

Blessings of a hospice nurse



Check your pride at the door

Wendy Young's heart has plenty of room for hospice care as she offers comfort and care to patients and their families at perhaps the most vulnerable time of life.

by James Coburn - staff writer

Wendy Young knew she wanted to be a hospice nurse before attending nursing school. She has been with Frontier Hospice for nearly five years and serves as a case manager in the Oklahoma City metro.

"Everybody said, 'Oh, you're going to change your mind. You're going to learn about all these different types of nursing and change your

mind.' I never did, but one thing you ran into at that time was you had to have nursing experience before you could be considered for a position," said Young, a registered nurse.

She began her career in health care

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A LETTER FROM:

Oklahoma City Hospitals: *Health Care System is at a Breaking Point*

INTEGRIS Health and three major hospital systems in Oklahoma City are warning of potentially serious problems as the number of hospitalizations rise amid the Omicron surge of COVID-19.

Our emergency departments are overflowing. Our caregivers are still strong, but they are exhausted. Even these heroes can't keep up much longer. The Oklahoma City Health Care System is at a breaking point.

Soon, you or a loved one may need us for life-saving care, whether for a stroke, emergency appendectomy or trauma from a car accident, and we might not be able to help. This pandemic isn't just impacting care for COVID patients.

We have 300 fewer beds than we did last year at this time, but we have the same number of COVID positive patients in the hospital - and this number will continue to go up, at least for the next few weeks. It's a desperate battle and we need you to be aware and help.

Your local hospitals are trying to adapt as best we can to these circumstances. Unfortunately, between our four health systems, we have hundreds

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YOUNG

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after earning her LPN credentials at Canadian Valley Technology Center in El Reno. After serving as an LPN for three years she earned her Associate in Applied Science degree to become a registered nurse after graduating from Oklahoma City Community College. Her nursing experience includes working for the Veterans Administration in Norman, and workers compensation. Having served as director of nursing at Shannon Springs Nursing Home in Chickasha helped her move to hospice care, she said.

"I have a strong belief that none of us are brought into this world alone and none of us should leave this world alone," Young said. "I think that for families it can be one of the hardest things they ever do — being with a family member and going through that in a home setting — it can also be one of the most beautiful and precious things they can ever do for a loved one. I think being in an environment where you're familiar with the smells and the sounds and the people that you love — I hope when it's my turn that my family will give me that gift."

Young's mother was one of 12 children. So, she has many uncles and aunts who are elderly. Being a hospice nurse serves mostly older adults, but also younger people. Young embodies a natural affinity with the elderly. She affectionately calls them her LOLs and LOGs, meaning little old ladies and little

old guys.

One of her opportunities she is most proud of by working for Frontier Hospice is they will go above and beyond in helping a patient or family in need.

"We have several non-funded patients that Frontier covers the cost of their care," Young explained. "If you have entered that time of your life where you're at the end of your life, it shouldn't matter if you have insurance or Medicare or what not. That brings in a human aspect for me that we are all people, not just names and numbers."

Young is grateful for the caring hearts of her coworkers that compliments her need to be compassionate as well, she said.

Her advice to anyone considering a career in hospice is to be in touch with your compassion. Be prepared with the technical aspects of palliative care, but at the end of the day a hospice nurse should always share their love with people, she said. It's vital to willingly accept people where they are in their life's journey.

"This is not my story. This is their story," she said. "And I'm just being allowed to be a part of that story."

A hospice nurse needs to check their pride at the door, shine with unconditional love and understand they are becoming part of their patient's lives.

A hallmark of Frontier Hospice is offering holistic care for the entire person. Nursing support involves 24/7 care. Young is always a phone call away for those

needing help. Nurse aides provide hygiene care for people. A non-denominational chaplain service is available for anyone seeking spiritual support. Social workers help families navigate helpful sources to ease life.

"If their goal is to stay in the home, we try everything we can to make that happen for someone," Young said.

She has a support team out in the field whenever she has a concern. But the work is not drudgery. Young believes she works with one of the most loving groups of nurses in the state of Oklahoma. Nurses discuss their patients' individual needs during staff meetings. The nurses share their stories of humanity.

"I know that in the field if I have a problem that needs solving, I have five or six people I can immediately call," she added. "I admire that a lot, and everybody knows that we are all a team."

The question of why hospice was recently asked of the nursing staff to explain at a recent

meeting.

"To my knowledge I've never had a family member on hospice services," she said.

Young recalls hearing the term, hospice, mentioned for the first time at the VA.

"Outside of that I just knew. I know that I am called to this field. I believe when it gets down to it, this is one of the purest forms of nursing. I'm not trying to fix anybody, I'm just trying to care and help keep people comfortable," Young said.

The goal of hospice is comfort and quality, she pointed out.

"I feel really blessed and that's something I am sure of," Young said.

For more information visit www.frontierhospice.com or call 405-789-2913 (Moore location) or 405-395-2184 (Shawnee location).



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HOPITALS

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of co-workers in quarantine or unable to come to work due to kids out of school and no available childcare. This has nearly crippled our already limited staff. Nurses are having to stretch to care for several more patients than they usually do. This is devastating and prevents us from being able to provide the excellent care we've been trained to give and that you've received in the past.

We have zero ICU beds and no inpatient beds available. This morning, all of our health systems across the Oklahoma City metro had a total of 107 patients in our emergency departments waiting for an open bed. They are waiting on inpatient or ICU beds, which are not available. To make matters even more difficult, many people who do not require emergency care are seeking COVID testing in our ERs that are there to serve very sick people.

We need you to know what we are up against. We need your help. We want to see you in our ERs if you are experiencing a true emergency, like trouble breathing. But we have to preserve our very

limited resources for truly sick patients. If you're asymptomatic or experiencing mild symptoms, please visit one of the many community testing locations hosted by the health department or IMMY Labs. Get vaccinated. Get boosted. Wear your mask. Socially distance. Stay home if you're sick.

We also need you to be kind to our caregivers and co-workers. Patients are coming to us struggling to cope with life stressors, and violence against health care workers is at an all-time high. Our caregivers are wounded from this two-year battle and are being asked to work under unconscionable conditions. Please be kind and patient with them.

Please do your part so fellow Oklahomans, our loved ones and neighbors, will have medical care available to them when needed.

With concern and compassion,
Julie Watson, M.D. – chief medical officer, INTEGRIS Health

Chad Smith, M.D. – chief medical officer, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City

P. Cameron Mantor, M.D. – acting chief medical officer, OU Health

Kersey Winfree, M.D. – chief medical officer, SSM Health St. Anthony



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Weyrich begins as OMRF president

Andrew S. Weyrich, Ph.D., today joined the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation as its president.

Weyrich comes to the foundation from the University of Utah, where he was vice president for research. An internationally recognized leader in blood clotting, his discoveries have facilitated key advances in the field of hematology.

OMRF, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary, named Weyrich president in October following a nationwide search. He succeeds Stephen M. Prescott, M.D., who died in May, and OMRF general counsel Adam Cohen, who served as interim president.

"Dr. Weyrich is a visionary scientific leader who will build on OMRF's reputation as home to the best and the brightest in research,"

said Len Cason, chair of OMRF's board of directors. "OMRF's excellence will only grow under his leadership."

Weyrich has been engaged in transition planning with the foundation's senior leadership since being named president. His early priorities include meeting the researchers in each of OMRF's labs, developing a scientific strategic plan and expanding the foundation's statewide outreach. That means seeking input from scientists, administrative staff, board members, donors, legislators and others.

"I'm here to listen," Weyrich said. "I want to know what our scientists and our community need from OMRF."

Weyrich is no stranger to OMRF; as a professor and researcher at the University of Utah, he collaborated with foundation scientists on research partnerships in cardiovascular biology that date back to the 1990s. His research focuses on how blood cells impact human thrombotic and inflammatory diseases.



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation President Andrew Weyrich, Ph.D.

See **PRESIDENT** Page 5

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PRESIDENT

Continued from Page 4

An independent, nonprofit biomedical research institute with more than 450 employees and a budget of nearly \$100 million, OMRF focuses its research on such critical disease areas as cancer, lupus, Alzheimer's, heart disease and Covid-19. Weyrich earned his doctorate in physiology and pharmacology from the Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest. He's authored more than 150 peer-reviewed articles and is a member of the advisory council to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Among his numerous honors is the American Society of Hematology's prestigious William

Dameshek Prize.

His tenure at OMRF will follow 15 years of record growth at the foundation that included the foundation's largest campus expansion and the addition of more than 40 new principal scientists. In the same span, OMRF has three times earned designation by the National Institutes of Health as an Autoimmunity Center of Excellence, and three life-changing drugs born at OMRF have earned FDA approval.

Weyrich said his goal is to "amplify and strengthen" an already thriving research institution.

"I want to set us up for continued success," he said. "We want to move things forward so that the excellence here becomes a perpetual thing."

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We tragically lost him too soon, but the choice he selflessly made to be a donor continues to be a humbling testament of Brock's love and passion for others. We were given the most amazing gift when God gave us Brock, for which we will forever be grateful.

'Children are a gift from the Lord, they are a reward from Him' Psalm 127:3

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Hiring in Norman

Calling all healers! We need you on our team. Norman Regional is hiring for both clinical and non-clinical positions.

In-person hiring events are the first Thursday of each month from **4 - 6 p.m.** at the Norman Regional Hospital Education Center, **901 N. Porter Ave. in Norman.**

Upcoming in-person events include:

• **Thursday, Feb. 3**

at Norman Regional Hospital Education Center

• **Thursday, March 3**

at Norman Regional Hospital Education Center

Applicants are encouraged to have their resumes ready as on-the-spot interviews and offers may happen at these events. The system's unique virtual events allow job seekers to "shop" for a position among several departments and chat with leaders from across hospitals and clinics.

The next virtual event is from **4-6 p.m. Thurs, Jan. 27.**

Join our team. See all our opportunities at NormanRegional.com/careers.



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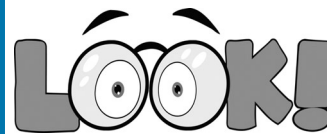
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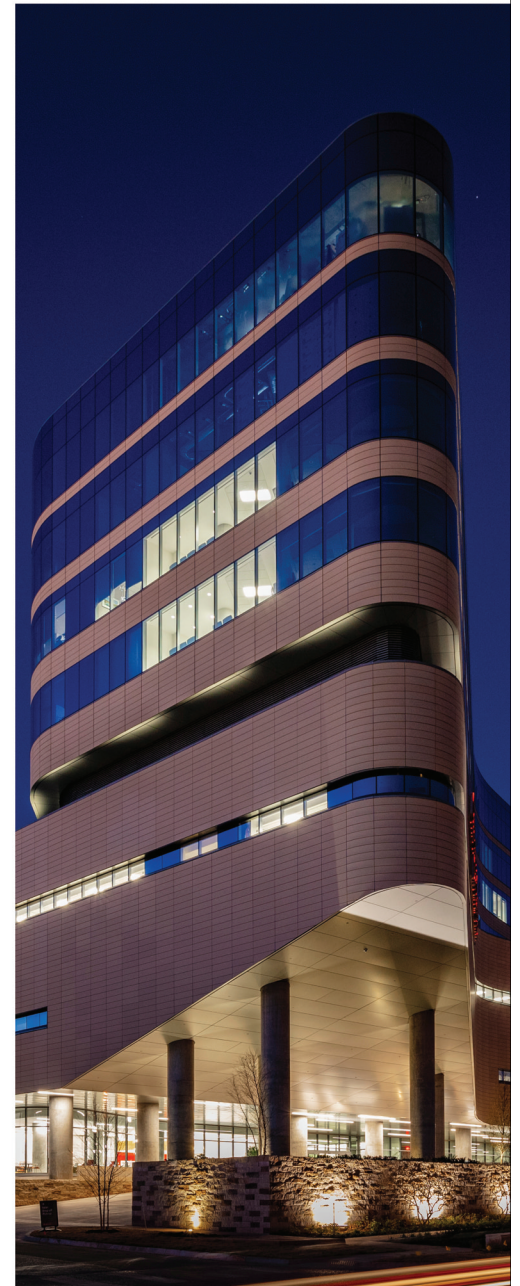
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OU Health is the state's only Level 1 Trauma Center and serves as a comprehensive regional hub for trauma-related care available to people of all ages. We are an academic facility and promote a fast-paced environment that will allow your career to really take off. We have six clinical affiliate programs for Respiratory care and we welcome new graduates to our team, no experience necessary. Our graduated orientation process, from floor care to Trauma ED, will help ensure that you will find your confidence through a combination of developing critical thinking skills and peer support.

At OU Health you can expect to gain a host of specialized skills by rotating through our service line critical care areas, which include Trauma, ortho/surgical, cardiovascular, Neurosciences, transplant and medicine ICU's. We encourage and support our RTs to perform in specialty roles such as the COPD navigator, Daily assessor, Smoking cessation advocate, Diagnostic Bronchoscopy and we have staff that are part of the ECMO specialist team as well.

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We are seeking Licensed Practical Nurse
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We are looking for Registered Nurse Case Manager
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Norman Regional names nurse of the year



Norman Regional Health System honored eight nurses for their commitment to patients and the community in 2021.

Each year, a group of Norman Regional physicians along with the Norman Regional Health Foundation provide an award for the exceptional care that was provided over the past year by Norman Regional's nursing staff.

Joel Pickard, RN, of the Emergency Department, was named Nurse of the Year. Pickard was praised for always

helping his co-workers, his dedication to his patients and his passion for quality care.

His colleagues noted that Pickard, "has a special passion for not only doing his job well but making sure the emergency department is functioning on an excellent level. He has gone above and beyond in expanding his skills to help care for patients - specifically mastering ultrasound IV placement, which greatly improves patient care."

Two nurses were named as the runner-up for Nurse of the Year. They are Debbie Brown, RN, of Labor, Delivery and Recovery and Cassandra Gibson, RN, of Progressive Care.

Brown was praised for being

an experienced nurse. "Debbie is a nurse who loves caring for both her patients and the people around her," her nominator wrote.

Gibson was another nurse recognized for her willingness to help in all situations. "I feel she is a perfect example of a Norman Regional healer and exemplifies all the characteristics of a super nurse," said her nominator.

Other nominees were: Meghan Bedwell, RN, Maegan Dover, RN, Susan Erne, LPN, Mark Veal, RN, and Pam Wilbur, RN.



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Shalonda Love, CNA

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2021 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

Nursing Education, Empowering the Next Generation of Oklahoma's Elite Nurses



For nearly 50 years, the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) has provided Oklahoma with well-qualified and educated nurses. Graduates of Central's nursing programs are known for being some of the best nurses in the state of Oklahoma and around the nation, and the UCO Department of Nursing is proud to continue this tradition.

Central's bachelor's and master's programs prepare tomorrow's leaders in nursing through a variety of settings, which helps the demand at all levels of nursing services needed in Oklahoma. Central offers traditional and nontraditional programs that fit the needs of anyone wanting to pursue a career in nursing or further their nursing education. Accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, Central offers the traditional BSN program with courses offered at the conveniently-located Edmond campus; the fully online RN to B.S. in nursing track; the fast-track B.S.; and, the fully online master's degree in nursing, which includes two tracks.

Traditional BSN Program

The traditional nursing program is for someone who has not yet obtained a license to practice nursing as a registered nurse. This may be a student who is attending college for their first degree or someone who has already earned a degree in another field and has decided that nursing is in their future.

Online RN to B.S. in Nursing Track

Central's RN to B.S. track is available 100% online for registered nurses who are interested in furthering their nursing education. Upon successful completion, nurses will have earned a Bachelor of Science in nursing. Central's commitment to providing registered nurses with quality, convenient, student-focused curriculum and a cost-effective baccalaureate nursing education is the inspiration for the track.

With both part- and full-time options available and for as low as \$8,500, Central's track is designed to provide flexibility for students, with the option to complete the track in as little as 10 months.

"The RN to B.S. in nursing track at UCO takes the flexibility, affordability and convenience of an online degree with the recognized quality provided by our faculty to provide an experience students are looking for," said Barbara



Arnold, Ed.D., RN, chairperson and associate professor of nursing at Central.
Fast-Track BS

Central's Fast Track in nursing is for those students who have earned a traditional bachelor's degree in another field and would like to change to the profession of nursing. Upon successful completion, a Bachelor of Science in nursing will be awarded. The fast-track program can be completed in just 16 months and provides the flexibility of hybrid courses.

Online M.S. in Nursing

The Master of Science in nursing degree at UCO will help to provide for the increasing global need of health care practitioners with expanded nursing knowledge. The program offers working RNs flexibility through fully online courses with both part- and full-time options available. The program can be completed in as little as 16 months, if pursued full time. Students are required to also complete 100 clinical hours. The online Master of Science in nursing can be completed for as little as \$15,000.

Nursing graduate students have the ability to choose from two tracks, the nursing education track or the specialty nursing track. A master's degree in nursing education will prepare students for academic positions in nursing education or for a position in hospital staff education. The specialty nursing track allows students to meet individual goals in areas such as leadership or administration.

Next Generation of Nurses

All UCO nursing programs offer real-world instruction from supportive nursing faculty who are experts in their field of nursing. Graduates from UCO nursing programs are recognized within the health care community for their knowledge, professionalism and leadership potential. Central prides itself as a smart investment for success and for preparing future leaders in an opportunity-rich environment.

"I have to thank UCO's online RN to BS program for giving me courage, skills and knowledge, I have learned so much in the program already. I have found great love and passion for evidence-based practice, quality management and nursing research," said Vicena Skelton, a current Central RN to BSN student.

"This program has fantastic faculty, staff and educators that are understanding and caring. They have helped make pandemic online learning doable and your degree achievable."

The UCO Department of Nursing has degree programs that can help you achieve your career goals, whether you are new to health care and are seeking your first degree in nursing or are a registered nurse interested in advancing your current career.

For more information about nursing programs offered at Central, visit www.uco.edu/nursing.



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OMRF experts encourage new-ish year resolutions

Haven't settled on resolutions for 2022? Experts at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation have a few suggestions for healthy commitments you can still check off the list this year.

1. Get moving.

OMRF physician-scientist Hal Scofield, M.D., said adding movement like taking the stairs or a short walk can pay dividends. "You don't have to sign up for a marathon," Scofield said. "The greatest health benefits come from changing habits by small increments that fit your current lifestyle."

If winter weather hinders outdoor workouts or Covid-19 precautions limit gym time, take advantage of free online workout videos. "You can get moving in new ways at home without any special equipment,"

Scofield said.

2. Get checked.

A Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study of U.S. adults found that 41% of those surveyed delayed or missed medical care at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. With the coronavirus surging again, OMRF immunologist Eliza Chakravarty, M.D., cautions that routine medical care remains important.

"Don't let other conditions - or concerns - go untreated, and don't miss routine checkups," she said.

Putting off testing for chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure or cancer might reduce the number of treatment options and have long-term impacts, Chakravarty added.

3. Get informed.



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Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation physician-scientist Hal Scofield, M.D.

Health is influenced by changing factors including age and environment, said OMRF cancer researcher Magdalena Bieniasz, Ph.D. This year, she said, make it a goal to educate yourself on possible risk factors specific to your life.

"For example, many cancer screenings aren't needed at a young age, but should become a regular practice after age 40," Bieniasz said.

No single factor should be cause for concern but knowing risks and warning signs for common conditions can help guide when to consult your doctor (see resolution No. 2).

4. Get boosted.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a Covid-19 vaccine booster for all adults and some children. Timing varies based on the maker of each person's initial vaccination.

"As Covid-19 continues to spread, all forms of protection are necessary," Chakravarty said. "Being fully vaccinated and boosted is at the top of the list, along with masking and testing."

Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for the latest guidance on vaccines.

SITUATION UPDATE: COVID-19

COVID-19 Cases	914,063
New Cases	7,679
Sunday's New Cases (01/23/22)	12,471
New Cases 7 day Average	10,703
Active Cases	129,047
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths	13,063
Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
	Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)	64 (17)
Region 2 (NE)	122 (26)
Region 3 (SW)	197 (35)
Region 4 (EC)	87 (21)
Region 5 (SE)	69 (9)
Region 6 (Central)	137 (33)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	485 (99)
Region 8 (OKC)	547 (96)
Total	1708* (336)
Other Types of Facilities	
Focus Facilities	97 (27)
Rehabilitation Facilities	5 (0)
Tribal Facilities	58 (10)
Other Facilities Total	160 (37)

*Includes 64 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 2022-01-24 at 7:00 a.m.

FROM OUR FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK

From: Hillcrest Medical Center DAISY Award Winner!



Congratulations to Brittany, RN, for receiving the DAISY Award. Brittany was nominated by a patient who noted that she was a tremendous help during her natural birthing process and that she could not have done it without her. The patient explained Brittany went above and beyond to give her the experience she wanted. Thank you, Brittany!

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