



Calm in the storm

RN at core of emergency care

Being prepared for the unpredictable is a hallmark of the Oklahoma ER & Hospital, says Kenzie Combites, RN.

story and photo by James Coburn, staff writer

Kenzie Combites passes nine hospitals from Norman to Oklahoma City on her way to work as a registered nurse at Oklahoma ER & Hospital. She says the extra miles are worth the effort.

"It's the atmosphere and it's the environment with my coworkers. I truly have my dream job working here," Combites said. "I thoroughly love my job and what I do."

Education is important among the staff with a willingness to learn. Many nurses are continuing their education, earning their bachelor's or master's degrees. Combites is a young nurse who embraces opportunities to advance in her career.

She is a 2019 nursing school graduate of Oklahoma City Community College. She was 19 when at first, she began scribing for

physicians. She has worked at Oklahoma ER & Hospital for three years.

I love working in the ER and one of the first doctors I worked with, Dr. (Sang) Lee, is actually the medical director here," she said.

Oklahoma ER & Hospital is growing with quality emergency care. Seven local physicians who saw a need for compassionate and quick emergency care opened Oklahoma ER & Hospital in 2019. It's equipped with nine ER beds, a triage room, and a pediatric room. About 50 nurses are on staff to respond to emergency care at 15103 N. Pennsylvania Avenue in Oklahoma City. The 15,000-square-foot building is designed for adult and pediatric patients' comfort, convenience and quality care.

She and 18 other nurses she works with

met at Oklahoma ER & Hospital and share the same three-day schedules. Combites and two other nurses have become best friends. They and their families spend a lot of time together outside of work.

"Even people that we don't work with every day — we still see each other. They always do a lot of events. We are out in public together, outside a work setting where you enjoy yourself and get to know your coworkers," she continued. "It's an awesome environment."

Her coworkers treat patients as their grandma, grandpa, mom or dad. Parents are always involved when children receive emergency care. They help keep their kids calm.

"I think my coworkers go above and beyond

COMBITES

Continued from Page 1

by making sure our patients have everything that they need," she explained. "It's not concierge medicine but it's the same quality. People are amazed by the treatment they get here."

Combites works weekends. This makes the nightshift unpredictable because there are more events happening in Edmond and as far south and places like Bricktown that bring patients to Oklahoma ER & Hospital.

"I work the nightshift and that makes it more unpredictable. We see a wide variety of things, but in our downtime, we always make sure everything is prepared for the next shift," Combites said.

Combites' nursing career has made her more patient in life.

"Sometimes I have to step back and realize in my day-to-day life, my family and other people who are not in healthcare don't see the same things that I see," Combites said. "So, if I see something that might not be

a big deal outside of work to my family or people who are not in a healthcare program like an ER setting — it's very scary," she said. "So, I've realized I handle myself really well in a crisis and in very unpredictable situations. If something were to happen, I stay very calm, where others do not stay calm."

Even though it's not related to the staff of a former hospital she worked at, Combites recalled that many patients there would come to the hospital ready for an argument. She would work entire shifts without a patient or their family member saying thank you.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many people seemed to lose touch with kindness, she said.

"But as soon as I started working here, I got told all the time, 'Thank you so much for helping me.' And as crazy as that sounds, it's touched my life more than all the other things. It was nice, it was very rewarding that people cared and thanked us when we were able to transfer their family members off to different states when hospitals were full here."



She recalled when her coworkers would call more than 200 hospitals outside of Oklahoma just to find a bed for one of her patients. Families were very appreciative.

"I was like, 'Thank you for noticing that. Thank you for thanking me.'"

For more information about Oklahoma ER & Hospital, Visit: <https://okerhospital.com/>

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Pittman Promoted at SSM Health Behavioral Health

SSM Health St. Anthony is pleased to announce the promotion of Sharonda Pittman, RN to the position of director within SSM Health Behavioral Health. Pittman will oversee operations of mental and behavioral health services on the St. Anthony Hospital campus in Midtown Oklahoma City.

Pittman started her nursing career at SSM Health St. Anthony as a behavioral health technician and has advanced to be one of the area's leading behavioral professionals.

SSM Health Behavioral Health is one of the state's largest providers of mental health services, including inpatient and outpatient care for children, adolescents and adults. For more information about non-emergency services, please call their central scheduling hotline at (405) 272-7272.

SSM Health in Oklahoma includes St. Anthony Hospital (Oklahoma City), Bone & Joint Hospital at St. Anthony (Oklahoma City), SSM Health Outpatient Center (Oklahoma City), St. Anthony Hospital - Shawnee (Shawnee, Okla.), St. Anthony Hospital - Shawnee, Seminole Campus (Seminole, Okla.) and St. Anthony Hospital - Midwest (Midwest City, Okla.). The SSM Health network in Oklahoma also includes five SSM Health St. Anthony Healthplex campuses, six managed hospitals, 12 rural affiliated hospitals and SSM Health Medical Group with more than 300 physicians and providers.

For more information about SSM Health St. Anthony, visit:
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Oklahoma's Nursing Times Locally Owned and Published Weekly

Editor/Owner/Publisher - Steven R. Eldridge

Writers: Darl Devault - Contributing Editor, Bobby Anderson, RN - Staff Writer and James Coburn - Staff Writer, Van Mitchell, Staff Writer

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CAREERS IN NURSING:

A SEASONED PROFESSIONAL - DON CARES FOR RESIDENTS AND STAFF

Nick Spencer, RN, says you will accept more responsibility in life if you want to grow in life. He accepted the leadership role as director of nurses at The Grand at Bethany Skilled Nursing & Therapy in October, knowing it's a good company that takes care of its people.

"It's the challenge of constantly triaging my time, making sure everyone is taken care of, my employees all the way down to my patients," Spencer said.

The Grand at Bethany Skilled Nursing is set-up for 130 beds with the potential of raising the count to 145 beds in the entire facility.

Spencer commended the ADONs and the nursing staff for stepping up during the COVID pandemic and flu season. Some nurses across the state left their careers or were sick themselves.

"When staff were out, we had residents sick, but people kept working. They kept picking up extra shifts. They did a remarkable

job," he said.

Effective nurses come with the understanding that their primary focus is about their residents and patients and not themselves, Spencer continued.

"Ultimately, it's our responsibility to make sure they're taken care of to the best of our ability," Spencer emphasized. "That's something that's always got to be in the back of your head as a nurse or as a CNA, or somebody washing dishes and cleaning the building."

When Spencer served in the United States Army, he wanted a job that would eventually translate well into the National Guard Reserves or a civilian career. He had been an emergency medical technician-basic before joining the Army.

Spencer became a licensed practical nurse in 1997. Ten years later he graduated from Mesa State College in western Colorado for his RN. His career has included

long-term, emergency and critical care.

"There was not some magical moment. I'm very big on if I do this job, I have a responsibility to make it happen. And that's why I became a nurse," Spencer said. "I was a good EMT. I was a good medic in the Army."

Nurses rank as the most trusted profession in the United States for good reason. Spencer believes the reason is due to the way nurses present themselves as compassionate patient advocates.

He tells his staff that they must love helping people as nurses. Being a nurse is not a lazy profession. It must be a calling.

"For some of them I say if you're just in it for a paycheck, go be a welder," he said. "This job is long hours. It's hard work, but it's rewarding. I go home every night and unless it was a really bad day, I'm usually proud of what I've done. And that's stuff that nobody can take away from you."

Families count on nurses to care for their loved ones.

"If you can't be trusted to take care of someone's parents, grandparents, or their children, we should not be in this profession," Spencer explained.

People searching for a place to care for a loved one rightly choose The Grand at Bethany Skilled Nursing & Therapy because the staff is a group of proven professionals who take their job very seriously. Be it the need to call a physician for a new medication or to advocate for more therapy, the staff cares about the residents and patients. Spencer has witnessed them work short-staffed and still give all the care that is required, he said.

"We will work through lunch," he said. "We take care of the residents and our patients, and we take care of ourselves," Spencer said.

See SPENCER Page 5



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As director of nurses of The Grand at Bethany Skilled Nursing & Therapy, Nick Spencer, RN, has a keen focus on providing best practices that deliver results.

SPENCER
Continued from Page 4

Events prove to Spencer and the nursing staff that their careers are well worth the effort. He read through work reports with his finger searching for a recent report that made a profound impression. It was from a patient's family.

"It was words to the effect of thank you for taking care of my mom. You guys did a wonderful job. She was so happy," he said. "It was really rather touching. It got to me. It was probably one of the nicest things I've seen. It's the little victories that you get. This person is walking, and they couldn't walk when they got here. This person

is feeding themselves. They couldn't feed themselves when they got here. You've got to find the little things that keep you going, and you get warm and fuzzy about nursing."

Spencer is empathetic about families' needs. He has four daughters of his own.

"I hang out with them on the weeks I have open," he said. "When I don't, I have a four-to-six-mile route that I hike, and it's just around the old gravel roads around my house."


Spencer is a former competitive powerlifter who continues to lift weights to stay in shape.

"I still like picking up things and moving them. Of course, there's always reading," he added.

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Kaylynn Johnson, CNA/CMA

"It means a lot to me. I love taking care of people, helping them any way that I can."



Donetta Loudermilk, CNA

"It's a privilege. Hopefully they will get better. It's an amazing job."



Robby Graves, CNA/CMA



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New Admission Criteria

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Career Ladder & Traditional

OSU-OKC welcomes LPNs and Paramedics looking for a pathway to being eligible for Registered Nurse licensure. With proof of active, state licensure and required prerequisite courses, LPNs and Paramedics will complete a transition course, then the final two courses in the program. Upon successful completion of the transition course, students are awarded 17 credit hours of advanced standing credit for their licensure. The coursework for this pathway is provided online. Students come to campus for testing, simulations, and laboratory experiences on Fridays. Students will complete clinical experiences on the weekends. This hybrid design was at the request of our program advisory committee to meet the needs of working adults.

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- Across
5. antianemic roll the vial

7. tx HTN, change position slowly

8. metabolic alkalosis, s/e blood in urine and increase in uric acid

10. reduce edema, loop diuretic

12. OTC anti diarrheal can cause constipation

14. tx head/lung tumors use contact precautions, antibetobolic

16. lower phosphorus levels, GI upset, hyperkalemia

17. reduce fluid overload, s/e hypokalemia

18. resp. depression, narcotic, urine retention

19. tx nausea, may develop a tolerance, antianxiety

20. use with corticosteroids, avoid OTC medications,
- immunosuppresant

21. tx bone marrow depression, cause anemia and decrease WBC count
- Down
1. chew well, no water, hypercalcemia

2. risk for infection, do not give with grapefruit

3. man boobs

4. pain at injection site

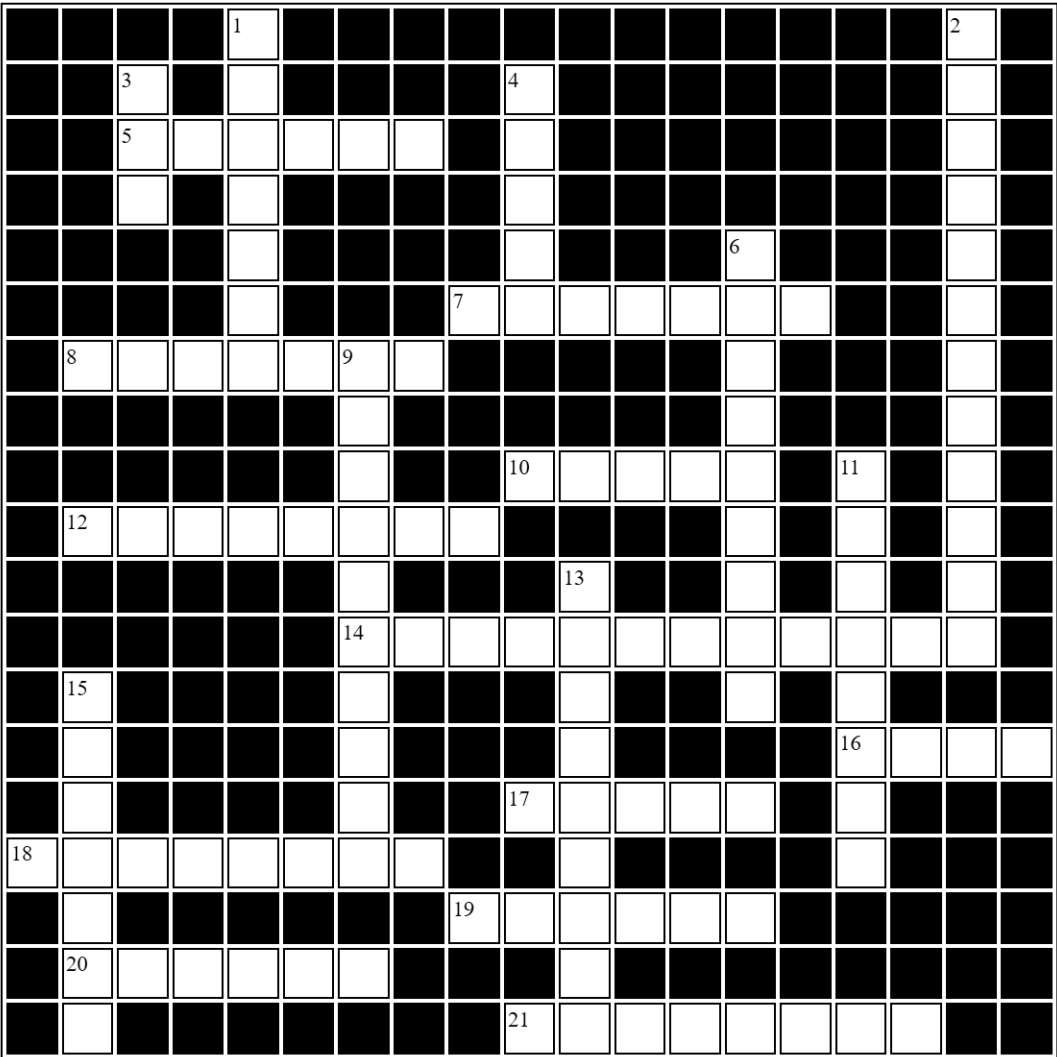
6. stops estrogen/ progesterogen, can cause facial hair, hypercalcemia

9. tx solid yumors, toxic to kidneys, antibiotic

11. swollen gums and gingival hyperplasia

13. give with full glass of H2O, s/e muscle spasms, blurry vision

15. antidiarreal, dry mouth NO GLAUCOMA



ANSWERS ON PAGE 13

By Christina Fowlks



7 out of 10 adults who use tobacco have expressed interest in quitting ...

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Nurses Aren't 'Quiet Quitters,' 2 Leaders Say

by Erica Carbajal

"Quiet quitting" is a phrase employers have become familiar with over the past year. The workplace trend of committing to no more than the minimum expectations for a role and reducing enthusiasm at work has implications for any industry, but the stakes are especially high in healthcare, where patients' safety could be at risk.

Findings from a Gallup survey shared in September suggested at least half of the U.S. workforce fit the "quiet quitter" description. "Bare minimum Mondays" is another trend that has gained traction on social media in recent months. It is difficult to find concrete data on how these trends might be showing up in healthcare. Some might assume high nurse burnout rates amid ongoing staffing shortages could correlate to more nurses leaning into these workplace trends. However, nurses say the reality is quite the opposite.

"I don't believe from the data that we've seen that nurses are doing the bare minimum," Katie Boston-Leary, PhD, RN, director of nursing programs for the American Nurses Association, told Becker's. "As a matter of fact, our data indicates that nurses struggle with the fact that they couldn't do

more for a patient."

In a survey last year, making a difference in people's lives was the top-selected response when nurses were asked about the most rewarding aspect of the job. With other tasks routinely getting in the way of nurses' ability to do that, not only are they consistently working beyond their scheduled hours to provide adequate care for patients, they're also taking home the stress of pondering the barriers that may have prevented them from going above and beyond for patients, Dr. Boston-Leary said.

One area where nurses are pulling back is with time off, combating longstanding pressure to respond to calls for help on their days off. A recent survey said 59 percent of nurses are regularly asked to cover additional shifts and nearly the same proportion say they frequently work beyond their shifts to complete work and care for patients.

"Over the past decade, it's been about, even if you're off, being able to respond to the calls if you're [asked] to come in and help your team," Dr. Boston-Leary said. "Nurses are saying 'no more.' They're not answering their phones. They're saying, 'My time off is my time off.'"

Despite challenges the industry is facing, Los Angeles-based Cedars-Sinai has maintained high engagement among its nursing staff, according to David Marshall, DNP, RN, the organization's senior vice president and chief nursing executive.

"We use Glint for our employee engagement surveys, and we've outperformed the Glint benchmark for all industries in the last several surveys that we've done," he told Becker's.

Dr. Marshall credited this to investments in nurses' professional development, strong interpersonal relationships between nursing staff and other clinicians, and a culture that embraces innovation.

"[We] have an accelerator program that brings in startup companies every year, and they get to talk to our clinical staff about how their products could be improved," he said.

Several innovations that give nurses a bit of time back in their day to spend with patients have come through the accelerator program, including Moxi robots and Alexa at the bedside. Over the past two years, Cedars-Sinai has expanded Alexa at the bedside beyond the pilot program, with most patient rooms outside of intensive care units now equipped with the technology. It

has saved nurses time by helping them understand what a patient needs if they use the call bell, for example, before sending someone to respond.

"The patient can say, 'Alexa, let the nurse know I'm in pain,' or 'let them know I need the TV changed,' so we can send different people in response to those questions," Dr. Marshall said.

These efforts do not go unnoticed by nursing staff.

"The innovation culture is palpable, and everybody sees these things as things we are doing to be a little more respectful of their time and make sure that we respond," Dr. Marshall said.

Any efforts hospitals can make to reduce nurses' time spent running errands or being tied to their computers is worth the while, especially for engagement, Dr. Boston-Leary said.

"They want to take care of their patients. They want to be able to do proper assessments. They want to be able to do education — build a relationship with their patients and get to know more about them," she said. "And that's where we restore some of the joy in nursing — if we start looking at some of the systems that we built that aren't working for us."

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2023 ANA Innovation Award Winners: Improving Health Care Delivery to Be More Practical, Comfortable, and Patient-Centered

Today, the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the American Nurses Foundation (the Foundation) announced the winners of the 2023 ANA Innovation Awards sponsored by Stryker, a leading global medical technology company. The ANA Innovation Awards highlight, recognize, and celebrate exemplary nurse innovators who improve patient safety and health outcomes.

Winners of the Nurse-led Team Award:

Roxanne McMurray, DNP, APRN, CRNA and the McMurray Team: *Steve Fischer, Co-Founder and President, Pete Anderson, Co-Founder and Financial Director, Brian McMurray, Co-Founder and Sales and Marketing Distribution Director, Ryan Artale, Partner and Product Development and Quality, and Jana Stender, Marketing and Communications Consultant*



Roxanne McMurray, a nurse anesthetist, leads the team that developed the Distal Pharyngeal Airway (DPA), called the McMurray Enhanced Airway, which is a breathing tool that stents open throat tissue to maintain adequate ventilation for surgery or other medical procedures. McMurray and her team saw a gap in available and effective airway management tools for populations who suffered from breathing complications, which led to the creation of DPA. This tool is the first-of-its-kind and designed to keep patients breathing who are susceptible to

upper airway obstruction during sedation or unconsciousness, which is a common occurrence with potentially serious outcomes.

Studies have shown that the average health care patient is more likely to be older, overweight, and more susceptible to sleep apnea. These are all risk factors for breathing complications and given that these groups are more likely to undergo outpatient surgeries that require deep sedation, there was a significant need for a solution. The DPA was created to address this problem in a way that is both comfortable and safe for patients and health care providers.

Winner of the Individual Nurse Award:

**Kevin Lee Smith, DNP, FNP,
FAANP**

Kevin Lee Smith, a nurse practitioner, is the creative mind behind The Good Clinic, a Minnesota-based, modern primary care model that provides patients age 12 or older with wholistic wellness plans tailored to each individual's health goals and lifestyle while offering convenience, value, and accessibility. This pioneering health care model is strategically led by nurse practitioners who utilize their unique relationship



with patients, referred to as “clients”, to fully understand their health background and to thoughtfully collaborate on personalized

Continued on next page

Some innocent nurses may be caught up in degree scheme

by Erica Carbaial

Lawyers for some nurses in New York and Georgia maintain that their clients completed required coursework and legitimately earned their nursing diplomas, but are being lumped together in the national scheme involving the sale of thousands of bogus degrees.

The Justice Department announced Jan. 25 it had uncovered a coordinated scheme involving the sale of more than 7,600 fake diplomas and transcripts from three now-shuttered nursing schools in Florida, which allowed individuals to bypass coursework required to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination. Florida officials have since ordered seven additional nursing schools where defendants work to pause graduation and enrollment. Of those seven, four schools have

voluntarily ceased operations for an indefinite period.

However, not all of the people who went to those schools purchased fraudulent documents, according to attorneys representing nurses now linked to the scheme.

“Look, nobody wants a fraudulent nurse taking care of them or their loved ones. However, in this case what we have are allegations and an investigation. We have to allow that process to play out before we rush to judgment,” Hannah Williams, an attorney representing five nurses in Georgia, told WSB-TV in a Feb. 1 report.

"There are people who went to those schools legitimately and did nothing wrong. And they are now somehow being lumped together with the fraudulent nurses," Ms. Williams told The Associated

Press.

Another attorney representing several affected nurses in New York is Jordan Fensterman. He has spoken to nearly 40 affected nurses, many of whom are immigrants who claim they attended classes. Some told Mr. Fensterman that they flew to Florida for training and participated in New York-based exam-prep programs affiliated with the Florida schools, according to a Times Union report.

“These New York state nurses have earned not only the benefit of the doubt, but have already proven themselves clinically on the front lines of an historic pandemic,” Mr. Fensterman told the news outlet. He is now requesting education officials in the state conduct individual assessments to determine which credits, if any, were obtained illegitimately.

About 2,800 people — or 37 percent of those who allegedly purchased phony degrees — passed the NCLEX and went on to secure employment at U.S. healthcare facilities.

As published here:

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/>

**Oklahoma City
University
Kramer School
of Nursing
Partners DAISY
Foundation**

OCU Kramer School of Nursing has partnered with The DAISY Foundation to present DAISY Awards to faculty and students. Awards will be presented at the Pinning & Recognition Ceremony.

The deadline for nominating a Faculty Member or Student for the DAISY Award is Friday March 31st, 2023. Scan the QR code or click this link <https://www.okcu.edu/nursing/about-us/daisy-awards> to nominate an Extraordinary Student or an Inspiring Faculty Member.

Learn more about The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Faculty and The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Students at

<https://daisyfoundation.org/#KramerSchoolofNursing>

AWARD

Continued from Page 12

health care recommendations such as wellness programs and family practice services.

The Good Clinic offers same-day, next-day, and virtual care appointments and accepts most insurance. Clients have described The Good Clinic as “spa-like” and “not your typical doctor’s office”. Every Good Clinic includes a retail component featuring essential oils, nutritional supplements, and books on healthy diet and lifestyle.

“The 2023 ANA Innovation Award winners have built clinical solutions for complex health care challenges. Roxanne and Kevin advanced care and the resources being delivered, while simultaneously improving health quality for their patients and communities,” said ANA Vice President of Nursing Innovation, Oriana Beaudet, DNP, RN, PHN. “The winners addressed emerging care needs, through a new nurse-led business model that’s improving access to health services, and the second is a medical device being used by emergency medical services and surgical teams. Advancing nurse-led solutions that create sustainable cost-effective solutions across health care is good business, driven by purpose and mission. Nurses advance health through their work as clinicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, researchers, product designers, policy leaders, in advanced practice, as community organizers, and by providing direct

care across our country in hospitals, long term care, hospice, ambulatory settings, schools, and numerous public health settings. It’s time the innovative work of nurses is recognized.”

“Nurse-led innovation is critical to the advancement of health care, and that is why we are proud to partner with ANA and the Foundation as a sponsor of the ANA Innovation Awards,” said Stryker’s Vice President and General Manager, Jessica Mathieson. “This year’s award winners epitomize nursing excellence, and we are excited to see how they continue to positively impact the profession and help improve patient outcomes.”

The 2023 individual nurse and nurse-led team 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 2024.

Watch the ANA Innovation Awards ceremony and meet the 2023 winners in the new webinar, “Are You a Nurse Influencer? Utilize Innovation to Drive Your Professional Influence” (Free for ANA Members). You can also learn more about how ANA is supporting nurse-led innovation by visiting the ANA Innovation website, where you will find a list of resources, upcoming events, and nurse-led innovation stories.



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