

## Building better partnerships



University of Oklahoma College of Nursing Dean Julie Hoff, PhD, MPH, RN stressed the importance of working partnerships at the recent Oklahoma Nurses Association annual convention.

by Bobby Anderson, RN - staff writer

There's a lack of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in Oklahoma.

There's also a shortage of nursing faculty in our state.

The remedy to both lies somewhere in partnerships with healthcare facilities and academia.

That was the message University of Oklahoma

College of Nursing Dean Julie Hoff, PhD, MPH, RN brought to the recent Oklahoma Nurses Association annual convention.

Just as hospitals are competing for qualified nurses, institutions of higher learning are competing for that same experience to teach tomorrow's leaders.

See PARTNERSHIP Page 2

## City Hospital Honored with 'A' Grade



For the ninth consecutive time, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City has received an 'A' Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade for achievements in protecting patients from harm and errors in the hospital.

"The care and safety of our patients is always our first priority, and our nurses, physicians and care teams reflect that in their work every day," said Jim Gebhart, president of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. "This recognition is special because it's decided by an objective, third-party group that evaluates and reports on hospitals' quality, safety and performance and less than one-third of hospitals nationwide receive it."

The Leapfrog Group, an independent, national watchdog organization, assigns letter grades to hospitals across the country based on more than 30 performance measures reflecting errors, injuries, accidents and infections, as well as the systems hospitals have in place to prevent harm to their patients.

In Oklahoma, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City was one of only 11 hospitals throughout the state and the only hospital in Oklahoma City to earn an A grade from Leapfrog in the Fall 2021 grades.

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harm to patients. The grading system is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public at [hospitalsafetygrade.org](http://hospitalsafetygrade.org). Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

"An 'A' Safety Grade is a tremendous achievement, of which this community should be extremely proud," said Leah Binder, president and

See MERCY Page 3



## PARTNERSHIP

Continued from Page 1

"I think No. 1 people don't understand what an academic health science center is. It is a resource for the state," Hoff said. "The opportunity for us to integrate is really going to raise nursing up. In my mind nursing comes from a unification model. You can't teach in the absence of practice. You can't do research in the absence of practice."

"They can kind of feed each other."

Hoff points to the fact that only 40 percent of nurses in Oklahoma obtain their bachelor's degree as a contributing factor in the faculty shortage.

A common point among frontline nurses is that pursuing a bachelor's degree results in no pay difference than obtaining an associate's degree. Nurses see the cost - which can range to upwards of \$15,000 - as simply money they will never see back.

"It does impact you financially and it does impact your career mobility and your options," Hoff said. "There are fewer baccalaureate nurses that are leaving nursing. They're

finding other roles. Healthcare has become complex. We're the only discipline that doesn't require a bachelor's degree to enter."

Oklahoma is among the worst states in healthcare outcomes as well as the number of nurses per 1,000 residents.

The United States is also the only industrialized country to practice without a bachelor's degree.

"My favorite group of students to teach are RN to BSN students," she continued. "They're smart. They're capable and they've defended themselves in their position their whole careers and have been made to feel inadequate. When you bring them into the classroom you can celebrate what they know and do and provide them with more theoretical information and they have these 'Ah-ha' moments. It's that higher-level knowledge and skills that a baccalaureate education provides."

Just a few weeks after the convention, Hoff, along with Norman Regional Health System Chief Nursing Officer, Brittnei McGill, MSN, RN, CCRN announced a unique partnership designed to help both the hospital system and the

university.

"No one should come forward and say we can build a college of nursing and solve the education crisis in Oklahoma because the faculty aren't there to do it," Hoff said. "(Clinical partners) are going to share their clinical experts. We're going to help their clinical experts become faculty. People will have dual roles - practitioner and teacher."

OU's Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs will be expanding onsite into the Norman Regional Health System and Duncan Regional Hospital.

The partnership will create a satellite location of the College of Nursing at Norman Regional's two hospitals - Norman Regional Hospital and the Norman Regional HealthPlex - as well as Duncan.

Students entering into this program will not only get clinical experience at the hospitals, but they will also attend classes in the Norman Regional Hospital Education Center.

Norman Regional will provide unique hands-on training.

McGill said the partnership is one-of-a-kind.

"I like that we can take the best of both organizations and make it into something that fits both people equally. It truly is a partnership," McGill said. "It's something we've created from scratch so it's ours to develop over time."

The move towards baccalaureate-prepared nurses is gaining ground every day.

In the interest of providing the best patient care and leadership by its nurse corps officers, the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force all require the baccalaureate degree to practice as an active duty Registered Nurse.

The Veteran's Administration, the nation's largest employer of registered nurses, has established the baccalaureate degree as the minimum preparation its nurses must have for promotion beyond the entry-level.

The nation's Magnet hospitals, which are recognized for nursing excellence and superior patient outcomes, have moved to require all nurse managers and nurse leaders to hold a baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing.

Simply put, "it translates to more opportunity," Hoff said.

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My name is Agnes, but my family calls me "Ike". I was born, raised and graduated from high school in Boley, Oklahoma. I met my husband, Otis, while I was attending business college in Omaha, Nebraska. During our 42 years of marriage we have been blessed with two daughters and two grandchildren. In 2006, I thought I was feeling okay, but noticed I was getting tired more and more. That's when I found out my kidneys were failing. I received a new kidney in May 2012. After writing to my donor family, I learned that a young woman name Holly saved my life. When I see the brightest star in the night sky, I think of my Angel, Holly.

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## MERCY

Continued from Page 1

CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "I thank the leadership and workforce of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City for its commitment to prioritizing patients and their safety, especially during these trying times."

The A grade from The Leapfrog Group is in addition to other recent recognitions of safety and quality at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City, such as a sixth 2021 IBM Watson Health 100 Top Hospital award and a 2021 Best Maternity Hospital by Newsweek and The Leapfrog Group.

To see Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City's full grade details and to access patient tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit [HospitalSafetyGrade.org](https://HospitalSafetyGrade.org) and follow The Leapfrog Group on Twitter and Facebook.



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# INTEGRIS Health Holds Annual Turkey Toss for Its Caregivers

## Makes Donation to Regional Food Bank

Turkey is traditionally the entrée of choice during the Thanksgiving holiday. It's also the most expensive item of the feast. That's why INTEGRIS Health has made it an annual tradition to provide turkeys to our caregivers. It's a way to say "thank you" for all their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Last year, we handed out thousands of turkeys system wide to employees, volunteers, physicians and board members. That includes hundreds of turkeys distributed to the students and staff of the charter school we sponsor, the Stanley Hupfeld Academy at Western Village, and to patients of the INTEGRIS Health Free Clinic.

But the giving spirit of INTEGRIS Health didn't stop there. Many of our caregivers decided to forego their gift and give back to the community by donating their turkeys to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma to provide holiday meals to those less fortunate. We will do the same thing again this year.



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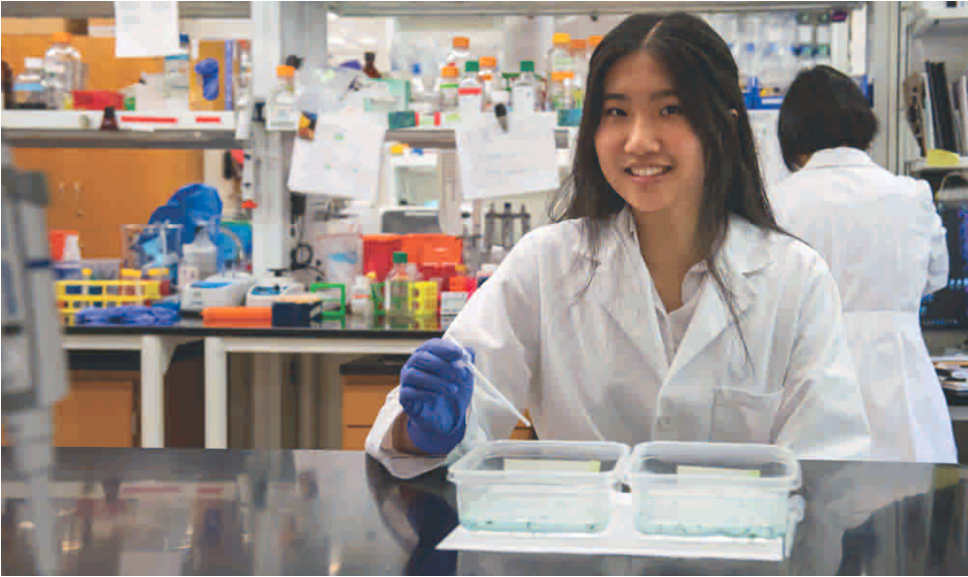
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# OMRF accepting 2022 Fleming Scholar applications



Cindy Li was part of Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation's 2021 class of Fleming Scholars.

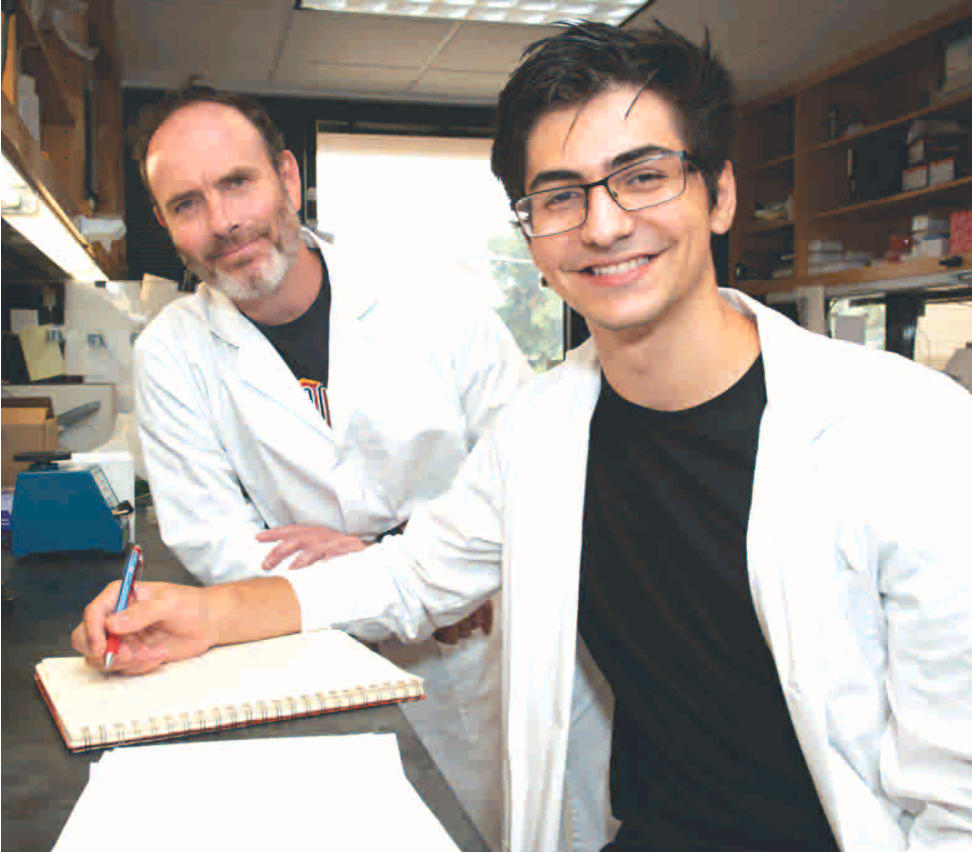
The Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation is accepting applications for its 2022 Sir Alexander Fleming Scholar Program. The application deadline is Feb. 1.

The paid, eight-week summer program allows the state's top science students to enhance their research

skills by participating in a lab setting alongside world-class scientists.

High school seniors, as well as college freshmen, sophomores and juniors, are eligible to apply. Students must be 16 or older to qualify and an Oklahoma resident at the time of high

See SCHOLAR Page 5



OMRF scientist Bob Axtell, Ph.D., in his lab along with David Stefanoff, a 2021 Fleming Scholar.

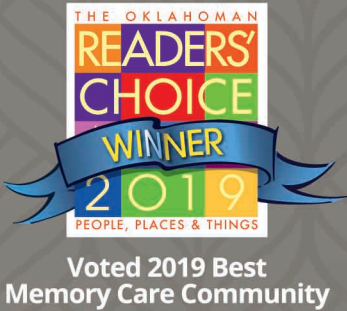


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## SCHOLAR

Continued from Page 4

school graduation to be eligible.

The application process includes submission of an essay, letters of recommendation and academic transcripts. Selected scholars may also be eligible for housing.

"Our Fleming Scholar experience provides students with invaluable hands-on experience that isn't possible in a classroom," said program coordinator Heather Rodriguez. "It's a unique opportunity for these students to build connections and discover possibilities for a career in biomedical research or medicine."

Founded in 1956 and named for Sir Alexander Fleming, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist who discovered penicillin and in 1949 dedicated OMRF's first building, the program offers students a summer packed with hands-on biomedical research.

Since its inception, more than 600 Oklahoma students have had the opportunity to work in state-of-the-art labs at OMRF. Two current OMRF vice presidents, Rodger McEver, M.D., and Judith James, M.D., Ph.D., started their research careers as Fleming Scholars.

For more information or to apply, visit [omrf.org/fleming](http://omrf.org/fleming).

# WCE Alliance Partners with Leading Nursing Organizations Nursing Education Project

The World Continuing Education Alliance (WCEA), a social impact technology company that works in partnership with the International Council of Nurses (ICN), has a partnered with the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to improve access to quality evidence-based training for nurses in low- and middle income countries using innovative technology solutions.

Through this collaborative partnership, WCEA will distribute ANA -created educational content and resources as part of its ongoing work to increase the professional practice of nursing, while improving patient outcomes, globally. These continuing professional development courses cover a diverse array of topics and issues from using nursing research and evidence-based practice, to preventing compassion fatigue, moral distress, and burnout, and understanding the role of innovation,

creativity, and design in nursing. These free courses will be provided via mobile learning platforms that will allow nurses to access the content both on and off-line. The partnership also provides opportunities for ANCC to supply additional course content in the future.

"We are delighted to be partnering with the American Nurses Association. The collaboration with ANA further emphasizes our commitment to deliver quality education and keeping standards" says WCEA Program Director Craig Fitzpatrick.

Fostering continuing professional development and lifelong learning among nurses across all specialties and health care settings as well as socioeconomic backgrounds is key to positively impacting the delivery of quality patient care as well as health outcomes for millions of people around the world. To

date, WCEA has delivered more than 3,000,000 educational courses as part of its work to significantly improve access to quality evidence-based education by using technology to develop skills, improve the delivery of patient care, and achieve better health outcomes.

"We are thrilled to support this work," said ANCC Senior Vice President Kathy Chappell, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN. "The content provided for these courses will significantly improve access to high quality, evidence-based, peer-reviewed education for nurses around the world. Nursing expertise is vital to driving positive patient outcomes, so it is imperative that nurses have access to high-quality educational content, especially given their role in the global COVID-19 recovery efforts. This project will change countless lives for the better, and we are proud to be a part of it."



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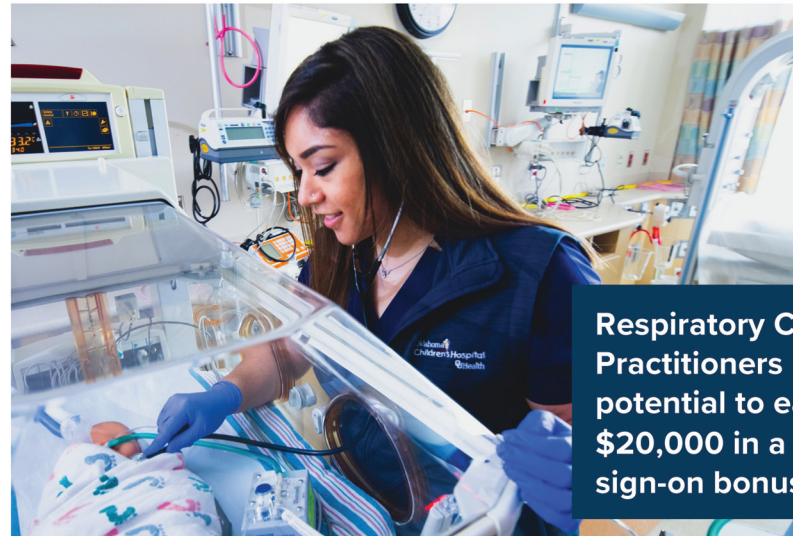
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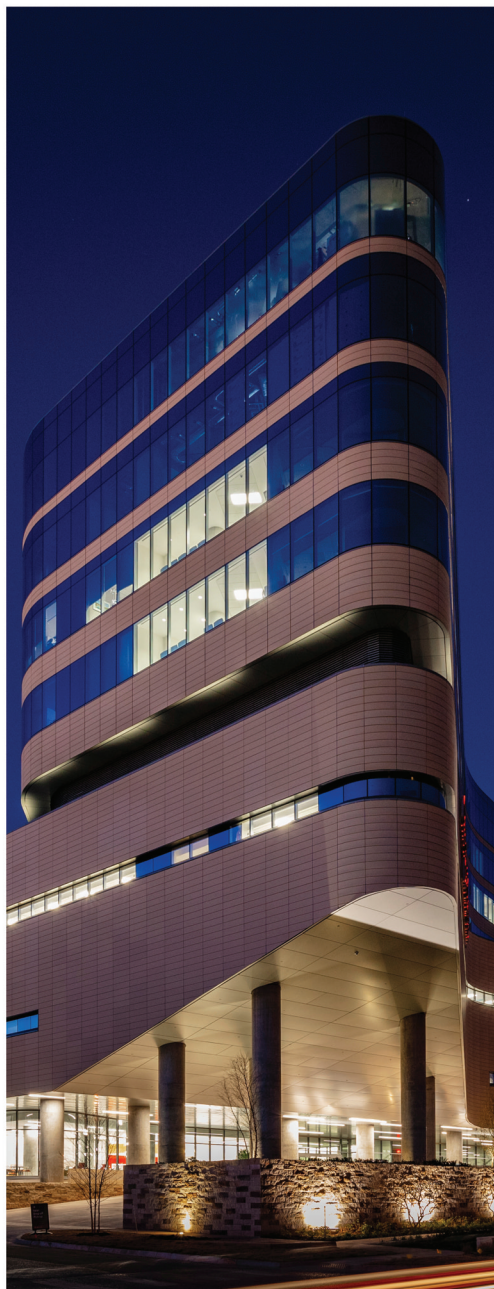
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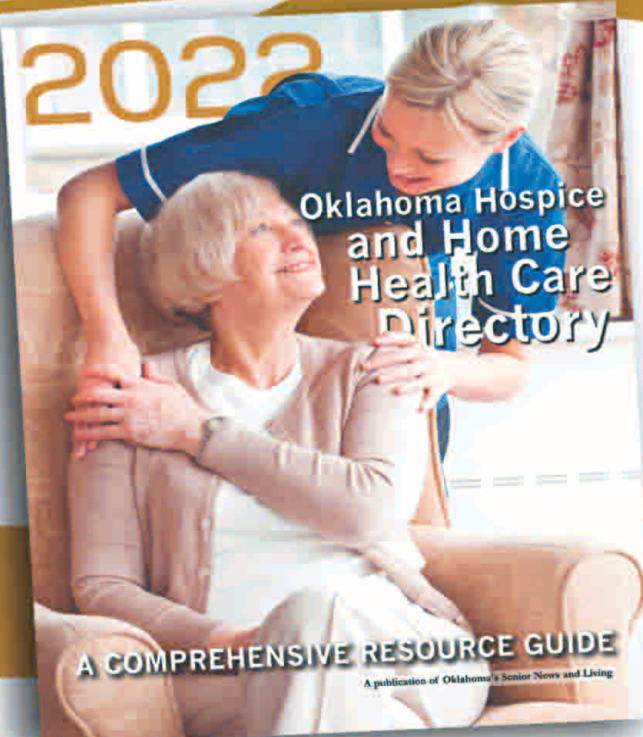


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*"I like to fish and hunt. I do a lot of fishing."*



Brian McFarlin, LPN

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# Learning on the front lines



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*Already an experienced nurse, Verena Turner is furthering her career in public health by pursuing her bachelor's degree in nursing through OSU's online RN to BSN completion program.*

Her passion for serving patients who need her most has been elevated amid the coronavirus pandemic. Turner, who is typically a nurse in a neurology intensive care unit (ICU), transitioned to caring solely for coronavirus patients over the last several months. The day-to-day patient care is an opportunity to

apply her coursework.

"I love being a nurse, although I wouldn't say being a COVID nurse was my goal for this year," Turner said. "Seeing these patients recover, getting text messages and cards and emails from families of patients we've seen at the absolute worst and not knowing if we're going to keep them

alive makes it all worth it."

Due to isolation restrictions, Turner said she may be the only person her COVID patients see for 13 hours. She endures layers of uncomfortable personal protective equipment (PPE) to spend extra time with the patients.

"Our patients a lot of the time are intubated and sedated, but they know there's somebody there," Turner said. "This has definitely opened my eyes that nurses have a really big impact."

Serving in a COVID care unit builds on Turner's past work as a licensed professional nurse on a surgical floor and more recently in the ICU. Not only does she apply hands-on experiences from working full time to her coursework, but she also learns from classmates who are working in diverse healthcare environments.

Dr. Mary Malaska, OSU RN to BSN program coordinator, said the OSU curriculum, which consists of eight nursing classes and two health classes, is specifically designed to enhance nurses' professional skills.

"Students expand their professional nursing lens from the practical, foundational skills they learned to become a registered nurse," Malaska said. "Our coursework provides higher level thinking that teaches the 'why' behind their past education."

Students are challenged with topics ranging from leadership and goal-setting, to public health policy and nursing theory. During the COVID pandemic, the epidemiology course has been especially applicable.

"Factors like causation, testing and data analysis are key tenets of the course," Malaska said. "Their application now in a global pandemic just underscores the relevance of our program."

Balancing COVID nursing responsibilities with classwork has certainly not been easy. Some OSU RN to BSN students working in COVID units travel to as many as four healthcare facilities in one metropolitan area tending to patients, in addition to managing

coursework and responsibilities at home.

Malaska is working with Dr. Alana Cluck, RN to BSN clinical faculty, to study the impact of COVID on nurses' mental health. While respondents reported positive aspects, like spending more time with family due to canceled personal events, they also reported increased stress.

"Many nurses feel like they are placed in impossible situations, having to decide which patient to tend to first when two patients are crashing at the same time," Malaska said. "This isn't a decision nurses usually have to make."

Oklahoma State nursing faculty understand that stress, and they are committed to supporting their students academically and professionally. As the world continues to social distance in order to combat the spread of coronavirus, nursing faculty have remained connected to students through weekly video updates and discussion boards.

This is part of a culture of support Turner observed even before the COVID pandemic, something she is thankful for as a full-time working mom. The 100-percent online program also added flexibility.

"My professors realize we're all in this together and have been super flexible and supportive," Turner said. "They even send emails checking to see if we're safe and okay."

For Turner, who expects to graduate in May 2021, the hands-on experience of caring for COVID patients during a pandemic as well as the healthcare applications learned from her RN to BSN program are preparing her to achieve her dreams.

"I think COVID is going to be something we're dealing with for a long time," Turner said. "The experience of working on a COVID floor, coupled with the higher-level concepts I am learning in the RN to BSN program, will shape my career."

For this nurse - whether treating COVID patients or furthering her education - each task is a labor of love.

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## SITUATION UPDATE: COVID-19

COVID-19 Cases:	655,512
New Cases Today	968
Sunday New Cases (11/14/21)	921
Saturday New Cases (11/13/21)	892
New Cases 7 day Average	787
Active Cases	7,228
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths	11,675

Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
	Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)	18 (7)
Region 2 (NE)	26 (8)
Region 3 (SW)	52 (16)
Region 4 (EC)	14 (7)
Region 5 (SE)	20 (5)
Region 6 (Central)	31 (11)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	126 (48)
Region 8 (OKC)	107 (33)
Total	394* (135)
Other Types of Facilities	
Focus Facilities	12 (4)
Rehabilitation Facilities	1 (0)
Tribal Facilities	12 (1)
Other Facilities Total	25 (5)

\*Includes 18 hospitalizations in pediatric beds.

\*\*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 2021-11-15 at 7:00 a.m.**



# OU Health Establishes Center for Pregnancy and Newborn Health

A ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house marked the official opening of the new OU Health Center for Pregnancy and Newborn Health (CPNH). The center, located in the University of Oklahoma Research Park on the OU Health Sciences Center campus, represents an expansive collaboration among physicians and scientists working for improved health outcomes for mothers and their babies.

The center is co-directed by Peter Vitiello, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Director of Laboratory Research for the OU College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics Section of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine; and Dean Myers, Ph.D., Professor and Vice Chair for Basic Research, OU College of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Associate Vice President for Health Sciences Research. Myers also holds the John W. Records Chair in Maternal-Fetal Medicine, and is Director of Research of the OU College of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Maternal-Fetal Medicine Fellowship program.

This new effort harnesses the resources of more than 60 physician-scientists, basic scientists, clinical and laboratory research staff and trainees, representing an extensive collaboration among OU College of Medicine faculty members in the Departments of Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Surgery and Internal Medicine, as well as the Harold Hamm Diabetes Center and Oklahoma Nathan Shock Aging Center.

Rodney Edwards, M.D., M.S., Professor and Chief of the Section of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, and Presbyterian Health Foundation Endowed Chair in Perinatal

Research, said the collaborative endeavor is remarkable in its scope, encompassing OU Health Sciences Center entities as well as Oklahoma Children's Hospital. "We believe that CPNH will not only increase collaboration among basic scientists in our various disciplines but also between basic, translational and clinical scientists. Doing so will facilitate not only discovery but translation of discoveries into improvements in clinical care."

Trent Tipple, M.D., FAAP, Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health Chief of Neonatology, and Reba McEntire Endowed Chair in Neonatology, said greater understanding of these factors will create new pathways to improve health outcomes with multi-generational impact. "As these fields of expertise overlap, we can accelerate development of therapeutic options and focus on disease prevention in the earliest stages of life. Our mission is to ensure healthy early development; this is the best way to promote optimal health as infants grow through childhood and adolescence to become healthy adults who can achieve their best, life-long potential."

Vitiello said ongoing work by CPNH faculty members will explore specific medical complications of pregnancy and prematurity. "Our work will strongly focus on two critical areas - the origin and progression of respiratory, intestinal, retinal and cardiac diseases in premature babies, and the impact of maternal and perinatal nutrition on newborn growth development. These factors greatly influence the course of health outcomes."

The primary CPNH laboratory site at 800 Research Parkway boasts 5,000 square feet of dedicated laboratory and office

space. Research is further supported by ready access to other new technologically advanced resources, including:

- Human milk analyzer in the Oklahoma Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, part of the Quincy Le Norman Nutrition Center, to track nutritional content

- Biorepository where clinical samples from infants born prematurely can be collected, processed, stored, and accessed for ongoing and future studies

- Metabolomics core to quantify molecular content from biological samples

Myers said, "Foresight, vision,



and opportunity have brought us to the right time and place for this new initiative. With a solid foundation of world-class resources and depth of expertise in multiple fields, the Center for Pregnancy and Newborn Health creates myriad opportunities for success that will improve lives for generations to come."



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