

Oklahoma's Nursing Times

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One Team When Together *ER Brings Best Out of RN*

Read her story on page 2

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Showcase Career Opportunities

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Amanda Gillett, RN

ER nurse at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff

"These are friendships I will probably maintain for the rest of my life," Gillett said. "I think our department really cares for each other and we're willing to help each other when we need help."

Gillett became a registered nurse in 2018 after earning her Associate of Nursing degree at Oklahoma City Community College. She worked as a hospital certified nurse aide during her studies. The nurses she worked with taught her a lot about the best practices of patient care.

"That led me to pursue a career in nursing," Gillett explained.

In 2022 she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

She has focused on emergency care for her entire career except for the six months she spent doing heart catheterization procedures. Gillett joined SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital in 2019.

"I love the pace. I love the wide variety of problems," she said. "You have no idea what's going to come in the next 30 seconds, two hours. You have no idea what your day's going to be like, and I love that."

Improving emergency health outcomes makes her days enriching. ER Nurses don't always get to see the outcome of their work to save lives and ease pain before being transferred to another unit. But they know they've done their best when their patients are stabilized.

Nurses often volunteer to come to work early to help when the

ER is short of staff. Gillett's shift is normally from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., but she has stayed to 11 p.m. at times, especially during the COVID pandemic when the ER was usually busy and short staffed.

"I was able to see how resilient we truly are," Gillett said. "It was a very difficult time. There are not a lot of good memories associated with it. And I think I can say that on behalf of most of the nurses I work with. What I do know is I was able to lean on them and they leaned on me. That's just what we do when we have to."

She believes that hospitals nationwide will be better prepared to counter another health crisis such as COVID. To do the best for the most people, hospitals had to be creative with how they allocated supplies and other resources during the height of COVID.

There is currently an increase in the number of COVID cases in the United States. Gillett said everyone has a choice to be vaccinated against the disease.

"I encourage people to educate themselves the best they can with legitimate sources, and make their

choice based on that," she said. "I encourage everyone to wear a mask if you are ill or if you are around ill people. A mask is a very simple way to protect yourself and a lot of other people."

Patients are not experiencing their best moments of life during an emergency. But every second matters. It's normal for Gillett and the ER staff to treat patients experiencing one of the worst days of their lives. The nurses may not always receive a lot of kindness from people in excruciating pain or discomfort. But everyone receives the best efforts from the nursing staff regardless. People wake up in the morning and find themselves going to an unexpected place they never planned on going to.

"Every once in a while, I'll get a very genuine thank you. And sometimes that's enough to keep me going for a while longer," she said.

Nurses in the emergency department are in a unique position to see the best and worst of humanity, Gillett continued. This experience gives nurses a

Continued next page

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Amanda Gillett, RN, is an ER nurse at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City where every second of life matters.

GILLETT
Continued from Page 2

unique perspective on life, and an appreciation for the goodness found in living, she added.

Gillett spends a lot of her spare time working out.

"I do weightlifting about five days a week, and I spend about three hours a day at the gym" she said. "That's what I'm passionate

about. And I spend a lot of time with my children."

She has an 8-year-old daughter named Nora, and a 5-year-old son named Maximus.

"They are very energetic kids, very happy kids, and I'm so grateful for them," she said.

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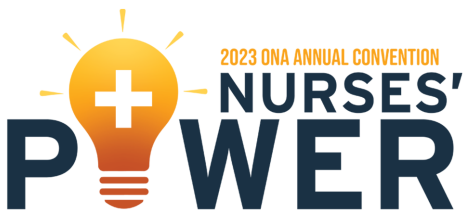
For more information about SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City, or to join our team visit us [HERE](#).

2023 ONA ANNUAL
CONVENTION ANNOUNCED

The Oklahoma Nurses Association will be hosting the 2023 annual convention in Oklahoma City September 27th through the 28th.

The goal of the convention is to focus on supporting nurses and building supportive structures for nurses' new normal as the work environment evolves and highlight the difference nurses make every day in the life of patients.

This year, the convention will take place at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Oklahoma City Northwest, 3233 Northwest Expy in Oklahoma City. Register for the convention here: <https://www.oklahomanurses.org/event-5288406>



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CAREERS IN NURSING:

HARMONY, REASSURANCE AND SKILL - RN LOVES MANAGEMENT NICHE

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Chase Ellis, RN, has a long history with Oklahoma Center for Orthopedic & Multi-Specialty Surgery, LLC.

Ellis serves as the north surgical services manager of OCOM North, located in Oklahoma City. Another OCOM serves the south side of Oklahoma City, located on Walker Avenue.

"I've been with OCOM for 14 years. I started out as a scrub tech," said Ellis, who in 2015 earned his nursing degree at Oklahoma City Community College. "I went to nursing school while I was scrubbing and have been here ever since. I like it here because it feels more like family than a big giant hospital with hundreds of employees. We're smaller and closer-knit."

Ellis feels he can provide a little bit better patient care in a smaller hospital, he said. OCOM North provides outpatient surgery with a lot of emphasis on orthopedics, pain management, and podiatry. He repeatedly hears from patients about how accommodating the nursing

staff is and how they make the process easy.

Most patients enter OCOM North feeling wound-up, anxious, and tight about having surgery. It's always reassuring for Ellis to listen to patients telling him the OCOM North staff was a calming influence and helps them get through surgery without having extra anxiety exacerbating their concerns.

"I usually just try to reassure them that I understand they are nervous. Everybody gets nervous. It's a natural human response. But we're going to do the best that we can to take care of you to the best of our abilities."

It helps people who are nervous build confidence to know they are cared for by a highly trained staff with a high acuity of experience with excellent outcomes.

Ellis commends the nursing staff's cooperative team spirit of working together to benefit patient care with best practices and a harmonious environment between themselves.

"We work towards our common goal without thinking about self. We have things to do and we're all going to do it until it's done," Ellis said. "Everybody is looking out for each other."

His interest in the medical field was instilled in him as a boy. He enjoyed his work as a scrub-tech but wanted a more advanced experience with more involvement in patient care. Now he does a lot of scheduling coordination as the surgical services manager. The weekly staffing flow is made as efficient as possible by Ellis. Nurses don't have a lot of idle time at OCOM North where an average of 50-75 surgery cases happen weekly. About 13-15 nurses care for patients at any given time.

Ellis is responsible for the staffing of pre-operations and the operating room. He said OCOM North has been fortunate to avoid staffing shortages during the ongoing nationwide lack of registered nurses. There has been little turnover during the nursing shortage.

"We've had a consistent staff level," Ellis continued. "A lot of our staff have been here for multiple years. We have a couple of new faces from time-to-time, but the majority of our staff has been here over a year."

People get along. They arrive at work to do their job and get to go home to their families with a good work/life balance, he explained.

Nursing qualities involve self-motivation because OCOM prefers not having to micro-manage its nursing staff. So, whatever is accomplished in a day depends on how that self-motivation shines.

"Efficiency is the name of the game here for us," he explained. "For a surgery center, we're trying to be efficient with our time and our patients."

Ellis will work in the operating room to bridge gaps when nurses are on vacation. But the OR is home for Ellis and where he loves to be.

"I love it because I go home knowing we've helped people today."

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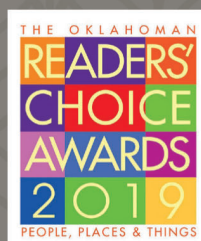


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Chase Ellis, RN, is a supporting surgical services manager at OCOM North, a surgical services center located in Oklahoma City.

ELLIS

Continued from Page 4

didn't just sit in a cubicle somewhere and throw a bunch of ones and zeros around," he said. "We helped people that were having real problems."

Ellis's nursing career has broadened his perspective about life. He has become more detail oriented. He learned early as a scrub tech circulating in the OR, that if the small details are not right, the larger details will become a miss.

"So, it's taught me to be focused and more detail oriented in my daily life, too," he said.

He and his wife have a lot of fun with their two young boys by riding bicycles together. Ellis enjoys playing golf. And the family enjoys going to a lake, especially during cooler fall weather.

"My wife and I grew up enjoying going to the lake, so we continued that when starting a family."

Visit Orthopedic & Multi-Specialty Surgery, LLC. [HERE](#).

41st Annual EPIC Educational Conference Set, 6 Continuing Education Hours Provided

The Epidemiologists and Professional in Infection Control (EPIC) conference will be held Friday, November 3rd, 2023 at the Petroleum Club Event Center, 4040 N Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK. 73105.

Nurses will be provided 6 hours of continuing education credits by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing.

The 2023 EPIC Conference Speakers:

Bryan Spradley, training director, Arkansas Oklahoma Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Program ICRA Awareness.

Kathleen McMullen, MPH, CIC, FAPIC, Mercy Health Director of Infection Prevention Critical Access Hospital IP Program Standards.

Dr. Izzy Justice, Chief Neuroscientist, NEURO580, Mental Health in Healthcare Workers.

Jolianne Stone, MPH, OSDH State Epidemiologist, State Disease Update.

Registration Deadline is October 15th, 2023. REGISTER [HERE](#):



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New Admission Criteria

In our nearly 55-year history, OSU-OKC has committed itself to providing high-quality nursing education to help meet the workforce demands of the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area and the state. Our graduates report a 100% job placement rate with starting salaries more than **\$52,000** per year. Future applicants to the program will notice a new pre-admission testing process and points structure, moving away from costly pre-admission testing requirements for students and placing a larger emphasis on science GPA, which has been revealed as the most consistent predictor of student success for graduation and successfully passing the NCLEX-RN licensure examination.

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.

Simulation Center

OSU-OKC boasts having one of the largest and most sophisticated simulation facilities in the metro area. Students will experience realistic hospital environments with simulation mannequins that can mimic human patients. The goal was to make the learning environment as close to an actual hospital as possible to increase students' comfort when they enter our partners' facilities and begin to take care of patients. This decreases student anxiety and boosts student confidence in their ability to care for patients.

Interprofessional Simulation

OSU-OKC nursing students, OSU-OKC paramedicine students, OSU-OKC diagnostic imaging, and OSU-Center for Health Sciences resident physicians come together to rescue, triage, and treat patients with a variety of injuries and illnesses. The goal is for these different groups to learn to work together as they will in the actual healthcare arena. Student volunteers and staff take on the role of patients and may simulate suffering anything from a traumatic injury requiring being rescued by our paramedic students to a mental health crisis and any other healthcare emergency in between. Not only do students learn to work together as a team, but they will also learn to prioritize care based on the severity of the simulated patient.

APPLICATION TIMELINES

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SPRING ADMISSION July 1 - Sept 1 • Traditional Students | Sept 1 - Dec 1 • Career Ladder Students

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eddi, a Gamified Diabetes Management App, Launches in Oklahoma

eddi gamifies real-time glucose data from Dexcom CGMs, making diabetes management a whole lot more fun

Tulsa, OK – (September 20, 2023) **eddi**, a new diabetes management interface that gamifies real-time glucose data, is pleased to announce its launch in the state of Oklahoma, with plans to expand its program nationwide later this year. By launching in Oklahoma, residents can now install the eddi app on their smartphones. eddi is available on both the [App Store](#) for iOS users and [Google Play](#) for Android. eddi is focusing on children living with diabetes and their families, with plans to expand into the adult market very soon.

"We are thrilled to be bringing people in the state of Oklahoma a new way to manage type-1 diabetes (T1D)," said Farhaneh Ahmadi, PhD, eddi's CEO. "The

T1D community and families in Oklahoma have enthusiastically supported eddi throughout, sharing their experiences and participating in the development of eddi. That is why we have chosen Oklahoma as our pilot state, to meet the families' needs and to build on that support."

Parents and healthcare teams know that treating children with T1D requires round-the-clock management. There are hundreds of decisions to make every day; monitoring blood glucose changes and considering all the factors besides food and insulin that affect blood glucose. This in addition to managing device malfunctions, what monitor to use, how to wear it correctly and deal with any chafing or discomfort, how to prepare for a



With eddi, children and their families take managing diabetes to a different level, a place of fun, motivating them to stick to healthy routines. Over time, eddi becomes the user's personal health buddy, cheering them on, challenging them and celebrating their achievements. With eddi, users play games, can request support, and receive daily rewards on the same interface that displays their real-time CGM data.

school field trip or a sleepover, and on and on. Every day it's something different. And every single day it must be managed.

eddi is a virtual in-app character designed to engage people living with T1D. Using games, educational character-led activities, and AI-enabled conversation (coming soon!), eddi becomes a smart health buddy, giving users real-time feedback, support, and in-app rewards in return for healthy behavior. In addition, the app integrates users' real-time Dexcom CGM readings, delivering updates on blood glucose levels, in turn reducing stress levels for T1D parents.

For those outside of Oklahoma, join eddi's early access program [here](#).

With eddi, children and their families take managing diabetes to a different level, a place of fun, motivating them to stick to healthy routines. Over time, eddi becomes the user's personal health buddy, cheering them on, challenging them and celebrating their achievements. With eddi, users play games, can request support, and receive daily rewards on the same interface that displays their real-time CGM data.

"Simply showing glucose data to children does not engage them

to take part in managing their T1D. They need incentives, and an engagement plan that makes the challenge fun. eddi provides just that."

Earlier this year, eddi conducted a **clinical trial** where 92 children with T1D and their families were enrolled in a randomized controlled trial (RCT) using Dexcom CGM. Outcomes from the trial showed a statistically significant 5.38% improvement in Time In Range (TIR), roughly translating into 1.5 additional hours every day of optimal glucose levels for children living with T1D.

In addition to launching in Oklahoma and partnering with Dexcom, eddi recently closed a \$2.5M seed round led by Kapor Capital, with participation from Atento Capital, MedMountain Ventures (MMV), StartUp Health, and angel investors.

eddi is a startup focused on making diabetes management fun. Founded by CEO Farhaneh Ahmadi, PhD, who lives with Type-1 diabetes, its vision is to create a fun, supportive, and educational interface that helps people living with diabetes take care of themselves and feel happier doing so. Learn more about eddi [HERE](#).

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**Oklahoma's
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Mercy Donates 50 Patient Beds and 30 Chairs to Respite Care Center for Homeless

Cardinal Community House provides housing for unsheltered people with ongoing medical needs

Mercy donated 50 patient beds and 30 reclining chairs to a respite care center in downtown Oklahoma City that provides temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness. Cardinal Community House (CCH) serves unsheltered people who no longer need hospital-level care but still need a safe place to stay while recovering from injuries or illnesses.

Cardinal Community House has been serving the Oklahoma City community for more than 50 years. The center began offering non-medical respite care in collaboration with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in March 2021 to meet a great need. In the state of Oklahoma, there are few options for unsheltered people to recover after a hospital stay.

Hospitals across the metro have contracts with CCH. If patients qualify for housing after discharge, they get a private room in a dormitory-style hall. There, Mercy patients have access to case management, social workers, home health visits, medication management, transportation to and from follow-up appointments and three meals provided daily.

"We do everything in our power to help all our patients, but our unhoused patients have unique challenges that can't be solved overnight," said Cindy Maggart, executive director of post-acute care services at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. "Hospitals are designed to provide immediate and acute care. We aren't set up to care for long-term needs or provide extended housing. Community partners like Cardinal Community House are a Godsend to our patients and the health care community."

Maggart recalled a recent conversation with Kelli Ude, executive director of Cardinal Community House. Ude mentioned the need to start fundraising to replace beds that would better serve their clients. Maggart had an idea.

"I was cleaning out a storage area at the hospital and ran across beds we purchased during the pandemic when we had a sudden increase in patients who needed care," Maggart said.

The beds have been in storage since the hospital's census decreased. Maggart approached Mercy administration with the idea of donating the beds to serve patients at Cardinal Community House. They were immediately on board.

"Mercy was founded nearly 200 years ago to provide a shelter for



Medical recliner donated to Cardinal Community House.

women and children living in poverty, and Mercy still exists to care for all, with a heart for the sick, economically poor and underserved," said Zack Dawson, chief operating officer of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. "It's such a privilege to partner with Cardinal Community House and support this amazing program that is such a vital part of our community."

"Our collaboration with Mercy has helped steer Oklahoma City's first respite initiative for the homeless in a responsive and sustainable manner," said Ude. "Most of our clients stay for around 30 days, and the beds have been so helpful in their recovery process. They can get comfortable, move the beds up and down and position them in a way that is best for their healing."

For more information about Cardinal Community House, visit [HERE](#).



Cardinal Community House patient room.



Kelli Ude, executive director of Cardinal Community House (left) and Cindy Maggart, executive director of post acute care services at Mercy Hospital OKC.

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ANSWERS ON PAGE 12



LEGEND SENIOR LIVING® NAMED AMONG 2023 BEST LARGE WORKPLACES



Fortune® magazine has again named Legend Senior Living among the Top 25 Best Large Workplaces in Aging Services. The 2023 list has just been released, and this is the second time Legend has been included in Fortune's Top 25 list of large workplaces. Legend is a Wichita, KS-based, privately owned senior living provider with over 50 residences in six states, including independent living, assisted living, personal care and memory care.

Fortune partners with Great Place to Work to determine the Best Workplaces in Aging Services. Surveys of more than 140,000 employees are analyzed from Great Place to Work-Certified companies in the aging services industry. Employees share confidential quantitative and qualitative feedback about their employer's culture, rating it as a great employee experience in terms of "trust, respect, credibility, fairness, pride, and camaraderie."

To be considered for the list, companies must be Great Place to Work-Certified and be in the aging services industry. Companies with 1,000 employees or more are considered for the large category.

"It's especially humbling to be named to the top 25 Best Workplaces in the country because the ratings come from our employees and are completely confidential and objective," said Matt Buchanan, President of Legend Senior Living. "We have the best-trained, most dedicated employees in senior living, and they know the culture better than anybody. A great workplace has a direct impact on delivering great service. It means we're supporting an overall culture of independence, dignity and purpose."

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Wichita, Kansas-based Legend Senior Living® is a privately held senior housing and services company and one of the nation's leading senior living providers. The company owns or operates over 50 senior living residences across six states - in Florida, Colorado, Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania.

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UCO Recognized as Top 100 Best Online Colleges



The University of Central Oklahoma's Connected Campus has been recognized as one of the top 100 Best Online Colleges in the U.S. according to Abound, a college guidance system for degree-seeking adults. Central is one of three institutions in the state recognized on the list.

The rankings are based on four distinct criteria including accessibility, affordability, acceleration and advancement. Data is sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard.

"UCO's Connected Campus is a prime example of the many ways we ensure access to a quality college education for our community," said Todd Lamb, UCO president.

"This recognition reflects the fact that UCO continues to own workforce development through the accessibility of online courses and creatively meeting students where they are."

Online degree offerings provided through UCO's Connected Campus include the Bachelor of Business Administration in human resource management, management, marketing or finance, the professional Master of Business Administration and the Master of Education in library media education, the Master of Public Administration in either urban management or public and nonprofit management, Master of Arts in strategic communications, Master of Music in music education, Master of Science in nursing, as well as the RN to B.S. in nursing track.

UCO also offers adult degree completion programs designed for adults who have earned prior college credits and want to complete their degree. Students can earn a Bachelor of Business Administration in general business, a Bachelor of Science in organizational leadership or general studies or a Bachelor of Arts in applied liberal arts.

Additionally, UCO recently also ranked as a leading institution for delivering an exceptional student experience in America's Best Colleges 2024 Wall Street Journal ranking.

Central was also ranked among the best programs in the nation at No. 183 in "Best Undergraduate Nursing" category and No. 222 in "Best Undergraduate Engineering" category on the 2023-24 Best Colleges list from U.S. News & World Report.

Undergraduate applications for the fall 2024 academic year are now open and prospective students are encouraged to apply early.

To view a complete list, visit abound.college/finishcollege/best-online-colleges/.

For more information about Central's online degree programs and Connected Campus, visit <https://online.uco.edu/>.



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

CONNECTED CAMPUS

Mercy Hospital and Marian University to Showcase Career Opportunities in Nursing

Sept. 27 "Come Explore Nursing" event to help the next generation find their calling while addressing Oklahoma's years-long nursing shortage

OKLAHOMA CITY (Sept. 7, 2023) – Marian University and Mercy are helping the next generation of nurses find their calling while putting more of these helping professionals on the front lines of care.

The university's Leighton School of Nursing and Mercy will host "Come Explore Nursing" from 4-7 p.m. Sept. 27 at the conference center at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City, located at 4300 W. Memorial Road.. The event will enable those considering a nursing career to meet the university's nursing faculty, admissions staff, students and alumni, along with the hospital's nursing leaders. Participants will also learn about Marian University's nursing programs, including:

An Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) Program. This 16-month second-degree program combines online coursework with

hands-on labs and clinical rotations. Through the partnership with Mercy Hospital, Marian University provides a unique opportunity to make a career transition without starting over.

A Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program for BSN-prepared registered nurses at the highest level seeking advanced clinical practice and leadership roles. This Indiana-based program includes both Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) tracks.

"Whether you are a young student or contemplating a career change, nursing offers good-paying jobs and the opportunity to give back to something bigger than yourself," said Morgan Beard, site director for Marian University's Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program.

The nursing shortage in Oklahoma is two decades in the making. "Even

before the pandemic, there was a critical need for nurses in our community," Beard said.

There are 7.5 nurses per 1,000 Oklahoma residents, ranking the state 46th in the nation in terms of nurses per capita, according to [data](#) compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Despite the dire need for nurses locally and nationally, the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing](#) noted that U.S. nursing schools turned away 91,938 qualified applications from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2021 due to a lack of faculty, facilities and clinical programs, as well as budget constraints.

"Giving prospective students a taste of the field is what our Sept. 27 event is all about," Beard said.

[CLICK HERE](#) To register.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE EVENT

"Come Explore Nursing," hosted by Marian University's Leighton School of Nursing and Mercy Hospital. This educational event provides an opportunity to meet Marian University's faculty, admissions staff, current students, alumni, and Mercy Hospital nursing leadership while learning more about Marian University's nursing programs.

WHEN: 4-7 p.m. Wednesday, September 27th.

WHERE: Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City Conference Center located in the lower level of the hospital at 4300 W. Memorial Road, Oklahoma City, OK 73120.

WHY: Oklahoma is facing a dire shortage of nurses. This event will introduce prospective students to this growing and fulfilling field to put more helping professionals on the front lines of care faster.



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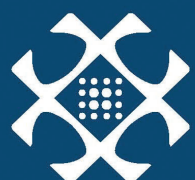
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