



Donna Banks, RN takes pride in working at AllianceHealth Deaconess Hospital in the Rehabilitation Unit. Full of love, compassion and physical therapy, the patients are on the road to recovery, one step at a time.

by Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

As I enter Alliance Deaconess Hospital, I am greeted with a smile and "How may I help you?" from the volunteer at the information desk. "I am on my way to the Rehabilitation Unit," I tell her. "Third floor," she replies, "the elevator is right around the corner."

At the nurse's station, I see a nurse interacting with a patient in a wheelchair. With a gentleness in her voice, I hear the nurse tell the patient, 'your physical therapist will be here in 5 minutes. I'll be right here with you until she arrives,' as she places her hand on the patient's shoulder. It is then that

I realize that this kind soul is Donna Banks, RN. With an outstretched arm and a handshake, I hear, "Hi, I'm Donna Banks. It is nice to meet you. I am the one you are to interview."

The Rehabilitation Unit is dedicated to helping people rebuild their lives after illness and injury. This is where they believe that recovery encompasses both mind and body, so the comprehensive services address both the mental and physical aspects of rehabilitation. The rehabilitation team includes knowledgeable, caring professionals who are dedicated to providing quality care and support.

"How long have you been a nurse?" I ask Donna. "Let's see, it has been about 21 years now,"

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## Nurses to converge at capitol

by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

How will Oklahoma close what is becoming a reoccurring funding deficit to public services?

How will we ensure funding for public and higher education so students who want to pursue a career in the medical field will be prepared?

These questions and others will be posed to Oklahoma's gubernatorial candidates and legislators when the Oklahoma Nurses Association hosts its annual Nurses Day at the Capitol on Tuesday, February 27.

ONA President Jane Nelson says that for the first time the association will host a roundtable of Oklahoma's candidates for governor so nurses can find out important information.

Invitations have been sent to candidates asking for their attendance or to send a representative.

One week prior to the event, Nelson said the campaigns of Drew Edmondson, Kevin Stitt, Mick Cornett, Connie Johnson and Gary Jones have all committed to coming to the roundtable.

The campaigns of Todd Lamb, Gary Richardson and Dan Fisher were still undecided about sending a representative.

Nelson explained the panel will be held in a talk show format with questions coming from the audience.

"We will be asking questions regarding nursing practice, health care and how they plan to address those issues and others," Nelson said, noting the topic of filling the budget hole will be key. "Questions (will be asked) that go to the heart of it like if we don't have money for education how do we insure students will graduate so they can pursue degrees, especially in nursing?"

ONA encourages all Nurses and Nursing Students to get involved in the legislative process by attending Nurses Day at the Capitol. The day begins with an informational session held at

See CAPITOL Page 2

## CAPITOL

Continued from Page 1

the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, followed by an opportunity to go to the Capitol and talk with legislators.

You will have the opportunity to:

\*Hear legislative experts, legislators and ONA's Lobbyist.

\*Talk with legislators concerning the issues vital to ONA and the nursing profession.

\*Increase your awareness of the role nurses play in the political arena.

\*Voice your concerns regarding legislation affecting nursing practice, patient safety, preventive care and health education as well as Oklahoma's health status.

The agenda for this year's event begins with registration at 7:30 a.m. the day of the event and an opening welcome at 8:30 a.m.

A few minutes later the panel of gubernatorial candidates addressing the future of Oklahoma's health will begin.

"There probably won't ever be another another forum quite like this," Nelson said.

A break to visit exhibitors will



Oklahoma Nurses will converge on the state capitol Tuesday, February 27 for their annual Day at the Capitol including a special roundtable discussion with Oklahoma gubernatorial candidates.

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follow and then a 10:15 a.m. learning activity session detailing the legislative process will be offered.

ONA Lobbyist Vickie White Rankin will address the group on how they can make a difference by advocating for their profession at the capitol.

Beginning at 1 p.m. attendees will visit with legislators and hear bills in the House and Senate chambers.

Nelson said the event typically draws some 500 attendees including nursing students and faculty.

"What comes out of it is an important opportunity to engage with gubernatorial candidates that

want to know what our issues and legislative priorities are," Nelson said. "(Legislators) are asking us questions about our practice and it's really been an open dialogue with nurses."

You can register online at [OKLAHOMANURSES.ORG](http://OKLAHOMANURSES.ORG) or call 405-840-3476 for more information.





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## RECOVERY

Continued from Page 1

she replies. "Gosh, I guess that is a long time," she adds with a smile. "I went to school in Senatobia, Mississippi and became a nurse. I have enjoyed my job ever since and I can't see myself doing anything else. I just love it!"

"Why did you choose nursing as a career?" I ask. "Well, it was shortly after I got married that my husband fell and broke his back. It was partially due to me caring for him and financial reasons that I was his caregiver. I had a real desire for 'caring.' It was then I knew that I wanted to become a nurse, taking care of others. I remember when I was a little girl, I just knew I would grow up to be an elementary school teacher but my husband changed that," she replied with a laugh. "Also, my older sister had gone into nursing a year before so she had an influence on my life too."

Asking Donna what advice she would give to someone if they were to enter the medical field, she replied, "I would tell them to keep their eyes wide open, be sincere in their heart and give sincerity to the patients, always doing what you say you are

going to do, following through with your word. That is so important."

"In your opinion, what makes a good nurse?" I ask. With a smile and a quick answer, Donna says, "I would say they would have to be honest, sincere and compassionate. They would have to really care about other people, taking care of them as though they were a part of their own family."

When I asked Donna what her best quality was, she told me that it was compassion. It was obvious to see that she had displayed plenty of it in the short time I was there.

When Donna is not at work, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two grown sons. Her hobbies include quilting and refinishing furniture. "I'm not the best at either hobby but I enjoy both of them. It is very relaxing." She adds with a laugh.

"I have one last question for you Donna," I continue. "What is the greatest reward about your job?"

"I love coming to work and seeing the patients. We have some sweet moments and some not so sweet moments and that is when I can get overwhelmed. Even with the chaos that occurs sometimes, the job is well worth it for that special reward. Also, we all get along so well around here. My job is very gratifying in many ways."

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# Quality counts

## OSU-OKC nurses stand out

For more than 50 years now, Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City has produced some of the most sought-after nurses in the state.

That legacy continues with the school's new RN to BSN program. OSU-OKC nursing students are even granted provisional acceptance to the program and receive full admission.

"One of the philosophies for the associate degree nursing program is to provide means for students to continue their education," said Anna Nguyen, PhD, RN, department head of the OSU-OKC nurse science program. "Many of the hospitals now are seeking Magnet status which prefers bachelor's graduates."

"Our program started in 1969 so we have a very solid and well established program. I believe we have a very solid program and on top of that OSU-OKC has a very positive reputation in the community for producing well-prepared graduates."

OSU-OKC is a community and

technical college located in central Oklahoma City. Each year, nearly 10,000 students attend OSU-OKC, seeking education as a pathway to a better life.

It is an urban campus, with a diverse student population. About half of the students are pursuing terminal degrees in a desire to move quickly into the workforce in technical positions, while the remainder are working on their basic coursework and will transfer to a four-year school in pursuit of a bachelor's degree.

### REPUTATION COUNTS

OSU-OKC's Nurse Science program is considered one of the pre-eminent programs at the university, and in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, with hundreds of students competing for admission into the program.

Of the students who successfully complete the program and the licensure exam, 100% find employment within six to nine months of graduating.

Nguyen says this high level of

placement indicates the strong demand for healthcare jobs in this area, the quality and reputation of the institution's nursing program, and that students in this field can quickly transition into a career when they complete their education.

The U.S. is projected to experience a shortage of registered nurses that is expected to intensify as Baby Boomers age and the need for health care grows.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Projections 2014-2024, Registered Nursing is listed among the top occupations in terms of job growth through 2024.

The Workforce Oklahoma Occupational Outlook 2018 report lists registered nurses as one of Oklahoma's top five demand occupations with 1,260 average annual openings per year.

OSU-OKC's Nurse Science graduates scored a 95.54% pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) in 2016.

The national average is 84.56% and the Oklahoma average is 83.78% during the same year.

### CONTINUED GROWTH

The OSU-OKC Allied Health program is now positioned to support tremendous increases in both student enrollment numbers and graduation rates beginning with the next academic year. Construction of the campus's new, 45,000-square-foot Allied Health building is complete, and the facility contains state-of-the-art technologies that rival the best that Oklahoma educational institutions offer.

This unique facility, opened in 2016, established a best-in-industry Simulation Center which enhances educational opportunities for both new health profession students and experienced healthcare workers employed by local hospitals and clinics.

The new facility and Simulation Center are significantly larger in size with more manikins which are considered state-of-the-art technology. The facility includes:

- Five simulation suites that emulate clinical situations
- Three medical/surgical suites
- A labor and delivery suite
- An emergency room/intensive care suite
- Two patient exam rooms
- Three debriefing rooms
- A ten-bed skills practice lab for Nurse Science
- An expanded ten-bed skills lab for Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Virtual IV and phlebotomy skills lab
- Life-size "manikins" that can be programmed to provide a realistic replication of a clinical/emergency situation (and which the Hearst grant helped to purchase)
- Multidimensional, flexible and adaptable space allowing for creative instructional deliveries
- A 200-seat Auditorium
- Space to facilitate the educational needs of the community for conferences and continuing medical education
- Nutrition Science lab/classroom
- State-of-the-art computerized technology and audio-visual capabilities throughout the building

The new facility has also facilitated a partnership with Variety Care, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that strives to make healthcare affordable and accessible for all patients. This partnership provides outstanding educational opportunities for the students as well as support to the surrounding communities.

It has also resulted in the establishment of a Variety Care community health clinic on the first floor of the new facility. The clinic offers services to those who otherwise could not afford it and the families of the underrepresented students attending OSU-OKC.

As an added benefit, students are able to expand upon what they have learned at the Simulation Center by then participating directly in clinical learning and onsite service learning — a unique arrangement for both the student and nonprofit clinic.



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# Oklahoma State Department of Health Confirms Measles Case

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) and the Cleveland County Health Department are investigating a confirmed case of measles in Norman located in Cleveland County. This is the first confirmed case in Oklahoma since 2015.

Measles was identified in a person who had returned to Oklahoma after international travel. Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus may remain airborne up to 2 hours in a room after the person with measles has left an indoor area.

Based on collected information about the measles case during the time they were contagious, public health officials want to alert anyone who visited the following locations in Norman during the specified times about potential exposure to the measles virus: \* Norman Pediatrics (808 Wall Street, Norman, OK) during the following dates and times: Friday, February 2 from 9:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. and Tuesday, February 6 from 11:15 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

\* Chuck E Cheese's (2201 Interstate Drive, Norman, OK) on Saturday, February 3 from 12:45 - 3:30 p.m.

\* Norman Regional HealthPlex (3300 HealthPlex Parkway, Norman, OK) on Tuesday, February 6 from 12:25 - 3:30 p.m. The specific areas include outpatient registration, emergency room waiting, and laboratory collection services.

The OSDH is collaborating with officials of these organizations to identify persons that may have visited the above mentioned locations to inform them of their exposure and provide recommendations. Persons are protected if they are immunized with two doses of a measles-containing vaccine after the first birthday, or if they were born during or before 1957. Those who think they may have been at risk of exposure should review their immunization records and contact the Cleveland County Health

Department (405-321-4048 ext. 260), their local county health department or the OSDH epidemiologist-on-call at 800-234-5963 (24/7/365 availability).

Persons who are susceptible to measles usually develop symptoms about 10 days after exposure with a range of 7-21 days. Symptoms of measles begin with a mild to moderate fever, runny nose, red eyes, and cough. A few days later, a rash appears starting on the face spreading to the rest of the body accompanied by a fever that can reach up to 105 degrees. Measles can lead to pneumonia and other complications, especially in young children and adults over 20. The disease can also cause serious problems in pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems.

Individuals that were exposed and are not experiencing symptoms of illness do not need to be evaluated by a healthcare provider. If you experience symptoms of illness suggestive of measles, contact your healthcare provider before presenting for care to discuss instructions for check-in and registration.

People with measles can spread the virus up to four days before the onset of the rash and until four days after the rash starts. Measles can be prevented with the measles vaccine (usually given in combination with rubella and mumps, called MMR vaccine), and is recommended for all children at 12 to 15 months of age and again at four to six years of age. If a person has not received a second dose of the vaccine between four to six years of age, the booster dose may be given at any age thereafter. Two doses of vaccine normally provide lifelong immunity.



Oklahoma State  
Department of Health

## St. Anthony Physicians Group Welcomes Tiffani Lowell, MSN, APRN, FNP-C to St. Anthony Physicians Choctaw

St. Anthony Physicians Group is pleased to welcome Tiffani Lowell, MSN, APRN, FNP-C to St. Anthony Physicians Choctaw.

Lowell received her nursing degree from Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma. She then completed a Master of Science in Nursing, from the University of South Alabama.

St. Anthony Physicians Choctaw is located at 15679 NE 23rd Street. To make an appointment please call 405-390-1800.



## Nurses, let your voices be heard at the Capitol this Legislative Session!



## ONA Nurses Day at the Capitol Feb. 27th in OKC

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Find more information and register at: [www.OklahomaNurses.org](http://www.OklahomaNurses.org).

## Oklahoma Nurses Association

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# What you need to know about the flu



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation Scientist Eliza Chakravarty, M.D.

This year's flu outbreak is shaping up to be the worst in a decade, with millions infected and hospitalization and fatality rates rising sharply across the U.S.

The flu season has hit Oklahoma hard, having claimed 74 lives as of Friday and resulted in more than 2,000 hospitalizations, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

But what makes the flu season so different from year to year? Why is this year worse than the last? To understand that, said Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation immunologist Eliza Chakravarty, M.D., we first have to understand how the virus works.

The virus spreads mainly by droplets from infected individuals, typically through coughing, sneezing and even talking. Once inside us, the virus uses our own cellular machinery to replicate.

"All influenza viruses have two molecules covering them: hemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N)," said

Chakravarty. "H opens the door by sticking to cells before injecting them. That process hijacks cells and forces them to pump out copies of the virus. N makes sure the virus doesn't get stuck when leaving cells."

It doesn't take long for our immune system to identify that something is amiss. "This leads to your body pumping out hormones in attack mode; that's partly what makes you feel so miserable," Chakravarty said. "It causes fever, body aches, coughing, fatigue and chills."

The immune system also responds by creating antibodies to the virus to prevent it from hijacking our cells next time around. This is also how vaccines work, stimulating your immune system to create antibodies—without actually getting sick.

Unlike many other viruses, the flu virus is constantly mutating, or changing. "This mutation problem is why we need a different flu vaccine every single year," Chakravarty said. "The fact that it's constantly changing,

even between the time where the vaccine is made to when the flu hits us, is partly why the vaccines can be very hit-and-miss in their effectiveness."

Unfortunately, it looks like that this year's vaccine is mostly a "miss." Although this year's dominant strain, H3N2, has been known for 50 years, reports indicate that the vaccine is only about 10 to 30 percent effective.

While certainly discouraging, Chakravarty said that if you haven't

received the flu shot, you still should. "Those statistics aren't good to see, but another way to look at it is that it still lessens your risk of contracting the flu by 30 percent. That can still make a huge difference."

"The other benefit is that even if you do still get the flu, you often get a much less severe version," she said. "So, get a flu shot. It really can save your life. And if you think you have the flu, please stay home to avoid spreading it."

## Researcher Receives \$3.3 Million Grant to Improve Health Outcomes for Homeless

A researcher from the Oklahoma Tobacco Research Center (OTRC) at the Stephenson Cancer Center is developing a custom smartphone app to improve health outcomes for homeless adults. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently funded this research with a \$3.3 million R01 grant. NIH R01 grants are the oldest and most prestigious type of cancer research grants.

The Link2Care app will offer recently incarcerated homeless adults the opportunity to connect to a case manager through the touch of the button. The app will also offer links to crisis management and other services on-demand.

"The aim of the Link2Care app is to increase the use of already available case management services, and thereby, help homeless adults to reduce alcohol use, drug use, psychological distress, and ultimately reduce homeless nights and re-arrest," said Michael Businelle, PhD, a lead investigator on this project.

Homeless adults who receive counseling and case management services upon their release from jail experience fewer mental health and substance abuse problems, are more likely to obtain stable housing, and are less likely to be re-incarcerated, ultimately saving taxpayer dollars. Yet, barriers such as transportation and limited access to information prevent homeless adults from accessing these already available resources.

"The use of technology to reduce barriers to service utilization among at-risk and hard-to-reach populations has great potential for intervention science," said Businelle. "This study aims to reduce barriers to service utilization by bringing case management services to homeless individuals via an innovative smartphone app."

Another aim of this study is to use smartphone-based and in-person assessments to pinpoint variables that predict substance use, psychological distress, homelessness, and re-arrest.

The Link2Care app will be developed by the OTRC's Mobile Health (mHealth) Shared Resource, which is directed by Businelle. The mHealth resource works with researchers to create innovative web- and mobile-based applications that identify and intervene upon environmental, cognitive, affective, physiological, and behavioral antecedents of health risk factors.

Researchers from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, University of Texas School of Public Health, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, and University of Kentucky are project investigators. The five-year study will enroll 432 participants from a Dallas-based Homeless Recovery Program.

The study is funded through a National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities grant from the NIH (1R01MD010733-01A1).



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**Q.** I got home from work, looking forward to a date night with my boyfriend. What I found was a dark apartment and letter on the sofa. It was a break up letter. Why? Because he said he did not like confrontation. Since when did communication and confrontation mean the same thing? --Tiffany

So more of my story. My boyfriend, Eric found out he would be required to attend some intensive training in another state for an unknown period of time. I will admit I have anxiety and sometimes I have trouble with news that might not be to my liking but really, "a break up letter" because you did not want to talk to me about this training.

Eric thought he had totally figured out what I would think, how I would react and what I would say. His movie was now in production. To avoid me "freaking out" about the long absence we would have with the training, he simply wrote a letter saying I would be better off with someone else. What is happening here?

He doesn't like confrontation. He hides from it. He runs from it. Somehow he confused communication with confrontation and never ever mentioned the upcoming training.

I was so confused when I came home to a dark apartment and breakup letter on the sofa. I could only read a couple of sentences and called him. I could barely breathe thinking he wanted to end

our relationship when we had been talking and texting throughout the day and he seemed fine. He said he was looking forward to our date night.

So now we were sitting on the sofa and he was "finally" communicating about the letter, the training, his fear about how I would react. How much of this could have been avoided if he had just talked to me when he found out. We could work through it, look at options, see how we could make it work.

We both realized that this was really more about him than me. His fear of failure, his inability to see beyond the immediate paralysis of his problem solving ability.

He apologized for writing the letter. He agreed that was not the way to solve problems that were really not that big but would require some adjusting.

I'm not sure why communicating in a relationship creates such obstacles but it does. I hope Eric and I can move past this bump in the road. Let me tell you, coming home to a break up letter when life appears to be smooth sailing was not the date night I expected.





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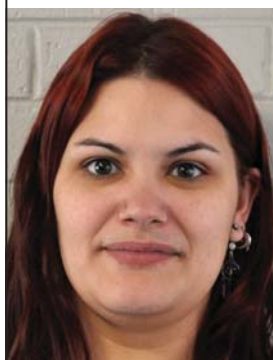
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*I would be an  
elephant because  
they are gentle  
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*I would be a tiger;  
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