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ANALYST**

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## Caring for others



## Nurses give back to humanity

Debbie Pender, RN, advocates for nurses and the patients at SSM Midwest in her new role as chief nursing officer.

by James Coburn - staff writer

Debbie Pender serves as a team builder as the chief nursing officer at SSM Midwest, located in Midwest City. She has been CNO of SSM Midwest since June, after SSM purchased the hospital from Community Health Systems in

April. Her goal has been to enhance the leadership structure from a for-profit hospital to a not-for-profit.

Pender has been a nurse for nearly 36

See PENDER Page 2

## Lance Named to Board Overseeing OU Health



Bill G. Lance, Jr., Secretary of Commerce for the Chickasaw Nation.

Bill G. Lance, Jr., Secretary of Commerce for the Chickasaw Nation, has been named to the board of directors overseeing OU Health, the state's comprehensive academic healthcare system.

Lance manages the Chickasaw Nation's commercial business enterprise, which has approximately 7,000 employees and is comprised of more than 60 gaming, hospitality, retail, media, manufacturing and tourism-related businesses. Previously, he served as

See LANCE Page 3

## PENDER

Continued from Page 1

years. She has stayed with nursing because she loves advocating for the vulnerable, being the voice of a helpless patient.

In leadership, her altruism translates to being the hands and the feet of the bedside nurse.

"I advocate for the bedside nurse," she said. "What I enjoyed at the bedside is still what I enjoy as chief nursing officer. I get to advocate for other people," Pender said.

Pender earned her Bachelor of Science degree and her Master of Science degree in Nursing at the University of Oklahoma. In 2013 Pender earned her MBA in Health Care Management from Walden University.

"One of the things that was made clear to me during my interviews was just the need to re-set the nursing culture, and to grow the nursing structure here," Pender said.

She was chosen for her history of improving quality and safety

as a nurse leader. She began by recruiting a strong core of leadership to improve patient care. Safe and effective care is what patients deserve from any bedside nurse, she said. Pender admires the resiliency of the nursing staff.

"When I came here, I wasn't expecting to hear about the tenure of some of the nurses," she continued.

One RN began her nursing career at the hospital in 1977. Another nurse has worked there for 50 years and counting. Many of the nursing staff have been at the hospital for more than a decade. She wasn't expecting such longevity in an organization that had experienced a lot of transition between different owners.

"So, I was pleasantly surprised with the really great core of nurses who have been here — who have stayed here through all the changes," she said. "And I believe in what can take the nursing culture here to the next level."

Nurses at SSM Midwest believe in advocating for the needs of the patients. Pender has witnessed

excellent bedside care. She pointed out one of the bedside nurses working on the medical/surgical unit.

### PATIENTS SICKER THAN EVER

"Our patients are sicker. They're probably sicker now than I've ever seen," Pender explained. "And so, we get these patients that probably could be in the ICU, but we don't have an ICU bed because of COVID. And so, we have these really sick patients on a medical floor, and that's not typical. But I have a particular nurse, and obviously it's not just her, but she stands out because she is dogged about ensuring the patient gets the care that they need."

This can be challenging on the med/surg floor when a nurse has six patients. But Pender pointed out that the nurse responds quickly to each of her patients' needs. She sets an example in notifying physicians of any changes and being keen on notifying families about how their loved one is doing, Pender said.

SSM is limiting visitation during COVID. Pender noted that nurses at SSM Midwest advocate steadily for their patients during a time of caring for sicker, and sicker patients, due to the COVID Delta variant.

"Even our critical care patients are sicker than they were in June when I came," she said.

June was a month when COVID-19 was primarily impacting the older population and patients with co-morbidities. Now hospitals are seeing an influx of very young people with COVID, Pender said.

"They tend to try to get well longer than some of our older patients," Pender said. "The relationships they build with these families and the patients along the way, I think is a lot different than what we saw in the elderly population."

Additionally, Pender said there is an increase of patients resisting hospital care during the pandemic, making them even sicker when admitted. COVID has made nursing care more challenging. There was

already a shortage of registered nurses in the United States before the pandemic. Now, CNO's across the state are working with even fewer RNs.

"I came from Mercy, and it was the same thing there," she said.

Nurses are leaving the profession because of COVID. Some nurses leave because they don't want to get immunized from the disease, even though it has taken more than 700,000 lives in the nation. She said nurses can make a lot of money by traveling, often to Texas, to care for patients battling COVID.

"So, I've been a nurse leader for 15 years now, and it is the most difficult time in recruitment in my career," Pender said.

Nursing schools are not producing enough graduates, one reason being is the lack of faculty.

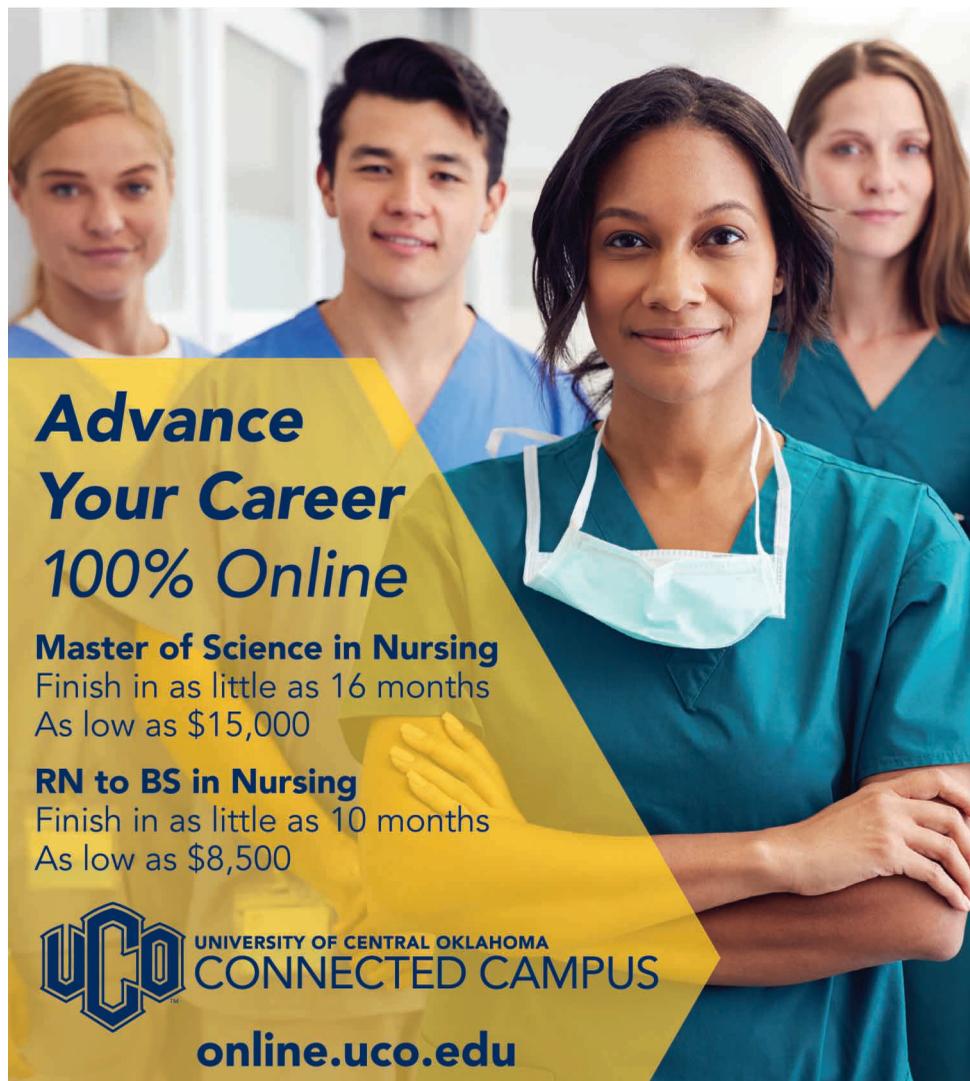
"Typically, colleges struggle with getting enough faculty so they can accept more nursing students," she said.

Nursing has been voted the most trusted profession in the US. for many years.

"That always makes me proud that being a nurse is being a part of that trusted profession. I think right now it's a great time to be a nurse because the nursing profession continues to grow. We gain more autonomy all the time, especially as we care for sicker and sicker patients. Our skills and especially highly skilled RNs are in high demand. So, I think the job opportunities truly are endless."

Especially with COVID, it makes you feel good to connect with patients, she said.

"It's really an honor to be with patients in their time of crisis," Pender said.



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## LANCE

Continued from Page 1

administrator of the Chickasaw Nation Health System, overseeing healthcare operations, including construction of the 370,000-square-foot Chickasaw Nation Medical Center in Ada.

"Having Bill on the board as an OU Health Community Director will be invaluable as we grow and develop innovations to address the healthcare needs of Oklahomans," said Jason Sanders, M.D., MBA, Senior Vice President and Provost of the OU Health Sciences Center and Acting Board Chair of OU Medicine, Inc. "He brings a wealth of experience in healthcare operations and a deep understanding of the needs of Oklahomans."

Lance is a fifth-generation Oklahoman and a member of the Chickasaw Nation. He earned a bachelor of science degree from East Central University in Ada, and a master of public health degree from the Hudson College of Public Health at the OU Health Sciences Center. He is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma Class XXV.

In addition to his role as Secretary of Commerce, he serves on the board of directors for several businesses owned by the Chickasaw Nation, including Global Gaming Solutions, LLC; Sovereign Native Holdco, LLC, and related subsidiaries; and Chickasaw Nation Industries, Inc.

Global Gaming Solutions operates Remington Park in Oklahoma City and Lone Star Park in Dallas/Fort Worth, and provides consulting and management services in tribal and commercial gaming industries. Sovereign Native Holdco is a holding company that includes investments in residential and commercial real estate, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, and energy and mineral holdings. Chickasaw Nation Industries is a holding company that includes subsidiaries focused on government contracting, industrial filtration, network services, research and development, and testing and evaluation.

Lance also serves as a Chickasaw Nation delegate on the Executive Committee of the American Gaming Association, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes, and an alternate delegate to the National

Indian Gaming Association and the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association. He is a member of the Board of Trustees for both the OU Foundation and the Chickasaw Foundation, and he serves on the BancFirst Board of Directors.

"Bill is passionate about improving the quality of life of all Oklahomans through accessible healthcare services," said G. Rainey Williams, Jr., chair of the University Hospitals Authority and Trust (UHAT). "We are grateful to have him on board as we leverage our missions of patient care, research and education to create a healthier

Oklahoma."

UHAT Secretary Anthony F. "Chip" Keating, III, who nominated Lance to the board of directors, said Lance's experience across healthcare and many other areas makes him ideal to help guide the future of OU Health. "Bill's leadership for the Chickasaw Nation is superb, and he has extensive knowledge of health systems," Keating said. "He will play a significant role in the future of OU Health."

Lance and his wife, Sherri, live in Sulphur. They have a daughter and two sons.

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# Turning over a new leaf

## SilverLeaf focused on seniors

story and photo by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

Jerry Almufleh still remembers getting out of school in the afternoons and heading to the dialysis center to sit with his grandmother while she received dialysis.

There would be good days and there would be bad days while Almufleh watched his loved one go through renal failure.

And he always wished there was something more he could do to make things easier.

"Doing that, sometimes three days a week, I got intrigued. I wanted to learn more and I built relationships with the nurses and the doctors," he said.

Eventually, that curiosity would be rewarded at age 19 with a job on the dialysis unit. Positions in long-term care, home healthcare and hospice would follow, but his driving focus was always helping

make life easier for those battling health issues.

That's why he and his wife, Alison, started SilverLeaf, a cannabis and CBD dispensary that takes a person-centered approach to making everyday life better.

The passage of State Question 788 in 2018 paved the way for medical marijuana in Oklahoma.

For more than two years Oklahomans have turned to the licensed and regulated industry for treatment of a variety of conditions.

But while new stores seemingly pop up every week, none have taken an approach like SilverLeaf.

"I would love to see this model flourish because we hear the testimonials. Not only the medicine, because we know what we're looking for but just the

experience overall," Jerry said. "Really all it is is to treat people like they're humans, empathize, sympathize with them, listen to them and always do your very best. That's where we're getting a lot of the trust."

Customers coming to SilverLeaf are greeted by their first name. It's just the tip of the iceberg as Jerry and his wife take the time to find out exactly what their client needs are.

"I get to help them in a more natural way," said Alison who previously worked in admissions in long-term care. "Working in long-term care you see the downgrade, someone come in and decline. But being there every day they become part of your family."

"Now when I get to be with the patients they walk in and they're happier."

Cannabis enjoys the distinction as one of the oldest cultivated crops in the world, dating back several thousand years.

But the discovery of its vast medicinal purposes has only occurred in the last half-century.

"It's hard to believe that just the last 60 years we got it right," Alison said. "We're finally figuring it out."

SilverLeaf operates more like a clinic than a store.

Having spent the better part of their lives working with seniors, both Jerry and Alison know the importance of establishing trust especially when it comes to helping customers who are struggling with chronic issues.

Jerry estimates more than 60 percent of his time is spent in teaching.

"The education is understanding the background of whatever diseases they're battling, understanding the side effects and the pros and cons," said Jerry, who frequently provides presentations to independent and assisted living facilities. "This is not what they were taught back in the day. The main message we want to get out is there is a more natural, safer way."

In the realm of constant pain or anxiety, there's little argument now that cannabinoids provide

See SILVERLEAF Page 5

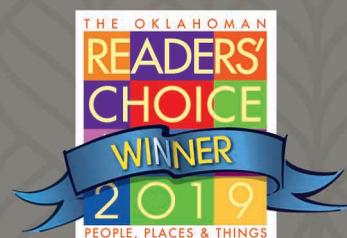


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# SILVERLEAF

Continued from Page 4

safe, natural symptom relief.

"(Constant pain) shouldn't have to be that way. What quality of life is that," Jerry asked. "We have a passion for seniors. I feel seniors should live their life to the fullest to the last day. They shouldn't have to succumb to sedation and seclusion."

Silverleaf Dispensary specializes in senior care and dosing. It is very important that you know the correct delivery methods and dosage to consume, that's why Silverleaf is a Certified Cannacian and can walk you through the process of obtaining optimal health through CBD and Cannabis.

The working relationship between Almufler and physicians often results in customers being

able to decrease dosages or even go off of pharmaceutical medications entirely.

In some instances, evening prescription medications designed to sedate patients for the purpose of sleep can be replaced by quality CBD products.

"We understand we may be ahead of our time in terms of (medical marijuana)," Jerry said. "It's now that we're starting to see those poles shift. We have a whole demographic counting on us."

"There needs to be an atmosphere and a place where people can come down and truly get what they need instead of being rushed through dispensaries like cattle," he said. "We feel like we needed to develop that place and here we are."

For more information visit: <https://silverleaf-ok.com> or go by and say hello at 5300 North Meridian Avenue Suite 12 in Oklahoma City.



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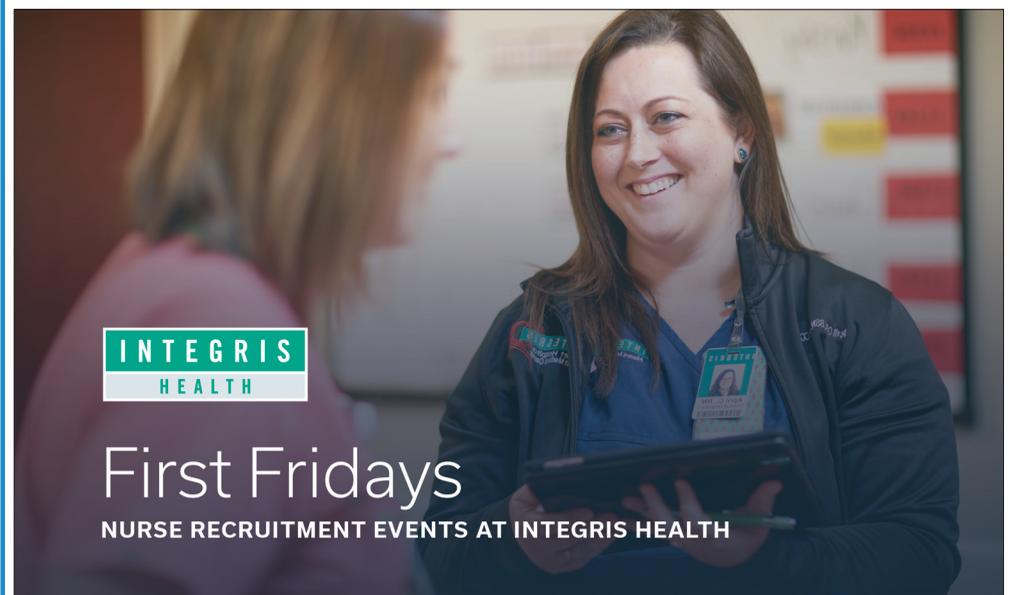


### LICENSING ANALYST

Coordinates licensure activities, including approval of licensure applications. Communicates with applicants, licensees, nursing education programs, other state and federal agencies, and employers.

**Min. 4 yrs. experience as an RN. Bachelor's degree in nursing required.**

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**We are looking to hire a Certified Medication Aide 3pm - 11pm.**

Apply at Beacon Ridge Senior Mental Health. 102 E. Line Ave. Sapulpa, OK 74067

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# NURSE TALK



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Errin Larrick, RMA

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Ronda Mchan, RMA

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# Red Cross enters third week of emergency blood shortage

*Donations needed now to help those battling cancer and other serious conditions*

The American Red Cross continues to experience an emergency blood shortage that has caused the blood supply to drop to the lowest post-summer level in at least six years.

With less than a day's supply of certain blood types in recent weeks, the Red Cross asks donors of all blood types - especially type O - to make an appointment to give blood as soon as possible to ensure patients can receive the lifesaving transfusions they rely on. Appointments can be made by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Fall is typically a time when the blood supply rebounds from summer blood shortages, but a surge in COVID-19 cases across the U.S. due to the delta variant has contributed to the lowest donor turnout of the year. To shore up inventory, the Red Cross must collect 10,000 additional

blood products each week this month to meet hospital and patient needs.

### Donors are asked to make an appointment

All those who come to donate in October will receive a link by email to claim a free Zaxby's® Signature Sandwich reward or get a \$5 e-gift card to a merchant of their choice.\* Plus, all those who come to give Oct. 11-31 will receive a bonus \$5 e-gift card to a merchant of their choice.\*\*

### Blood donations help those with breast cancer

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, the Red Cross is reminding donors of the importance of blood to those undergoing treatment. According to the National Cancer Institute, roughly 1.9 million people are expected to be diagnosed with cancer in the U.S. this year, and more than 281,000 of those individuals will have breast cancer.

Patients with breast cancer and other cancers may need blood products on a regular basis during chemotherapy, surgery or treatment for complications. In fact, nearly 25% of the blood supply is used by cancer patients.

People across the country depend on the kindness of blood donors. Donors are urged to make an appointment to give blood or platelets as soon as possible by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

### Blood drive safety

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions - including face masks for donors and staff, regardless of vaccination status -

have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive.

### Upcoming blood donation opportunities Oct.16-31

**Norman**  
10/21/2021: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., CrossPointe Church - Student Building, 2601 24th Ave SE

**Edmond**  
10/28/2021: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sleep Inn & Suites, 3608 S Broadway

**Cleveland**  
10/28/2021: 11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., First Christian Church, 100 S. Division

**Stillwater**  
10/26/2021: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., Stillwater Public Library, 1107 S. Duck St.

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**AIDAN** had a way about him. He had a way of creating adventure out of everything he did. He wanted to do EVERYTHING and was fully intent on achieving that goal. He had a huge loving heart and was quick to share that love. He was conscious of the feelings of others and always made an effort not to hurt others feelings. He was messy. He was smart. He was a great big brother. It was his interest in church that brought our entire family back to the church. He loved God and he liked to share what he learned. For eight short years his light shone so brightly.

to do EVERYTHING and to become a donor and save lives.

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We are so honored that he was able to continue

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2021 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# Health Care Training is a Core Area of Francis Tuttle

Among the most highly regarded of the many career training programs offered at Francis Tuttle Technology Center are those in the health sciences. From programs for adults looking for a new career, to those designed to prepare high school students to earn a living while exploring other health career options, there are many available to choose from to help people who are considering pursuing a career in the helping professions of health care. Francis Tuttle has experienced faculty who have worked extensively in the industry, with state of the art equipment used in health and medical facilities throughout the metro area and around the country, and a dedicated focus to help fill a looming skills gap. Below is a brief

description of each of Francis Tuttle's program offerings.

The **Pre-Nursing** program for adult and high school students is an exciting opportunity to begin exploring a health care pathway and see what careers are available with additional training. Students gain knowledge about the broad spectrum of health professions. Through the program, students can obtain certification as a Nurse Aide (CNA) and an Advanced Unlicensed Assistant (AUA).

The unique **Respiratory Care** program for adult students works cooperatively with Oklahoma City Community College, whereupon completion, students receive a Certificate of Completion from Francis Tuttle and an Associate of Applied

Science degree from OCCC. Students are trained to assist with the treatment of individuals with pulmonary and cardiac disorders, and obtain eligibility to take the national examinations to earn a Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential and apply for an Oklahoma Respiratory Care Practitioners License.

The **Practical Nursing** program prepares adult students to provide quality health care in a variety of settings. Three enrollment options are available to best fit student needs: full-time, blended online, and the 1+1 program. Upon completion, students are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).

The unique **Orthotic & Prosthetic Technician** program, along with certification in Pedorthics, each for adult students, is a hands on program to prepare students to assist the disabled by fabricating the orthopedic braces (orthoses) and artificial limbs (prostheses) necessary for their rehabilitation. Pedorthics offers specialized training to manage comprehensive pedorthic patient care for all injuries and pathologies involving patient feet. Upon completion of the

program, students are eligible to take the American Board of Certification (ABC) national certification exam to be recognized as a Certified Technician in Prosthetics and Orthotics (CTPO). After training and one thousand hours of work experience, students may take the Pedorthic Certification Exam (ABC or BOC) to be a Certified Pedorthist (C.ped).

The **Dental Assisting** program prepares adult students to become members of the dental health care team. Dental assistants have the opportunity to enhance the efficiency of the dentist in the delivery of oral health care. Upon completion of the program, students can obtain certification as a Dental Assistant (CDA).

Each program offers the potential for a high paying career and Francis Tuttle is dedicated to serving the growing demand for a highly qualified workforce in the health care industry. If you're interested, or know someone who is looking to expand their horizons through the expanding field of medical care, check out these and other programs at [www.FrancisTuttle.edu](http://www.FrancisTuttle.edu) and get started on your future today!

Visit [www.FrancisTuttle.edu](http://www.FrancisTuttle.edu) for more information.

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**FRANCISTUTTLE**  
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# Heart for People

story and photo by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

Most people choose the jobs they want to pursue.

For Christina Sibley, the job chose her.

Christina has been a healthcare provider for more than 20 years. She's taught medical assisting and phlebotomy.

She's worked in doctor's offices, labs, hospitals and home care, always with a passion for her patients.

But it was a suggestion from husband, Steven, that brought it all together.

"I feel like God put me on the Earth for a reason," she said. "I have a specific set of skills, experience and education that allow me to do things for people, they have put me in a unique position to be able to do things for people that others just don't have the ability to do."

Christina and her husband own and operate Sibley Insures.

Actually, it's more than that. They live it.

An average of 10,000 people age into Medicare each day.

Licensed Health insurance producers in Oklahoma and Kansas, serving OKC, Tulsa, and beyond, the Sibleys are a wealth of information when it comes to making one of the most important healthcare decisions most of us will ever face.

And that yearly decision is fast approaching.

The last few months of the year the Sibleys' business goes into overdrive with Medicare enrollment beginning October 15 and running through December 7.

"A broker, like myself, is someone contracted with multiple carriers so they aren't beholden to a specific carrier and they're not trying to fit someone into the only tool they have," Christina explained of what she does. "A broker is able to find the right tool for the client and their specific needs."

"You would be surprised at how

many people who are on Medicare, and have been for a long time, who don't understand how it works. They've never really been given a good education."

That's the "what" when it comes to Sibley Insures.

The "why" runs deeper.

Christina Sibley tears up when she talks about her grandmother, whom she was able to care for in her final few years.

"She was a widow, a homemaker her whole life, whose husband died at a young age unexpectedly," she said. "She lived on a very low income and had significant health issues. I watched her struggle for a long time, especially with paying for medications."

Planning on going to school to become a physician's assistant, Christina fell in love with gerontology (the study of aging issues), largely because of the experiences with her grandmother.

"My desired patients were going to be geriatric patients. That's who I love. That's who I love to work with," she said. "When Steve suggested I go into insurance I was not interested at all."

"She thought I was nuts," Steve said with a laugh. "When she found out about Medicare and what she could do for seniors it was like the lightbulb came on. These were not



Christina fell in love with gerontology largely because of the experiences with her grandmother. (Photo provided)

only the people she wanted to serve but as an educator she was able to use her experience and skills to truly make a difference."

Behind her the whole way is

See HEART next page



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## HEART

Continued from Page 12

Steve, who brings 15 years of financial services expertise and 36 years of military service to the business.

She's always had a passion for education.

"The best part of what I do now

I can spend two or three hours with somebody and really get to know them, help them understand so they can make their own choices," she said. "As an educator you have to be able to break complex things down into something people can relate to."

With Covid 19 restrictions ongoing, many seminars and educational opportunities to help seniors make an informed decision will likely not occur this year throughout the industry.

"That has been in the back of my mind but my clients, the people who are already with me, understand they have access to me all year," she

said. "They're used to 'Hey, I have a question. I'm going to call Christina.'"

She said "this year, in particular, there are many tools available to meet and enroll virtually, if that's someone's preference."

In person or on the phone, Christina has always prided herself on being accessible to her clients and the people who are referred to her by her clients.

Answering a question, or giving her opinion - it's always about the client.

"One of my favorite sayings is do the right thing for the sake of the right thing," she said. "Just do the right thing for people, it's that simple. I decided early on that I was going to do it that way, period. I'll either be successful at it or I won't be, but I'll do it in a way that I can look at myself in the mirror each day and be happy with what I do." Visit: <https://www.sibleyinsures.com>

## SSM Health St. Anthony increases minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour

SSM Health is pleased to announce that it will implement a new minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour throughout its four-state system, including ministries in Oklahoma. SSM Health in Oklahoma includes SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Shawnee, SSM Health Bone & Joint Hospital at St. Anthony, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Midwest, SSM Health St. Anthony Healthplex locations and SSM Health Medical Group. The increase will take effect on Oct. 10.

Our Mission and Values call us to care for the health and wellbeing of all those we serve," said Joe Hodges, Regional President, SSM Health Oklahoma. "As a leading employer in Oklahoma, our ongoing commitment is to foster a diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace - which includes providing fair and socially just wages and benefits for our team members, along with robust programs and resources designed to promote wellness."

This increase will impact nearly 3,000 team members across Missouri, Illinois, Oklahoma and Wisconsin - or about 7 percent of SSM Health's total workforce of nearly 40,000 employees. This decision is consistent with SSM Health's previously stated plans to advance equity as part of its overall talent development strategy.

Additionally, as a leading employer, SSM Health Oklahoma continuously seeks ways to better meet the needs of its workforce. The health system provides many programs and resources designed to support employees' overall health and wellbeing, including:

- Innovative and holistic wellness programs and support
- Discounted health insurance for eligible employees
- Access to an employee relief fund
- Tuition reimbursement
- Continuing education and development programs for career advancement
- Life management services - from personal counseling and healthy lifestyle coaching to legal consultation and financial planning

SSM Health in Oklahoma includes St. Anthony Hospital (Oklahoma City); Bone & Joint Hospital at St. Anthony (Oklahoma City); St. Anthony South (Oklahoma City), SSM Health Outpatient Center (Oklahoma City), St. Anthony Hospital - Shawnee (Shawnee, Okla.) and St. Anthony Hospital - Midwest (Midwest City, Okla.). The SSM Health network in Oklahoma also includes six SSM Health St. Anthony Healthplex campuses, 16 affiliated hospitals and SSM Health Medical Group with nearly 300 physicians and providers.

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