

Journey to learn CNO has a curious intellect



Brenda Hood brings a caring, empathetic spirit blended with curiosity to her new role as CNO at Valir Rehabilitation Hospital, located in midtown Oklahoma City

Story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Rehab nursing is new for Brenda Hood, who in January assumed the role of chief nursing officer at Valir Rehabilitation Hospital, located in Oklahoma City.

"I have never been to a place that has more friendly people than Valir," Hood said. "That was one of the first things that drew me here besides knowing the CEO. From top to bottom, they are probably the nicest people I have encountered at a facility."

Hood said has been a nurse for 23 years since she was in her late 30s. She likes taking care of people and being in their company. She is also an avid problem solver. So, when someone is having a health problem, she enjoys seeing what physicians are doing to figure things out.

"I like the people connection," she said.

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ANA Appalled by the Texas Mifepristone Ruling



The American Nurses Association (ANA) is appalled by a recent ruling out of Texas that would invalidate the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval of the abortion drug mifepristone. On April 7, 2023, a federal judge in Texas issued a ruling in the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, that could result in further restrictions on patients' ability to access abortions, even in states where it is legal. This recent ruling is yet another threat to individuals' basic reproductive health and human rights in the courtroom. ANA is concerned that this precedent could put other lifesaving or established drugs at risk for review by the court system. ANA holds that FDA decisions should supersede state-level decisions.

"ANA opposes any action that threatens a patient's basic right to make their own decisions about their reproductive health care," said ANA President Jennifer Mensik Kennedy, PhD, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN. "There are so many concerning downstream effects that we cannot afford to ignore. From eroding patients' personal choices, setting dangerous legal precedents, undermining evidence-based decisions, and impeding access to lifesaving treatments and medications. This is all at stake if the Texas ruling stands."

The FDA approved mifepristone over 23 years ago. The ruling in Texas, if it stands, will set an unprecedented situation where

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HOOD

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Hood came to Valir Rehabilitation Hospital with a wealth of nursing experience to her credit.

After receiving her Associate's degree in Nursing at Redlands Community College to become a registered nurse, Hood earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford. She was serving as a charge nurse in the ICU at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City when deciding to earn her Master of Science in Nursing degree at the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing (Health Sciences Center – Oklahoma City). She then became the manager of the post coronary care unit at INTEGRIS Health Southwest Medical Center. Afterwards, she served as chief nursing officer at Kindred Hospital where she served as CNO before being promoted to CEO for six years.

It was the CEO of Valir Rehabilitation Hospital who recruited Hood to join Valir Rehabilitation Hospital after she resigned from Kindred Hospital in August of 2022. Patients are at an

advantage when coming to Valir Rehabilitation Hospital, Hood said.

"I think when they are in a hospital for a long time, they become deconditioned," she said. "We have physical therapy and occupational therapy here that spends time with them. On average it's three hours a day. So, the goal here is to get a patient to where they were before ever entering the hospital."

Nurses help prepare their patients' health to go to the next level. The goal is to prepare patients to return home. Three hours of working with therapists a day is one of the benefits patients have when choosing to come to Valir Rehabilitation Hospital, Hood explained.

Seeing patients before and after their maximum assistance by the nurses and therapists is the highpoint of her role as CNO. How long a patient will stay in the rehab hospital depends on their diagnosis. Different disciplines including speech therapists work with them and get them to where they need to be. Some patients only stay 12-13 days.

"What they can accomplish in that amount of time is kind of a miracle in itself," she continued.

The nurses shine each day. Hood said she loves their diligence and personalities that translate into exemplary patient care. Normally an administrative officer does not work on Saturdays. But seeing Hunt on a weekend proved not to be a surprise.

"That spoke volumes to me, knowing they're doing the right thing whether we're here or not. They were just very welcoming to me, just showing up on a Saturday," Hood said. "So that meant a lot to me."

They have a caring heart and want to see their patients do better. Hood said what makes the difference is treating patients as if they are family members. Nurses must be a team player with a willingness to learn and consider their patient their priority, she added.

There are about 56-57 nurses working at the rehab hospital with 49 on staff besides a few agency nurses.

"We are in the process of getting more nurses," she said.

Valir Health encourages continuing education. There are many LPNs at Valir Rehabilitation. And the hospital is in the process of creating more educational

opportunities for the staff.

"We have a TBI (traumatic brain injury) unit, and we have certain nurses who like to work in that unit. So, through Ginger, the risk manager, we have come up with some classes that can be given to those nurses who want to work in the TBI unit," Hood said. "They have an eagerness to learn, and they want to learn how they can better take care of these patients."

Nursing has demonstrated for Hood the need for a caring heart.

"I think things that happen in your life teach you to be a better person," she said.

Her father's bypass surgery helped her to empathize with what families and the patients go through.

"I think life experience teaches you things that you can learn also in your practice," she said.

Her greatest joy outside of her work is her dog.

"They love you unconditionally," she said.

She and her husband consider their German Shepherd/ Collie mix a member of the family.

"She's spoiled," Hood said.

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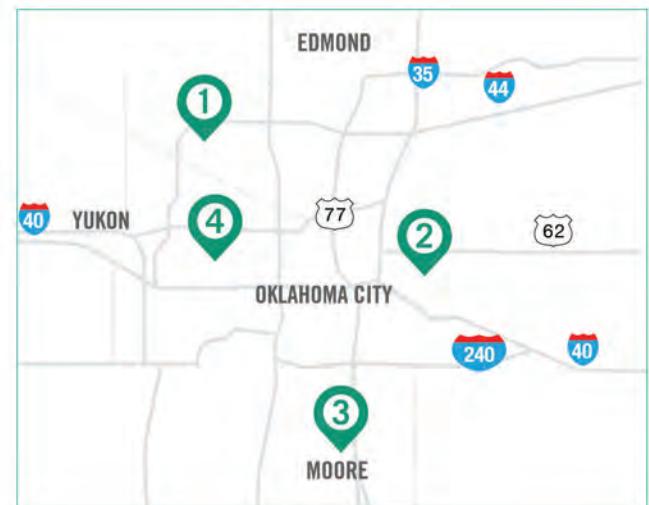
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CAREERS IN NURSING: FOCUSED ON EXCELLENCE - HARD WORK ENRICHING FOR RN

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Anthony Walker comes from a family of nurses and keeps family at heart.

"My uncles are nurses, my cousins are nurses," said Anthony Walker, RN, who serves as an operating room nurse (circulator) at OU Health-Edmond Medical Center.

"I feel a responsibility when I put on a uniform that I'm taking care of someone's family member. I know what I put into the world will come back karma-wise. If one of my parents were having surgery, I would want the team taking care of my parents," Walker said. "I know that I can make an impact doing my job to the best of my ability."

When Walker was in the U.S. Air Force, he recognized he was smart enough to go to college, but he didn't want a degree for a career he didn't want. A nursing career appealed to him. He had surgery, himself, while in the Air Force and observed how things were supposed to be done by the nurses.

Walker has spent nine years in the OR since graduating from the nursing program at Rose State College

in Midwest City. Rose State College had an awesome team of instructors, he said.

"I hadn't been to school in 10 years. This time when I went back to school I was focused because I knew what I wanted to do," he said. "I went back to school when I was 28 and I just had a different mindset. It was the most challenging thing in my lifetime, going to nursing school. It was very tough, a lot of work, but it paid off in the end."

Walker had an internship when in college at OU Medical Center, located on the campus of the OU Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. He joined OU Medical Center in 2019.

"I was fascinated because I didn't learn too much about operating room nursing when I was in school. But when I did the internship it felt like a different world," Walker said. "Just taking care of patients in that capacity — that's what I wanted to do."

A nursing career is rewarding but is not always like sunshine, he said. So, Walker admires the resiliency and perseverance of his coworkers who rise to the occasion of saving lives and

improving healthcare.

The team of nurses understands best practices for patient centered nursing, he said. Everybody has a role to do. Emergency surgeries make predictable days of scheduling a bit different. There are generally three to five surgeries per operating room at the hospital and there are five dedicated operating rooms, Walker said.

Part of Walker's role is to interview patients prior to surgery. He must ascertain that they had nothing to eat on the day of surgery. Patients are also asked why they are having surgery and if they have questions. Walker will mark the body area a surgeon will work on.

"I found over nine years, for me, the best thing to say is, 'You've got a great team taking care of you,'" Walker said. "And once they hear that, I see their eyes light up and they know they're in good hands. It just takes off all the pressure knowing there's a great team taking care of them. It's not our first time doing this. We're doing this every week, and you want a professional team taking care

of you."

He enjoys the times when patients will write thank you notes to the nursing staff. There was a patient who had just gotten out of surgery and was recovering from the effects of anesthesia.

"She thanked me because she was nervous about having the surgery. She thanked me personally, saying I calmed her down until she felt comfortable having the surgery by the words I said to her," Walker said. "She just thanked me for it."

But Walker and the other nurses do not rest on their laurels. OU Health-Edmond Medical Center provides health streams for continuing education. In-service meetings take place to introduce additional medical equipment with a representative to demonstrate how it works and to answer questions. Walker takes notes on his phone.

"I'm a visual guy, so I need to see it," he said. "So, that's how we keep up-to-date."

He recommends OU Health-Edmond Medical Center because he

See WALKER Page 5



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Anthony Walker's life as a registered nurse at OU Health-Edmond Medical Center is filled with dedication and respect for patients and staff. (at the time of this photo Anthony Walker was between surgeries and could not remove his mask)

WALKER

Continued from Page 4

knows what goes on there behind the scenes.

"It's kind of like if I was a chef. Behind the scenes you're in the kitchen. Whoever is in the kitchen behind the scenes you see food prepared to make sure it's safe," he said. "I know the team here. We do everything to the best of our ability to make sure the patients are safe. I

feel comfortable.

It makes him feel part of a community, that he is part of a team and not just one person," he said.

At home, he is dedicated to caring for his 13-month-old baby girl named Aalune-Noi.

"Just taking care of her brings me joy after a hard day at work."

For more information about OU Health-Edmond Medical Center, visit: <https://www.ouhealth.com/find-a-location/ou-health-edmond-medical-center/>

RULING

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ANA

AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

the judiciary is able to overturn FDA decisions that are made using an established process based on scientific fact. These evidence-based decisions by the FDA are made with patient safety and efficacy in mind. The Texas ruling also follows the 6-3 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* from June of 2022. ANA continues to oppose this decision, which overturned the longstanding and significant precedent of *Roe v. Wade* and potentially paves the way for laws that will come between patients and health care professionals. This includes nurses who are guided by ethical obligations 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 in the U.S.," said Mensik-Kennedy, "nurses are instrumental in assisting their patients with weighing the benefits, burdens, and available options, including the choice of no

treatment, when discussing sexual health issues and pregnancy. No nurse should ever be subject to any 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. ANA will continue its decades-long advocacy work for reproductive justice and sexual health that supports a patient's decision and rights in a just society.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's more than 4 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.



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Ramona Wilson, RN

"In the early 90s I worked on a step-down unit for cardiac. I learned a lot."



Leah Owen, RN

"Don't laugh, I was hauling hay. It was hot and it was hard, hard work. This compared to that is relatively easy."



DeAnne Isaacs, RN

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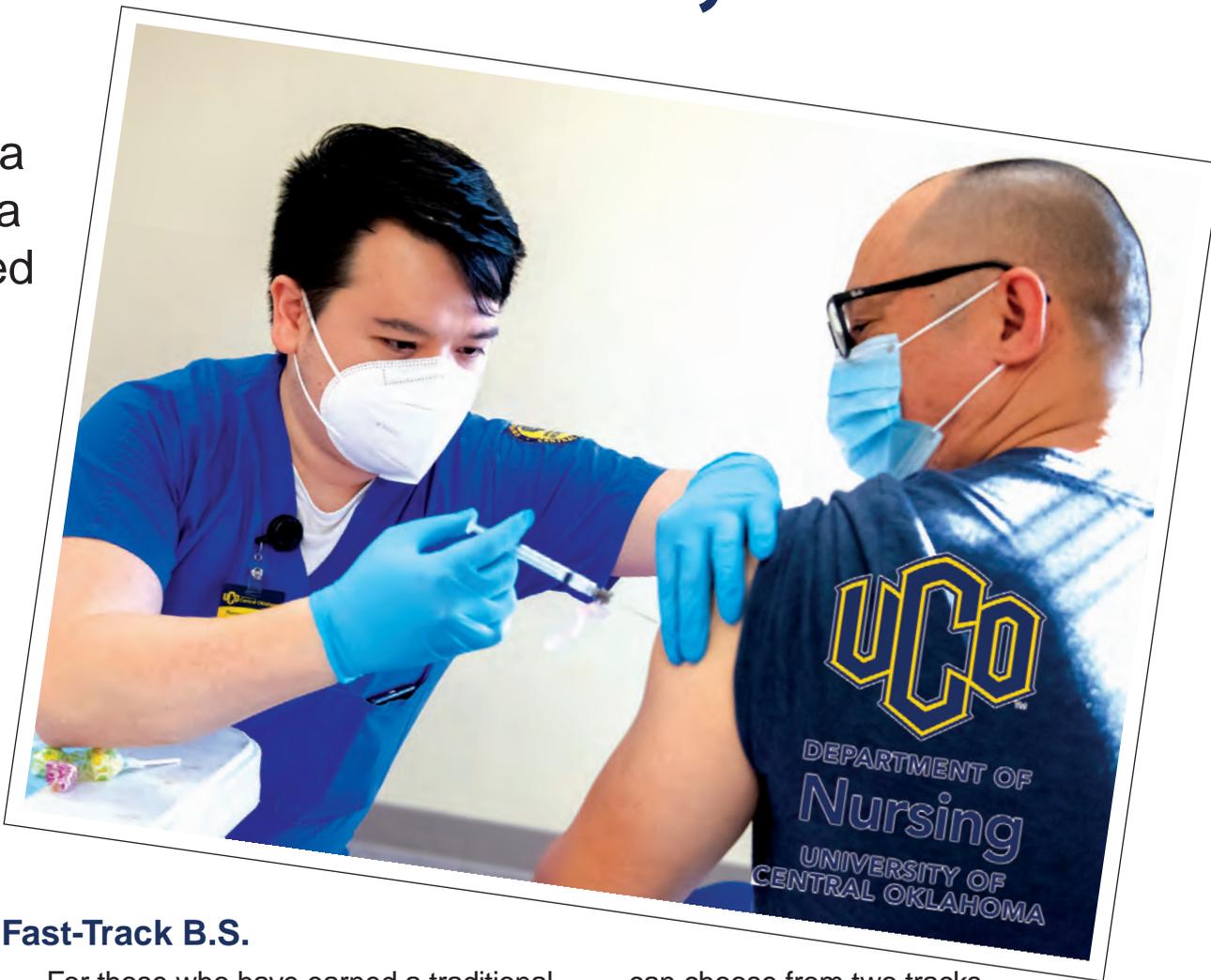
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When Rachel Jones, nurse manager for IMC at Integris Baptist, knew she wanted to pursue nursing she would need a program that was focused on flexibility and the success of students. "I appreciated the flexibility of the online program – I was running a COVID-19 + only unit in the middle of a pandemic, working two jobs and raising two kids while trying to get my B.S.," she said. "The online program at UCO provided the flexibility I need that allowed me to work when I could. At UCO, I knew the standards I would be held to would help make me a better nurse and stronger leader."



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Garrett Collins graduated from Central's fast-track program in 2022, he currently works as a nurse resident at Integris Baptist in the transplant ICU. For Collins, the clinical opportunities available gave him first-hand insight into hospital culture and specialties. "Having the opportunity to do clinical hours at different hospitals across the metro prepared me for deciding where to apply for work," he said. The clinical rotations also helped me learn how to apply the skills I was learning in class to real life."

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The Master of Science in nursing degree program at UCO offers working RNs flexibility through fully online courses with both part- and full-time options available. The program can be completed in as little as 16 months, if pursued full time. The online Master of Science in nursing can be completed for as little as \$15,000. Nursing graduate students

can choose from two tracks – nursing education or nursing leadership.

Kiersten Snider is a registered nurse at OU Children's Hospital in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. After receiving her B.S. in nursing from UCO in 2020, she began pursuing her master's in nursing at UCO in nursing education. To Snider, the passion the faculty have for success is unparalleled. "You are more than just another student to the faculty members in this program," she said. "They strive every day to think of different methods they can use to improve the content they are providing to ensure that each student holds a high standard of knowledge that will be used in their careers."

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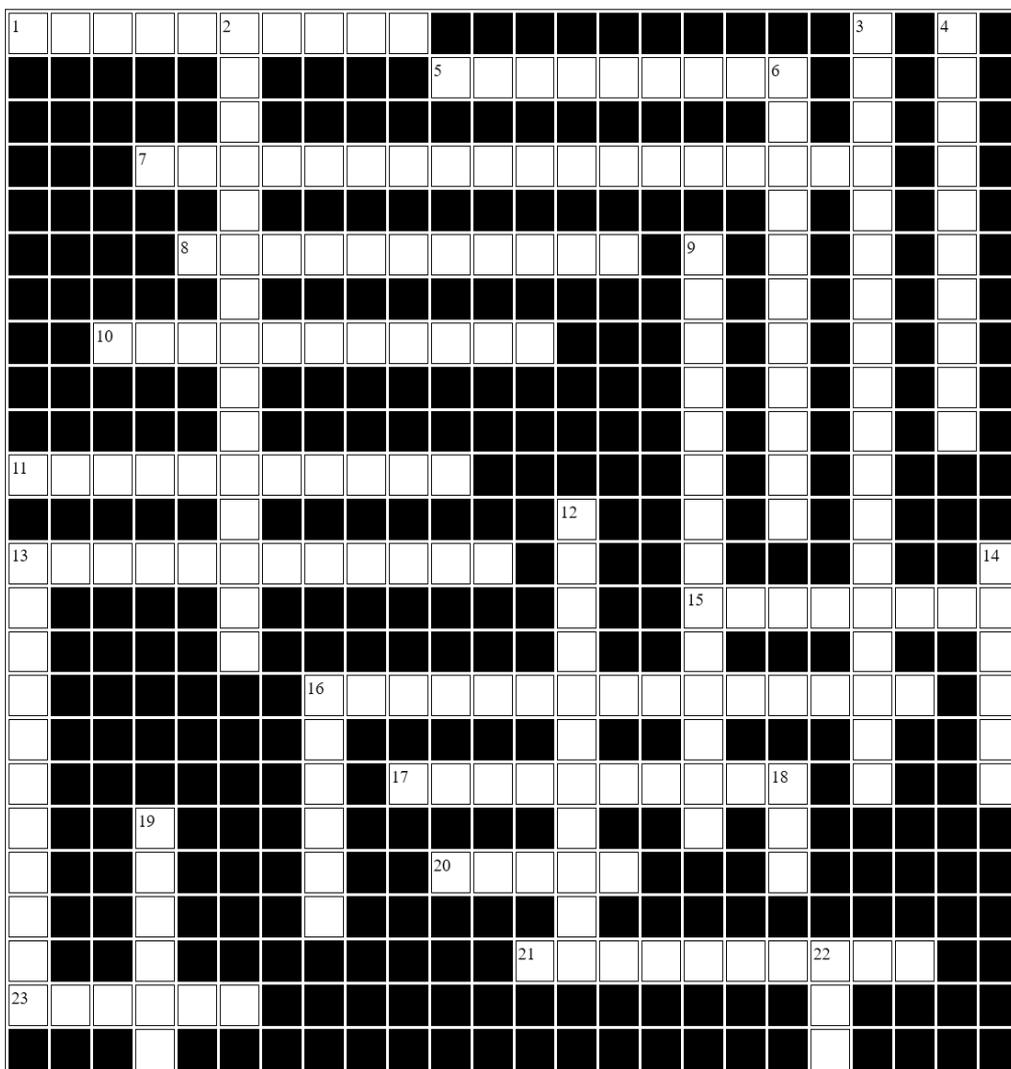
OKNT CROSSWORD: List of Medical Terms

Across

- 1. the change in the type of adult cells in a tissue to a form that is not normal for the tissue
- 5. pertaining to the ileum and cecum
- 7. excessiva amt of cholestrol in blood
- 8. the part of the pharynx that lies above the level of the soft plate
- 10. abnormal multiplication or increase in the number of normal cells in normal arrangement in a tissue
- 11. formation of white spots or patches on the mucous membrane of the tongue or cheek
- 13. unable to control excretory functions
- 15. local and temporary deficiency of blood supply caused by obstruction of the blood flow to the part
- 16. pertaining to or compromising the skeleton and the muscles
- 17. formation of an area of coagulation necroses in a tissue

caused by local ischemia

- 20. a transparent slightly yellow liquid of alkaline reaction, found in the lymphatic vessel and derived for the tissue fluid
 - 21. pertaining to the myocardium
 - 23. irrigation or washing out of an organ such as the stomach or bowel
- Down**
- 2. disease of the lymph nodes
 - 3. enlargement of the liver and spleen
 - 4. pertaining to the neurology or the nervouse system
 - 6. excision of the posterior arch of a vertebra
 - 9. elevated concentration of any or all of the lipids in the plasma
 - 12. roentgenography of the mammary gland
 - 13. situated between the ribs
 - 14. gliding
 - 16. a mucous membrane
 - 18. no known allergies
 - 19. pertaining to loins
 - 22. Intravenous pyelogram



ANSWERS ON PAGE 13 By Joanna Rodriguez

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OMRF awarded \$2.1 million to study heart valve disease

The National Institutes of Health has awarded the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation \$2.1 million to investigate a potential genetic cause of degenerative heart valve disease.

"Like everything else in the body, heart valves degenerate as we age," said OMRF cardiovascular biologist Sathish Srinivasan, Ph.D., who received the four-year grant. "But some people experience it earlier than others."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart valve disease affects about 2.5% of the U.S. population and close to 13% of people aged 80 and older. Although medication can treat symptoms, no drugs exist to prevent the disease or repair damaged valves, Srinivasan said.

In the two most common forms of the condition, blood either leaks back into the heart or the valve becomes stiff and narrow, preventing blood from passing through.

Known genetic predisposition explains about 1 in 10 cases of heart valve disease, Srinivasan said. In

those cases, researchers have identified the responsible genetic variants.

He believes that within the remaining 90%, a lifestyle factor such as smoking, poor diet or lack of exercise may flip a switch in people with unidentified genetic variants. "We suspect that reaction negatively affects a valve's ability to repair itself and regenerate tissue during normal wear and tear," Srinivasan said.

Vascular valves, far smaller and more plentiful than heart valves, are found in blood vessels and lymphatic vessels. Srinivasan's lab was the first to observe that the genes that regulate the formation of vascular valves also are found in heart valves.

In his new study, his lab will use research models to determine what happens to heart valves when a gene known to be critical in vascular valves is turned off.

"We expect to find that the absence of this gene causes heart valves to age rapidly," Srinivasan said. "If our hypothesis is correct, we can focus on how the gene functions and eventually work toward therapies that prevent heart valves from aging prematurely."

OMRF scientist Lijun Xia, M.D., Ph.D., noted that degenerative heart valve disease can lead to heart failure or even death.

"Our current understanding of the various causes of this condition is incomplete," said Xia, who leads OMRF's Cardiovascular Biology Research Program. "Dr. Srinivasan and his team are making substantial headway on one particular cause, with a goal of someday identifying targets for new medications."

Srinivasan is collaborating with OMRF scientists Jasim Ahamed, Ph.D., Lorin Olson, Ph.D., and researchers at Boston Children's Hospital and Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Sathish Srinivasan, Ph.D.

on the study.

The grant, R01HL163095-01A1, was awarded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, a part of the NIH.

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The Nursing Workforce Needs More Men

As the US health-care system struggles with a labor shortage, a renewed focus on recruiting can only help.

By The Editors - as appeared in <https://www.bloomberg.com>

In less than two years, the US could face a shortage of up to 450,000 nurses. The health-care system won't be able to fill this gap with half the potential workforce on the sidelines: More must be done to recruit men into nursing.

Men currently comprise about 12% of nurses, up from less than 3% in 1970. Boosting their number would not only ease shortages, but offer a pathway to good jobs for a demographic that has been exiting the workforce in alarming numbers in recent years. Employment growth in some traditionally male sectors, such as manufacturing, has all but vanished.

Yet men traditionally haven't entered nursing because, much like teaching, it's stigmatized as a female profession — the term "male nurse" is a case in point. Men in nursing tend to be career-switchers, and often include former members of the military, police officers and firefighters. In short: civic-

minded workers drawn to the six-figure salaries, career progression and flexible schedules, with the added bonus of not having to sit behind a desk.

Recruiting more of them could have pronounced benefits. Ample research suggests that diversity in the health-care workforce improves care. Studies have shown that visits are longer and patients are more satisfied when they share the same race or ethnicity as their provider, which can have a cascade of positive effects including improved communication, deeper trust and stricter adherence to medical advice. Evidence that patients prefer same-gender providers is also starting to emerge.

The needs among the patient population can't be overstated. Native American, Black and Hispanic men experienced the biggest declines in life expectancy during the pandemic and remain among the least represented demographics in the nursing workforce.



One in eight isn't that great. Photographer: Fred Dufour/AFP/Getty Images

Male school nurses (and teachers) are also at the frontlines of a burgeoning teen mental-health crisis: Adolescent boys are both less likely to seek treatment and more likely to die by suicide. The American Psychological Association has long identified the need for gender-specific care for teen boys, who might have a harder time confiding in women.

Although addressing the nursing shortage has strong bipartisan support, increasing male representation has been largely absent from discussions. That's a mistake. To start, lawmakers should follow the tested model of encouraging women in STEM. Recent legislation, for

example, directed the National Science Foundation to channel more of its K-12 funding to elementary and pre-K-age students to encourage STEM careers earlier in the pipeline. Similar efforts should be made for nursing, not least because a recent NSF report on diversity expanded the definition of STEM to include health-care workers. Some nursing schools engage middle- and high-schoolers in their communities to reduce stigma and highlight nursing as a viable career path; they should make every effort to include male faculty and nursing

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Saint Francis Hospital Receives #1 Hospital in Oklahoma Ranking by U.S. News & World Report

Saint Francis Hospital South is also recognized for High Performance in several clinical care categories

Saint Francis Hospital in Tulsa has been recognized as #1 in Oklahoma in the 2022-2023 Best Hospital Rankings by U.S. News & World Report. The annual Best Hospitals rankings and ratings, now in their 33rd year, are designed to assist patients and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive care for challenging health conditions or for common elective procedures.

This year's ranking marks the sixth year that Saint Francis has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report. In addition to the Best Hospital ranking, the hospital was also rated as a high-performing organization for care and treatment in the following clinical areas:

- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Repair
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Colon Cancer Surgery
- Diabetes
- Heart Attack
- Heart Failure
- Hip Replacement

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WORKFORCE

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students as role models. Although it might prove politically unpalatable, targeting scholarship funding and loan-forgiveness programs to male nursing students would also make sense.

Of course, men aren't immune to the broader forces driving the nursing shortage. In particular, nursing schools are so resource-strapped that they turn thousands of qualified applicants away each year. State and federal

efforts to boost the number of nursing instructors, increase stipends (and forgive loans) for doctoral students, and broaden access to training facilities (in person or online) need to be accelerated.

Yet a renewed focus on recruiting men can only help. Bringing men to parity in the field would add some 3.5 million nurses today. Hitting even a fraction of that figure would be a significant milestone and improve the lives of millions of Americans. It's a long-term investment the industry can justify.

RANKING

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- Kidney Failure
- Knee Replacement
- Stroke
- Maternity Care (awarded in early 2022)

Additionally, Saint Francis Hospital South was recognized for high-performing care in the following clinical areas:

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Heart Failure
- Hip Fracture
- Kidney Failure
- Maternity Care (awarded in early 2022)

"We are honored to be the number one hospital in Oklahoma and to have so many high-performing specialties," said Dr. Cliff Robertson, president and CEO of Saint Francis Health System. "Each day, our employees strive to provide quality, compassionate care, and this recognition pays tribute to our entire Saint Francis family, which

sets the bar high every single day."

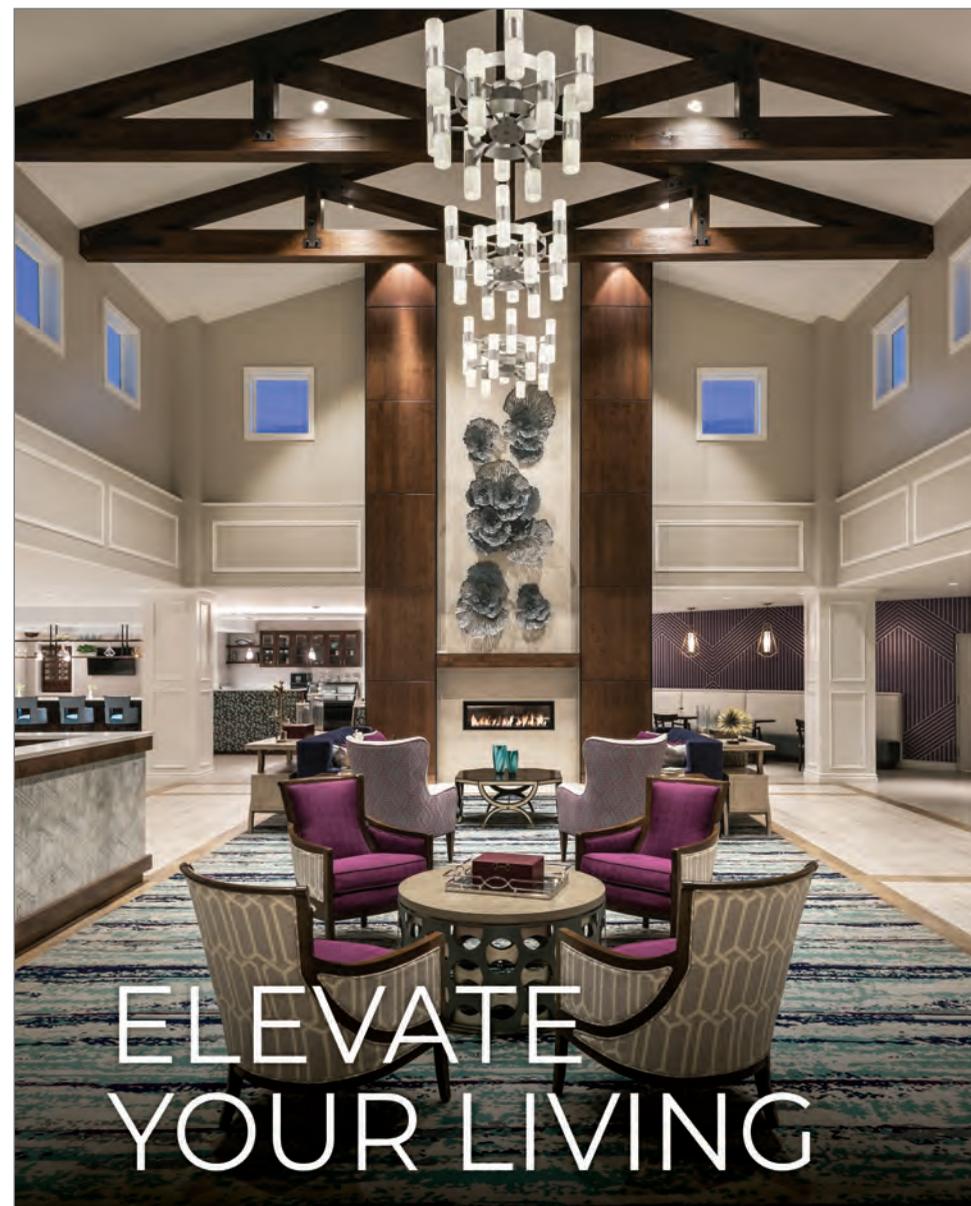
For the 2022-2023 rankings and ratings, U.S. News evaluated more than 4,500 hospitals across 15 specialties and 20 procedures and conditions.

"When patients are considering their options for care, the Best Hospitals ratings are designed to help them identify hospitals that excel in the kind of care they may need," said Ben Harder, chief of health analysis and managing editor at U.S. News. "A hospital that's earned a High Performing rating in a service may be a good option for patients in need of that service and their medical professionals to consider."

The U.S. News Procedures & Conditions methodology is based entirely on objective measures of quality such as survival rates, patient experience and how successfully each hospital helps patients get back home.

For more information on the U.S. News & World Report Best Hospital rankings, please visit

<https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/rankings>



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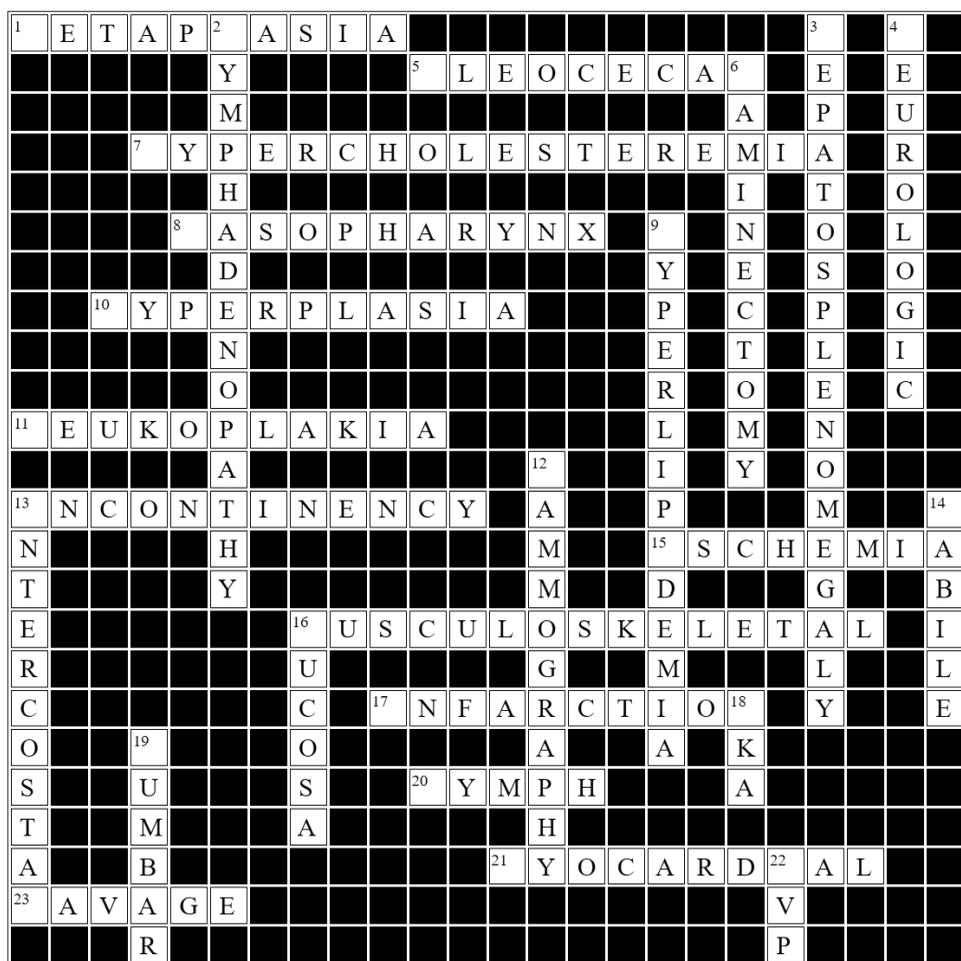
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