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Finding fulfillment RN finds niche at Interim



Desiree Gower, RN, BS, CEN has found the flexibility in her nursing career she always wanted at Interim Healthcare of OKC.

by Bobby Anderson, RN, Staff Writer

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced a lot of soul-searching in many healthcare professionals. Unprecedented times have brought about unprecedented stresses.

For ICU nurse Desiree Gower, RN, BS, CEN, the soul-searching led to career fulfillment she never thought possible.

Now a clinical supervisor at Interim HealthCare of OKC, Gower is once again enjoying her chosen profession.

"It's probably been the most fulfilling," she said. "I still miss the adrenaline of acute care but my heart is fuller. I feel like I

See INTERIM Page 2

OMRF marks 75 years of discovery



Oklahoma Medical Research Hospital Head Nurse Marian MacAuley walks with a young patient in 1955.

In 1946, a polio vaccine was still years away. DNA was just a group of letters. And no one had any idea cigarettes caused cancer.

But in Oklahoma, a group of citizens recognized that it wasn't enough for physicians to work each day to treat illnesses like tuberculosis, heart disease and cancer. To make real headway against disease, medicine had to do more.

So, they created an institute where scientists could devote their entire careers to rooting out the causes of human disease: the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

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INTERIM

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have a bunch of family members out here.”

Gower started her career in Ada as a nurse aide before finishing her LPN. From there she went to Pauls Valley and got her RN degree while working in critical access.

The emergency department in Norman was her next step before moving up to the ICU at OU Health.

At every stop, Gower’s skill level increased.

So did the stress.

It was last summer when she made the jump to Interim.

Gower’s father had recently passed as her ICU unit was moving to Covid care exclusively.

“We had all these people that were dying. It was just time. I wasn’t dealing well with people not having their family members there,” she said.

Now in a supervisory role, Gower gets to teach nurses how to teach their patients.

“I’ll tell you, I was a really good ICU nurse and I could manage drips

and run a code and all that, but it’s not the same as sitting on someone’s couch and teaching them how to do their antibiotics,” she said. “You learn what makes them happy. It’s more fulfilling.

“With this, I get to teach them how to manage their health and do better.”

And do better with more complex care that the patient themselves are in charge of in their home.

Gower graduated nursing school in 2005. The types of healthcare delivered in a home setting have grown exponentially since that time.

“Some of the things we do now in the home I never would have imagined doing,” Gower said. “I could never have imagined when I graduated LPN school that I would see a PleurX drain in the home.

“I think we’re seeing things that are more acute in the home.”

Infusions, drains and more extensive wound care orders are just the tip of the iceberg.

“People are just staying home longer and living longer,” she said.

With a constantly-increasing skillset, the old stereotype that home health is where nursing skills go to

die has been shattered.

“The funny thing is I feel like I use my skills more,” Gower laughed. “You can’t just step out in the hall and say ‘Hey, can you bring me another butterfly.’”

From non-medical senior care, skilled nursing services and hospice care, Interim offers services in Canadian, Cleveland, Grady, Kingfisher, Lincoln, Logan, McClain, Oklahoma, Payne, and Pottawatomie Counties.

Interim HealthCare of Oklahoma City is a U.S. Veteran owned, nurse-led business.

For Gower, the change in pace was a breath of fresh air. She felt revitalized as a nurse and found more of those connections she had been missing.

The move to Interim was also felt by her family.

“Flexibility,” Gower said of what she enjoys most now. “And I think anybody who has worked in acute care, you get where everybody is the same in the bed. They’re all in a gown. It’s a sterile environment. I get to see people at home. I get to meet their dogs and know what they like to do.

“It’s kind of holistic versus just kind of task-oriented in the hospital.

“The great thing was I could make more money and still pick my kid up from school,” Gower continued.

The pandemic is still ongoing, but Gower and her staff have a different view, one that doesn’t exact such a crushing toll every shift.

The Covid patients Gower’s staff works with are post-acute, which allows nurses to be able to be there to help with the sometimes lingering after-effects of the disease.

The relationships built in the home run both ways.

“It’s an extension of their family,” Gower said. “They develop that trust and rapport. It’s not the same as going to the hospital and having a different nurse for 12 hours and repeating over and over and over for your whole stay.”

For more information visit: <https://www.interimhealthcare.com/oklahomacity/home/>



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OMRF

Continued from Page 1

Saturday marks OMRF's 75th anniversary. On Aug. 28, 1946, Oklahoma's Secretary of State granted the charter of the new foundation that would, in the words of an early fundraising brochure, conduct "scientific investigations in the field of medical research to attack killing and crippling diseases about which little is known by science."

"Oklahoma is a young state, so we sometimes find ourselves playing catch-up," said OMRF Interim President Adam Cohen. "But when it came to creating an independent research institute, we were on the cutting edge."

To fund the construction of OMRF, which would become one of only a handful of independent biomedical research institutes at that time, Gov. Roy J. Turner led a drive that spanned all 77 of the state's counties. The state's physicians organized one fundraising campaign, and pharmacists, dentists and nurses followed suit with their own efforts. When Turner declared a statewide "Research Week," organizers held 137 meetings in 42 cities and towns over seven days.

"This is one of the finest things

we of Oklahoma ever have attempted," said Grace Marlow of Shawnee in 1947, when she and her husband donated \$26,000 to the new foundation in memory of their late son. "Such a wonderful movement cannot fail."

All told, 7,000 Oklahomans gave more than \$2 million to build the foundation. And what began as an 18-person scientific staff has since grown into an internationally recognized research institute.

OMRF now employs 450 staff members who study cancer, heart disease, autoimmune disorders and diseases of aging. Their discoveries have yielded hundreds of patents and three lifesaving drugs now available in hospitals and clinics worldwide. Most recently, Adakveo became the first targeted therapy approved by the Food and Drug Administration for sickle cell disease, which affects an estimated 100,000 Americans.

OMRF scientists made crucial insights that paved the way for powerful protease inhibitors that transformed the therapeutic landscape for people with HIV/AIDS. The National Institutes of Health has designated OMRF an Autoimmunity Center of Excellence, one of only 10 in the country, for its work on conditions such as lupus, where OMRF researchers have played



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

a role in identifying or confirming more than 60 genes involved in the disease.

OMRF has also taken on emerging challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic. It's now serving as the lead clinical site for a nationwide clinical trial sponsored by the NIH to study why immunocompromised patients fail to respond adequately to Covid-19 vaccines.

"The goal of every medical researcher is to make discoveries that improve people's lives," said Rodger McEver, M.D., OMRF's vice president of research. "OMRF scientists have done that, and they're continuing to do so."

OMRF's founding donors could not have foreseen the advances their gift would make possible. Still, said McEver, "I hope they'd be proud."

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CAREERS IN NURSING

NURSE STILL LOVES JOB AFTER FORTY THREE YEARS

By Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Dustin Baker, MD, is a board certified family medicine specialist with an additional board certification in hospice and palliative care and is located at Total Healthcare Partners, 4400 Grant Boulevard, Yukon, OK.

After earning his medical degree from the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center, he completed a Great Plains Family Medicine residency. While in residency, he served as chief resident. He also served as President of Frontier District for Oklahoma Academy of Family Physicians.

Dr. Baker believes that building relationships with patients is one of the most important things a provider can do. Developing a solid level of trust allows you to better educate patients, and more easily recognize when new health concerns arise.

Kathy Collins, LPN has been a

nurse for Total Healthcare Partners for nineteen years. She has been a nurse for a total of forty-three years. Now, she enjoys working for Dr. Dustin Baker. Kathy attended school in Memphis, Missouri where she grew up. "I am a nurse because I like helping people and making them feel better. We see patients of all ages and I have seen many of them grow up and I am taking care of their children," Kathy said. "I also enjoy the fact that I can balance my job and my family life," she added. "Being a nurse is one of the most rewarding jobs. Being a nurse for so long is something that I still love to do."

"My first job was at a hospital in Missouri. I worked in Pediatrics. It is nice to have such a wide variety of areas of nursing that one can go into. I enjoy working in a doctor's office, a clinical setting now though. It gives me a chance

to relate to the many patients that come to see Dr. Baker. I have a very good relationship with all of my patients. Some of the patients have continued to see Dr. Baker for years. We have a special relationship and a closeness with our patients."

Asking Kathy what qualities make a good nurse, she replied, "I think a nurse should possess patience, compassion and selflessness. These qualities are very important for a nurse, yet, sometimes hard to handle at first. A nurse should show kindness to others, treating everyone as if they were their own family member." It is easy to see the Kathy has all of these qualities as it shows in her daily life.

Kathy's biggest reward as a nurse is the relationship and bonding she has developed with her patients over the years. "When

the patient calls and I recognize their voice right away and the patient and I really know each other, it is really special to have such a close bond between the patient and their families. I also think it is special that I give the immunizations to the students that are just entering college. I have seen most of them grow up and we enjoy reminiscing about the past. Then, some of the patients just want a quick injection due to the lack of trust in the medical system."

Do you have any relatives in the medical field? "Yes, I have four children, two in the medical field. My son is a physician and my daughter is a medical social worker. I think it kind of runs in the family a little bit," she said with a smile.

Asking Kathy is she considers

See COLLINS Page 5



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COLLINS

Continued from Page 4

herself a leader or a follower, she replied, "I am a little of both. I am a non-confrontation. I avoid conflict at all lengths unless there is a situation that needs to be handled in a different way. I feel like I am a strong leader at times, considering all of my experience, yet, I can be a follower when I need to be. Everything depends on the situation."

Kathy's personality is uplifting and encouraging. She enjoys spending time with her two grandchildren. She gets along well with others and feels like teamwork is very important. She continues to do what comes natural to her, caring for others as a nurse. She has a few unique hobbies including playing bridge, golfing and playing the ukulele.

Summing up your life in three words, what would those words be? Kathy replied with a smile, "Blessed, content, satisfied."

For more information visit: <https://thpok.com/>



Kathy Collins, LPN enjoys being a nurse for Dustin Baker, MD. After forty-three years in the medical field, Kathy can't image doing anything other than being a nurse.

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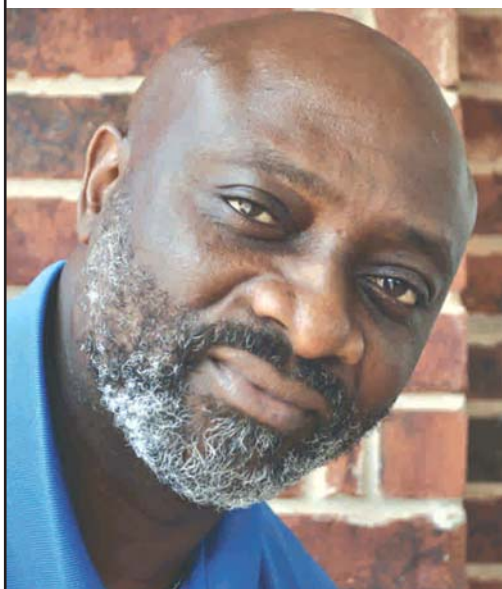


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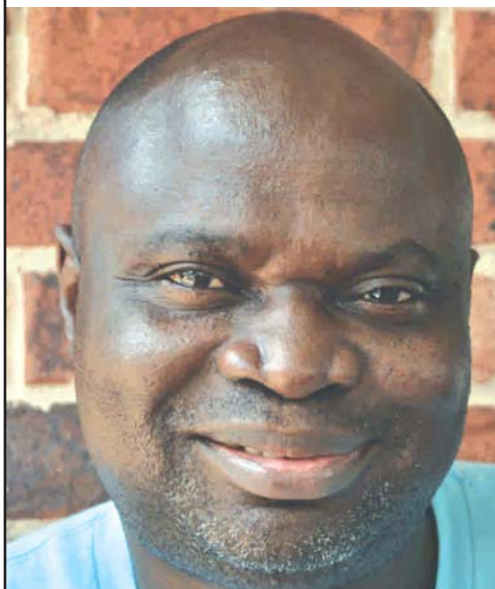
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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2021 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

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- Delivery: hybrid format, with online courses and three on-campus intensives throughout the program
- Master's Entry into Professional Nursing
- Traditional bachelor's entry or accelerated bachelor's to master's options
- Eligible to sit for NCLEX-RN exam upon program completion
- Delivery: on campus with some online classes

What sets Harding trained nurses apart from other nursing schools? The undergraduate nursing program has a 99.2% first-time NCLEX-RN pass rate since 2016 and has been ranked the No. 1 Nursing Program in

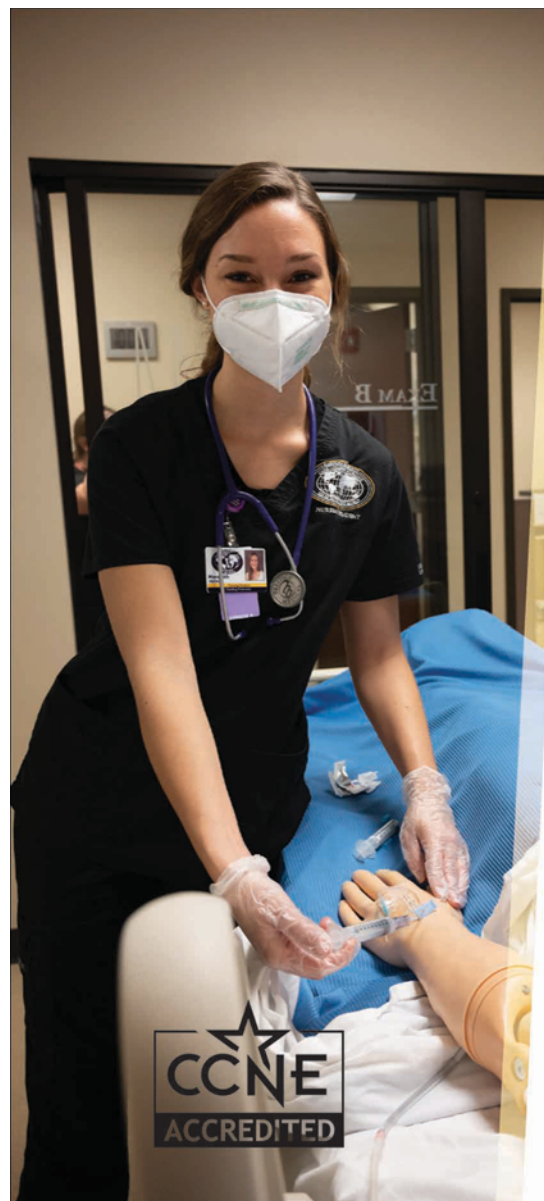


HARDING
UNIVERSITY

Arkansas by RegisteredNursing.org for four years in a row. This ranking is based on how well a program supports students toward licensure and beyond.

Harding's nursing graduates are well-equipped to enter the field, with high job placement rates and a 100% first-time Family Nurse Practitioner National Certification pass rate since the program's first graduates in 2017.

Continued on next page



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| SITUATION UPDATE: COVID-19 | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| COVID-19 Cases | | 550,239 |
| New Cases | | 1,617 |
| Sunday's Cases (08/29/21) | | 2,365 |
| Saturday's Cases (08/28/21) | | 3,845 |
| New Cases 7 day Average | | 2,806 |
| Active Cases | | 23,582 |
| CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths | | 9,162 |
| Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location** | | Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations |
| | | Cases (ICU) |
| Region 1 (NW) | | 40 (11) |
| Region 2 (NE) | | 138 (33) |
| Region 3 (SW) | | 155 (31) |
| Region 4 (EC) | | 91 (25) |
| Region 5 (SE) | | 79 (12) |
| Region 6 (Central) | | 112 (30) |
| Region 7 (Tulsa) | | 456 (137) |
| Region 8 (OKC) | | 406 (113) |
| Total | | 1,477* (392) |
| Other Types of Facilities | | |
| Focus Facilities | | 53 (20) |
| Rehabilitation Facilities | | 2 (0) |
| Tribal Facilities | | 40 (10) |
| Other Facilities Total | | 95 (30) |

*Includes 56 pediatric hospitalizations

**Focus, Rehabilitation and Tribal Facilities numbers are not assigned to a specific region as their patient populations reside across the state. Information provided through survey of Oklahoma hospitals as reported to HHS as of the time of this report. Response rate affects data. Facilities may update previously reported information as necessary.

Data Source: Acute Disease Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health. **As of 2021-08-30 at 7:00 a.m.

HARDING

Continued from Page 10

The first of its kind in Arkansas, the master's entry into professional nursing program prepares graduates for eligibility to take the national nursing license exam to become Registered Nurses. The program provides on-campus, state-of-the-art simulations and diverse clinical experiences in Searcy, Little Rock and surrounding counties to aid students in understanding patient clinical skills and administration and leadership in nursing. Applicants with any undergraduate degree can apply. There are Arkansas nursing prerequisites.

What if I have a degree in another field but have decided healthcare is my passion? The Master of Science in Nursing - Master's Entry into Professional Nursing option is a great path

for students who already have a bachelor's in another area of study.

How do the programs interact with the community? Students assist in a variety of community clinical settings that serve diverse patient populations. They also provide health screenings at area churches and various university sponsored events.

Does Harding offer a study abroad program? For more than 40 years, Harding has been training nurses not only for a career in traditional healthcare settings but also to work in health missions. Medical mission opportunities exist locally and abroad in short-term and long-term options. Opportunities are open to graduate and undergraduate students.

Visit:
<https://www.harding.edu/academics/colleges-departments/nursing>

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Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health Launches Virtual Pediatric Urgent Care

Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health has launched new virtual urgent care services to complement existing urgent and emergency care services provided by OU Health pediatric experts. Virtual urgent care, available at oklahomachildrens.org/virtualcare, is

a convenient way for children to receive quick care for common conditions, such as fever, cough, skin rashes and pink eye. These services are provided to new as well as current patients of the OU Health system.

Ryan Brown, M.D., pediatric emergency medicine specialist, said these new services are a valuable addition to existing urgent and emergency care services provided by Oklahoma Children's Hospital.

"Part of our commitment to children's health means being able to care for our patients and patient families when and where they need us," said Brown. "As a parent, it is difficult to see your child in any kind of discomfort. These new options make it easier to see a provider and help kids get well faster."

Brown said that while the best care happens in an established relationship with a primary care pediatrician, urgent situations may demand immediate attention. Unique and distinctive to Oklahoma Children's Hospital, virtual visits are conducted by the same local, highly skilled OU Health Physicians experts who take care of children in OU Health hospitals and clinics.

Parents can access care online in the way they prefer, including online questionnaires or video visits. No appointment is necessary. Most visits are complete in as little as 15 minutes but no more than an hour during regular business hours, and fees are \$25 or less. However, insurance is not required. Acceptable forms of payment include credit card or health savings account. For online questionnaire visits, a video connection is not required; therefore, a strong bandwidth is not necessary. This allows OU Health to reach patients needing urgent care, no matter where they are in Oklahoma. Currently, providers are available virtually from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with 24/7 access to arrange a visit.

"Our providers do their best to treat your child online, and if additional care is needed, they make recommendations for follow-up,

in-person care or emergent care," said Brown.

Oklahoma Children's Hospital operates two after-hours, urgent care locations in the metro area, located at 12516 N. May Ave. in Oklahoma City and in Edmond at 2820 N. Kelly Ave., Suite 100. These clinics also offer most emergency services, and are staffed by board-certified or board-eligible OU Health Physicians pediatricians. Call (405) 751-5437 to reach either clinic. Clinics are open from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekends.

In addition to these urgent care locations, Oklahoma Children's Hospital has Oklahoma City's only dedicated 24/7 pediatric emergency department. A Child Life specialist is part of its staff, in addition to the full range of customary emergency services and providers who specialize in pediatric trauma care. "As the state's foremost resource for care devoted to children, Oklahoma Children's Hospital seeks to be truly comprehensive," said Brown. "Parents can rely on the most trusted pediatric specialists in the state to provide top-notch care for their children."

Visit oklahomachildrens.org/urgentcare to learn more about all urgent and emergency care options offered at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health.



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AMA, AHA, ANA applaud FDA full approval of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, urge all to get vaccinated



"Today's full approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – the result of many months of work, robust data evaluation, and a thorough, comprehensive review process that has already protected more than one hundred million Americans from severe COVID-19 complications – is a major step forward in the worldwide effort to end this pandemic. The vaccines to prevent COVID-19 are effective; we have known that for months as health care professionals were among the first to get vaccinated and have advocated for our patients to get vaccinated to save lives. But today's news marks a critical moment for people who were concerned about getting vaccinated due to the vaccines being authorized for emergency use. With millions of data points on the vaccine's safety and efficacy over nearly nine months of vaccinations,

every 'i' is dotted and every 't' is crossed. This vaccine is safe, it prevents severe COVID-19, hospitalization, and deaths, and it will save your life.

"According to recent polling, 30 percent of unvaccinated people said they were waiting for vaccines to receive full approval before getting vaccinated. We are there now; this vaccine is fully approved. If uncertainty was holding you back, now is the time to act. And if you still have questions about the vaccines or about COVID-19, please consult your health care professional.

"Science, data, and thorough research have given us the tools to defeat COVID-19. With the delta variant surging, there has never been a better time to get vaccinated.

"FDA approval also should further reinforce efforts in the health care field to achieve high levels of vaccination."

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