



Esthela Quiroz, LPN, has worked at Valir Rehabilitation Hospital since becoming a nurse in 1999.

by James Coburn - staff writer

It's evident that Esthela Quiroz is a seasoned nurse when listening to her discuss her career as an LPN at Valir Rehabilitation Hospital, located in midtown Oklahoma City. Since 2009 she has been part of the Valir team, working to improve people's lives.

One of the main things she focuses on is getting a patient's pain under control so

that they may better participate in the program. Especially during the pandemic, the nurses make sure the equipment is clean. Equipment is disinfected between each patient appointment.

The inpatient program has the patients staying an average of 10 to 14 days. A lot of patients are recuperating from strokes,

knee surgeries, spinal cord injuries. A unit is dedicated to traumatic brain injuries. Liaisons go out and look for patients who could benefit from the hospital. Services include physical therapy to help them walk, occupational therapy to help them carry out simple physical tasks such as

VALIR

Continued from Page 1

brushing teeth. Speech therapy helps people communicate once more.

"They leave here and they're walking. They're able to care for themselves. They're able to communicate with their families," she said.

Quiroz's mother was hospitalized around the time that she became a nurse. She entered rehab after hospitalization and Quiroz knew that rehabilitation was in her nursing future. She wanted to work at a rehab center where people leave with their speech restored and are once again able to walk.

"That's what we see a lot here, especially the traumatic brain injuries," Quiroz said. "That's one of the units where I actually started working when I first started working here. I wanted to help people just like they helped my grandmother. I saw that the nurses were nice and compassionate. I wanted to help

people and other families to get back on their feet. That's what we do here."

She loves that everybody works together for the common good of patient care. Management has been empathetic and concerned about their staff during the pandemic. During Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Valir leadership provided every Valir Rehabilitation Hospital employee a full dinner for their families.

"They were always checking on us and making sure that everything was going smoothly, making sure the patient is taken care of because that's our priority," Quiroz explained.

Being a Valir nurse means going above and beyond the call of duty during COVID. There were times when they would let their patients call their families with their own phones brought to work. Patients had anxiety and feared how the pandemic was sweeping across the country, she said.

"We would take out our phones and take it to them to

make sure they were keeping in touch because that was important," she continued.

Education is vital in helping patients adjust to being hospitalized, she said. A lot of people had little education about the introduction of vaccines and how they are helpful in spurring the immune system to fight COVID. They were going by the negative narratives on social media, Quiroz said.

She recalls a daughter who died. The experience touched Quiroz's life. The mother had what Quiroz considered to be a perfect life with a husband. They shared a daughter who was handicapped.

"The daughter actually passed away here holding her hand," Quiroz continued. "The daughter came to visit in her wheelchair, and she passed away. That touched me, especially the husband who was taking care of both the patient and the daughter."

Quiroz said life changed for that family in a matter of seconds. This experience changed Quiroz to understand the importance of simple things that make life important. Valir Rehabilitation Hospital is an amazing place, Quiroz said. That's why she has stayed through the years.

"I've worked with a lot of therapists and they're here because they care about the patient," she added. "I've seen a lot of changes here, too. But it is always for the better," she said.

Pain management is a staple of the hospital. Quiroz strives to keep patients comfortable yet functional, which can be very

challenging when some patients enter the rehab hospital directly from a hospital intensive care unit. The transition may be quick. At time the patient doesn't know where they are going before reaching Valir or what to expect. So, a continuum of education is key to defray anxiety. Their transition to rehab involves the patient improving enough to safely go home.

"We have to be educated about every single pain medicine because it's important to give patients the right information about what they are taking and why they are taking it," she explained.

Even with a nationwide nursing shortage, a patient is never left alone without a system in place to provide help. Someone is always there for them, Quiroz said.

"Whether it's the director of nursing, everybody steps in to help because it is hard," she said of the nursing shortage.

"We have to put patients at ease and assure them that we're going to be taking care of them no matter what," she said.

Nurses never say to their patients that they are challenged with their workload.

So, she cherishes the many thank you calls and notes received from patients and their families.

"We're always working short, and a lot of people don't know that. So, whenever we do have someone who says thank you and understands, that means a lot," she said.

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CAREERS IN NURSING

TALES FROM THE HEART: HOME HEALTH AIDES SHARE JOY

by James Coburn - staff writer

Two employees of AllFaith Home Care have a combined total of 45 years of service to their credit.

Trena Anderson and Ky'shawndra Whiteside, are both CNAs and home health aides at AllFaith Home Care, located in Edmond. Anderson has invested 25 years at AllFaith Home Care, located in Edmond. Whiteside will celebrate her 19th year in May. They know each other so well that they sometimes finish each other's sentences.

"We all work together. It's just a good company to work for," Whiteside said.

Anderson earned her CNA credential at Metro Technology Center in Oklahoma City and became a certified home health aide after testing out at Moore Norman

Technology Center. Whiteside completed both certifications at Metro Technology Center.

Whiteside didn't have a job when moving to Oklahoma from Texas. AllFaith owner Lisa Wariboko-Alali, RN, is Whiteside's sister-in-law. When she left her home health job in Houston, she was offered employment by Alali.

"I've been here ever since. I like this type of work, helping others when they can't help themselves," Whiteside said.

Anderson met Alali when working in a doctor's office. Alali noticed how kind and attentive Anderson was with her home health patients.

"She had some young kids at the time, and now they've grown," said Alali, a pastor's wife. "It's kind of like the family grows

together, and then the patients, they transition and we're part of the family. If they hurt, we hurt."

Providing care to clients at home not only enhances a patient's quality of life. It also enriches the life of the home health aides, Anderson said.

Anderson loves connecting to the joy she sees on a patient's face when visiting their homes. Not all clients have family members living nearby. They may not have visited them in weeks or months at a time.

"We see the smiles on their faces and how comfortable they feel. They take us in like we're family," Anderson said. "It's just a blessing both ways to me. It's very fulfilling."

Alali has encouraged Anderson to become an LPN or RN, but

Anderson said being a certified home health aide brings her closer to the life of a patient.

"We spend more one-on-one time with them," Anderson continued. "I really enjoy that they feel safe and comfortable as I provide services and do my job."

Providing loving services is what keeps her dedicated to a profession she felt called to do. She's more than willing to provide extended care to patients needing food or something else from the store.

"We get them food. They don't have to pay us back," Anderson said. "It's a blessing that we're able to do it. I love what I do. My heart and passion is in what I do."

A home health aide is a synergistic part of the nursing staff.

See ALLFAITH Page 5

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ALLFAITH

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Close attention allows Whiteside and Anderson to document and report even the most subtle changes in the life of a patient.

She enjoys learning about the decades of life her patients have lived. Her most elderly patient is a centenarian, who at 100, shares stories of her life experiences from many decades ago.

"You learn a lot going deep into their family. It's a joy to help people, it really is — helping with things they can't do for themselves," Whiteside said.

She said the most difficult aspect of being a home health aide is when a patient she has been with for five or six years passes away.

"They all touch my life," said Whiteside, who continues to follow her patients when entering hospice or leaving home health.

"We still keep in touch. When PHOTO RIGHT: Trena Anderson, LEFT, and Ky'shawndra Whiteside are enriched by their role in health care as home health aides for AllFaith at Home.

they get off our services, I'll call them once a week to see how they're doing. Some of them I'll go by and see. I'm hard to get rid of," she said laughingly.

Anderson is grateful for working where she can be of service in the right way. One's heart and not a paycheck is reason enough for becoming a nurse, she said.

"You don't do it for the money," she said. "That's in any job you do. If your heart's not in it, you're not going to stay long. You need to have a passion, and I do have a passion for serving the elderly and working with them."

On days when her mood needs a lift, it is the elderly who cheer up the women. They keep their clients smiling, Whiteside said. And Anderson's and Whiteside's patients keep them smiling.

For more information on AllFaith Home Care visit: <http://www.allfaithhc.com/>



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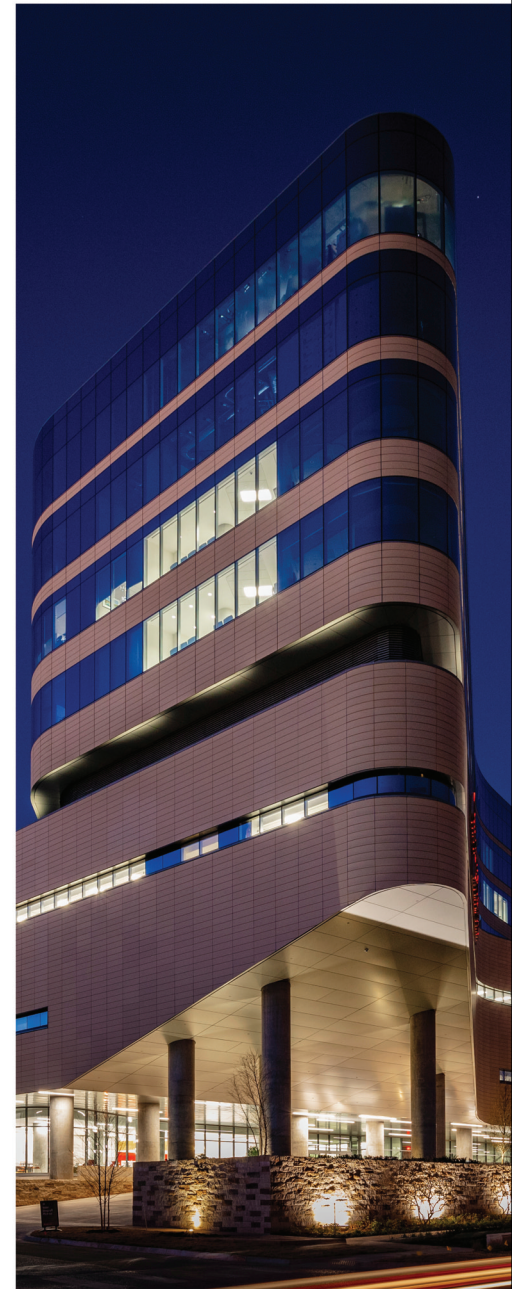
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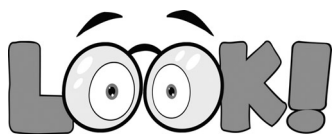
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OMRF discovery reveals 'flip side' of sometimes harmful protein

Scientists at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation have stumbled onto a finding that could alter future treatment options for conditions ranging from heart attacks to life-threatening infections.

The discovery involves the inner workings of the omentum, a mass of tissue that connects the stomach to other abdominal organs and is critical in the body's immune response.

The omentum can act as a powerful Band-Aid. Following a mastectomy, surgeons often place strips of it over a reconstructed breast to regrow lymphatic vessels, which are crucial in fighting infection. But the omentum's

healing properties aren't well understood, and it wasn't the original focus of research led by OMRF scientist Courtney Griffin, Ph.D.

"We were studying the role of a certain molecule in lymphatic vessels, but the approach we took led us toward the omentum," Griffin said. "The time it added to our research was well worth it because it resulted in a far better understanding of this fascinating tissue."

The study involving mouse embryos showed that when red blood cells naturally leak from the omentum before birth, a white blood cell called a macrophage

See OMRF page 9



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Courtney Griffin, Ph.D.

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Renee Norton, LPN

"I'm a big car guy, driving them and rebuilding. I like to do a lot of maintenance at the house."



Chris Alvear, LPN

"Selling embroidery and hiking at Natural Falls State Park, Lake Eufaula, everywhere."



Anthony Abela, nurse tech

OMRF

Continued from Page 8

is triggered to produce an inflammatory protein, or cytokine. This specific cytokine, called IL-1 beta, causes the omentum blood vessels to continue leaking during development.

"We also learned that IL-1 can make lymphatics more functional in the embryonic omentum," Griffin said. "Normally, new lymphatics are so busy growing that they aren't focused on their eventual job of collecting fluid and transporting cells from tissues. IL-1 makes them act more like mature lymphatics."

Understanding how and why that process occurs is critical, she said, because current treatments for heart attacks, sepsis and other conditions often include a drug that blocks IL-1 and other cytokines.

Cytokines are "a double-edged sword," Griffin said, because they help fight infections, but when released en masse, they attack healthy tissue, often causing organ

damage. The term "cytokine storm" has become common over the past two years to describe cytokines' harmful impact in people with severe Covid-19.

"Our research shows the flip side of IL-1, which has previously been seen as harmful in large quantities," she said. "A wound or an infection stimulates growth of new lymphatics, and it appears that IL-1 might help them function more quickly to heal tissues. If this finding is confirmed through additional research, it could help physicians decide that a slight delay is beneficial when prescribing a cytokine blocker."

The findings were published in the journal *Circulation Research*. Griffin said subsequent studies are needed to verify that the same process occurs in mature mice and, eventually, in humans.

The research was funded by National Institutes of Health grant Nos. R35HL144605, R01HL134788, P30GM114731 and P20GM139763, and American Heart Association grant No. 16POST31300013.

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Learning on the front lines



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES

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. Visit: <https://education.okstate.edu/>



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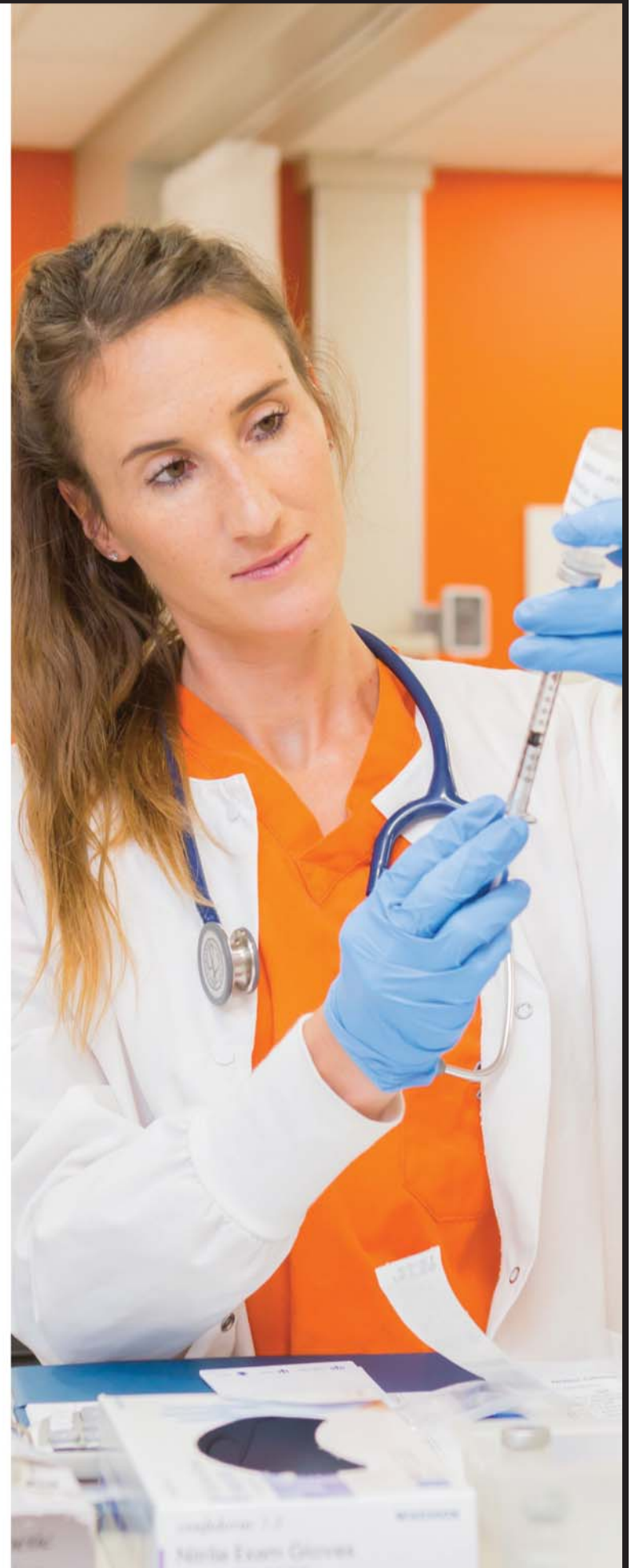
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"I was truly blown away by the level of professionalism and commitment from the faculty and staff. The knowledge and support I received are unparalleled."

- Kayce (Tuter) Brown, RN to BSN student



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2022 ANA Innovation Award Winners Address Gaps in Health Equity and Education Brought on by COVID-19

The American Nurses Association (ANA) and the American Nurses Foundation (the Foundation) recently announced the winners of the 2022 ANA Innovation Awards sponsored by Stryker, a leading global medical technology company. The ANA Innovation Awards highlight, recognize and celebrate exemplary nurse-led innovations that improve patient safety and health outcomes.

Winner of the Individual Nurse Award:



LEFT: KaSheta Johnson Jackson, DNP, RN, Vice President, Health Equity and Social Impact at Vidant Health.

Kasheta Jackson developed Community Pop-Ups: A Rural Approach, an innovative health care delivery model implemented as community-based pop-up clinics across Eastern North Carolina to address social and economic health care barriers. This program makes health care both more accessible and approachable by directly providing preventative services, improving health care equity, and offering resources within communities with the greatest need. This is done through

a system-level collaboration at Vidant Health with community-focused intervention. Through partnerships with community leaders and other Vidant Health team members, these clinics have evolved from solely offering health care screenings to providing COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, mental health resources, access to fresh produce, and employment opportunities.

Community Pop-Ups have been held in a variety of informal community settings, including baseball fields, farms, and parks, to build trust and improve community engagement. Designed and led by nurses, Community Pop-Ups follows the tenets of a holistic nursing care plan, addressing the community's physical, mental, and environmental needs. In 2021, Community Pop-Ups provided care to more than 400 community participants, identified acute diseases, provided numerous jobs, gave away 500 produce boxes, and delivered 500 health passports in rural locations across Eastern North Carolina. In 2022, Community Pop-Ups plans to make a more substantial impact in the communities it reaches and establish a model for addressing the social determinants of health through qualitative data.

Winners of the Nurse-led Team Award:



Michael Pickett, MSN, APRN, CPNP, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Texas Children's Hospital.



Marilyn Hockenberry, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor of Pediatrics and Director of Global HOPE Nursing at Baylor College of Medicine.



Jaime Choate, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, Nursing Professional Development Specialist at Texas Children's Hospital.



Tadala Mulemba, BScNM, RN, Global HOPE Nursing Assistant Director at Baylor College of Medicine.



Jeannie Eggers MSN, RN, CPN, CCRN, Simulation Education Specialist, Quality Education & Simulation Team at Texas Children's Hospital.

A multidisciplinary team of frontline nurses developed the RediStik® Wearable Simulation Task Trainers. They identified educational gaps in the lack of realistic, versatile, and engaging training tools for nurses to learn skills in peripheral intravenous (PIV), Port-a-Cath, and Central Venous Catheter (CVC) care and maintenance. Nurses and other health care professionals are trained to insert peripheral and central venous catheters to administer fluids, draw blood, and deliver medications. The RediStik® innovation offers nurses the opportunity to have hands-on practice while receiving real-time feedback from instructors via zoom. Nurses have access to a system of individual and wearable simulation trainers as well as immersive skills videos filmed from the nurses' point of view, which are accessible on YouTube® and through a QR code found on the RediStik® Kits.

The RediStik® Wearable Simulation Task Trainer project exceeded initial design goals and has proven to be an asset to the nursing community, according to survey data. Prior to training, 15% of nurses surveyed said they were "confident" on starting PIV lines. After training, 96% of nurses surveyed were "confident". Nurse confidence and patient outcomes improved not only in Houston, Texas, but in Sub-Saharan Africa through Texas Children's Hospital's partnership with the Global HOPE (Hematology Oncology Pediatric Excellence) initiative, which is dedicated to treating and dramatically improving the prognosis for children with cancer and blood disorders in sub-Saharan Africa. The funds from this award will support the distribution of the RediStik® trainers to additional health care systems and nursing schools both locally and internationally.

"The 2022 ANA Innovation award winners have proven that nurses are able to make incredible strides and improve health while navigating turbulent times. These nurses created solutions that scaled beyond their organizations, into their communities, and globally," said ANA Vice President of Nursing Innovation, Oriana Beaudet, DNP, RN, PHN. "Nurses are the conduits of positive change across health care through their work and advocacy, which was solidified by the Gallup ranking as the Most Honest and Ethical Professions for the 20th consecutive year."

"As a loyal advocate and supporter of the nursing community, we are honored to partner with ANA and the Foundation as a proud sponsor of the ANA Innovation Awards," said Stryker's Vice President and General Manager, Jessica Mathieson. "This year's winners truly embody

AWARD

Continued from Page 12

the meaning of nurse-led innovation, and we can't wait to see their ideas expand and grow."

The 2022 individual nurse and nurse-led team, ANA Innovation Award recipients, will receive monetary prizes of \$25,000 and \$50,000, respectively. These funds support translational research, development, prototyping, production, testing, and the implementation of these innovations. The award winners will have one year to further develop their innovation and will share their outcomes and findings in 2023. The ANA Innovation Awards are sponsored by Stryker.

You can celebrate these incredible nurse innovators at the 2022 Navigate Nursing Webinar. All are encouraged to attend - nurses, communities, industry members, health care leaders, health systems, innovators, schools of nursing and public health, and nursing advocates. The 2022 Webinar expands upon how nurses can lead in new ways moving into the future.

You can also learn more about how ANA is supporting nurse-led innovation by visiting the ANA Innovation website, where you will also find a list of resources, upcoming events, and nurse-led innovation stories.

The ANA Enterprise is the organizing platform of the American Nurses Association (ANA), the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), and the American Nurses Foundation. The ANA Enterprise leverages the combined strength of each to drive excellence in practice and ensure nurses' voice and vision are recognized by policy leaders, industry influencers and employers. From professional development and advocacy, credentialing and grants, and products and services, the ANA Enterprise is the leading resource for nurses to arm themselves with the tools, information, and network they need to excel in their individual practices. In helping individual nurses succeed—across all practices and specialties, and at each stage of their careers—the ANA Enterprise is lighting the way for the entire profession to succeed.



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Situation Update: COVID-19

COVID-19 Cases	1,013,287
New Cases	1,119
New Cases 7 day Average	1,128
Active Cases	11,874
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths	14,223
Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
	Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)	21 (3)
Region 2 (NE)	55 (15)
Region 3 (SW)	126 (21)
Region 4 (EC)	62 (13)
Region 5 (SE)	31 (6)
Region 6 (Central)	70 (11)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	282 (72)
Region 8 (OKC)	348 (73)
Total	995* (214)
Other Types of Facilities	
Focus Facilities	45 (10)
Rehabilitation Facilities	5 (0)
Tribal Facilities	22 (5)
Other Facilities Total	72 (15)

*Includes 53 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 2022-02-18 at 7:00 a.m.



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