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Information for the Oklahoma Nursing & Health Care Professional

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# Vol. 24 Issue 22 Making moments count Hospice nurse grateful to help

Pamela White advocates for patient care as RN case manager at Russell Murray Hospice in Oklahoma City.

Story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Hospice eases confusion and uncertainty by making the transition more comfortable as death nears, said Pamela White, RN case manager, Russell Murray Hospice, located in midtown Oklahoma City. For families and patients, their expectations and planning become clearer.

"Having been on both sides I can see," White

Hospice makes a world of difference with the

quality of life. White has never had a patient who didn't tell her the difference hospice made for them. Otherwise, many hospice patients wouldn't have the resources to plan for special occasions with family members or friends.

"Pain management is huge, especially with cancer and ALS. You're helping them with their

## expanding mental health services

**NRH** 



by Bobby Anderson - Staff Writer

A huge gap in mental health services is about to be reduced upon completion of Norman Regional Health System's new 48-bed hospital.

Construction on the project officially began in March but hospital leaders gathered in late May for the official groundbreaking ceremony.

The hospital is set to open in early 2024 and will begin to hire staff including additional nurses prior to completion.

Norman Regional and Oceans Healthcare entered into a partnership in 2021 to expand access to behavioral health services in south central Oklahoma through the construction of a new, state-of-the-art behavioral health hospital.

"The selection of a partner who shares our commitment to improving access to quality behavioral health services is an important milestone in the implementation of our Inspire Health plan to transform the delivery of care in our communities," said Richie Splitt, President and Chief Executive Officer of Norman Regional Health System. "Partnering with Oceans Healthcare will allow us to leverage their expertise in the delivery of behavioral healthcare and bring important new resources to meet growing demand for mental health support."

The 48-bed hospital will be named Behavioral Health Porter Village and will more than double Norman Regional Health System's current inpatient capacity for behavioral health patients and add new services, including an intensive outpatient program and a dedicated geriatric behavioral health unit.

The freestanding hospital, which is expected to open in 2024 on the Norman Regional Hospital campus, Porter location, will replace the existing 20-bed behavioral health unit inside the current hospital.

The behavioral health center will be one of the first facilities constructed on the new Porter Health Village campus and will augment a broad range of health and wellness services planned for that location,

See NRH Page 2

#### **NRH**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

including the addition of a senior wellness center.

Mental health is increasingly in the national spotlight as rates of depression, anxiety and substance abuse have risen following the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the 2021 State of Mental Health in America report, Oklahoma ranks 45th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for the highest prevalence of mental illness in adults and lowest rates of access to care.

"Increasing access to mental health treatment and care is critical to Oklahoma becoming a top 10 state for behavioral health. The ODMHSAS welcomes the additional broad range of treatment options to help better serve Oklahomans experiencing emotional distress," said Carrie Slatton-Hodges, Commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Those working in healthcare - especially acute care settings - understand there are often few available inpatient resources for patients.

Long hold times - up to several days - in ERs for patients needing inpatient placement are common.

Farhan Jawed, MD, oversees Norman Regional's Behavioral Medicine Services.

"As a psychiatrist, I see firsthand the need for mental health services in our community," Jawed said. "I can't wait to expand and increase the number of patients we are able to treat. This new freestanding center will be life changing for many members of



Leaders gathered at the end of May to celebrate the beginning of construction on Norman Regional's new 48-bed behavioral health hospital. Photo provided

our community."

Norman Regional selected Oceans Healthcare after a thorough review of potential partners at the state and national level.

A nationally recognized provider of behavioral health services, Oceans Healthcare specializes in bringing mental health treatment options to underserved communities and consistently achieves industry-leading performance metrics on national quality and safety measures.

The company currently operates 33 locations, including 23 inpatient

hospital campuses, across three states and has forged similar partnerships with leading health systems including Ochsner LSU Health in Shreveport, Louisiana, and CHRISTUS Spohn Health System in Corpus Christi,

"Across the country, the need for mental health services is increasing and few communities have the resources they need to meet that demand," said Stuart Archer, Chief Executive Officer of Oceans Healthcare. "We are honored to partner with a respected institution such as Norman Regional Health System to expand access to behavioral health care and, ultimately, help fulfill their vision of making the communities they serve stronger and healthier."

In addition to Behavioral Health Porter Village, Norman Regional will continue to provide outpatient behavioral health services at Norman Regional Moore, including an outpatient counseling center and a senior counseling center.

For more information about Norman Regional Health System, visit: https://www.normanregional.com/

#### HOSPICE Continued from Page 1

breathing, their shortness of breath, their air hunger and all those things that make you miserable day-to-day," White explained. "And we can control those symptoms to the best of our abilities. We can't always fix it. But we can make it where you can visit with your friends and family or go to that graduation if you want to. We try to make those things happen."

Some hospice patients do not have families and many of their friends may have passed away. But they are not alone, White said. A common remark she hears from patients is that they don't want to die alone. They want someone by their side.

"We're going to do our best to do that," White said.

Some people depart from life during their sleep. White cannot always predict exactly when someone might pass away but will offer them the option of going to a hospice house or a facility where they will not

be alone. However, she can identify general changes of decline to let family members know the time of passing is approaching. There is a decreased appetite and increased fatigue depending on a diagnosis. When only days or hours are left, there usually is a color change in one's hands and feet. The hospice patient may become cool to the touch or fluctuate, White said. They might stop eating or drinking or merely take sips.

"Usually, they are more tired at that point in their life and they're just ready to rest," she explained.

She is quick to point out that she has witnessed several graceful transitions of departure from this life. A burst of energy is not uncommon during a person's final hours.

"I have seen people sit up and wave up toward the ceiling like they're waving to somebody from heaven or something," White said. "They will have full and long conversations. I don't understand because I'm only hearing part of it, but it's really interesting to see."

One of her patients had a dog that

died shortly before them. They began petting the dog as if it was there. Maybe they were confused, or their dog was really there.

"Who knows?" White said. "There's so much more to this world."

Hospice nurses are in great need as well as caregivers. Nurse aides help every day to keep hospice patients turned, be clean and comfortable while providing companionship.

White said that patience is essential in hospice care. Hospice nurses also need to be willing to answer the same questions repeatedly. Patients may be scared, and forgetful and family members might have stress overload. Nurses must understand procedures for palliative care and respond to each situation with compassion, White said.

"Have a willingness to learn and be flexible because you never know what the day is going to bring you," she continued.

Her workday might begin slowly and suddenly three hospice patients, or their primary caretakers notify Russell Murray Hospice of emergencies. Being flexible as a nurse and willing to change course is important.

White is grateful for being able to help patients during their times of need. Hospice answered her calling to be a nurse. She set her course to become a nurse early in life. She earned her LPN license at MidDel Technology Center during high school and five years ago graduated from Rose State College to become a registered nurse. And, she has been with Russell Murray Hospice throughout her career.

Her coworkers keep her engaged in a friendly environment. The nurses communicate closely together in the office and have each other's back when challenges come, she said.

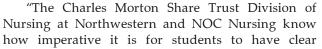
"That's a wonderful thing and you don't see that everywhere," White said. "Just being able to be there for the families and the patients in this trying time of their lives is rewarding by itself, being able to be there when they need that extra care and spend that time with them."

Visit https://rmhospice.org/ to become part of the Russell-Murray Hospice team.

#### NOC Enid Campuses Develop Partnership Program for **Nursing Students**

Northwestern Oklahoma State University and Northern Oklahoma College Enid have partnered to create an RN-to-BSN pathway for students to earn their degree starting at NOC and finishing at Northwestern.

By choosing this option, students will have a streamlined process between the two programs by decreasing barriers and, overall, becoming costeffective. The pathway has multiple entry points that will allow a student to start in the fall, spring or summer. A student can obtain their associate's degree RN at NOC Enid in approximately six semesters depending on their degree plan, and apply to Northwestern's RN-to-BSN program. Once at Northwestern, the student will finish their degree in three semesters.



guidelines for degree completions," said Dr. Leslie Collins, chair of the Charles Morton Share Trust Division of Nursing. "We are very excited to finalize this RN-to-BSN pathway so that students can take advantage of both higher education institutions and all that each has to offer. We know that this partnership will help increase the number of practicing nurses in our communities and help students meet their goals when and where they need."

Questions regarding the Northwestern nursing program should be directed to Collins at (580) 327-8493 or by email at nursing@nwosu.edu. Questions for NOC Enid's nursing program, should be asked of Dr. Nikole Hicks at (580) 628-6679 or by email at nursing@noc.edu.



Dr. Nikole Hicks, PhD, RNC, CNE, Division

#### **OCU** hosts health professions open house

Oklahoma City University will host an open house from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. June 6 for its College of Health Professions.

Prospective students of various levels are invited to learn about the programs offered at OCU, from high school students interested in learning more about health care professions, to transfer students seeking a bachelor's degree, to graduate students seeking advanced degrees. Programs will include nursing, nurse practitioner, physician assistant and physical therapy.

Registration for the open house can be made at okcu.edu/healthopenhouse.

OCU's College of Health Professions was established in 2021 and encompasses the Kramer School of Nursing, the Physician Assistant and Physical Therapy programs.

Gina Crawford, dean of the College of Health Professions, said the need for more health care professionals continues to



Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, Dean and **Associate Professor** 

"These rewarding careers are in high demand. Health care staff shortages are projected to remain for years to come," Crawford said.

Open house participants will hear from program directors, faculty and staff, and may also tour the Meinders Simulation Center, featuring the latest in healthcare simulation technology. The center was recently awarded endorsement status by the International Nursing Association For Clinical Simulation & Learning. More information is available at https://www.okcu.edu/.



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## OBU and Project Lead the Way Enter into Agreement with Scholarships to be Awarded

story and photo by Bryan Painter

As a supporter of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning, Oklahoma Baptist University has entered into an agreement with Project Lead the Way (PLTW) to begin the fall semester of 2024. Through this agreement, OBU will offer an annual \$1,000 scholarship to students who have completed at least two PLTW courses during their high school years. This applies to PLTW students who enroll in any area of study at OBU.

The academic programs at OBU which readily align with PTLW high school curriculum include engineering, biochemistry, biology, chemistry, physics, computer science, and programs in the division of exercise science and sports recreation.

Project Lead the Way is a nationwide program that aims to increase the quantity and quality of learning for students in the areas of STEM. Through practical

applications of those disciplines, PLTW students engage in project-based learning requiring problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, and applied learning using state-of-the-art equipment and techniques. PLTW assignments and projects are designed to promote group communication and collaboration amongst students.

Currently, there are 311 Project Lead the Way programs in Oklahoma. A 2019 study (Gary Pike and Kirsten Robbins, "Expanding the Pipeline: The Effect of Participating in Project Lead the Way on Majoring in a STEM Discipline," Journal of STEM Education Research, Vol. 2, pp. 14-34, 2019) found that students taking at least one PLTW course were statistically more likely to major in a STEM discipline in college. The more PLTW courses they took, the higher the likelihood the student majored in a STEM discipline.

Sara Wright, director of PLTW School Success, commented, "This new agreement with Oklahoma Baptist University is a great example of an in-state four-year higher education institution actively

partnering with PLTW and demonstrating to students the value they place on STEM learning. Students participating in these programs are aware that they are being actively recruited through the offer of scholarships and plans to award college credit. We welcome this win-win opportunity provided through OBU."

PLTW students work through modules that consist of activities, a project and a problem to gain increased knowledge and skills. They then proceed to use those skills to investigate a meaningful project before transferring and applying them to a real-world problem.

At the conclusion of each course, students have the option to complete an end-of-course exam to assess their learning, in a format similar to the advanced placement (AP) model of learning. The university is exploring options to grant college

See OBU Page 5



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#### **OBU Continued from Page 4**

credit for successful completion of these exams.

Dr. Contessa Edgar, chair of the OBU division of math and science, said, "The Project Lead the Way curriculum provides an excellent education to high school students, exposing them to advanced concepts and career options in STEM. Overall, the caliber of students and the depth of learning in these courses offers distinction in learning. The students are successfully equipped to pursue related academic programs at the college level. Our hope is that the PLTW scholarship affirms students for accomplishing the additional work required in PLTW."

Dr. Chuck Baukal, director of OBU's engineering program commented, "We are very excited to partner with PLTW. The numerous pre-engineering high school students I have met who are completing the PLTW curriculum are very well prepared to become successful university engineering students. It is a win-win partnership. This caliber of education and training for these students, both in high school and continuing into college, will significantly enhance the workforce of tomorrow."

Dr. Chad Payn, chair of OBU's division of exercise science and sports recreation said, "I am thrilled about the partnership between Oklahoma Baptist University and Project Lead the Way. This agreement represents our commitment to providing worldclass education and preparing our students to be future shapers. By integrating PLTW's cutting-edge programs into our academic framework, we are equipping our students with the essential skills and competencies needed to excel in STEM fields."

OBU computer science professor Dr. Timothy Darr, said, "The PLTW focus on project-based learning will ease the transition of the PLTW graduate to the OBU computer science program. Our program is heavily focused on project work, especially in the upper-level courses. PLTW's emphasis on problem solving will prepare students for one of our program's strengths: data analytics and data science.



Officials with Oklahoma Baptist University and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) have signed an agreement beginning Fall 2024, which will award high school PLTW students an annual \$1,000 scholarship if they attend OBU. Pictured at the signing are left to right, Dr. Chuck Baukal, director of the OBU engineering program and associate professor of engineering; Dr. Heath Thomas, OBU president; Sara Wright, director of School Success for PLTW, and Dr. Contessa Edgar, chair of OBU's Hurley School of Science and Mathematics and associate professor of biology.

Finally, a PLTW graduate's critical and creative thinking skills mesh well with the OBU computer science program strong integration with the liberal arts in which we consider the integration of faith and technology (especially artificial intelligence) in every single course. We are excited to welcome these students to the OBU community!"

The partnership with OBU and Project Lead the Way is part of the ongoing mission of OBU to create pathways which promote higher learning, to strengthen the workforce, and to foster student enrollment in the world-class academic programs offered through the university.

Research demonstrates that PLTW students outperform their peers in school, are better prepared for postsecondary studies, and are more likely to consider careers in STEM compared to their non-PLTW peers.

For more information about Oklahoma Baptist University, visit: https://www.okbu.edu/

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

## RSU Building Legacy of Compassionate Nurses

The RSU Department of Health Sciences offers programs in nursing and pre-allied health fields. Nursing programs include the traditional BSN in nursing, leading to RN licensure; the RN2BSN online program which allows registered nurses with an associate degree to complete a bachelor's degree; and the bridge to traditional BSN entry for LPNs or paramedics to earn their bachelor's degree. Allied health sciences options include pre-athletic training, prephysical therapy and pre-occupational therapy. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program at RSU now offers a concentration in Healthcare Management.

With a history of over 40 years of academic excellence, RSU's nursing program provides academic rigor and a reputation that gives RSU graduates an edge in the competitive job market. Upon graduation, RSU nursing graduate NCLEX pass rates exceed the state and national average. Approximately 95% of students report having obtained an RN position before graduation. These outcomes are credited to a quality curriculum, outstanding students, and a caring

and dedicated faculty. RSU's nursing faculty have more than 130 years of experience in both academic teaching and practical experience. Several low and high-fidelity laboratories are utilized to provide hands-on learning so that students are well prepared to deliver safe, highquality nursing care in a variety of settings.

Students interested in attending medical school complete their undergraduate studies in medical/ molecular biology. RSU's biology program has seen more than 150 students move on to professional schools pursuing medical and healthcare careers.

RSU consistently earns national recognition for affordability, both for traditional classes and its online programs. The university is routinely recognized for having one of the region's lowest student debt loads with nearly half of its graduating class earning a diploma without any student loan assistance.

The traditional BSN and RN2BSN nursing program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).



Being the only public residential Tulsa area, RSU gives students traditional college experience. With the university's proximity to Tulsa, RSU is strategically positioned geographically, fiscally and reputationally to be Oklahoma's first choice in BSN education.

RSU is committed to building a university in the metropolitan legacy of compassionate and virtuous nurses who advocate for their patients and serve the community for years to come. For more information about RSU's nursing programs or to schedule a campus tour, visit https://www.rsu.edu/nursing or call 918-343-7631.



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\*Length of time required to complete degree will vary depending upon student's transfer credits.

#### CONTACT INFO

Dr. Amy Richards | arichards@rsu.edu | 918-343-7641 Dr. Marla Smith | marlasmith@rsu.edu | 918-343-6887



(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

## Half-century success

#### Northern Oklahoma College going strong

Northern Oklahoma College nursing turns half a century this year and the success keeps coming.

Northern Oklahoma College, the State's first public community college is a multi-campus, land-grant institution that provides high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services which create life-changing experiences and develop students as effective learners and leaders within their communities in a connected, ever-changing world.

Northern offers a two-year Associate of Applied Science Degree for the RN. A two-year RN's focus is providing care at the bedside regardless of whether the bedside is located in the hospital, clinic, doctor's office, hospice, nursing home or community.

The program also focuses on how to manage care for groups of patients.

To celebrate the 50-year milestone, a two-day event at NOC Tonkawa's Renfro Center was held where faculty, staff, and nursing alums gathered to share their experiences.

The event included time with NOC President Dr. Clark Harris, attendance at a campus jazz concert, and campus tours culminating in a dinner for the attendees.

NOC is also participating in The Daisy Award, an award that recognizes extraordinary faculty. Students, faculty, staff, and alums may nominate anyone deemed worthy of the prestigious award

NOC instructor Kim Brewer earned the award in 2022, the first year for the program at NOC.

Fifty years of success include more than a few accolades including:

- Top 10 Nursing Program in the state, according to Nursing Hub
- RN Associate Degree Program (Traditional Pathway or LPN to RN Pathway)
- Partnerships with RN-BSN Programs
- Academic Practice Partnerships with Paid Clinical Internships in Final Semester
- High NCLEX Pass Rates
- High Employment Rates and Employer Satisfaction

• The associate degree nursing program at Northern Oklahoma College is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

NOC offers programs at the Tonkawa, Enid, and Stillwater campuses.

Under the direction of Dr. Nikole Hicks, NOC Nursing Division Chair, the program is rigorous and innovative.

Academic Practice Partnership opportunities are available for select students in Tonkawa, Enid, Stillwater, and Tulsa with paid clinical internships in the final semester of the nursing program.

Graduates of NOC's nursing program earn an Associate degree in Applied Science and are eligible to apply for licensure as a registered nurse. There is an entry pathway for current LPNs to enter the program with advanced standing.

NOC partners with several RN-BSN programs to provide graduates with opportunities for advanced education. Additional majors include the Associate in Science Pre-Baccalaureate/Pre-



Dr. Nikole A. Hicks, PhD, RNC, CNE, Nursing Division Chair - Northern Oklahoma College

Professional Program.

Nursing students are also a part of the Student Nurses Association and Alpha Delta Nu National Associate Degree Nursing Honor Society.

NOC also received grant funding that will improve technology in the nursing practice and simulation labs to provide state-of-the-art equipment to prepare practice-ready graduates.

For more information, please contact the nursing program at nursing@noc.edu or 580.628.6679 or at NOC's web site at:

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#### **CROSSWORD: Drug Abbreviations**

#### Across

1. as soon as possible

3. hour

4. left ear

6. both eyes

7. night

9. once every day

10. nasojejunal tube

11. as desired

13. per os or by mouth

14. before meals

16. capsule

18. right eye

21. ointment

23. bedtime, hour of sleep

24. to keep open

25. every hour

27. after meals 28. one half

30. elixir

31. minute

34. water

36. tablet

37. right now

38. every other day 41. suspension

43. three times a day

44. intramuscular

45. sublingual

46. both ears

#### Down

1. before

2. alternate hour

5. subcutaneous

6. once every day

8. with

12. intravenous push bolus

13. after

14. right ear

15. capsule

17. when necessary

19. patch

20. keep vein open

22. gastrostomy tube

25. quantity sufficient

26. twice a day

27. per rectum

29. nasogastric

30. and

32. nothing by mouth

33. drop

35. four times a day

37. suppository

39. left eve

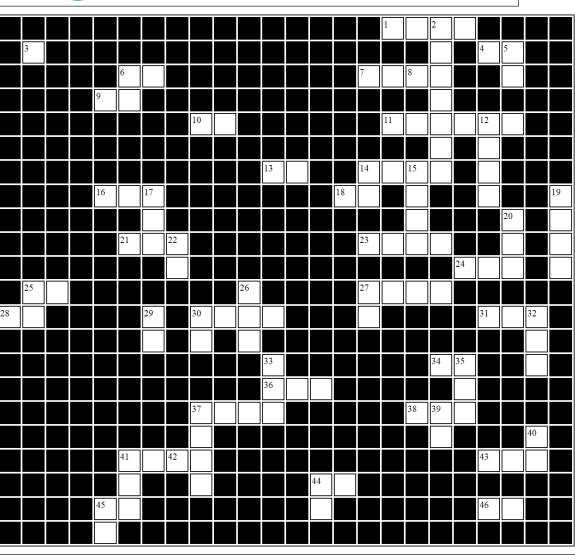
40. intradermal

41. solution

42. without

44. intravenous 45. slow release

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 13** 



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How does a nursing career enrich your life to make you want to get out of bed each morning?

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NORTHWEST SURGICAL HOSPITAL

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NorthWest Surgical Hospital "Honestly it's the love that makes me wake up every day. I am going to make somebody's life, somebody's day better."



Lena Maxell, RN

"I just really love taking care of people. I love finding my purpose in life. It's my calling and always has been."



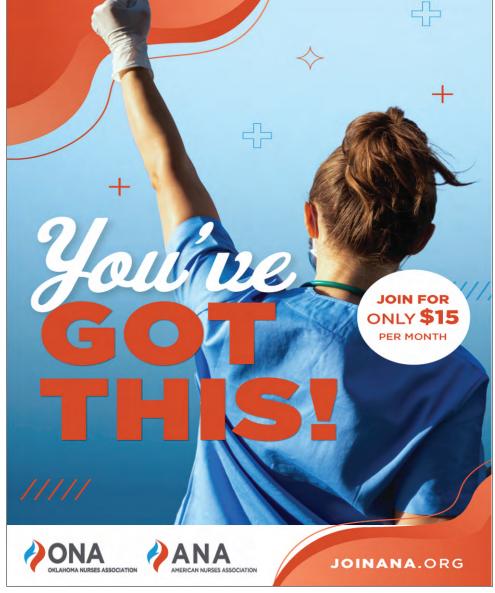
Leslie Hendricks, RN

"Just taking care of my patients, just helping them because they're here having surgery."



Selina Armstrong, RN





OMRF awarded \$2.7 million to study HIV drugs' effects

Thirty-five years ago, an HIV diagnosis was a death sentence. Thanks largely to advancements in drug therapies, a person who tests positive for HIV at age 20 can now expect to live just as long as someone without the disease.

With a \$2.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Jasim Ahamed, Ph.D., hopes to increase the quality of life for people who take antiretroviral drugs to treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

With the grant, Ahamed is studying whether these drugs – which people with HIV take for their lifetime – contribute to the formation of scar tissue in the heart. This condition, called cardiac fibrosis, ultimately leads to heart failure

"Certain types of antiretroviral drugs are linked to cardiovascular risk, and people with HIV who die suddenly often show the presence of cardiac fibrosis," Ahamed said. "This research aims to dive deeper into understanding whether their life-saving therapies increase the risk of cardiac fibrosis, and if so, to determine why and which drugs carry that risk."

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, about 35,000 people in America contract HIV each year. Roughly 1.2 million people in the U.S. live with the virus. Worldwide, the United Nations estimates that nearly 40 million people have HIV. More than half are female, and almost 5% are children. Left untreated, HIV typically leads to AIDS, which is almost always fatal.

Ahamed's lab at OMRF studies TGF beta 1, a protein that can be generated by blood platelets at levels almost 100 times higher than by other cell types in the body. This contributes to several disorders, including cardiac fibrosis.

We believe some antiretroviral drugs activate the platelets to release TGF beta 1, leading to cardiac fibrosis," Ahamed said. "Using research models, we will test all the HIV drugs available on the market – alone and in



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Jasim Ahamed, Ph.D.

combination."

Ahamed hopes to discover a way to inhibit the TGF beta 1 release and cardiac fibrosis in people with HIV.

"Science has produced tremendous improvements in HIV therapies over the past three decades," OMRF Vice President of Research Courtney Griffin, Ph.D.,

said. "If Dr. Ahamed's hypothesis proves correct, it could lead to yet another major advancement for millions of people living with HIV"

Ahamed's four-year grant, 1R01HL167656-01A1, was awarded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the NIH.



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## TUTORING SERVICES NURSING STUDENTS/REGISTERED

VIDEO TUTORING SERVICES

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- Prep for lecture exams \* Help with care plans
   For more information contact Hope Schreur, RN, BSN at:

   918-706-9574 or email hope.schreur@gmail.com

Hello! I am a RN in Oklahoma who is offering tutoring services to nursing students needing exam/NCLEX prep, and RNs taking specialty certifications such as the CCRN, PCCN, CMC, CSC, etc. I have nearly 6 years nursing experience in cardiac ICU and electrophysiology, and I have personally received the CCRN, CMC, CSC certifications. I look forward to helping others achieve their personal goals.

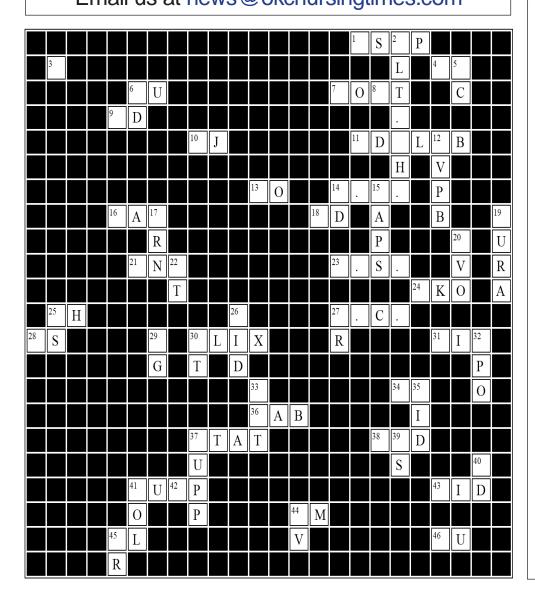
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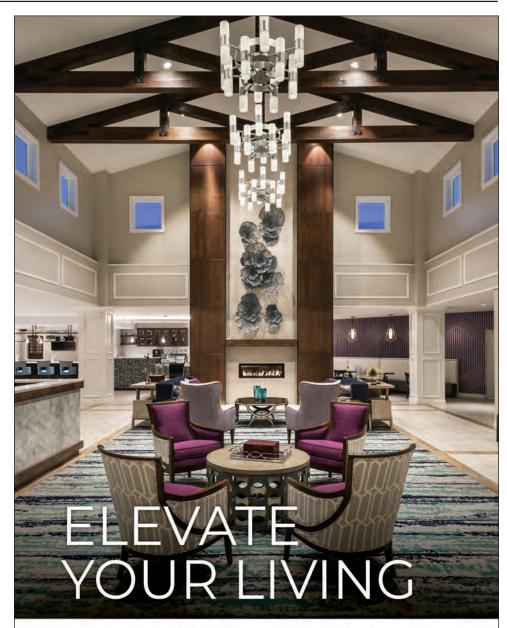
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