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## Elevating care Specialist takes nursing to a new level

photo by James Coburn

Rizza Lacson, RN, understands the inevitability of change and how as an informatics specialist she can communicate efficiency of care at St. Anthony Hospital, located in midtown Oklahoma City.

by James Coburn  
Staff Writer

Rizza Lacson will have a first-time experience in life and so will St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City. In

February Lacson will become the first nursing informatics specialist at St. Anthony. She will transition from her current role as a charge nurse on the tenth-floor med surg unit.

She is familiar with the course of events. St. Anthony changed from paper charting to EPIC, the electronic health care record, in 2011.

As a natural leader Lacson volunteered to be a Super User of the electronic health record to be of support to her peers.

Her manager in 2012-13, Noni Erb, encouraged her to become a nursing

## Nurse Turned Patient Inspires Others through Battle with Cancer



Susan Abrahamsen was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer in February.

story and photos provided

This holiday season, Susan Abrahamsen says she is especially grateful. In addition to having a loving family and a successful 30-year career in health care, Abrahamsen is a breast cancer survivor.

"It was surreal," said Abrahamsen of her diagnosis. "All of a sudden, everything changes."

Abrahamsen learned she had stage two breast cancer.

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## INSPIRES

Continued from Page 1

"It was surreal," said Abrahamsen of her diagnosis. "All of a sudden, everything changes."

Abrahamsen learned she had stage two breast cancer in February. By March, she began weekly rounds of chemotherapy.

"In the beginning, it was easy to keep my illness hidden from my patients," said Abrahamsen. "I just poured myself into my work, but as I started losing more hair, my patients could tell something was going on."

For nearly the last two years, Abrahamsen has worked as an advanced practice registered nurse and certified nurse practitioner in the telemedicine program at Mercy Hospital El Reno. She takes care of patients in the hospital, while helping to relay important information about her patients to physicians in Oklahoma City using a television screen with two-way audio and video technology. She often works with Dr. Daniel Pascucci.

"I just remember her being very shaken when she told me she

had been diagnosed with cancer," said Dr. Pascucci. Despite the diagnosis, he said it was hard to keep her away from work. "Her first priority has always been our patients, and even as she was going through a health scare of her own, she did whatever she could to continue taking care of them."

Dr. Pascucci said Abrahamsen's outlook on her illness and recovery is now inspiring his own practice in medicine.

"It is humbling to be able to see somebody live out the Mercy mission of bringing to life the healing ministry of Jesus in such a selfless way," he said. "To see her faith in the Lord guide her through that and give her peace while she continued to care for patients has been very eye-opening."

Following surgery and now daily radiation treatments, Abrahamsen hasn't been able to work since September, but she still believes that she has been "very blessed" throughout this journey.

"It is a different feeling being on the other side of care, but it's helped me connect on a much

deeper level with my patients, and I understand better what they are feeling," she said. "When my patient's started realizing my diagnosis, they would often offer support and encouragement, even when I was the one taking care of

them. There are good people in El Reno."

Abrahamsen will have finished her final round of radiation two days after Christmas. She plans to return to work at Mercy Hospital El Reno by New Year's Day.

## Mercy Adds Telemedicine Specialist



Caring for the people of Watonga always has been a top priority for Miranda Cash.

"This is my home," Cash said. "I was born and raised in Watonga, and I've always felt that God has allowed me to give back to the community through medicine."

As an advanced practice registered nurse and certified nurse practitioner, Cash specializes in caring for patients at Mercy Hospital Watonga. Through Mercy's telemedicine program, she plays an important role in relaying patient information to physicians using a TV screen with two-way audio and video technology.

"I really act as the doctor's eyes and ears in the room," Cash said. "Because physicians interact with patients through a television screen, they rely on me to observe and interact with the patients to help provide important details about the kind of care they need."

Mercy began investing in advanced telemedicine capabilities

more than a decade ago, allowing patients in rural communities easy access to specialists and physicians. Last year, Mercy opened the world's first virtual care center in Missouri that includes a team of doctors dedicated to seeing patients within the hospital around the clock.

"This program is saving lives and giving people in the community the kind of care they need," Cash said. "I am fortunate to be able to play such an impactful role in their lives."

Cash has more than two decades of experience in nursing. She said she is passionate about rural health care and about providing the best possible care to her neighbors.

"People in rural areas can face different issues than those who live in cities and towns," Cash said. "A trip to a specialist's office can take hours when you factor in the travel time. With telemedicine, we are able to provide the same care right here at home."

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**LACSON**  
Continued from Page 1

informatics representative for the med surg unit.

"So I got involved in the conference calls. We go and have face-to-face meetings in Missouri which is the corporate office," Lacson said. "I've been involved in a couple of EPIC upgrades now, giving feedbacks," she explained. "So I've been doing it off-and-on basically for four years." "I was kind of doing it on the side for an extra-curricular activity. Just recently St. Anthony decided they need somebody full-time to do it."

Nursing informatics is an emergency specialty in nursing. It combines the science of nursing with information management," Lacson noted.

As a specialist Lacson will serve as a liaison for the nurses and IT (information technology) people. Nursing informatics specialists receive feedback from the bedside nurses if there is something needing to be changed. Lacson would communicate that information to the IT staff.

The informatics nurse would also relate to the IT staff when regulatory measures are introduced as well as core measures of care. IT will assist

nurses in documentation through the electronic health record when these new measures are introduced. Lacson would then educate the nurses about the new process.

So Lacson will utilize her skills to interpret what the nurses need to use technology better. This improves the work flow and charting processes.

"I think my goal in nursing informatics is to be a voice for those bedside nurses," she added.

Lacson has seen how frustrating it can be when technology is not serving the purpose of nursing. Her experience provides empathy and effective communication throughout her course of the day.

"My goal is to make our EHR efficient, that the nurse will spend less time charting and more time at the bedside," she said. "So if I accomplish that, I think I will have met my purpose."

She also plans to reach out to other SSM hospitals for mentoring. The field of informatics is always evolving so the need to be updated as a nurse is essential, she said.

"Informatics is kind of like involved at every table," she said. "I'm also involved in what we call a Practice Council. Basically the Practice Councils are nurses that meet once a month.

We talk about our policies; we talk about any changes regulatory-wise and all that stuff. And so we want the informatics to be at that table so they can evaluate."

She will be working with the four St. Anthony Healthplexes in the metroplex. These Healthplexes already have product specialists so Lacson anticipates working with the nursing staff as her primary focus.

"We're growing," she said.

Helping nurses be more efficient in charting provides them more time at the bedside to be attentive to patient care which is a standard hallmark of St. Anthony Hospital.

"One of the things I am passionate about is the MAR team which is the medical administration record," she said.

Feedback from the nurses is communicated by the informatics specialist to the products information staff for improvement sake. A newsletter is sent out every month notifying nurses of the approved changes.

"That's one of the exciting things I've seen that is tangible. We've had feedback. They've heard me and now we've made changes," Lacson said. EPIC promptly plugs in valuable information into the system of nursing care.

"Nurses document a lot. We have

a lot of things we need to remember," she said.

Future projects being developed are work lists. These are check lists for nurses resembling a test, she explained. The project will be time consuming, however, Lacson thrives on improvement.

"You need to be passionate about being a part of the change," Lacson said. "You need to know that change is always inevitable, and we have to be open to changes."

An informatics specialist needs to enjoy educating people and be a people person, she said. It is important not to take things personally when hearing frustrations, she added.

"Be open to criticism and feedback. I don't know everything, but I'm open," she said.

Lacson is busy on her feet a lot talking with a lot of people which is something she enjoys, but she also has a personal life.

She and her husband have a 2-year-old son who keep them busy. She reads a lot and plans to visit her 98-year-old grandfather in the Philippines where she was born.

"We're going to have a big family reunion and I'm going to get to see cousins from around the world."

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# CAREERS IN NURSING

## GOOD MORNING WITH A SMILE: CNA EMBODIES VALUES

by James Coburn - Writer/Photographer

Leslie Garrett has been with Forest Glade Retirement Community in Bethany for several years working as a CNA.

"She is definitely one of the favorites of our residents and management," said Karen Martinez, executive director. "She is one employee I wish I could clone. I would take many of her if I could find them."

Forest Glade is an assisted living center and the certified nurse aides are the ones who spend most of the time with the residents there, Martinez said.

"So really they are the blood going through the veins of the community," Martinez said.

Garrett is also a medication aide technician and said it is the residents that keep her enthusiastic about serving the elders at Forest Glade.

"If I notice anything new, I like to go and tell the nurses right then and there," Garrett said. "Most of the time they already know about it, but

still I want to be sure we're all on the same page because it all falls on all of us."

The interaction between the residents and Garrett makes her job easier, she said.

"I just love the residents. That's what keeps me here. They enjoy me as much as I enjoy them," she said.

Garrett became a CNA in 2006 after seeing the good care her grandmother received at a McAlester hospital, she said.

"That kind of inspired me whenever she passed," she said.

Garrett graduated from OSU/OKC and has been a CNA ever since she earned her certificate. Garrett said she treats the elderly in the same manner that she would treat her own grandmother if she was taking care of her. She never had the chance to do that because her grandmother died before she was a CNA.

Garrett said the quality of patience is an example of how a CNA can work well with the individuals they

serve. Residents also love to converse with her, she said. A CNA also needs to be reliable, Garrett said, because residents might be on a schedule.

"When you mess up on that schedule it kind of messes their day up," she explained. "I like to listen to their stories and I love to look at their pictures from back in the day -- the black and white ones are kind of cool."

She learns about how they lived when they were younger, the careers they had for many years and the enrichment it brought to their lives.

"They actually sit down and explain it, and they just love interacting with me, and they have compassion," Garrett continued.

She came to Forest Glade three years ago. She likes the flexibility of working there because they understand when she needs time off. Forest Glade is very family oriented, Garrett continued.

"They interact with the residents because they care about the residents,"

she said.

Residents are taken to Walmart or other places of interest. They do arts and crafts which is something Garrett likes because she can join them when she has free time. She celebrates their lives and has fun while doing it.

"They cook and have little therapy dogs and that's all me," she said. "Every day there's something new to do." Garrett said she admires the residents because even when they feel at times like giving up they won't.

"I admire their strength and being able to deal with the struggles that they do face every day," she said. "Because it is frustrating and I just admire they can do it because I know when I get that age, I don't know how I'm going to be. So I admire that because how some of these residents can take a hand full of pills -- I admire that because I can't do that."

She laughed when asked about

**Continued on next page**



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Leslie Garrett is a beloved CNA by both residents and staff at the Forest Glade Retirement Community, an assisted living center in Bethany.

her hobbies and what she likes to do in her spare time. Garrett has three kids and plays a lot with them. They go to the park and watch movies.

"We play outside. That's pretty much my hobbies," she said.

When thinking of work Garrett said she likes the teamwork that she has with the LPNs and RNs. She is thankful for the friendships she has made as part of the nursing staff through the years.

"We work good with each other. We're all kind of like family," Garrett said. "We all just kind of fit together."

She looks forward to the new residents who will be moving into Forest Glade in coming days.

"It's always kind of interesting getting new ones," she said. "I look forward to bringing in the new year with the residents we already have that didn't think they would make it to 2017. There's new and exciting opportunities to come."

She always has a smile on her face that attracts a lot of conversation from the residents, she said.

Her family tells her they admire her because they could not do the work she does as a CNA. But Garrett said being a CNA is not bad at all.

"I can handle all of it. I like it,"

she said. "What I do to assist is I help them to the bathroom. I help them get dressed, brush their hair and if they need help washing dishes or something little like taking showers, bathing -- all of that I do."

"We have some that don't need nothing but a little dish washed."

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## PEDIATRIC PSYCHOLOGIST JOINS OU CHILDREN'S

Psychologist Melissa Bernstein, Ph.D., has established her practice with OU Children's Physicians. She has also been named an assistant professor with the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine.

Bernstein provides comprehensive psychological and psychoeducational evaluations for children with a variety of concerns, including those who have experienced child abuse and neglect and those with disruptive behavioral problems.

Bernstein completed a fellowship-in clinical child psychology with the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect at the OU College of Medicine. She completed a child and adolescent psychology internship at Starr Commonwealth, Albion, Michigan, and earned her doctor of philosophy in clinical-developmental child psychology at the University of Maine, Orono.

OU Children's Physicians practice as part of OU Physicians, Oklahoma's largest physician group. The group encompasses nearly every child and adult medical specialty.

Nearly 200 of these specialists committed their practices to the care of children. The majority of OU Children's Physicians are board certified in children's specialties. Many provide pediatric-specific services unavailable elsewhere in the state. Some have pioneered surgical procedures or innovations in patient care that are world firsts.



Melissa Bernstein, Ph.D.

OU Children's Physicians see patients in their offices at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and other cities around Oklahoma. When hospitalization is necessary, they often admit patients to The Children's Hospital at OU Medical Center. Many children with birth defects, critical injuries or serious diseases who can't be helped elsewhere come to OU Children's Physicians. Oklahoma doctors and parents rely on OU Children's Physicians depth of experience, nationally renowned expertise and sensitivity to children's emotional needs.

## How to make healthy resolutions that stick



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation employee Stephen Apel makes use of the on-site fitness facility. If your goal is to get to the gym, focus on just that goal and add other resolutions later on.

January typically begins with the best of intentions. Shed a few pounds. Hit the gym religiously. Sound familiar?

But while many make resolutions, most fail to follow through, with fewer than one in 10 achieving their goals. The key to being one of those who succeeds, says Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation President Stephen Prescott, M.D., is to make goals that are both reasonable and quantifiable.

"People often say, 'I want to lose 25 pounds,' or 'I want to eat better.' Those are both laudable aims," said Prescott. "The problem is, one is awfully ambitious, and the other is almost terminally vague."

If you overreach with your goals—like trying to drop 25 pounds—an early misstep or bump in the road can derail you quickly. "Then the task will feel impossible, and the natural reaction is to give up," said Prescott.

For a better shot at a healthy 2017, he suggests mapping out smaller, achievable goals to get the ball rolling.

So instead of pledging to lose 25 pounds, said Prescott, set a goal to lose two pounds in January. "When you succeed, you'll feel great and have the motivation to keep going with two more pounds in February, then

March and so on," he said. "After 12 months, you could end up dropping those 25 pounds by tackling the goal in increments. Short-term markers can translate to long-term success."

When it comes to improving your diet, Prescott suggests a similar approach.

Start with a specific, manageable goal, like giving up sugary drinks for a month. If you achieve this, then build on it in February by also pledging to add a green vegetable to your plate every day. Over time, these small adjustments can lead to big changes.

For the best chance of success, Prescott recommends taking on a single resolution at a time. It's a lesson he learned from personal experience.

"When I resolved to lose weight and improve my fitness level a few years ago, I found it was really difficult to exercise while I was also dieting," said Prescott. "It worked much better when I shifted my focus to losing weight alone. Then, after I dropped 15 pounds, I got serious about fitness."

"You only have so much willpower and self-discipline, so don't stretch yourself too thin," he said. "Choose the resolution that is most important to you and focus on that one."

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# Oklahoma's Nursing Times Hospice Directory

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**Alpha Hospice:** 7512 N Broadway Ext., suite 312 OKc, 405-463-5695 Keith Ruminer/volunteer coordinator/chaplain

**Autumn Bridge Hospice:** 405-440-2440

**Autumn Light Hospice:** 580-252-1266

**Carter Healthcare & Hospice:** OKC - OKC Pat McGowen, Vol. Coordinator, 405-947-7705, ext. 134; Tulsa - Samantha Estes, Vol. Coordinator, 918-425-4000

**Centennial Hospice:** Becky Johnson, Bereavement Coordinator 405-562-1211

**Choice Home Health & Hospice:** 405-879-3470

**Comforting Hands Hospice:** Bartlesville: 918-331-0003

**Companion Hospice:** Steve Hickey, Vol. Coordinator, Guthrie: 405-282-3980; Edmond: 405-341-9751

**Compassionate Care Hospice:** Amy Legare, Bereavement/Vol. Coordinator, 405-948-4357

**Cornerstone Hospice:** Vicky Herrington, Vol. Coordinator, 918-641-5192

**Crossroads Hospice:** Elizabeth Horn, Vol. Coordinator, 405-632-9631

**Cross Timbers Hospice:** Ardmore-800-498-0655 Davis-580-369-5335 Volunteer Coordinator-Shelly Murray

**Excell Hospice:** Toni K. Cameron, Vol. Coordinator 405-631-0521

**Faith Hospice of OKC:** Charlene Kilgore, Vol. Coordinator, 405-840-8915

**Frontier Hospice:** Kelly Morris, Vol. Coordinator, 405-789-2913

**Golden Age Hospice:** 405-735-5121

**Good Shepherd Hospice:** 4350 Will Rogers Parkway Suite 400 OKC OK 73108 405-943-0903

**Grace Hospice Foundation:** Sharon Doty, Dir of Spec. Projects - Tulsa 918-744-7223

**Harbor Light Hospice:** Randy Pratt, Vol. Coordinator, 1009 N Meridian, Oklahoma City, OK 73107 405-949-1200

**Horizon Hospice:** LaDonna Rhodes, Vol. Coordinator, 918-473-0505

**Heartland Hospice:** Shawnee: Vol. Coord. Karen Cleveland, 405-214-6442; OKC: Vol. Coord. Tricia Woodward, 405-579-8565

**Heavenly Hospice:** Julie Myers, Coordinator 405-701-2536

**Hope Hospice:** Bartlesville: 918-333-7700, Claremore: 918-343-0777 Owasso: 918-272-3060

**Hospice by Loving Care:** Connie McDivitt, Vol. Coordinator, 405-872-1515

**Hospice of Green Country:** Tulsa: 918-747-2273, Claremore: 918-342-1222, Sapulpa: 918-224-7403

**INTEGRIS Hospice, Inc. & the INTEGRIS Hospice House:** Ruth Ann Frick, Vol. Coordinator, 405-848-8884

**Hospice of Owasso, Inc.:** Todd A. Robertson, Dir. of Marketing, 877-274-0333

**Humanity Hospice:** Kay Cole, Vol. Coordinator 405-418-2530

**InFinity Care of Tulsa:** Spencer Brazeal, Vol. Director, 918-392-0800

**Indian Territory Home Health & Hospice:** 1-866-279-3975

**Interim Healthcare Hospice:** 405-848-3555

**Image HealthCare :** 6116 S. Memorial Tulsa, Ok. 74133 (918) 622-4799

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**LifeSpring In-Home Care Network:** Terry Boston, Volunteer and Bereavement Coordinator 405-801-3768

**LifeLine Hospice:** April Moon, RN Clinical Coordinator 405-222-2051

**Mercy Hospice:** Sandy Schuler, Vol. Coordinator, 405-486-8600

**Mission Hospice L.L.C.:** 2525 NW Expressway, Ste. 312 OKC, OK 73112 405-848-3779

**Oklahoma Hospice Care:** 405-418-2659 Jennifer Forrester, Community Relations Director

**One Health Home Health in Tulsa:** 918-412-7200

**Palliative Hospice:** Janet Lowder, Seminole, & Sabrina Johnson, Durant, 800-648-1655

**Physician's Choice Hospice:** Tim Clausing, Vol. Coordinator 405-936-9433

**Professional Home Hospice:** Sallisaw: 877-418-1815; Muskogee: 866-683-9400; Poteau: 888-647-1378

**PromiseCare Hospice:** Angela Shelton, LPN - Hospice Coordinator, Lawton: (580) 248-1405

**Quality Life Hospice:** 405 486-1357

**RoseRock Healthcare:** Audrey McCraw, Admin. 918-236-4866

**Ross Health Care:** Glenn LeBlanc, Norman, Chickasha; April Burrows, Enid; Vol. Coordinators, 580-213-3333

**Russell Murray Hospice:** Tambi Urias, Vol. Coordinator, 405-262-3088; Kingfisher 405-375-5015; Weatherford-580-774-2661

**Seasons Hospice:** Carolyn Miller, Vol. / Bereavement Coordinator, 918-745-0222

**Sequoyah Memorial Hospice:** Vernon Stone, D. Min. Chaplin, Vol. Coordinator, 918-774-1171

**Sooner Hospice, LLC:** Matt Ottis, Vol. Coordinator, 405-608-0555

## Breakthrough Treatment for Patients with Barrett's Esophagus Now Available at St. Anthony Hospital

### Radiofrequency Ablation System Reduces Risk of Barrett's Esophagus Progressing to Esophageal Cancer

Over 12.5 million people in the U.S. have Barrett's esophagus, many of whom are not even diagnosed. Barrett's esophagus occurs when cells in the lower esophagus are affected by chronic exposure to acid. Because of its strong association with esophageal cancer, Barrett's esophagus is considered a pre-cancerous disease.

To reduce the risk of Barrett's Esophagus progressing to Esophageal Cancer, St. Anthony Hospital is now offering the Barrx radiofrequency ablation system, a treatment that removes esophageal tissues affected by Barrett's esophagus, a pre-cancerous disease (dysplastic Barrett's esophagus).

"Barrx technology offers an efficient and safe way to treat complicated Barrett's esophagus, a condition that is common and results from chronic heartburn or Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD). Barrx radiofrequency ablation is a minimally invasive technique performed by a Gastroenterologist during an upper endoscopy, which minimizes a patient's risk of developing esophageal cancer," said Pooja Singhal, M.D., board certified gastroenterologist at St. Anthony Hospital.

The Barrx radiofrequency ablation system uses heat to remove tissue affected by Barrett's esophagus. In a clinical study, the Barrx radiofrequency ablation system was found to reduce the risk of Barrett's esophagus progressing to esophageal cancer by over 90 percent.

If you have undergone treatment or observation for GERD, chronic heartburn or other acid reflux-related symptoms, you may be at risk of developing Barrett's esophagus. Early detection of Barrett's esophagus may reduce the risk of this disease progressing to esophageal cancer. To learn more about this procedure or to make an appointment with St. Anthony Physicians Gastroenterology, please call

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The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with options like Home, My Account, Find Jobs, Post Resume, Register, and Employer. A search bar is prominently displayed with fields for keywords, job type, country, state, and city. A sidebar on the right offers login options for employers and job seekers, along with a featured section for 'Ambassador Mentor Nursing Center'. At the bottom, a starburst graphic emphasizes the site's mobile compatibility.

The Hospice Directory above does not represent a list of all Hospice facilities statewide. For a complete list visit [www.ok.gov/health](http://www.ok.gov/health)



**Vicki L Mayfield, M.Ed., R.N.,  
LMFT Marriage and Family  
Therapy Oklahoma City**  
*If you would like to send a  
question to Vicki, email us at  
news@okcnursingtimes.com*

**Q.** At the end of every year I think about what I want to accomplish in the new year. I want to have meaningful and reachable goals and ideas not new years resolutions that sound great but never last. Here are some thoughts I wanted to share.

**A. WEIGHT LOSS --** Start slow. Think about nutrition and movement. Failure often occurs because people join a gym and start a diet that are extreme and set the tone for defeat.

**NUTRITION -- DON'T GO ON A DIET!!!!** Start slow. Make small changes that bring big rewards. Start a food diary, Understanding why you overeat and what you choose to eat are very important in making permanent food changes. Learn about food and the benefits as well as dangers for your body. Disease can be directly related to unhealthy food choices.

**MOVEMENT --** Notice the word is not exercise which has a negative association for many people. We have become a very sedentary group of people and progress is unlikely to happen unless people can put their electronics on the table and walk away from them. A fat society is full of health care related problems. You can cease opportunities to take more steps, you don't have to spend money and join a gym on Jan. 1 and stop going Jan 31 because you just don't like it. Think of all the ways you can move your body..

**WORK --** Are you working the job that you enjoy? If No, what options do you have? If your options are few or none, is there anything about your job that does make you happy? Some of us are lucky to work with people that make any difficult day more bearable. In the health care profession there are many opportunities for transfers to other units or facilities. Take an inventory of your current job and see how it is working for you.

**SOCIAL TIME --** How are you spending your time away from work? Do you have close friends that you can spend time with who make you healthier? Do you have hobbies or social involvements that you really look forward to? One of the dangers of work related stress is isolating when the work day is over. Some people have had enough interaction. Alone time can be healing also if it doesn't become the normal.

**PERSONAL GROWTH --** Are you following your dreams? Is there something that you have always wanted to do but made excuses for why you couldn't do it? Do you want to take piano lessons but think you are too old? Do you want to go back to school but think you don't have enough time? Personal growth comes from reading, joining 12 step groups, book clubs, making new interesting friends, traveling, etc.

Let 2017 tap into your creativity. Get out of the box. Color outside the lines. If you desire change, you can find it.

## The Flu Doesn't Take a Break During the Holiday Season:

### St. Anthony Pediatrician Gives Tips on Treating and Preventing the Flu

What comes with the most wonderful time of year? Flu season. Yes, among the brightly decorated houses, beautifully wrapped presents, and delicious treats, flu season lurks in the shadows of every holiday season.

According to Dr. Brittany Daniels, St. Anthony Pediatrician, the flu can be packaged in various symptoms. "Many signs of the flu can mimic other viruses. Children will typically have fevers and chills, cough, sore throat, fatigue, generalized muscle aches, headache, and congestion. It can sometimes be difficult to differentiate the flu from another virus. However, the flu can sometimes lead to pneumonia, seizures, or diarrhea in children."

If you suspect your child has the flu, you should take them to see their pediatrician in the first 48 hours. "If the flu is diagnosed in this time range, Tamiflu, an antiviral agent, can be prescribed and can sometimes shorten the course of the flu illness," commented Dr. Daniels. "Supportive care is also important for taking care of a child with the flu at home. The general rule is to stay home from school until fever free for greater than 24 hours. It's helpful to give them Motrin or Tylenol to help reduce fever, and also make sure they are receiving plenty of fluids so the child does not get dehydrated."

If you're looking for the best medicine when it comes to the flu, your best option is prevention. "The flu vaccine helps prevent you from

getting the flu. If you do get the flu and have had a flu shot, it can make it less severe and can keep you from spreading it to other family members, for example children under 6 months who are unable to get the flu vaccine," said Dr. Daniels.

The flu is much more dangerous if you are an infant, young child, or in the elderly population. These are the groups of people that have the most complications from the flu such as pneumonia, and are more likely to be hospitalized. "The earliest a child can receive the flu shot is 6 months of age. It's important for them to have the flu shot at this age, because a young infant can have the most complications if the flu is contracted," she added.

Each year researchers study which strains of flu will be prevalent for that year and "match" the flu vaccine to those types. "The flu shot contains a very small amount of flu antigen. When you get the flu vaccine, your body recognizes the flu virus or antigen as a foreign trespasser and will produce antibodies to it. The next time your body encounters the flu virus it will remember, and will guard against the virus," said Dr. Daniels.

Along with the flu vaccine, prevention consists of good habits. "Preventing the flu is just like preventing any viral illness," said Dr. Daniels. "Good hand washing, not sharing food or drink, and keeping your daily environment clean will help."

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# NURSE + TALK

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## What do you look forward to in 2017? Meadow Lake Estates

"Just grow more as a nurse and watch my son grow and develop more. He's 3."



Hannah Serrano, LPN

"I just graduated from nursing school, so I look forward to becoming a nurse."



Leighann Garrison, CMA

Each week we visit with health care professionals throughout the Metro



Please Let us know Your Thoughts

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"I look forward to peaceful living. Let's everybody come together with this new president and peace amongst men."

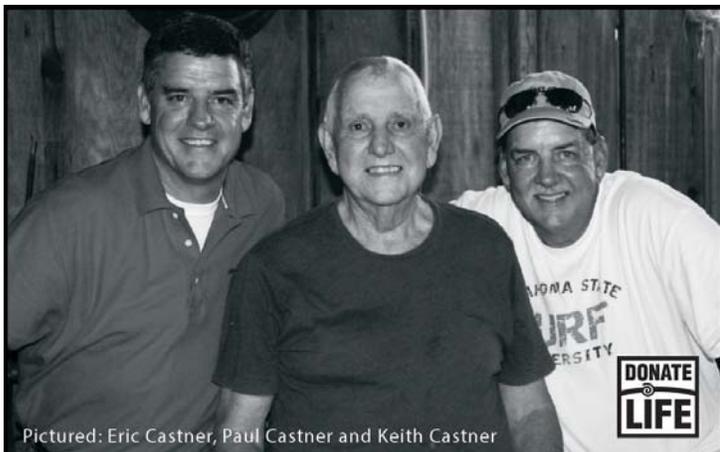


Michael Mackey, restorative nurse

"I look forward to meeting new people here and getting to know one's who have been here that I don't see all the time."



Mishael LeMay, LPN



Pictured: Eric Castner, Paul Castner and Keith Castner

Paul raised his family the good-old-fashioned way, he expected character, integrity and hard work out of his sons. He built his family with faith in God, and his sons passed those same qualities of faith, character and integrity to their kids. At 82 years old, Paul was able to give the gift of life as his last final act of kindness.

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