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YEAR OF THE NURSE

Saying *Thanks* to those who care!

To the organizations taking part in this year's very special section by showing appreciation for current and future nurses and expressing their gratitude

we salute you!

Celebrating *National Nurses Month* 2020!

 **Oklahoma's
Nursing Times**

WWW.OKNURSINGTIMES.COM

May 4, 2020 Vol. 21 Issue 18

Stonegate stands tall in crisis

Tamara Meadows, RN-BC, is taking things one day at a time.

Charged with overseeing operations at 13 skilled nursing and assisted living facilities in Oklahoma, Meadows has brought her 35 years of long term care experience to bear during this pandemic.

It's never been easy.

Quite the contrary, it's often been exasperating as new information seemingly pours in by the hour.

Like every other healthcare facility in Oklahoma, supplies are a constant challenge.

News reports pour in adding to the fear, confusion and fatigue.

But to this point, Stonegate Senior Living has weathered the storm through Meadows' leadership here in Oklahoma and the staff's unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of the residents. I'm fortunate I also have three very talented Regional Nurse Consultants, who work along side me to support the facilities, Dawn Watson, RN, Briley Bolin, RN, and Kim Selvey, RN.

"I am just always in awe of our staff, our directors of nursing and administration," Meadows said. "They are the ones leading their teams to stay strong and not be fearful."

Stonegate began "battening down the hatches" in early March, restricting visitation and ending communal dining.

"We started at the very beginning and we didn't hesitate," she said. "Every day I thank the Lord we did that. We have fared very well so far."

It's shown in the safety and well-being of residents and staff.

Flexibility and maneuverability have been key for Meadows and her staff.

"We're taking it one day at a time," she said.

And calm, clear insightful voices have helped chart Stonegate's course.

Meadows and Stonegate have relied heavily on the leadership of Dianne K. Sullivan-Slasyk, MBA, BSN, RN., the company's CCO/SVP of clinical operations and Rhonda Abercrombie, RN, MHA, a former epidemiologist for the CDC, has helped to shape the company's Pandemic Plan and to ensure the information gets out to where it needs to be as Stonegate's director of quality.

Meadows is assured knowing she has 24/7 access to those information sources at Stonegate just like her staff has 24/7 access to her.

Looking back, she sees that's just one of the reasons Stonegate has been so successful.

"Starting early, I think that was the No. 1 thing," she said. "We started early and hard. We didn't go at this piecemeal and soft. Every time I think I'm being too hard I think of the evacuations (at facilities across the country). It's not too hard. This is what we're trying to prevent."

Education has also been vital in Stonegate's success.

Communicating that information in a timely, informative manner has helped decrease the stress level of staff while heightening their IQ of this viral process.

Knowledge truly is power.

"I think everyone feels very confident that Stonegate management is very strong in their guidance and what they're doing and that gives everybody a sense of security that there really are people at the top that



Tamara Meadows, RN-BC, a Board Certified Gerontological Nurse, is the Divisional Director of Clinical Operations for Stonegate Senior Living.

know what they're telling us," she said.

"They're huge on education at Stonegate," Meadows continued. "They have provided us tons of material to share with our staff. Also the Oklahoma State Health Department has been amazing."

"I think it's been educate and educate and educate. I'm getting all the education, but if I'm not sharing that with anyone it's not doing anyone on the ground floor any good. It's a matter of making sure they know what I know. I probably feel more secure in our buildings than I would going into Wal-Mart."

As the Governor's order came that all Oklahoma nursing home and long term care residents and staff would be tested in the coming days, Meadows said she's continuing to take it one day at a time.

"I would like the public to know we are diligently, faithfully - every hour of every day - trying to do everything to protect our residents," she said. "I get emotional because it is that emotional. These residents are our family. We care very deeply what happens."

"Just as the hospitals are doing everything they can, believe me, so are we and sometimes with much fewer tools."

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Thank You, Nurses

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Nurses have always been Heroes!

Nurses Month to Be Celebrated May 1-31

By Jane Nelson, CAE
ONA CEO

Never in a million years could we anticipate that in 2020 nurses would be on the frontlines with the COVID-19 pandemic; this is truly the **Year of the Nurse!**

"As the largest group of health care professionals in the U.S. and the most trusted profession, nurses are with patients 24/7 and at the beginning of life to the end. Nurses practice in all healthcare settings and are filling new roles to meet the ever-growing demand for health and health care services," said ANA President Ernest J. Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN. "Despite the major role nurses play in health care delivery and community outreach, there are still opportunities to increase understanding of the value of nursing by expanding investment in education, practice, and research, as well as increasing the number of nurses who serve in leadership positions."

May 6 – 12th is typically the week that has been designated to recognize and celebrate the work Nurses do every day, 24/7. This year Nurses Week has been expanded to a month-long celebration to expand opportunities to elevate and celebrate nursing in honor of 2020 being the Year of the Nurse. As always, we hope you will wear your "RN pin" on May 6th in honor of RN Recognition Day and celebrate Florence Nightingale's birthday on May 12th. However, there is more with this entire month being dedicated to celebrating nurses! Please go to the ONA website, oklahomanurses.org, to see the special events and resources we have designed to support you in the work you do 24/7, especially this year. ANA also has some special events, including a webinar with Carolyn Jones, on "telling your story."

ONA has always worked to

advocate for nurses, nursing, and the profession as a whole. That adage remains steadfast, especially during this crisis. We are working to ensure nurses have a seat at the table; ONA has been invited to participate with other health care providers in discussions with the Governor's cabinet. These meetings have been focused on Oklahoma's emergency response to COVID-19 – accessibility of PPE, availability of testing, and the overall workforce. Additionally, ONA has signed on or authored several letters to the Governor regarding Stay-at-Home orders, PPE, testing, and workforce.

Besides these advocacy efforts, we've worked to develop a place on our website for our nurses to find resources and tools to help navigate COVID-19 - we hope you've found these helpful. It's imperative that you not only have access to these resources but that you also have a safe space to share and network with fellow nurses. We created our Networks of Support: Connecting Oklahoma Nurses for just that reason. We'll continue to put on Networks of Support for the foreseeable future, as this has also assisted us in advocating for you. We have expanded this Network of Support for the month of May to provide you with tools that will help you mitigate stress, fatigue, and moral and ethical issues you are facing.

So this week, as you celebrate Nurses Week, consider how you can make a difference in your life and in the life of your patients. Let ONA know how we can help you and other nurses advocate for change. ONA works to advocate for nurses, the profession, and your patients, but we need to hear from you to know your needs firsthand. Let's Celebrate Nurses Week!

About ONA's Chief Executive Officer—Jane Nelson, CAE was named the CEO of the Oklahoma Nurses Association in March 2002. She has more than 30 years of association management and marketing experience with a variety of organizations. She holds a bachelor's degree from Purdue University and a master's degree from Michigan State University.

Nelson is a member of the American Society of Association Executives and the Oklahoma Society of Association Executives.



ONA Executive Director Jane Nelson.



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Answering the Call

The Uniform Shoppe continues to provide

For nearly 60 years now, The Uniform Shoppe has catered to the needs of Oklahoma's healthcare professionals.

So when the worst health crises in decades brought our state to a grinding halt, the owners of The Uniform Shoppe knew they had to be there continuing to support Oklahomans in healthcare.

The Weise family - beginning with husband and wife Albert and Elaine - and continuing with daughter, Jody, are synonymous with nursing apparel in Oklahoma.

With the Oklahoma City location, 10503 N May Ave, and the Tulsa store at 6044 S Sheridan Rd The Uniform Shoppe is a one-stop shop for everything nursing related including apparel, footwear and equipment.

Just like Oklahoma's healthcare professionals, The Uniform Shoppe was quickly deemed an essential business.

"All around people are calling healthcare workers their heroes. We've always known that," Jody Weise said. "We've always known those are the people that take care of our community, our families and take care of us. In turn they take care of our business."

Weise recalled a recent conversation with a customer.

The customer had just finished three straight shifts and thanked Weise for being open and giving her the opportunity to come get fresh scrubs.

"She just felt a little better about what she was doing, having something fresh and clean and new on her," Weise said. "She was thanking me for supporting her. It goes hand-in-hand. We have to look out for each other."

"You don't get that when you order online."

The Uniform Shoppe's online ordering portal has been markedly busier as the store offers modified hours but the stores remain open.

The Oklahoma City location is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tulsa's temporary hours are Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

As requirements changed seemingly hourly, Jody Weise got on the phone with her suppliers as nurses began flooding her with calls.

Through existing sources, The Uniform Shoppe was able to



For nearly 60 years, The Uniform Shoppe has continued to serve Oklahoma's nurses.

bring in disposable lab coats, gowns and hats - things most of their customers were hard-pressed to find at their facilities.

"We had to bring that stuff in," Weise explained. "We had people asking us for it. They couldn't find it anywhere else. I just happened to have a resource that had it in stock. The first go-round of disposable lab coats and gowns that came in were gone in a day."

"We understand these people put their lives on the line every day anywhere and are exposed to whatever working ungodly hours," Jody Weise said. "We appreciated what they're doing for our community anyway. This surely a test of talents and perseverance" as they go to work every day.

Weise and her staff have been there for Oklahoma nurses when they need it the most.

"My staff is amazing," Weise said, noting, like most businesses staying open right now, employees are dealing with fewer hours. "They're there. Our staff is dedicated to making sure we are still in business and we're all doing what we can."

And continuing to love on Oklahoma nurses the best way they know how.

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www.theuniformshoppe.com



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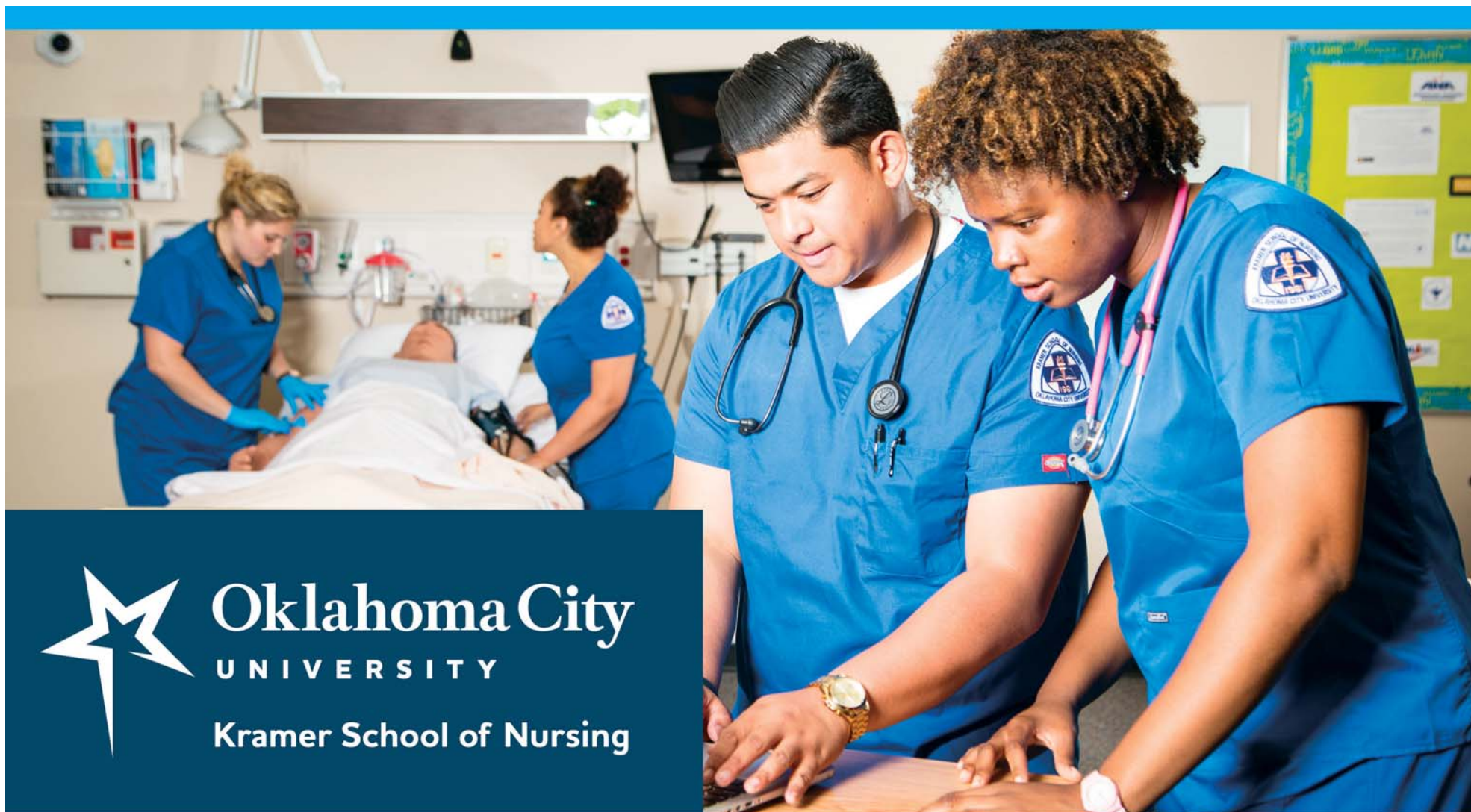
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HAPPY NURSES MONTH!

Kramer School of Nursing recognizes our caring and innovative nursing faculty who tirelessly work to provide the highest quality education to the next generation of nurses and advanced practice providers. Through your leadership and guidance, students are prepared to enter the workforce in a variety of nursing and leadership roles. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to nursing education and the healthcare profession.

KSN offers the RN-BSN, BSN, Masters, PhD, and DNP degrees. In fall 2020, the following new program options will also be offered:

LPN-BSN

MSN-HyFlex program delivery where students may choose face-to-face, synchronous video conferencing, or asynchronous fully-online (or a combination of the three)

MSN Community Based Public Health Track

BSN-DNP, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Track

DNP Completion (MSN-DNP), Community Based Public Health and Educational Leadership Track

CONTACT US!

UNDERGRAD: admissions@okcu.edu - (405) 208-5050

GRAD: gadmissions@okcu.edu - (405) 208-5054



OCU continues to lead

As a preeminent nursing program, Oklahoma City University's Kramer School of Nursing (KSN) continues to innovate its offerings to produce some of the most highly skilled nurses in our region.

This fall, KSN is adding several programs for students wanting to further their education. LPN's will now have the option of an LPN-BSN degree track. Nurses who want to pursue their Master's degree, but need flexibility, can choose the MSN-HyFlex program.

Nurses who work within the context of population-focused care will have the choice of getting an MSN in the Community Based Public Health (CBPH) track, which is also offered as a DNP Completion track.

And in response to the need for increased mental health providers, KSN is the first university in the state to offer the BSN-DNP, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner track. It's evident that KSN is positioning itself to continue to provide nurses with a variety of educational options that places them in a position to advance their careers.

The mission of KSN is to provide unique education and service opportunities that prepare professional nurses who practice with integrity, knowledge, and compassion while positively impacting the health care needs of diverse communities.

Crystal Westmoreland, PhD, MSN, RN, Chair of Traditional BSN Education at Kramer, states, "I love the collaboration between faculty, staff and students. The mentorship program allows faculty and staff to really get to know students as individuals, helping them through life's obstacles as they pursue their degree."

"As with all of our programs, Kramer doesn't have wait lists and offers students a variety of full-time and part-time options." The NCLEX pass rate for Kramer School of Nursing BSN graduates is above the national average and graduates who are ready to enter the workforce have employment.

The Meinders Simulations Center offers a seven-bed high-fidelity laboratory mirroring the hospital environment, allowing students to practice with realistic patient care scenarios.

KSN offers an outstanding RN-BSN program in which RNs can complete their BSN in just two semesters, with no prerequisites required.

"We have small, individualized classes taught by a group of amazing faculty who love working with practicing nurses" said Denise Burton, MS, RNC, CNE, Chair of the RN-BSN program. "The RN-BSN program is a gateway to career advancement or furthering your education by attending graduate school; the sky is the limit."

The program features the best of both worlds with nursing courses meeting face-to-face half day per week and the remaining elective/general education courses offered online. The program is currently offered at OCU, Mercy Hospital-OKC, and Norman Regional Hospital. No nursing exams, care plans or clinical hours are required. RN-BSN students are awarded a discounted tuition rate from the standard OCU tuition.

ADVANCING PRACTICE Vanessa Wright, PhD, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor and MSN Program Coordinator notes the MSN program is now offering Hy-Flex program delivery options where students may choose to attend face-to-face, synchronously using



video conferencing, asynchronously fully online, or some combination of the three based on their life schedule and preferred learning modality. The MSN currently offers tracks specializing in Education and Leadership, with a new program track in Community-Based Public Health anticipated to begin in August 2020.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice Completion program is for nurses with careers in all types of health care settings who already hold Master's degree in nursing, advanced practice, or a related field.

Focus areas include clinical, community based public health, and executive leadership. Post masters certificates are also available for advanced practice nurses who seek additional certification in an advanced practice role.

Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, Chair of Advanced Practice Program and Director of the FNP program points out, "Kramer School of Nursing was the first to offer a post-bachelors Doctorate of Nursing Practice program in the state of Oklahoma," she said. "It's been very fulfilling to see this program grow and see the success of our

alumni who are now working in a variety of clinical settings and some who own their own clinics."

Kramer School of Nursing will be the first in Oklahoma to offer the BSN-DNP Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner option.

Elizabeth Diener, PhD, RN, PNP, CNE Assistant Dean and Chair of Graduate Education discusses the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

"The PhD degree prepares expert nurses in the roles of nursing education, research, and leadership to serve the community, state, and nation," she said. Students meet on campus for 2-3 days at the beginning of each semester and then complete courses online over the remainder of the semester.

KSN is offering a virtual open house on June 9 from 5:30-7 pm. Prospective students can join an informative webinar and then participate in a breakout session to meet with program advisors and faculty for information specific to the program of their interest. More information is available online at www.okcu.edu/nursing



Oklahoma City
UNIVERSITY

Kramer School of Nursing

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Importance of self-care

As part of the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps, Stress Response Team, Wanda Robinson, PhD, APRN-CNS, CNE is part of a team that responds to devastating events like tornadoes and wildfires.

She spent nearly a decade as a sexual assault nurse examiner.

Her clinical background is working with trauma victims.

Now, as an assistant professor at the OU, Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing teaches psychiatric-mental health to tomorrow's nurses.

As the global coronavirus pandemic continues and National Nurses Week and Year of the Nurse shines even more light on the profession, Robinson wants nurses to pay particular attention to taking care of themselves and how they are feeling.

And for many nurses caring for patients in crisis, Robinson says they need to be aware they may be exposed to emotional trauma each and every shift.

"This pandemic doesn't follow the normal curve of a crisis as far as the trajectory and the impact," Robinson said. "We don't have the typical crisis event peak. This is prolonged exposure."

The vast majority of trauma experiences are tied to a specific event.

There may be an unexpected tornado or wildfire that affects a community and its first responders.

However the impact is clearly tied to a specific event with a definable beginning and ending.

To date more than one million Americans have tested positive for COVID 19. The death toll has passed 60,000.

Each day more and more people die.

And as the country begins to re-open, most medical professionals realize that illness and loss due to pandemic will continue.

For many nurses, it's an ongoing trauma with no end in site.

That's why Robinson says it's important to identify and validate what a person is feeling now and connect them with support.

"The impact nurses make in this situation is absolutely critical," Robinson says. "We know that when working with the people in crisis situations, the support individuals receive in that immediate short term after an event has happened or when it's happening



Julie A. Hoff, PhD, MPH, RN, dean of the OU Health Sciences Center Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing, wants nurses to remember to take of themselves as they take care of others.

makes all the difference in their ability to cope, feel supported and be able to move forward."

Make no mistake, nurses are grieving.

"It's normal to feel stressed and worried in a time of crisis," Robinson said. "It helps to recognize these feelings including anxiety, frustration and anger that occur because we want the best outcomes for our patients. When we recognize these feelings, we can name them and accept these as expected emotions that may accompany loss."

"While we are still strong for everyone else, being strong doesn't mean we don't need support too."

"It's OK to say I'm hurting and frustrated and get support."

"Nurses' are heroes and resilient people doing amazing and challenging work even while experiencing the emotions that come with crisis and trauma."

Julie Anne Hoff, PhD, MPH, RN, as the dean of the OU Health Sciences Center Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing.

She understands as we celebrate the Year of the Nurse, nurses everywhere are hurting.

"Health care organizations/systems must make the emotional and physical health of nurses a top organizational priority," Hoff said. "During other epidemics, nurses reported the highest levels of occupational stress compared to other health care professionals. Nurses are on the frontlines for extended periods of time with increased numbers of high acuity patients. They fear they will become ill or worse yet bring the illness

home."

"They are confronting ethical and moral conflict on a daily basis."

And as America begins to open up, Hoff reminds all nurses to remember what they are truly about.

"Remember, nurses are consistently rated as the most honest and ethical of all professions," she said. "COVID has demonstrated the power of nursing. Each of you are superheros in your own right. Try to not get caught up in the politics of the situation."

If you're feeling stressed or need help coping Robinson said you can seek out help from the Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

You can also contact the National Alliance of Mental Illness at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) as well as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255).

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Daniela Dial,
Future nurse

OU Nursing – Advancing Health Sooner

*“Let us never consider ourselves
finished nurses ... we must be
learning all of our lives.”*

— Florence Nightingale



Highlights:

- Nationally ranked by U.S. News & World Report
- New B.S.N. – D.N.P. Program
- Advanced Practice Board Certification and NCLEX pass rates above state and national averages
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- Study Abroad opportunities
- Interprofessional experiences across colleges and campuses
- Faculty-led practice and research mentoring across Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Programs
- The College of Nursing is one of seven OU Health Sciences Center professional colleges
- One college, three locations: Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton



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Smooth Transitions

Frontier a resource for families

Mandi Schulz has worked for and helped lead Frontier Hospice for a decade now.

She's seen changes in the industry for sure. And while Frontier's level of care has never wavered, she's proud to say her company has been forward-thinking enough to change for the better.

"Really it's my passion for the business," the executive director said of what's kept her with the company. "And Frontier is my family." Frontier has always provided excellent Hospice services, but saw a gap in healthcare that they wanted to help fill.

One of those changes is a unique community outreach program that brings Frontier's vast resources to clients when they need them.

SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

Almost four years ago was when Schulz and Frontier began their Transitional Care program. The idea was borne out of community need and hospital transition of care meetings.

Hospital administrators were asking for ways providers could help curb readmission rates.

Schulz said. "With our unique program, we are able to assist patients that other programs are not able to help. These are people far away from that hospice realm, newly diagnosed or just passed through the healthcare system with nowhere else to turn."

"They're high risk for readmission and they have needs. That was the gap."

The program allows Frontier to help meet community resource needs.

"We go into people's homes and help them with resources," Schulz said of the program staffed by nurses and social workers. "Our heart is not just taking care of the terminally ill patient but the community outreach."

Maybe it's working with clients to help them find help at home. Maybe it's taking the time to help fill out an Advantage program waiver that will help them pay for the additional care they need.

BRIDGING GAPS

Where Schulz and her Transitional



Frontier Hospice and Mandi Schulz continue to help Oklahoma families when they need it the most.

Care team can help is when a loved one experiences a life-altering event or diagnosis. For many patients the next step out of a hospital is to a skilled nursing facility.

"Because of the nature of transitional care we can meet with the family and help that transition along while they are in skilled," Schulz said. "The need may not be for hospice they just need to help with home health - maybe they've declined it, which is a huge risk."

All too often those patients who do refuse help at home will wind up back in the ER, further setting back their healing process and greatly increasing the chances they will no longer be able to live independently.

"At that point we're connecting the dots and following up with the primary care provider," she said.

The program is designed to be a 30-day plan but if there's still a need

the Transitions program continues.

We stay in contact.

"What case managers at hospitals have really discovered is we can connect those dots and make their job a little easier."

"I think one of the main things we do is finding the 'yes' in every scenario," Schulz said. "That is what we do different. We make decisions based on the information we have and what's best for the patient at the local level."

Advanced care planning with a social worker is another service offered in the Transitional Care program.

"The feedback we get all the time is 'I wish somebody else would have been this honest with me. If I would have had the information I might have made different decisions,'" Schulz said.

What Frontier has found through the program is that multiple providers

are requesting the service. We have become an excellent community partner with other providers while making our mission of outreach to the most disenfranchised through this pro bono mission. Hospitals and skilled nursing facilities have a vested interest in preventing readmissions as their reimbursements can be seriously impacted.

Physicians are looking to keep their patients as independent as possible.

Schulz sees the program as providing a safety net for those who might slip through the cracks. Frontier is on the forefront of providing a program that is unique in helping members of our community stay as independent as possible and make educated decisions regarding their own healthcare decisions.

Those within 60 miles of Frontier's central Oklahoma offices may utilize the service.

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Stride Bank N.A. Helping Even More Local Businesses with PPP Round Two

Stride Bank has managed to secure over 400 SBA PPP loans and saved an estimated 6,407 jobs

The staff at Stride Bank has been working around the clock for weeks now to ensure local businesses are approved for the Small Business Administration's Payroll Protection Program loans. The funds may have run out for the initial phase of the program, but Stride isn't slowing down their efforts any time soon.

As the federal government works to provide a second wave of SBA PPP funding, Stride Bank is putting in the extra effort to ensure anyone left out of phase one funding will find relief with phase two.

So far, throughout this process, Stride Bank has managed to secure over 400 SBA PPP loans, provided over \$59 million in potentially forgivable funds and saved an estimated 6,407 jobs.

When asked how Stride has managed to secure so much funding and ensure the approval of so many loans, Kevin Guarnera, the leader of Stride Bank's dedicated SBA team, responded, "We've been a part of our community for over 100 years. We're not about to quit on anyone now.

Local small businesses are in trouble, and they've been thrown a lifeline. It's our job to make sure as many small businesses as possible secure that lifeline and find safety."

Guarnera and his team have been sought out by others in the industry as the experts on getting these loans approved quickly and efficiently. By understanding the guidelines inside and out and working overtime to get applications processed, the team at Stride has helped numerous local businesses find that lifeline.

"When you're a part of a community, you protect it and everyone in it. We won't stop until this is over," added Guarnera.

Founded in 1913, Stride Bank is an Oklahoma-based financial institution that holds over \$800 million in assets.

Offering a full range of financial services such as consumer and commercial banking, mortgage, wealth management, and treasury management, we have also developed and currently manage highly specialized payment solutions for several national fintech companies. While we are

unwavering in our pursuit to continue innovating and offering new financial solutions, we will always remain loyal to our community banking roots in Oklahoma. We have branches throughout Oklahoma in Enid, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Bartlesville, Blackwell, Woodward, and Mooreland. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender. Learn more at www.stridebank.com.

Debbie Blacklock is the Senior Vice President and Manager of the Stride Bank Healthcare Division. Founded in 1913, Stride Bank is a full-service, Oklahoma-owned-and-operated financial institution with offices in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Bartlesville,

Enid, Woodward, Mooreland, and Blackwell. As an industry leader throughout the U.S. in real-time, next-generation payments, Stride Bank provides mobile banking and a full spectrum of Treasury Management Services. The Stride Bank Healthcare Division provides loans and other financial solutions for senior housing, long-term care, specialty hospitals, surgery centers, physicians, dentists, and other ambulatory healthcare providers. Debbie has 21 years of commercial banking experience in Oklahoma with over nine years in the healthcare space. Stride Bank, Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender.

Publisher's Note: Upon finding out our local financial institution was not able to secure SBA loans, we were forced to look elsewhere. Because we "were not a customer of theirs," three other banks refused to even look at our application for the PPP loan. Fortunately, we made contact with Stride Bank, who worked diligently to secure our PPP even though we were not currently a customer. This publication does not generally recommend or endorse one business over another, but Stride Bank won our respect. A special thanks to Debbie Blacklock, Senior Vice President, Manager of Healthcare Banking at Stride Bank, N.A. for her hard work. OKNT recommends Stride Bank to our Healthcare Friends.

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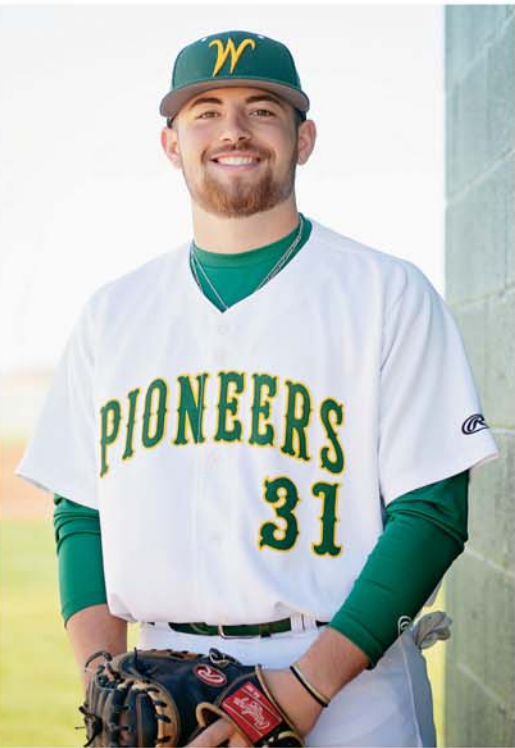
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LPN to RN: Evening or online at WOSC



Working full-time, the struggle is real for LPNs trying to get their RN.

Throw in family and the rest that life has to offer and it gets easier and easier to postpone your dreams.

Leaders at Western Oklahoma State College recognized that reality and answered the call to bring quality, affordable and convenient nursing education to those that needed it.

And as an added bonus, it's helped Southwest Oklahoma facilities find the trained staff they need.

"We really feel that our nursing program has a strong tie to workforce," said Chrystal Overton, M.S., R.N. and Vice President for Academic Affairs at WOSC. "I feel in our state Gov. Stitt is really pushing workforce development with colleges and universities and we feel like nursing is one of those programs that has that tie."

Located in Altus, Western Oklahoma State College was originally established as Altus Junior College in 1926, and is the oldest original municipal two-year college in Oklahoma. On August 16, 1974, Altus Junior College became Western Oklahoma State College by an act of the state legislatures.

The school's nursing program began in 1981 and graduated its first class in 1983.

Two other locations are also offered: one in Lawton, housed at Cameron University and the other in

Elk City, housed on the campus of Great Plains Regional Medical Center.

Accredited by the National League of Nursing Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation, the school offers a traditional program for general students and advanced standing placement for LPNs. A full-time day program is offered at each campus along with the LPN to RN online track offering an online didactic with face-to-face clinicals.

The evening track at the Lawton campus began last year through a partnership with Comanche County Memorial Hospital.

The fall of 2018 was the first online offering for LPNs to advance their education. No driving around after work and no classroom to sit in.

"This was very successful," said Stacey Machado, DNP, RN, and the Director of Nursing Education at Western Oklahoma State College.

The first cohort of 28 students graduated in May 2019 from the LPN-RN online program that included a clinical component.

In the fall of 2019, WOSC brought in its first cohort of students in the evening track at Lawton.

Now 18 more are on track to graduate in the spring of 2021.

This evening program is a great option for many students.



Opportunities for nurses to advance abound at Western Oklahoma State College in Altus.

Having this additional option for students will increase the capacity at Western and as well as help provide southwest Oklahoma with the Registered Nurses needed to maintain healthcare in the rural parts of the state.

The program also had a goal of collaborating with clinical affiliates so students would have immediate options for work.

"It absolutely made sense," said Machado. "Our goal when our students graduate is they are immediately ready to go after passing boards. Also we wanted them to have an opportunity to work at their clinical sites."

The plan has been a win for everyone. Students are getting the hands-on experience they need and are able to scope out where they feel like they will fit in.

The clinical sites get on-the-job feedback to make offers before graduation. Machado knows facilities appreciate her students.

"A lot of feedback we get from area hospital nurses, managers and directors is that our students come out as great critical thinkers," Machado said. "They're self-reliant

and able to get on the floor and show they've come out of a program that has rigor in the training process."

The application window for the next spring period will begin November 1 for any returning or transfer students coming into nursing.

Applications for the following fall will open in December.

"To obtain an associate degree that leads to a high wage, high skill career and career is phenomenal," Overton said of the opportunity. "They can decrease the amount of student loan debt they have and be able to go out into the workforce after passing boards."

"That's pretty critical. A large number of students do go on for their bachelor's and some their master's. When you look at the economy and concern with high student loan debt, our program really makes sense."

Machado said the school's curriculum is aligned with most bachelor's programs meaning students won't be slowed down by having to take more prerequisites later on down the road.

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We are seeking Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).
Apply at Heartsworth Assisted Living located at 821 N Foreman St, Vinita, OK 74301

CNA - 7 am-3 pm needed
at North County Nursing & Rehabilitation located at 523 N 22nd St, Collinsville, OK 74021. Apply now! Competitive Pay, Benefits, Bonuses, Supportive Leadership. Qualifications: Must be 18 or older, with a clean background, reliable transportation, active driver's license, auto insurance, and the ability to lift at least 50lbs. Ability to work flexible schedules and weekends is highly preferred. Required CNA license or certification. Required education: High school or equivalent.

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at Care ATC Inc located at 9902 E 43rd St a, Tulsa, OK 74146. We are looking for someone who has an excellent patient/customer service skills and an out-going, dynamic personality, and has the ability to work well on a close team environment. Min. Qualifications: HS diploma or equivalent. Graduation from an approved practical nursing program. One year LPN exp. required; clinical experience preferred. State licensed practical nurse. Current BLS/CPR certificate.

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