 2019. Hospital-acquired infections decreased, and processes were improved to help impact better outcomes.



Harpreet Mann, BSN, RN of CCU

Hospital Acquired Infections 2019 vs 2020 Comparison



Hand Hygiene Helps Decrease Hospital-Acquired Infections

RWJUH Rahway Infection Prevention Manager Emma Kariuki, BSN, RN, CIC spearheaded a hand hygiene initiative in 2020 to help decrease hospital-acquired infections (HAIs), including central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSIs), catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs) and methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). In addition, she was tasked to meet Leapfrog hand hygiene requirements of 200 observations per unit/location.

The initiative engaged leaders in conducting hand hygiene observations and offering just-in-time feedback, especially when noncompliance is observed; educated new employees on the requirement to clean hands upon entry and exit to patient rooms; and ensured the availability of alcohol-based sanitizers with properly functioning dispensers in convenient areas. In conjunction with nursing shared governance and Unit-Based Committee practice changes, these efforts resulted in a decrease in hospital-acquired infections from 2019 to 2020, an important step on the Magnet journey for nursing excellence.



Infection Manager, Emma Kariuki, BSN, RN, CIC



Same Day Surgery Nurse Stephanie Persaud, RN



2E Nurse Suffiyah Hussain, BSN, RN

CIWA Assesses Alcohol Withdrawal Symptoms

The Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol (CIWA) is an established assessment tool that quantifies the level of alcohol withdrawal symptoms and helps determine appropriate medical treatment. Instituted at RWJUH Rahway in February 2020, this screening protocol is an important tool to identify those at risk for alcohol withdrawal, especially given that 51.9% of Americans stated that they are current drinkers and 1 in 16 adults have severe drinking problems, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Onset of withdrawal symptoms ranges from 6 to 96 hours after the last drink.

The implementation of CIWA has empowered nurses to perform earlier identification of alcohol withdrawal, enabling the faster initiation of treatment to reduce complications such as seizures and delirium tremens. Management goals include prevention of symptoms, addressing patient safety and comfort and identifying engagement in long-term treatment.

Cardiac Catheterization Lab Reduces Door-to-Balloon Time

One of the biggest factors in heart attack survival is achieving a low door-to-balloon (DBT) time in promptly treating a patient's occluded coronary artery through percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI). DBT, a key performance metric, is the time from patient arrival at the hospital until they undergo PCI at the Cardiac Catheterization Lab (CCL). American Heart Association guidelines recommend that PCI procedures be performed within 90 minutes for the best patient outcomes, with 60 minutes as above the bar.

Doreen Miller, BSN, RN, lead RN Coordinator of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab, joined RWJUH Rahway in 2020 and observed DBT metrics averaging 80 minutes during the first and second quarters. In seeking to improve these metrics, she determined that on-call providers were being notified individually rather than through the more optimal SPOK paging system.



Dori Miller, BSN, RN of Cardiac Cath Lab



Bariatric Center of Excellence Reaccreditation

In 2020, the RWJUH Rahway Bariatric Center attained reaccreditation as a Center of Excellence in Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery by the Surgical Review Corporation (SRC), an internationally recognized health care leader committed to advancing the safety, efficacy and efficiency of surgical care worldwide. SRC accredits facilities and medical professionals that are committed to creating and sustaining a culture of excellence. The bariatric team, who was instrumental in preparing for and earning this reaccreditation, includes Bariatric Surgery Nurse Clinical Coordinator Dianne Errichetti, MSN, RN, ASMBS, Medical Director Anish Nihalani, MD, FACS, who has received SRC reaccreditation as Master Surgeon, Administrator Gloria Sarceno and Clinical Dietitian Kanika Gandhi, RD. Dori collaborated with IT to update the CODE MI healthcare providers' contacts to ensure notifications to all appropriate parties are received. She met with the Operators and Security team to provide education on the NETSCAPE STEMI activation/paging system. As a result of this nurse-driven initiative, notifications are sent simultaneously through the SPOK paging system, improving the timeliness of alerts. The change in process yielded a DBT average of 57 minutes in quarter 3 and 4



Bariatric Nurse Coordinator Dianne Errichetti, MSN, RN, ASMBS



Critical Care staff from front left to right: Unit Administrator Harry Bhagat, Lisa Cannon, BSN, RN, Deanna Pinkham, MS, RN, Harpreet Mann, BSN, RN, Alyssa Lazo, BSN, RN, Buffy Onyeche, BSN, RN, CCRN, Marites Sagyn, BSN, RN, Katherine Tutiven, BSN, RN

Saving Face: Protecting Patients from Pressure Injuries

In 2020, an interprofessional taskforce collaborated to examine the number of respiratory medical device-related pressure injuries in the Critical Care Unit (CCU), finding that respiratory medical devices contributed to 32% of all pressure injuries in 2019. The taskforce then worked to implement the following action plans and practice changes:

- CCU and Respiratory staff huddles and education
- Nursing cross-checks performed for respiratory therapists on changing endotracheal tube positions, and creation of a visual aid to move tubes accordingly
- Assessment and documentation by respiratory therapists in patient medical records
- Proposal of skin assessments with bedside shift report and every four hours
- Apparent cause analysis performed by nurse managers for every deep tissue injury
- Identified that the current bite block product used across RWJBarnabas Health is a contributing cause. The taskforce verified this by connecting with other hospital sites and communicated the potential dangers.

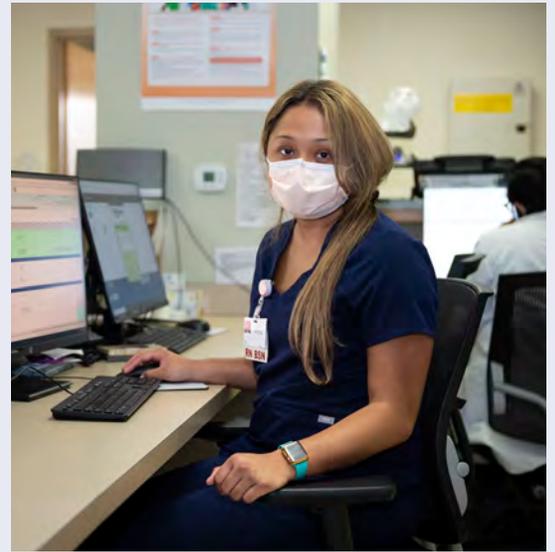
Once these steps were taken, RWJUH Rahway observed a significant decrease in medical device-related pressure injuries.



2E Nurse Samira Castro, BSN, RN-BC and Clinical Administrative Coordinator of Nursing Supervision Elvera Baez, DNP, MSN, RN, APN-BC



Same Day Surgery Judith Brownstone, BSN, RN



Carissa Morales, BSN, RN of 3C



2A Nurse Manager Christine Meo, MSN, RN, APN, RN-BC, 2A nurse Lisa Veira-Alacron, BSN, RN, Case Manager Mary Kate Lampariello, RN, and Social Worker Carrie Faraone, LCSW



Arlene Caparruva, RN-C of 3E



Ashley Austria, RN of 3C

Success in Improving Patient Satisfaction

In alignment with the RWJUH Rahway nursing strategic plan and as part of its commitment to the Magnet journey, nursing initiated new interventions and returned to basics to improve patient satisfaction scores. Following evidence-based research in 2019, house-wide initiatives for bedside shift reports and walking interdisciplinary rounds – including nursing and care management – were developed and implemented in the first quarter of 2020. RWJUH Rahway nursing Unit-Based Committees continued to work diligently to improve patient satisfaction as they also battled COVID-19

	2019	2020
NURSE COMMUNICATION	77.8	78.9
RESPONSE OF STAFF	53.7	57
DISCHARGE INFORMATION	78.8	84.9
ED OVERALL	84.4	85.6
ED INFORM ABOUT DELAYS	75	77.2
ED INFORM ABOUT TREATMENT	82.8	85.3
PROVIDED NEEDED INFO RE: PROCEDURE	88.4	91.4



Director of Engineering and Construction Bill Kelly and Director of Nursing Operation Eric Kleinert, BSN, RN

RWJUH Rahway nurses continually seek new knowledge and innovations, integrating evidence-based practice and research into clinical and operational processes. They embrace the spirit of inquiry to discover innovative best practices for patients and care environments.

Turning Positive into a Negative

RWJUH Rahway's first COVID-19 case arrived on March 20, 2020. Given that RWJUH Rahway is a 100-bed community hospital, only nine negative pressure rooms were available. On March 29, Eric Kleinert, BSN, RN, Director of Nursing Operations, and Bill Kelly, Director of Engineering and Construction, pioneered an innovative plan to increase negative pressure capacity. This collaboration resulted in the conversion to 91 negative pressure rooms in less than one month, achieving 1011% capacity without disrupting patient care. Completed conversion included all inpatient units, PACU and OR room 5.

Cross-Training Staff for a Second Wave

The number of critically ill patients at the height of the pandemic was alarming. To proactively prepare for high-caliber patient care and a safe staffing ratio and structure during the second wave of the pandemic, the Education Department teamed up with the Critical Care Unit and 2E, the telemetry, medical/surgical and ventilator unit. Nurses created a new education model that would better suit the needs of the patients and the staff. Through the interprofessional collaboration of nursing and educators, 2E staff nurses attended courses and gained experience by shadowing nurses in the Critical Care Unit. This nurse-driven action plan enabled nurses to promote and disseminate knowledge and a plan to assist staffing needs in the Critical Care Unit during high census or a surge of patients requiring a higher level of care.

THOR Disinfecting Robots Enhance Cleaning

Thorough cleaning and disinfection has been crucial to providing a safe environment to care for patients during the pandemic. To ensure optimal cleaning protocols, Emma Kairuki, BSN, RN, CIC, Infection Prevention Manager, collaborated with the Environmental Manager Danielle Damion in conducting education for the environmental staff. In addition, in July 2020 she assisted in implementing the usage of two UV machines (THOR) in Operating Rooms and in patient rooms, particularly in isolation rooms after patients were discharged. The two UV machines continue to complement manual terminal cleaning, as they are highly effective in killing bacteria and viruses.



Oxygen Monitoring and Medication Scanning Solutions

In 2020, 2E nurses identified workflow concerns among COVID-19 isolation patients related to scanning barcodes for medication administration and monitoring supplemental oxygenation requirements for weaning measures. As a workflow design, 2E nurses implemented an innovative practice to help maintain the safety of patients and staff, decrease the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the exposure of equipment to contamination. This solution involved placing barcoded patient ID bands on the doors for scanning of medication administration safety and created an oxygen-weaning tracker sheet to help medical providers identify the patient's oxygen saturation, liters of supplemental oxygen being provided and last titration. To adhere to HIPPA requirements, the oxygen-weaning trackers were placed over the patient's ID band.

The benefits of this solution extended to other RWJBarnabas Health hospitals as well. These hospitals altered their policies to allow for patient ID bands to be placed on the doors for medication administration safety and infection control.



Nursing Makes Virtual ID Rounds Achievable

During the pandemic, the nursing team helped optimize the utilization of technology for successful outcomes. The Chair of Infectious Disease, Juan Baez, MD, connected with Ann Marie Shears, MA, RN, NE-BC to propose methods for effective and efficient virtual rounds on patients with COVID-19 to ensure safety and conserve PPE. Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN, Magnet Program Manager, and Mary Jackson, Director of Patient Experience, created a taskforce to organize and execute the program. Together, they identified and re-deployed nurses and created an effective virtual rounding schedule for nurses and physicians.

Nurses and staff participating in this project included:

Judy Brownstone, BSN, RN

Dmitry Eremtchouk, RN

Victoria Hourihan, RN

Joanne King, RN

Nataliya Lizanets, BSN, RN, CNOR

Dori Miller, BSN, RN (with Denise Cherepanya, RN as backup)

Carol O'Donnell, RN

Kim Polimeni, MSPT, DPT

Donna Roglieri, RN

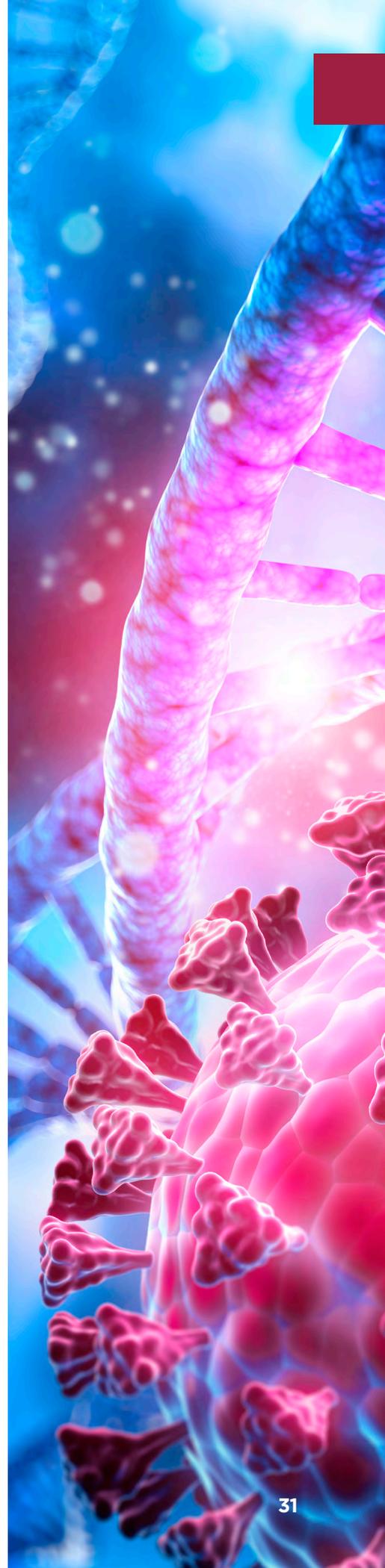
Dawn Spinello, RN

Fighting COVID-19 with a BAM Clinical Trial

Seizing an opportunity to bring hope to the community, RWJUH Rahway received a grant to participate in a clinical trial for Bamlanivimab (BAM), a new monoclonal antibody infusion for the treatment of COVID-19. BAM heightens the immune system's ability to block the passage of the virus into human cells and has been shown to reduce symptoms, disease progression and hospitalization while speeding recovery and preventing death in some patients. RWJUH Rahway Emergency Department clinical nurses incorporated this new medication into their workflow, a process that many other overburdened hospitals were unable to integrate into their practice due to logistical challenges.

On Thanksgiving Day in 2020, Emergency Department nurse Feven Amanuel, BSN, RN, PCCN, was the first clinical nurse to administer the first two doses of BAM. She recalls how the ED team worked together to ensure that any barrier was broken down by advocating for the infusion, adjusting workflow and throughput and working together to ensure patient safety.

"With all the support and education I received from the Pharmacy Department, my fellow nurses and the ED nursing leadership team, I felt confident and comfortable to safely administer BAM," says Feven. "The entire ED team knew how BAM could be a game changer, and it gave me great pride to be part of this innovative treatment for the community we serve."





Emergency Department nurse Megan Disch, RN

New Nurses Benefit from High Fidelity Simulation

High Fidelity Simulation (HFS) was added to the nursing orientation program in 2020, with healthcare education modalities illustrating clinical scenarios of heart failure, pneumonia, COPD, sepsis and MI. Clinical scenario opportunities are required to achieve skilled clinical competencies of nurses. These scenarios provide opportunities that engage nurses in an experience that helps to develop competent clinical reasoning, critical thinking and clinical judgment. The inclusion of HFS during orientation promotes reflection on clinical execution, function and self-confidence. This educational approach may contribute to reducing lengths of stays and re-admissions.

Developing a Stroke Response Resource Guide

Emergency Department nurse Megan Disch, RN identified a need to disseminate knowledge to other staff as RWJUH Rahway implemented a new workflow that incorporated telemedicine for neuro management and care. Because her experience as an ED nurse and exposure to neuro and stroke diagnoses could assist others in providing care, she created a Stroke Response Resource Guide for each unit. This resource includes the Stroke Management Policy, teleneuro information, important components of neurological assessment and more for nurses to review and use to enhance care.

Nurse-Driven Grant Writing for Patient Safety and Quality

RWJUH Rahway Chief Nursing Officer Ann Marie Shears, MA, RN, NE-BC learned of a grant opportunity through the Foundation's Vice President, Heather Hays. She brought this to the attention of Jennifer Brown, MPA, MSN, RN, Magnet Program Manager, who wrote the grant after discussing several ideas for the use of the funds with nursing leadership. The grant was awarded and will ultimately be used to update the 2E nursing call bell system to aid in fall prevention by integrating visual and audio alarms.

Additional Nurse-Driven Innovations

Crisis can be a time of deep reflection and positive transformation – and an opportunity for innovation. RWJUH Rahway is proud to recognize these additional nurse-driven innovations implemented in 2020:

- Through networking and professional collaboration, ICU nurse **Raquel Bisda, BSN, RN, CCRN** helped introduce the use of an IV extension tubing set to titrate drips and feeds for patients with COVID-19. This enhanced staff safety while reducing exposure and conserving PPE. In addition, she used stat locks on IV tubing to prevent extension tubes from touching the ground, aiding in infection prevention.
- **Victor Sanotsky, MA, RN, Director of Perioperative Services**, redesigned the perioperative area workflow to accommodate patient surges. This workflow included patients being discharged from PACU instead of returning to Same Day Surgery to help reduce time in the hospital post-procedure.
- Interventional Radiology nurses **Maureen Disch, RN and Rose Tarantino, BSN, RN** redesigned their PICC line insertion workflow for COVID-19 patients. The nurses traveled to the bedside for PICC line insertions to decrease potential virus exposure during patient transfer, thus aiding in staff and patient safety.
- Wound Care nurse **Paula Mattis, RN, WOC** knew that skin integrity would be compromised from the extended use of N95 masks. With her experience and knowledge, she created skin protection kits for nurses that applied a protective barrier to cheeks and ears. These kits were provided to every unit and handed out from the PPE Command Center.
- During her time in quarantine with her children, 2E per diem nurse **Vicky Ramos, BSN, RN** sought unique opportunities to help her unit as the team battled COVID-19. As staff began experiencing skin integrity issues on their noses and behind their ears from masking, she created beautiful, sturdy, personalized “ear savers” for her team with the help of her son and daughter.
- Concerned about the spread of COVID-19 during airway protection, 3C nurse **Liliana Alvarez, RN** developed an “intubation box” for hospital staff to help decrease exposure. This clear plastic device placed over a patient’s head and shoulders featured holes for the clinician’s hands, enabling healthcare providers to perform intubation while being shielded from any viral droplets generated during the procedure.



Raquel Bisda, BSN, RN, CCRN of Postanesthesia Care Unit (PACU)



Ear Savers



Intubation Box



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Rahway

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