



Claressa Carter, RN, has a curiosity about life that benefits patient care and herself.

## RN flourishes in profession

by James Coburn - staff writer

Claressa Carter develops a deep well of accomplishment while working as a registered nurse at Stillwater Medical Center. She serves in the hospital's catheterization lab in the pre-assessment and post-assessment position after six years of working on the medical surgical floor. She has her eyes on becoming a nurse educator,

knowing that a nursing career improves life.

"It's pretty awesome to see something built on another experience," Carter said. "I can be doing something in the cath lab and think about something that I did when I

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## Statement in Response to the Conviction of Nurse RaDonda

Recently a jury convicted former Vanderbilt University Medical Center nurse RaDonda Vaught of criminally negligent homicide and impaired adult abuse after she mistakenly administered the wrong medication that killed a patient in 2017. The following statement is attributable to both the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the Tennessee Nurses Association (TNA):

"We are deeply distressed by this verdict and the harmful ramifications of criminalizing the honest reporting of mistakes.

Health care delivery is highly complex. It is inevitable that mistakes will happen, and systems will fail. It is completely unrealistic to think otherwise. The criminalization of medical errors is unnerving, and this verdict sets into motion a dangerous precedent. There are more effective and just mechanisms to examine errors, establish system improvements and take corrective action. The non-intentional acts of Individual nurses like RaDonda Vaught should not be criminalized to ensure patient



safety.

The nursing profession is already extremely short-staffed, strained and facing immense pressure – an unfortunate multi-year trend that was further exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic. This ruling will have a long-lasting negative impact on the profession.

Like many nurses who have been monitoring

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## CARTER

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was a CNA, and then as an LPN, and now as an RN, I get to see how the pieces fit together. I could still do what I do in the cath lab, but I don't think I would have as rich of a background to share with my patients if I didn't have each step of the journey."

Stillwater Medical Center offers a lot of educational opportunities to grow in one's profession, in-part with the flexibility it gives its staff to move seamlessly within the hospital. Learning benefits not only the person receiving the education but the people they are taking care of, whether that's the patient, their family members or co-workers, Carter said.

Carter said she appreciates the culture at Stillwater Medical Center because coworkers build each other up and invest in one another.

"I feel that it's very important to have continuing education. The medical world is advancing, and I feel that we need to advance with it, to be able to provide the best care to

our patients for a speedier recovery and faster pain-free recovery," said Whitney Arrington, RN.

Carter is advancing her education after earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva in 2016, to enjoying her second semester of earning a Master of Science in Nursing Education degree from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. For Carter, greater opportunities bring contentment. And she is enriched by fine-tuning her on-the-job learning experiences.

"I just feel you can be more concise. You can feel where a person is and how to relate to them best, if you have an education to do so," Carter said.

She is very encouraged by the online educational opportunity offered by Northeastern State University.

"They have high standards. They want you to think about what you're thinking," Carter said. "I really like that. It's a new concept to me, thinking about what I'm thinking about. You can get really deep. Sometimes the deeper you get

— you get down to the granular level."

Two years ago, Carter was certified as a med/surg nurse after learning about the advantages from coworkers certified in that specialty. She is also certified to give chemotherapy and in advanced cardiovascular life support. Certification enhances a nurse's credibility to a higher standard and demonstrates a caring persona to delve below the surface of health care. The process of certification felt more intense for Carter than her NCLEX training for becoming a nurse.

She encourages students to become nurses. A nursing career means a lot to Carter.

"I get a lot out of helping other people. I think people should look at becoming a nurse. They could be in another person's shoes. We are always going to need the profession of nursing," she said. "You can take nursing as far as you want to take it."

Areas of nursing go beyond working in a hospital or clinic. So, for Carter, opportunities abound to satiate desired professional

achievements from data and technology to administration.

"I like that at this hospital, nurses are involved at every level of decision making," she added. "I think a lot of professions don't give you that choice like nursing does."

There is not only a nation-wide nursing shortage, but also a lack of teachers to train them.

"There's a lot of pressure in being an educator. I mean it's not just educating. It's service in the community and working with other educators. There's a difference in pay. There's always going to be a trade-off. You just need to see where you're at in your life."

When Carter was a certified nurse aide on the Texas coast, she would ask nurses about their history in the profession. Her charge nurse at the time told her that education defines interests in work and choices of where to live.

"It gives you that freedom," Carter explained. "Whenever I'm precepting — whenever I have a student with me — or somebody goes, 'Hey, I got into nursing school,' I say, 'Good, you're giving yourself that freedom.'"



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## WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT RETURNS

After a two-year hiatus brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health and the Center for Learning and Leadership, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, will once again co-host the Annual Wheelchair Basketball Tournament, benefiting the Oklahoma Adaptive Sports Association (OKASA).

Now in its 12th year, the tournament is scheduled from 5:30 to 9 p.m., Thursday, April 21, at Oklahoma City University Freede Wellness Center, 2501 N. Blackwelder Ave.

Dominic Frimberger, M.D., pediatric urology specialist at Oklahoma Children's Hospital, is a long-time supporter, promoter and organizer of the annual tournament. "Historically, support for this event has been wildly enthusiastic, and as a fundraiser, we've enjoyed great success," he said. "I'm thrilled beyond words that we are at a place where we can again advocate for and support these athletes and the tremendous work that OKASA does."

A number of OU Health teams will compete in 10-minute exhibition basketball games against the Wheels of Thunder, OKASA's wheelchair athletes. All participants will compete in wheelchairs with nets at regulation height.

Spectators are welcome to attend free of charge. Fundraising activities include a silent auction, t-shirt sales and concessions. The event will feature special guests as well. All proceeds go toward the purchase of equipment and travel expenses for OKASA athletes competing in national tournaments. Visit [www.okasa.org](http://www.okasa.org) for more information about the association and its work.

For more information or for accommodations on the basis of disability, call (405) 271-6900.

# STATEMENT

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this case closely, we were hopeful for a different outcome. It is a sad day for all of those who are involved, and the families impacted by this tragedy."

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 4.3 million registered nurses. ANA advances the profession by

fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all. For more information, visit [www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org). For high-resolution images of the ANA logo or photos of ANA leadership, please [click here](#).

## ONA Statement on Non-Punitive Reporting of Errors

On April 2, 2022, the ONA Board of Directors approved the statement on Non-Punitive Reporting of Errors: Embracing the Use of Just Culture and Transparency in Error Reporting. This statement is a direct result of the jury conviction of the former Vanderbilt University Medical Center nurse. However, this is not the first time a nurse has been prosecuted for an error. It is inevitable that mistakes will happen, and systems will fail. The criminalization of medical errors is unnerving, and this verdict sets into motion a dangerous precedent. There are more effective and just mechanisms to examine errors, establish system improvements and take corrective action. This includes the involvement of direct care nurses at all levels to be a part of the development of system changes that enhance the quality of patient care across the continuum.



### Embracing the Use of Just Culture and Transparency in Error Reporting

The Oklahoma Nurses Association is aligned with the American Nurses Association and expresses concern regarding the criminalization of medical errors against nurses and other healthcare professionals. The complexity of health care systems has long been recognized by the Institute of Medicine. In the landmark study, To Err is Human, several recommendations outline strategies to make systems safer in a just culture. The first step involves reporting medical errors in full transparency so that deep analysis can reveal opportunities for improvement. Without a culture that supports open transparency, silencing of errors may occur and create an environment where opportunities to mitigate or prevent harm are not identified.

ONA supports the implementation of safety systems to foster reporting, learning and a culture of trust. These systems should include the development of processes that support the improvement of patient care. This includes the involvement of direct care nurses at all levels to be a part of the development of system changes that enhance the quality of patient care across the continuum.

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# CAREERS IN NURSING

## DIGGING DEEP INTO WELLNESS: NURSE PRACTITIONER IS ATTENTIVE TO NEEDS

by James Coburn - staff writer

Kelly Johnson brings a detective-like problem solving approach to all her patients as an independent Advanced Practice Registered Nurse serving Payne County and Logan County. Research is one of Johnson's hallmarks as a nurse practitioner.

Her unwavering drive was sparked from personal experience during her father's illness when he was misdiagnosed with cancer. It further galvanized her desire for a career in health care.

She tries to be proactive rather than reactive, Johnson said of taking a preventative approach to wellness care. She was born and raised in Toledo, Ohio, and began her career working as a habilitation specialist with individuals who experienced both developmental disability and mental illness (dual-diagnosed).

Her career began in Ohio where she decided that if she was ever a director of nursing that she would not base her effort on a culture of fear.

One place she began working at early in her career was Golden Age Nursing Facility in Guthrie.

It was there that she discovered, while working as an LPN, that there is a world of difference. She found there to be a sense of shared governance and kindness filtering among employees and the ownership of the family-owned business, she said.

In her current role as an APRN, Kelly cares for many elderly patients in skilled and long-term care settings.

"My visits include treating illnesses, as well as monitoring skilled needs," Johnson said. "Routinely I monitor their medications, labs, treatments, and all of their skilled needs. Everything is monitored to make sure patients have the best possible outcome. I'll do visits with acute patients, sometimes skilled visits if they go into a skilled facility. I check their medication. I check their labs to make sure their labs are in range. I make sure if they've got medications that require therapeutic

checks, that we do that as often as needed."

Johnson makes sure patients in need of breathing treatments have them on hand, and whether they need to be hospitalized again for a recurrent pneumonia, among other co-morbidities.

Wounds are monitored to prevent infection, anything a patient's skilled need requires, she said.

"We (nurse practitioners) try to monitor everything closely to make sure we don't have issues," Johnson said.

She checks routine lab work for long-term care individuals. Johnson makes sure they have their routine scans that are required are up to date.

Johnson is driven to share knowledge with whomever she is in contact, whether staff or patients. With deep respect for pharmacology, she is very conscientious in prescribing compatible medications that do not cause otherwise adverse effects to her

patients.

When Johnson served as director of nursing for Golden Oaks Village in Stillwater, she was encouraged by the staff to become a nurse practitioner. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree with honors at Oklahoma City University's Kramer School of Nursing in 2015.

"I really liked Kramer," she said.

Johnson completed course work in the fast-track RN to BSN at Kramer, and in 2018 graduated from East Tennessee University with her Master of Science in Nursing degree with an emphasis on being a nurse practitioner. Her clinical preceptor hours were with local physicians in Stillwater and Perkins.

"I had to have 580 clinical hours in mental health and women's health, geriatrics and pediatrics," she said.

One of the benefits of having a nurse practitioner is the time they

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# CARE

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spend with their patients.

"That is just what you do as a nurse," Johnson said.

A career nurse often has those comforting characteristics of offering holistic care. Nurse practitioners develop that side of themselves. So, growing numbers of people appreciate having a nurse practitioner on their side as a provider.

"I do not discount doctors at all. I do not consider myself a doctor by any means," Johnson said. "They have had a lot more schooling."

Johnson provides the same level of attention to every patient, said CC Crane, marketing director of Golden Oaks Village.

"Each patient is treated as if he or she were the only one. There's not one to whom she gives less or more effort to," Crane said. "That's what I see. She's exceptionally dedicated and committed."

As a nurse practitioner, Johnson said she sees increased amounts of longevity among the staff of family-owned businesses.

"It seems like they are a lot more compassionate and caring," she said.

Some older people reach a certain age and become stagnant, she said. But Johnson helps them to reach their personal best by improving the health of every part of their lives.

"I love to enhance their quality of life," she said.



As an independent nurse practitioner, Kelly Johnson takes a preventative approach to patient care.

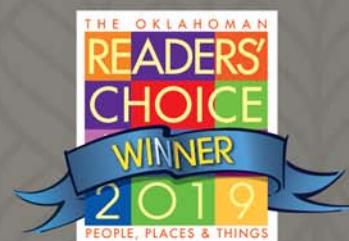


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*What do you enjoy about your career?*

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Stillwater Medical Center

*"Being able to make a difference in people's lives and making an impact on everybody."*



Shiloa Cline, RN

*"I love Stillwater because it is like a family to me. I still do bedside nursing and I just love and enjoy the patients."*



Tammy Bro, RN

*"My coworkers and just taking care of the patients, watching them go home and feeling better."*



Whitney Arrington, RN

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2022 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# OU helps nurses take next step

When Hannah Rames, RN, decided to go back to school for her BSN she knew it would require some sacrifices.

But going back to school through the Fran and Earl Ziegler University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center College of Nursing's RN to BSN track, she had no idea how flexible it was going to be.

"I think we really just work to try to meet the students where they are," said Dr. Lori McElroy, DNP, RN, CNE, and RN to BSN track coordinator. "We know these are working students, often a little older than the traditional student who sometimes have families, children, elderly parents - just all kinds of life circumstances they are working through. "We realize that in the beginning and I think our focus is to be as student-centric and self-directed as possible."

Rames earned her associate's degree from Oklahoma City Community College in the winter of 2015. She began working as a labor and delivery nurse at OU Health Children's Hospital in March of the following year.

She spent three years there before moving to the Prenatal Diagnostic Center for another three years. "I grew up in Norman and started my college career at OU and really wanted to finish with my BSN from OU," said Rames, who now works in the nursery at Lakeside. "I chose this program because there was a part-time track and it was all online, which made it much easier to continue working full-time while also taking care of my son." Tuition assistance while working for OU was also a big draw that helped her complete her next degree.



OU helps students advance their careers.

One-hundred percent online course offerings helped Rames fit everything into her schedule. And another big draw was the ability to complete practicum hours at her own job site.

"It helps them feel very comfortable in an atmosphere they know and they can find someone in their leadership like their charge nurse or someone in administration to actually supervise their clinical experience," McElroy said.

The program can be completed within a year, or longer if a student needs more time. "We don't require any brick and mortar, face-to-face type of interactions but we really try to communicate frequently with these students and offer encouragement and support along the way because we do realize this second degree is sometimes difficult and challenging even though it is a flexible pace. More and more, McElroy said she's finding nurses coming back to

advance their degree as a way of opening up more opportunities both at the bedside and away from it.

"This is just a stepping stone that often these students once they get back into the academic setting they do take their BSN further and get an advanced degree, either a nurse practitioner or even their Ph.D.," McElroy said.

OU's nursing programs have earned high honors in nationwide rankings. In its 2022 rankings, U.S. News & World Report placed OU No. 29 in its list of best online master's in nursing programs, and No. 58 for best bachelor of science in nursing programs.

OU's RN to BSN online program is ranked No. 2 in the nation by <https://nurse.org/>.

A nurse for more than 30 years, McElroy said each time she advanced her degree it opened up more possibilities she never thought possible.

"I don't feel like I realized the opportunity at the time and I think the students now have a much more realistic perspective of healthcare, of technology, of informatics and I think nursing programs have had to shift to keep up with the healthcare community," she said. "The opportunities are just endless now." Rames has realized it too as she moves closer to her BSN. "I have appreciated that all of my professors have been very flexible and made themselves accessible throughout the semester," she said. "After I finish this program I'm going to continue my career as a bedside nurse and focus on my family. When my child is older I might consider getting my Master's or Doctorate."

For more information on the Fran and Earl Ziegler University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center College of Nursing's RN to BSN program visit: <https://nursing.ouhsc.edu/>

# INTEGRIS Health Community Clinic Spanish Interpreters



Left to right, Leticia Orosco, Becky Wood, Carmen Romo, Valerie Bell, Blayklin Polly and Amanda Brown, INTEGRIS Health Community Clinics

### The Problem

In 1993, INTEGRIS Health opened a free medical clinic in the inner city of Oklahoma City. It is one of the largest free, all-volunteer clinics in the state. The clinic offers adult care of chronic diseases, diabetes classes, physical, occupational and speech therapy, vision care and pharmacy services.

With almost one in four Oklahomans uninsured, the need for health care is great. The INTEGRIS Health Community Clinics have made a huge impact in the community by helping thousands of patients over the years with a variety of needs. It operates three Mondays a month and sees more than 100 patients each night.

The INTEGRIS Health Community Clinics serve a vital role providing access to health care in the Hispanic community. Carmen Romo, program manager for Hispanic Outreach with INTEGRIS Community Health Improvement, recognized that more than 70% of the patients utilizing the INTEGRIS Health Community Clinic were Hispanic speakers, however, currently the majority of the providers and volunteers were not fluent in Spanish.

### The Idea

Romo quickly realized the clinics needed additional interpreters for each of the many areas of the free clinic to assist with translating the health care needs and the provider recommendations for their Hispanic patient population.

### The Solution

Romo contacted the faculty of OSU OKC's Technical Spanish/ Translation and Interpretation Department and Tulsa Community College for their assistance with locating technical Spanish students who would be interested in volunteering their time as interpreters at the clinics.

The students would have the opportunity to practice their Spanish in the field in a clinic setting along with their preceptors and receive certification for their interpreter services.

The INTEGRIS Health Community Clinics now have two to three additional Spanish speaking volunteer interpreters at each of their clinics through their OSU OKC and Tulsa Community College partner agencies.

Thank you to all the dedicated caregivers and volunteers with the INTEGRIS Health Community Clinics for helping to provide access to health care to all Oklahomans.

# Situation Update: COVID-19

<b>New Cases 7 Day Average</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>New Cases Week of 3/13/22 - 3/19/22</b>	<b>452</b>
<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>876</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>1,035,300</b>
<b>CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths</b>	<b>15,640</b>
<b>Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**</b>	<b>Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations</b>
	<b>Cases (ICU)</b>
Region 1 (NW)	0 (0)
Region 2 (NE)	6 (0)
Region 3 (SW)	9 (3)
Region 4 (EC)	5 (1)
Region 5 (SE)	0 (0)
Region 6 (Central)	7 (0)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	24 (12)
Region 8 (OKC)	54 (5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>105* (21)</b>
<b>Other Types of Facilities</b>	
Focus Facilities	4 (1)
Rehabilitation Facilities	3 (0)
Tribal Facilities	1 (1)
<b>Other Facilities Total</b>	<b>8 (2)</b>

\*Includes 25 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 2022-04-07 at 7:00 a.m.

# NICU Cameras Provide Families Peace of Mind From Anywhere at Any Time



The COVID-19 pandemic elevated the need for additional communication devices throughout Norman Regional Health System. When visiting capacity was limited, the only way to connect families and patients was virtually. Nurses were using personal cell phones so family members could visit with their loved ones and COVID positive parents could not be with their newborn babies. The communication need was brought to the Norman Regional Health Foundation from several healers.

"The technology existed - we just needed the funding," Foundation Director Erin Barnhart said. "We reached out to our generous community to support communication devices for Norman Regional's inpatient units, which included 10 cameras in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and the community responded."

The NICU cameras benefit not only moms and dads with COVID, but moms who may have had surgery and cannot visit the NICU; parents with babies who need to stay in the NICU for weeks or months; fathers who are overseas and miss the birth of their child, and grandparents or other family members who live further away or who are unable to visit due to current visitor restrictions.

## Respiratory Complications

Keera and Kade Johnson are one set of parents who have used the NICU cameras. Keera was admitted to the Norman Regional HealthPlex at 30 weeks due to preeclampsia. Her doctor and the rest of her healthcare team wanted her to be

at least 34 weeks to deliver, but weren't sure if she would make it. Fortunately, Keera made it to exactly 34 weeks on March 1 before delivering her baby girl, Felicity, at just 3 pounds and 10 ounces.

Baby Felicity had severe respiratory issues, but thankfully she turned a corner after the first 48 hours, Keera said. Although Felicity was out of respiratory failure, her left lung still wasn't developed enough to breathe on her own. Felicity was first in the NICU on a ventilator. She then was able to be taken off that and have a nasal cannula put in. After two weeks in the NICU, Felicity is breathing on her own and her respirations are staying normal. She's even beginning to take bottles and recently tried breastfeeding for the first time.

Keera laughed, saying how feisty Felicity is - so much so that her NICU team have started calling her the feisty baby.

The day Keera was discharged wasn't a happy time for her - she said she cried and cried, knowing Felicity wasn't going home with them yet and that she couldn't be at the hospital to visit her all day every day.

"Having that camera to just be able to open and look at any time and know she's okay gave me peace of mind," Keera said. "It really helped my recovery and postpartum too, to just be able to see her whenever I wanted to."

"How incredible technology is. How far we've come to just put a little camera over a baby in the NICU and give the family so much peace of mind."

Keera added how much their family has loved the cameras too.

"It is such a blessing. My mom was doing the dishes the other day and she was able to set up the camera and just watch Felicity as she did her dishes," she said. "We watch her so much, it's almost like she's here with us sometimes. We call it the 'Felicity Show.'"

Their family members also got to watch via the camera as Keera held Felicity for the first time.

## Triplets

NICU Baby Cameras-6.jpg (5.98 MB)Lilia and Matthew Ghibaudi are another set of parents who have happily used the NICU cameras. As they were expecting their triplets, it was expected Lilia would not go full term, but to their surprise, they found out Lilia had preeclampsia when they went to her last appointment and she had to be admitted. Lilia gave birth to three premature babies on March 4 at just 32 weeks - Natalia, Azalia and Mateo, all weighing 3 pounds - Natalia being the biggest and Azalia being the smallest.

Since the babies were premature, they went straight to the NICU, but Lilia had a cesarean and lost a lot of blood in the process so she was unable to go visit them.

"It felt weird being in the operating room without them. She just delivered these babies and now they're immediately gone and you're in the room without them," Matthew said. "The cameras have been fantastic. To be able to login and have that peace of mind right away - especially for [Lilia] who couldn't go visit them in the NICU, it has just been fantastic."

After being discharged and leaving their triplets at the HealthPlex, the Ghibaudis also faced the concern of living 40 minutes away in Lexington, so Matthew said being able to see their babies on the cameras while at home is great. Plus with COVID and visitor restrictions, the cameras allow them to show friends and family the babies, he added.

The cameras can be accessed from anywhere at any time - allowing parents or family members to have that peace of mind whenever and wherever they need it.

"Two priorities for the Foundation are enhancing the patient experience and assisting our healers in their daily work life. These cameras support both efforts and make a difference," Barnhart said.

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