

Bringing comfort



Emerald Hospice nurses care

Brandy Davis, RN, regional clinical coordinator of Emerald Hospice, says God put her on the right path.

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Hospice was not the path that Brandy Davis thought her nursing career would take. She didn't think that becoming close to a patient before watching them pass is something she wanted to do.

"But God had another plan for me," said Davis, RN, regional clinical coordinator for all three Emerald Hospice offices in Oklahoma. "I think God put me into hospice for a reason. Coming into this

world is a beautiful thing but leaving this world doesn't have to be traumatic. It can be a beautiful process."

Her nursing background includes rehab, case management. When she was in RN school at Connors State College in Muskogee, Davis became the first LPN hired by Emerald

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ANA Acts on Climate Change and Key Nursing Issues



The representatives of ANA's Membership Assembly, the governing and official voting body of the American Nurses Association (ANA) have acted on compelling and critical issues that greatly impact the nursing profession and the health of global populations. More than 300 nurses, observers, and other leaders attended a two-day governance meeting in Washington, DC, June 10-11. Eligible representatives elected national leaders including the next national president and acted on nurse staffing, verbal abuse and workplace violence, and climate change.

- Nurse staffing: Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated long-standing nurse staffing issues, the Assembly considered changes to existing ANA policy related to nurse-to-patient ratios. Participants stressed the need for enforceable staffing standards and shared their successes and challenges in implementing various models. Assembly representatives approved a recommendation that ANA supports safe patient standards including ratios that are acuity and setting-specific as per nursing assessment and enforceable, and that ANA will engage with its constituent and state nurse associations (C/SNAs) to develop further details regarding standards, implementation, and enforcement. Assembly representatives also called on ANA to collaborate with organizational affiliates and C/SNAs to begin to develop evidence-based staffing standards for all nursing disciplines for

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COMFORT

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Hospice nearly nine years ago. She later became the director of nursing at the Wagoner office.

Nobody comes into the world the same way, neither to they take the same trip out, Davis said. Helping people pass comfortably and honoring their wishes of symptom management means a lot to the patient and their loved ones.

"We can play their favorite song or a favorite hymn from church — they get a peace — they just relax and slowly pass," she said.

Patients do not come on hospice expecting to pass that day, which is sometimes a stigma associated with hospice, she said. Patients usually live for weeks or months. Helping them to live out their best wishes of making trips or planning favorite events is rewarding for a hospice nurse.

"We've had some that go across country, and we set up spots with hospices when they are traveling. They are there for a day or two and that hospice was there, and they've been able to fulfill their dreams."

Some patients may be in a nursing home and might be without access to Braum's ice cream. Emerald Hospice staff will venture to get their ice cream, just to make their day. Hospice is not only about being the nurse, the CNA, social worker or chaplain. A hospice career requires a passion for it, because it can take a toll on the person. The Emerald Hospice staff's loyalty is why she remains loyal to the company. There is a lot of education provided to the families, she said. Families grieve the loss of their loved ones before that loved one dies. However, they can depend on the knowledge and kindness of Emerald Hospice.

"They don't teach us how to help somebody be comfortable with end of life in nursing school. So, we learn a lot from doing this," she said. "So, when you're dealing with families that don't have a medical background, it takes a lot of education, and my team is amazing. They go above and beyond to make sure our patients are being taken care of, and that their families are taken care of, and that they understand why this is happening and what to expect next."

Davis has a place in her heart

for every patient she meets. There are some whom she has developed deeper relationships with because they were on service for a long time. Their families become part of her family, she said.

"They want to know about you because it's so intimate when you start talking about dying. It's just different, so the relationships you can develop with families are different from some other fields of nursing," Davis continued. "We go into their home. We are providing personal care at their most vulnerable times. I think that is why my personality fit with the opportunity to do hospice."

Being a primary caregiver is difficult for a family member when someone needs 24/7 care. Being a hospice nurse has taught her to appreciate and enjoy each day she is alive. Anybody could learn today or tomorrow they are living with a terminal disease. During the COVID pandemic, Davis encountered patients with heart disease or cancer who did not go to a hospital because it was too crowded with COVID patients. Patients are returning to hospitals now that COVID cases have decreased to a new normal, she said.

Some of these patients are learning for the first time that their cancer has metastasized. Their prognosis is not good, so she is seeing more of these types of patients entering hospice care.

Death does not take a holiday. But all nursing careers include special people who share a rewarding journey benefiting patients' lives.

"They need somebody to help them understand that God is in control. I am not in control of whenever you leave this world. Whatever you believe in, there's a higher power managing that. That's not me, but what I can do is help you be comfortable and help you have quality of life," she said.

One of the families asked Davis to choose a song to play at their loved one's funeral. And Davis is always grateful when families recognize her in their loved one's obituaries.

"To know that I made such an impact on that family that they honored me by mentioning me with their family, I knew I was doing something right," she said.

For more information about Emerald Hospice visit: <http://emeraldhospice.com/>.

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ANA

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publication.

• Addressing verbal abuse and workplace violence: Often, healthcare stakeholders' approach to workplace violence (WPV) in health care focuses on responses to, and prevention of, physical assaults in hospitals. Discussions often overlook verbal abuse, which can be a risk factor for physical violence. In addition, practice and policy recommendations developed for inpatient settings may not be appropriate for or helpful in community settings, such as schools, community health centers, public health facilities, and similar places where WPV can occur. Assembly representatives called on ANA to engage key stakeholders to identify, develop and advance strategies resulting in a comprehensive culture of safety and zero-tolerance approach to verbal abuse and violence in all care

settings, advance workplace violence prevention priorities in nursing practice and public policy, and advocate for better data collection to inform policy development.

• Impact of climate change on health: Citing statements from International Council of Nurses, the World Health Organization, and the American Academy of Nursing, along with editorials from several health care journals on the danger of climate change on global health, representatives proposed that ANA, as the leading nursing organization, should take a strong leadership position in addressing the impacts of climate change on human and population health and help prepare nurses to engage patients in conversations about climate change and its health impacts; impacts which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations. To help address the public health crisis caused by climate change, Assembly representatives approved the

recommendation that ANA, C/SNAs and individual member division (IMD) include climate crisis and its consequential impact on human and population health as an essential component of their policy platform. Voting representatives also endorsed that ANA revise and establish as an official position the 2008 House of Delegates Statement on Global Climate Change and Human Health. Finally,

the representatives called on ANA, C/SNAs and the IMD to promote nursing knowledge on the relationship between climate change and human and population health.



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CAREERS IN NURSING

A PLACE CALLED HOME : ASH STREET PLACE IS COZY

by James Coburn - staff writer

It was at St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City where she was born that Tammy Williams remembers being hospitalized for three months after a car accident. She was only a 10-year-old.

"Nurses were there for everything. They took on the role as a friend, a caretaker and a nurse as far as any dressing changes. They were a parent if I needed them to be," said Williams, LPN, director of Nursing at Ash Street Place Assisted Living in Guthrie.

Those nurses inspired her to become a nurse.

Today, she and her nurse aides and volunteers strive to give the same quality of care and compassion to the residents of Ash Street Place. Friendly conversation with the residents makes her day.

"I like geriatrics," she said of the residents. "They're friendly and very important. I learn lots of things from the residents here."

Dominoes, Bingo, and Checkers are

popular games. They take trips to Walmart or other stores for shopping. Church services are held for residents on Monday evenings. On Sunday mornings some of the residents usually venture out for church services with a friend or family member. Some of the ladies get together for Bible study on Sunday evenings.

Williams smiles when recalling the day that Joe Chappell sang at a resident's birthday party and one of the male residents asked her to dance. The Chappell family owns Ash Street Place. A high quality of life includes a family-friendly atmosphere.

The staff is very respectful, punctual and kind, 24 hours a day, Williams said. A certified medication aide works on every shift.

"Everybody's friendly, willing to help each other and be there for each other," she continued. "We have several different levels of care."

Interaction with residents, assisting them when there is a need including

medications, and assistance with daily needs is provided. If there is a need for more assistance with daily activities, a resident may transition seamlessly across the street to Golden Age Nursing Facility for long-term care or skilled nursing. Williams's exposure to nursing began at Golden Age where she was a CNA and CMA before working as an LPN there for 12 years. She graduated from nursing school at Francis Tuttle in 2000.

She sets new residents at ease by asking them about their preferences in life. She helps them blend in by knowing some of their favorite things to do. Williams lets them know that changes can be made to make them more comfortable.

They all share a good outlook on life and are as caring as the staff, she said. Among the residents is a gentleman who worked as a space engineer at NASA, another who served in the Navy during WWII, a woman who worked as a dietician in the

prison system, who happens to be a direct descendent of Daniel Boone.

"She was telling us recently about when she had to go through a course of training to learn Karate," Williams said.

Ash Street Place can accommodate up to 37 residents. It represents a strong commitment to the town as the only assisted living facility in town. The family-owned center takes care its own community of Guthrie and other residents from elsewhere.

Ash Street Place is usually the first place a Guthrie resident chooses when they need more care than is possible at home.

Many of the residents already have a community connection often recognize other residents as their former neighbors, school chums or fellow churchgoers.

The Chappell family has grown up in the community. This spirit of care makes Ash Street Place, Willow

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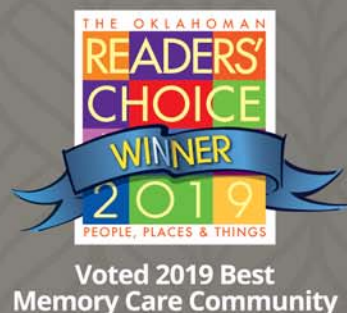


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COZY

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Creek, Golden Age and Companion Hospice so special.

"We are here to take care of the health care needs of the community," said CC Crane, spokesperson for Companion Healthcare. "Besides Mercy Logan — it is us. I really do think you experience that family centered approach." As a staple in the community, Ash Street Place must be exceptional in its standard of care. The brand of Ash Street Place is written in family and neighborly community ties of knowing that the best of care is only a step away when choosing one of Oklahoma's finest assisted living centers.

"We're taking care of a lot of people here that were your old schoolteacher, or your former Bible study or Sunday school teacher. Ash Street Place is the first place you would think about if you needed assisted living care," Crane said.

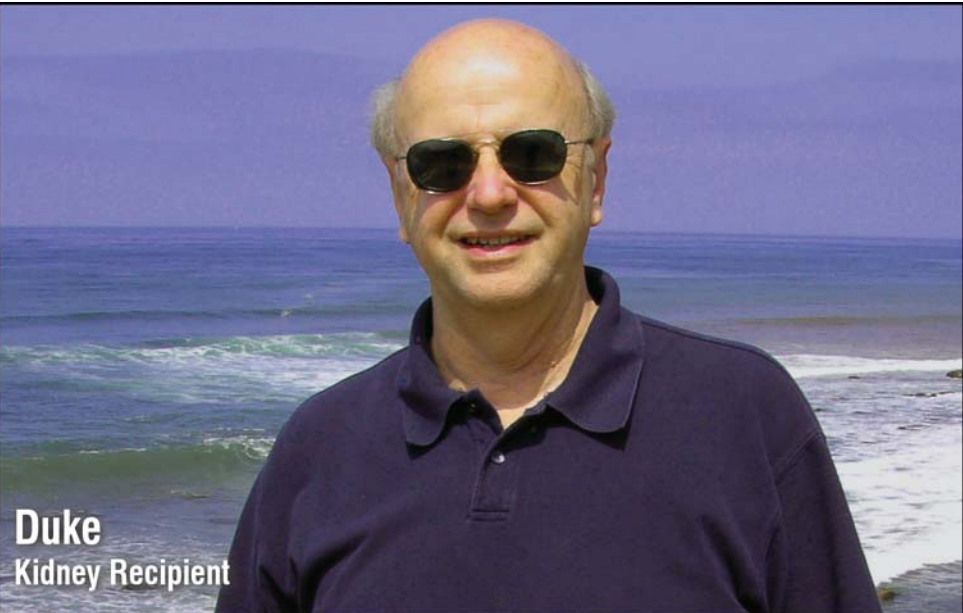
Williams agrees.

"Personally, I think it's the best place. Of course, I think Golden Age is the best place, too," she said.

For more information on Ash Street Place visit: <https://ashstreetplace.com/>



Tammy Williams, LPN, has gone full circle in her nursing career by giving comfort and care as the director of nursing at Ash Street Place Assisted Living, located in Guthrie.



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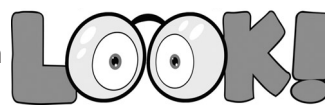
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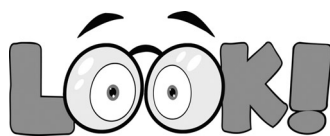
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US Supreme Court’s Decision to Overturn Roe vs. Wade: Is a Serious Setback for Reproductive Health and Human Rights

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is dismayed by the 6-3 ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* which has overturned the longstanding and significant precedent of *Roe v. Wade*. The *Dobbs* ruling removes the right of all women to access high-quality health care and make personal decisions about their sexual and reproductive health care. In doing so, it potentially paves the way for laws that will fundamentally come between patients and health care professionals, including nurses, who must be guided by ethical obligations to their patients and the profession.

“ANA is deeply disappointed in the decision to upend *Roe v. Wade*, which we view as a legal protection of basic reproductive health rights and human rights,” said ANA Enterprise CEO Loressa Cole, DNP, MBA, RN, FAAN, NEA-BC.

Nurses have an ethical obligation to safeguard the right to privacy for individuals, families, and communities, allowing for decision making that is based on full information without coercion. As the largest group of health care professionals, nurses have for decades assisted their patients with weighing the benefits, burdens, and available options, including the choice of no treatment, when



discussing sexual health issues and pregnancy. ANA firmly believes that no nurse should be subject to punitive or judicial processes for upholding their ethical obligations to their patients and profession.

In March 2022, ANA affirmed that abortion is a reproductive health alternative that nurses can discuss when counseling patients. Nurses have a duty to respect the decisions of their patients, including those decisions that are related to sexual health and pregnancy. Respect for patient decisions does not mean that the nurse must agree or support the decision. Nurses can exercise their right to refuse to participate in sexual and reproductive health care based on ethical grounds, as long as patient safety is assured and care by others has been arranged.

“No matter their philosophical differences or belief systems, all nurses must strive to remain consummate health care professionals and display empathy and respect to all,” said Cole. “This is a complicated issue and deeply personal for all, including nurses. Nurses, leaders, all health care professionals, and the public must engage on this issue with empathy and respect.”

ANA will continue to advocate for reproductive justice and sexual health that supports a patient’s decision and rights in a just society.



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In 2021, the U.S. News & World Report ranked Graceland University's Master's in Nursing online programs #1 in the nation. To learn more about the Graceland School of Nursing, visit our website at www.graceland.edu/nursing.



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Two Father/Son Duos Think of Father's Day Differently After Transplant



The Koontz family never takes a Father's Day for granted after nearly losing their patriarch last year. Keith Koontz of Wichita, Kansas was having urination issues and just wasn't feeling well when he finally went to the doctor. Come to find out, his kidneys were failing - and he was put on dialysis. "Dialysis is no joke," he admits. "I would go in three

times a week for four hours each. It was time consuming and could be painful. Things got a little better when they put me on home dialysis, but it was hard to lug around heavy boxes of fluid anytime we tried to go camping."

An avid camper for many years,

Koontz had no idea his hobby would play a role in saving his life. "When it became clear that I needed a transplant, my physicians said I was lucky that I was in such good shape. I attribute that to camping."

But at the age of 81, he wondered if transplantation was even an option for him. "Some transplant centers will not transplant someone over the age of 80," Koontz states. "That was one of the deciding factors for why we chose INTEGRIS Health."

I wasn't done living yet, and they were willing to give me a second chance."

E.N. Scott Samara, M.D., is the surgical director of the Nazih Zuhdi Kidney Transplant program at INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City. "It's our transplant center's philosophy to not look a patient's chronologic age, age in years, but to look at how the patient looks physically and mentally. Mr. Koontz is an active, vibrant man with an overall good health status and we felt he was well deserving of transplant for continued quality of life."

The Koontz clan is a tight knit group. Keith's sister and all five of his children offered to give him one of their kidneys. They all went through the application process, but it was Kenny Koontz of Norman, Okla., the baby of the family, who was a perfect match. "Any one of us would have done it for him," says Kenny. "I just happened to be the best candidate."

The transplant took place on Jan. 11, 2021. It was a complete success - but the story doesn't end there.

As fate would have it, the surgeons

who performed the transplant on Keith and Kenny Koontz - were a father and son duo as well. E.N. Scott Samara, M.D., is the senior and Shea Samara, M.D., is the son. Both are transplant surgeons at the Nazih Zuhdi Transplant Institute. "What are the odds?" asks Keith Koontz. "When we tell our story to people, they don't believe us at first. But then they think it's amazing when they realize we're being serious."

Kenny Koontz gets choked up when he thinks about it. "The son took my kidney and handed it to his father, who in turn put it into my father. It's more than a coincidence to me, it's a connection. One we won't forget for the rest of our lives."

"As transplant surgeons, we always feel blessed to be able to help people. One father and son pair helping another father and son pair was truly special," admits Shea Samara. "My dad and I have been blessed to have been able to work together for the past 15 years and we truly cherish every moment together."

The Koontz family hopes to help others by sharing their story. They say life is too precious to be taken for granted. "Never take a Father's Day for granted," advises Kenny. "You never know when or if it will be the last one you get to spend together."

Keith Koontz agrees. He is camping again and just celebrated his 64th wedding anniversary with his wife, Beverly. He says they have lived a blessed life thanks to the Man Upstairs. He calls these next years his 'bonus' years - and says he will live each of them to the fullest.

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The AARP Foundation Senior Community Service and Employment Program (SCSEP) can help you keep pace with the changing nature of work and improve your ability to find employment, even in today's tough job market. AARP Foundation SCSEP places older workers in a variety of community service activities at nonprofit and public facilities like day care and senior centers, schools and hospitals. As a participant, you can sharpen your job skills and earn income — all while giving back to your community.

If you're 55 or over and unemployed, contact AARP Foundation SCSEP's local office at 405.879.3899 for more information.

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Local Children’s Hospital Named Best for Pediatric Cardiology, Gastroenterology

Oklahoma Children’s Hospital OU Health has earned U.S. News and World Report’s ranking of Top 50 Best Children’s Hospitals in the nation for Pediatric Cardiology & Heart Surgery and Pediatric Gastroenterology & GI Surgery. This marks the first year these programs have been included in the Top 50 list.

The publication’s annual ranking system, now in its 16th year, is designed to assist families and their physicians in making informed decisions about where to receive care for challenging health conditions. The rankings are measured by key areas including surgical outcomes, quality, patient experience and peer reputation.

“As the leader in pediatric care for Oklahoma and the region, we are incredibly proud that these two specialties are recognized as the nation’s most elite,” said Richard Lofgren, M.D., MPH, OU Health CEO and president. “This acknowledgment from U.S. News & World Report reflects the dedication of our highly skilled care teams, who put the patient first in everything they do.”

Oklahoma Children’s Hospital is the only dedicated children’s hospital in the state. From advanced surgical services to general pediatrics, oncology care and more, Oklahoma Children’s Hospital patients have access to cutting-edge research and treatments through hospital-based and outpatient services.

The leaders of these programs include: Harold Burkhart, M.D., cardiothoracic surgery; Arshid Mir, M.D., pediatric cardiology; Muhammad Altaf, M.D., pediatric gastroenterology; and Catherine Hunter, M.D., pediatric surgery.

“These physician leaders have built incredible programs at our hospital,” said Cameron Mantor, M.D., OU Health Chief Physician Executive, Children’s Division. “They are each nationally respected in their fields, which has allowed them to recruit the best teams in the nation.”

Oklahoma Children’s Hospital’s cardiology team includes experienced pediatric cardiothoracic surgeons using advanced surgical technologies and minimally invasive techniques and



clinical trials. The cardiac surgery team performs more than 500 surgeries each year, and the number of children who survive open-heart surgery — 98.8% — stands above the national average, regardless of the surgery’s complexity.

The comprehensive pediatric cardiology program at Oklahoma Children’s Hospital cares for all children and adults with pediatric and acquired heart disease in the state. The team conducts more than 10,000 clinic visits a year for patients referred to the programs throughout Oklahoma. Services include a nationally-accredited imaging program with echocardiography and fetal echocardiography services, advanced MRI and CT imaging systems, a Hybrid cath lab for interventional programs and more.

The gastroenterology team at Oklahoma Children’s Hospital conducts more than 12,000 clinic visits and 1,800 procedures a year and participates in multiple research studies and multi-center clinical drug trials, making it the largest referral center in the state.

Specialized gastroenterology programs include Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Liver Transplant, Intestinal Rehabilitation, Aerodigestive Disorders, Gastrointestinal Motility, Fatty Liver and Cystic Fibrosis. The gastroenterology program offers one of only a few Transnasal Awake endoscopy and GI Motility disorders centers in the nation and is the founding member center of Improve Care Now, an International IBD Collaborative Quality Improvement network.

“In my more than 40 years in healthcare, I have had the opportunity to work with several nationally recognized programs,” Lofgren said. “I am not surprised to see us achieve these rankings and I fully expect to see additional programs at Oklahoma Children’s Hospital added to the list in years to come.”

Situation Update: COVID-19

New Cases 7 Day Average	716
New Cases Week of 6/12/22 - 6/18/22	5,009
Active Cases	9,265
Total Cases	1,065,714
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths (As of 6/3/22)	16,145
Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
	Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)	4 (0)
Region 2 (NE)	8 (1)
Region 3 (SW)	15 (3)
Region 4 (EC)	9 (0)
Region 5 (SE)	3 (1)
Region 6 (Central)	9 (1)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	52 (25)
Region 8 (OKC)	71 (5)
Total	171* (36)
Other Types of Facilities	
Focus Facilities	6 (0)
Rehabilitation Facilities	0 (0)
Tribal Facilities	4 (0)
Other Facilities Total	10 (0)

*Includes 30 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 2022-06-23 at 7:00 a.m.



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Chesapeake Energy Corporation	Bank of Oklahoma	Ascent Resources	UPS	COSTCO Wholesale
American Fidelity	BancFirst	INTEGRIS Health	First Fidelity Bank	Jasco Products Company

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