

Oklahoma's Nursing Times

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GIVING

RN Finds Home at Community Hospital in OKC

Read her story on page 2

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RECRUITER SHOWCASE



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PAGE 2

Shelly Lein, RN

Med/surg nurse at Community Hospital, located in north Oklahoma City.

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Shelly Lein, RN, often hears patients following a surgery say they feel so much better.

"Just because of the chronic pain they've been in for so many years, they finally get their moment of relief," said Lein, RN, a med/surg nurse at Community Hospital, located in north Oklahoma City along the Broadway Extension near Britton Road. Lein also serves in the ER and is a relief house supervisor.

"They sometimes say, 'I'm having surgical pain. But this pain I've been having for years — I finally feel some relief.'"

Patients have told her after a back surgery that it is the first time they can feel their hands or feet after a surgery to correct a back injury.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has given

Community Hospital a 5-Star Rating. The Medical/Surgical department has all private rooms, close and convenient to the nurses' station.

Lein embarked on her nursing career 12 years ago after graduating with an associate degree from OSU/OKC. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Northwestern University in Alva. Her career involves two years of med/surg oncology, four years of cardiac ICU, and three years of emergency room nursing. She joined Community Hospital in 2020.

"I think I had so many years in critical care which I loved. I think I was ready just to kind of be in an environment where there's elective surgeries," she said. "I wasn't seeing people on their worst days. I was seeing people feel better almost instantly. So, I was

just ready for that. And, I hadn't a lot of experience in orthopedics, so I wanted to learn more about that, too."

She would tell nursing school graduates not to enter the profession for the money but because they care.

"You're going to see so many people and a lot of them on their worst days. And you really must have that caring, loving heart," Lein continued.

Her patients come for surgeries involving their back, knees, and hips. Community Hospital provides inpatient and outpatient services, including diagnostic imaging. As a med/surg nurse, she mostly provides patient care for post orthopedic surgeries. Lein helps patients recover after their procedure.

The biggest draw for nurse retention is that nurses want to feel safe in their work environment, she continued. With low nurse-to-patient ratios, nurses appreciate having the time to provide outstanding service.

Lein said one to five patients is the industry standard for med/surg nurses, depending on the state.


ER is generally one nurse for every three or four patients, and ICU is one nurse for two patients, she added. Factors have impacted these numbers as was seen during the Covid pandemic and continues with the long-time national nursing shortage. However, a nursing career offers many diverse specialties for nurses to avoid burnout.

"I really love our management. They try to keep us at a smaller nurse to patient ratio than some of the bigger hospitals," Lein explained. "I've been to places where I had to take care of eight patients for a whole shift. That's scary as a nurse because I think that makes a lot of nurses quit and go to other careers. People hear about that and go, 'Oh, I don't want to be a nurse,' Really focusing on good nurse to patient ratios is one of the biggest things."

Community Hospital's north campus is a sister hospital to Community Hospital's south campus and Northwest Surgical Hospital. Each of these campuses

See SHELLY LEIN Page 3

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- Proven team leadership
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RN Manager - Medical Unit

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RN Charge Nurse - Medical Unit

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Shelly Lein, RN, brings diverse skills and flexibility as a nurse at Community Hospital, located in north Oklahoma City.

SHELLY LEIN
Continued from Page 2

communicate with each other about staffing needs when a nurse calls in sick.

“We can also always call a nurse in, so we work together really well,” Lein said.

The Community Hospital nursing staff enhances her work satisfaction. Lein said some of the biggest compliments patients tell the nursing staff is that their nurses always seem happy. Lein said the compliments reflect their happiness with their job and their love of working together so much

that the patients take notice.

“It makes me confident with them staying here,” Lein said.

She understands what it’s like to be hospitalized, ever since being hospitalized for three days at age 19. The nurses took such good care of her that it inspired her nursing career.

“I wanted to do that for someone else one day and make a big difference in their life,” Lein said. “Getting to see that instant relief from people really makes me happy.”

For more information or to join Community Hospital **CLICK HERE.**



Leadership Opportunities:

- RN Assistant DON Perioperative Services
- RN Director of Nursing

South Campus:

- RN Emergency Dept (ER/ED) - Nights -
- RN OR Circulator (PRN)
- RN Weekend - Med-Surg
- RN Med-Surg - FT and PRN
- RN Med-Surg - Bariatric Program - FT - Nights
- RN Med-Surg - Bariatric Program - FT - Days
- RN Pain/GI - FT and PRN

North Campus:

- RN OR Circulator - FT -
- RN Pre Admission Testing - FT -
- RN Pre OP/Phase II Recovery (PRN)
- RN ICU Med-Surg
- RN PRIME - Days and Nights
- RN Med-Surg - FT and PRN - Days and Nights

Northwest Surgical Hospital:

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Community Hospital/Northwest Surgical Hospital complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Community Hospital/Northwest Surgical Hospital is a facility in which physicians have an ownership or investment interest. The list of physician owners or investors is available to you upon request.

Center for Health Systems Innovation Research May Have Profound Impacts On Health Care



Students of the CHSI internship program pose with OSU Center for Health Sciences executives after the presentation of their findings after their month-long internship.

The Spears School of Business and the Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences are researching ways to impact health care education and your health care experience using groundbreaking curriculum shifts and experiential learning.

Researchers from CHSI, a collaboration between Spears Business and CHS, are using the methods and ideologies of lean health care and systems-based practices to equip medical students with the tools to observe, develop and implement impactful changes to the health care system.

“Lean health care and systems-based practices are not new concepts,” said Dr. Marjorie Erdmann, CHSI director. “However, in most cases those concepts are not introduced to students until their residency. We thought there might be a different way of introducing these subjects earlier in an already jam-packed curriculum.”

In 2019, a summer internship program was created to do exactly that. The first cohort of students were between their first and second years and spent a month learning and

developing the concepts and tools of lean health care and systems-based practices. However, the students didn’t spend a month in a classroom, instead the OSU Medical Center opened its doors and challenged the students to solve a real-world problem that would allow them to sharpen their new skillset, while directly impacting health care system processes.

The students honed their observational, analytical and practical skills and then began researching, mapping and innovating a system process within the hospital to identify areas where the process could be reimaged or refined — in an effort to use hospital resources more efficiently and effectively.

“We found that the students left the month-long program with a much better understanding of how a hospital truly works,” said Ipe Paramel, project manager for CHSI and lean health care specialist. “Not only did they better grasp the processes that must occur for the health care system to run effectively, but they developed a better understanding of how they, as physicians, play an important role in those processes and how they can be better system citizens throughout

their careers.”

The program stresses how interconnected hospital processes are and the importance of learning that a process may seem straightforward, however the actual implementation of a process can involve numerous other steps and subprocesses and have profound effects on the manner in which other system citizens perform their assigned tasks.

For example, past students of the internship program have worked to alleviate emergency department overcrowding, a crisis affecting hospitals across the nation. They targeted improving the flow of admitted patients to a standard room. Oftentimes, hospitals try to improve this on a department-by-department basis, however the students at CHS were challenged to look at the problem from a system-wide, multi-departmental perspective. Using lean tools, the students gained understanding of how changes in one department impacted other departments, thus allowing them to design solutions that increased efficiency and effectiveness across multiple departments.

“The program not only provides

students with the skills to identify root causes of problems and the associated safety and quality issues but to also design effective solutions,” [IP1] Erdmann said. “As they develop solutions, we encourage them to investigate how those potential solutions could affect other citizens within the hospital system and to make sure the solution doesn’t just push a problem from one department to another, a situation that commonly occurs.

“Before the program, the students’ knee-jerk reaction to solve a problem is usually to do one of three things: hire more people, discipline the people you have or purchase more technology for people. However, by teaching them to observe and map processes and not people, they discover how things happen and realize that the possible solutions are, oftentimes, much simpler, cheaper and easier to implement. Almost always, it is a process problem, not a people problem.”

The program finished with its third cohort of students this past summer and has seen a marked increase in interest from students wanting to be

See OSU Page 5

OSU
Continued from Page 4

involved.

“Students are eager to learn these skills because they have experienced health care inefficiencies themselves as many of us have,” Erdmann said. “They understand as physicians they will be expected to lead improvements to U.S. health care, which unfortunately right now frequently ranks last in outcomes and first in costs.”

Paramel said when students initially sign up for the internship, they don’t understand what they are getting into.

“Now, the students have become ambassadors for the program and strongly encourage their peers to get involved. I have people contacting me before I have a chance to market upcoming opportunities,” Paramel said.

The success of the program has garnered attention from the administration at CHS, so much so that the CHSI staff has been invited to give an interactive lecture and lab during the upcoming spring semester to broaden early access to systems-

based practice competencies. The students will engage in a total of four hours of instruction and lab training as a small introduction to the program being developed by CHSI.

The team also had a paper published in Academic Medicine, the Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges covering their innovative, effective approach to teaching medical students systems thinking and solution design because The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education recognizes the need for physicians to not only work effectively in health systems, but to also create and implement solutions.

“The U.S. health system has put a lot of emphasis on physicians innovating health care,” Erdmann said. “We need to create high quality, skilled innovators. We believe our system will help inform and develop those innovators, it’s at the heart of our mission. It’s rare for business schools to be teaching medical students. We are proud of Spears School of Business’ contribution to developing our future physicians.”

For more information about the Center for Health Systems [CLICK HERE](#).

OKNT Special Note - SSM



Congratulations to Jamie Barnes, RN, Transitional Care Unit, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital, who was recently recognized as a DAISY Award winner!

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses is part of the DAISY Foundation’s program to recognize nurses who go the extra mile for their patients, family and team members.

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Primary Care Expands to the Heart of Oklahoma in Purcell

Early November was a milestone as Norman Regional Primary Care - Purcell opened its doors and welcomed its first patients.

This is Norman Regional Health System's southernmost clinic. It currently serves as the home of Marvin Harvey, MD, a dedicated board-certified family medicine physician, with Tracy Parker, APRN, FNP-C set to join later this year.

Primary Care Purcell and More Health Services

Our commitment to expanding healthcare in the 'Heart of Oklahoma' doesn't stop there – other specialties such as **OB/GYN, Orthopedics, X-ray, Cardiology** and General Surgery Consultations will also be practiced out of our new space starting in early 2024.

Norman Regional Primary Care Purcell Laboratory Services are currently available and perform a wide variety of tests to assist physicians in the diagnosis, treatment and management of disease and illness. In most cases, lab results are available on the same day.

Why Establish Care with a Primary Care Provider?

Your Primary Care Provider is not

just a doctor; they become a partner in your health journey. They are adept at preventive care, identifying subtle changes in your health, managing complex medical issues, and coordinating your care across various specialties. Here are some key benefits of having a primary care provider:

Prevention: A Primary Care Provider helps you stay current with screenings, vaccines and offers guidance on lifestyle changes, aiming to prevent chronic illnesses.

Comprehensive Care: They're trained to notice signs of issues such as depression, fatigue, or memory problems, often before you are aware of them.

Coordination of Care: They manage referrals to specialists while ensuring cohesive and effective treatment plans.

Quicker, Accurate Diagnoses: Through a deep understanding of your medical history, they can often diagnose health conditions earlier, leading to better outcomes.

Time and Cost Efficiency: Regular visits to a Primary Care Provider save time and money, as they can promptly address emerging health concerns, potentially preventing costly health



emergencies.

Comfort and Trust: A strong patient-physician relationship encourages open communication, making it easier to discuss sensitive health issues. We're pleased to introduce our providers at Norman Regional Primary Care - Purcell.

Meet Dr. Marvin Harvey

Dr. Harvey brings a wealth of experience and expertise to our new practice. His dedication to family medicine stems from a personal experience with life-changing family doctors.

Specializing in asthma, blood pressure management, COPD, and diabetes, Dr. Harvey values individualized, patient-centered care and is ready to guide you on your path

to a healthier life.

Introducing Advanced Nurse Practitioner Tracy Parker

Tracy boasts an impressive 29 years in healthcare, specializing in family medicine. Tracy's commitment to holistic care and personalized attention is the cornerstone of his practice. With interests in acute injury, allergies, preventative medicine and more, Tracy is dedicated to supporting your unique health needs.

Both Dr. Harvey and Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Tracy Parker, are now accepting new patients.

Norman Regional Primary Care - Purcell is located at 2320 N. 9th Avenue in Purcell.

For more information visit [CLICK HERE](#).

OKNT CROSSWORD: BREAST CANCER

Across

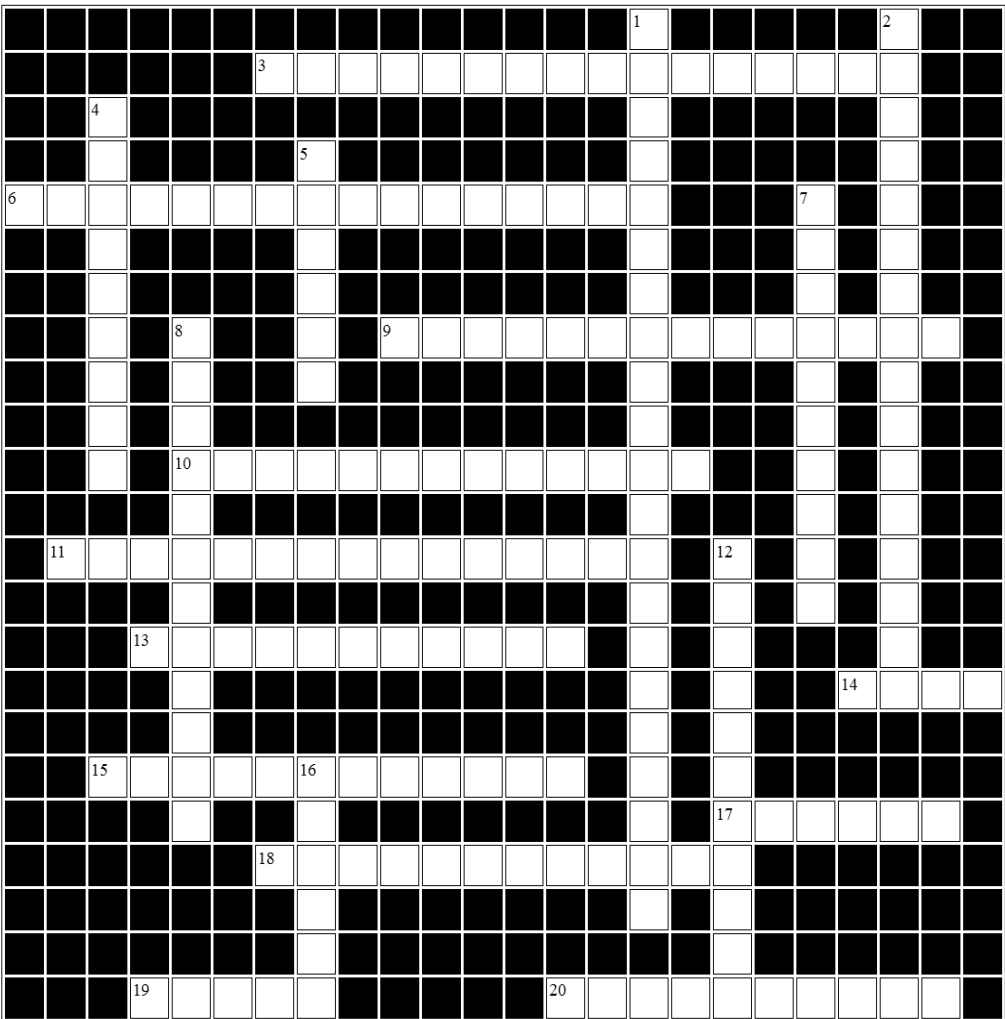
- 3. Cancer that originates in a milk- producing lobule of the breast
- 6. The breast contains the greatest concentrations of these
- 9. The most important strategy
- 10. First place breast cancer usually spreads to
- 11. Cancer that starts in one of the milk ducts
- 13. Screening that has detected about 85% of breast cancers
- 14. Round, fluid-filled pocket in the breast
- 15. Type of treatment used alone or with a lumpectomy or masectomy to treat breast cancer
- 17. Pink area surrounding the nipple
- 18. Through the skin
- 19. At what age should a woman

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12

- start having mammograms
- 20. Refers to surgical removal of a concerous lump along with a small amount of surrounding normal breast tissue

Down

- 1. BSE stands for
- 2. Uses high-energy rays to stop breast cancer cells from growing and dividing
- 4. Most common breast cancer drug
- 5. Involves removing a sample of tissue to determine whether it is concerous or benign
- 7. Complete removal of the affected breast
- 8. Seconding leading cause of cancer
- 12. Meaning to spread
- 16. The age when a women should do monthly breast exams



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Alyssa Rapoport is congratulated by Redlands Community College President Jack Bryant during the nursing pinning ceremony in 2021.

REDLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE *PREPARES NURSING GRADUATES FOR WORKFORCE*

Nursing is a career that attracts graduating high school seniors but also provides a second career for those who are ready for a change.

Some students are ready to enter the field as young adults, but many people see the importance and value of nursing care through their own life experiences and then choose to make a career change.

Redlands Community College in El Reno, Okla., is not only preparing these students for a successful future in health care but also working to address the staffing shortage in rural and tribal health care facilities. The college received a grant that is providing more resources to expand programs designed to support and retain nursing students as well as implement educational programs to attract youth to the field.

With a **100% job placement rate**, Redlands offers a two-year degree program that prepares graduates to successfully take the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) for licensure as a registered nurse and to enter the workforce immediately.

"The benefit of earning an associate degree in nursing at Redlands is that graduates are well-prepared for the licensure exam that will allow them to begin working quickly," said Dr. Jalelah Abdul-Raheem, director of Redlands' Nursing Program. "Once they have completed this stage, they are able to focus on their career as a registered nurse or continue their education at a university to earn a bachelor's of nursing degree."

Redlands has two nursing program options: the **traditional RN program** and a track for **Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)**. Students



Redlands Community College nursing students gain valuable experience in the campus' simulation lab.

who are enrolled in the LPN-to-RN cohort earn articulation credits in the first semester, allowing them to graduate in three semesters instead of four. This helps get them out of the classroom and into the community where they can do the most good.

From a young age, Redlands nursing graduate Cory Michael Williamson knew he wanted to be a nurse. His life had been impacted by a nurse who cared for his father after a terrible car wreck. "When my father was in the hospital, there was a male nurse who really showed kindness and compassion to me during that time," Williamson said.

Since graduating from Redlands, Williamson has worked in different intensive care units while he pursued a bachelor's degree at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, and now he serves as a nursing supervisor in a tribal health clinic. Williamson said his experience at Redlands taught him to look beyond a patient's diagnosis. He learned "to get to know my patients and their families to help them in more ways than just what they came to the hospital or clinic for."

Redlands is a solid, affordable choice for students because of the scholarships available as well as the personal attention and opportunities it provides. The college's partnerships with several area health facilities provide students with challenging, hands-on experience during their clinical rotations.

"Fortunately, our location just outside of Oklahoma City gives our students the opportunity to serve in both rural and urban areas, exposing them to the different types of nursing care available and helping them figure out what is the best fit for them" Abdul-Raheem said.

Alyssa Rapoport chose nursing because she wanted to be able to help others on their worst days and celebrate with them on their best days during recovery. A 2021 graduate, Rapoport appreciated Redlands' convenient location, affordability and caring faculty, especially Professor Kayla Zimmerman.

"She was always there to listen and support me and my classmates," Rapoport said. "I felt like she was someone who respected the students as much as we were taught to respect the staff."

With a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant from Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) Part A to support outreach and retention efforts and additional funding to update campus simulation labs, the Redlands Nursing Program is providing a high-quality learning experience led by dedicated and well-trained faculty.

"At Redlands, everyone is friendly, and the faculty is excited to be part of students' lives," said Abdul-Raheem. "We are committed to helping our nursing students succeed, and our faculty and staff are dedicated to supporting them throughout their time in the program."

The five-year cooperative grant is designed for Native American and low-income students and is 100% funded by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the NASNTI program.

Visit <https://www.redlandsgcc.edu/nursing-program> for more information and to apply for scholarships. The deadline to apply for the general nursing program is April 15, and the deadline for the **LPN-to-RN program** is December 1. Apply for scholarships by May 31.

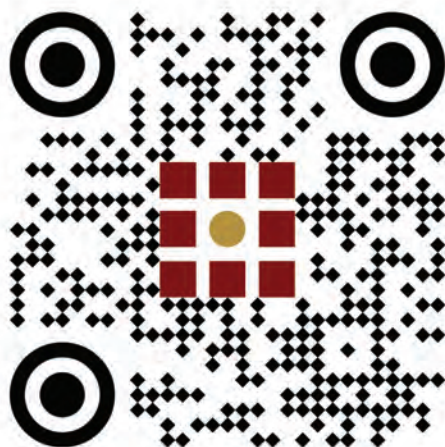
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INTEGRIS Health March of Dimes Nurse Of The Year Winners



March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Winners

INTEGRIS Health Nurses Elisabeth Bell, R.N., Madison Brady, R.N., Wanda Emmett, R.N., Whitney Marrero, R.N., Charlie Nguyen, R.N., Brenda Southwell, R.N. and Elizabeth Trenary, R.N.

INTEGRIS Health nurses Elisabeth Bell, R.N., Madison Brady, R.N., Wanda Emmett, R.N., Whitney Marrero, R.N., Charlie Nguyen, R.N. (health care technology category), Brenda Southwell, R.N. and Elizabeth Trenary, RN.

The March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Heroes in Action Gala was recently held in Norman to pay tribute to nursing excellence and the tireless efforts of nurses in Oklahoma. In all, 27 nurses from INTEGRIS Health were nominated, with seven receiving the prestigious honor of March of Dimes Nurse of the Year. These seven caregivers are Brenda Southwell, R.N. (innovation in clinical advancement category), Madison Brady, R.N. (rising star category), Whitney Marrero, R.N. (women's health category), Charlie Nguyen, R.N. (health care technology category), Elisabeth Bell, R.N. (house

supervisor category), Wanda Emmett, R.N. (public health, ambulatory care and other nursing specialties category) and Elizabeth Trenary (general medical/surgical category). INTEGRIS Health is exceedingly proud of the nurses recognized by March of Dimes and all nurses throughout the INTEGRIS Health system. INTEGRIS Health caregivers are the backbone of health care in Oklahoma, and they continuously improve themselves to provide the best possible care to patients. As always, INTEGRIS Health is partnering with people to live healthier lives.



Child Victims of Intimate Partner Violence Killed by Gunfire: Forensic Nurses' Respond



In response to the American Academy of Pediatrics' "Intimate Partner Violence-Related Firearm Child Homicides: An Urgent Call to Action" published November 6, 2024, Jennifer Pierce-Weeks, BSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P

Chief Executive Officer of the International Association of Forensic Nurses, issued the following statement:

The International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) amplifies the American Academy of Pediatrics' call to action published in Pediatrics today. Protecting our children from witnessing and experiencing any form of intimate partner violence (IPV) is paramount. The alarming statistics published in Pediatrics today, sadly, are not news to our members, who provide specialized healthcare for patients impacted by violence and trauma.

IAFN urges physicians in all practice areas to ensure their clinical staff members are trained to identify patients who may be victims of IPV, in addition to creating and nurturing bi-directional relationships with victim service agencies,

IPV causes both acute and long-term health conditions in children who have witnessed or experienced it. The high occurrence of children's exposure to IPV places them at risk for mismanagement of their emotions, mental health conditions (such as anxiety, depression, PTSD), and poor coping behaviors (such as impulsiveness, unsafe sexual activity, and substance abuse). It is important to remember that where there is a child witnessing IPV, there is a primary victim of that IPV as well. Trauma from IPV, whether witnessed or experienced first-hand, can cause chronic health effects throughout the person's lifetime.

Forensic nurses trained to identify and treat victims of IPV should be part of the "strengths-based healing-centered approach" that AAP recommends in its clinical guidelines. IAFN can play a significant role in training clinicians whose patients are victims of IPV. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) recently released its first evidence-based clinical guidance on IPV, with best practice recommendations for clinicians in various settings. This includes an **interactive, mobile-friendly version of the protocol** with expanded resources and tools. IAFN also offers a 15-hour online Intimate Partner Violence Nurse Examiner Certificate Program.

Nurses must be educated in how to identify the patient experiencing IPV, provide trauma-informed care, and safely connect the patient to appropriate resources and services in an effort to help mitigate the long-term physical and mental health consequences, including homicide. Any patient may be a victim of violence; therefore, every nurse is a forensic nurse.

The International Association of Forensic Nurses is a professional organization of more than 6,000 nurses who provide specialized healthcare for patients impacted by violence. The Association establishes the standards of practice for forensic nursing; defines and advances the global research agenda to enhance forensic nursing's evidence-based response; develops, promotes, and disseminates information about forensic nursing science; and serves as a global network for forensic nurses to exchange ideas, serve as mentors, and enhance their practice. For more information, visit <https://www.forensicnurses.org/>.



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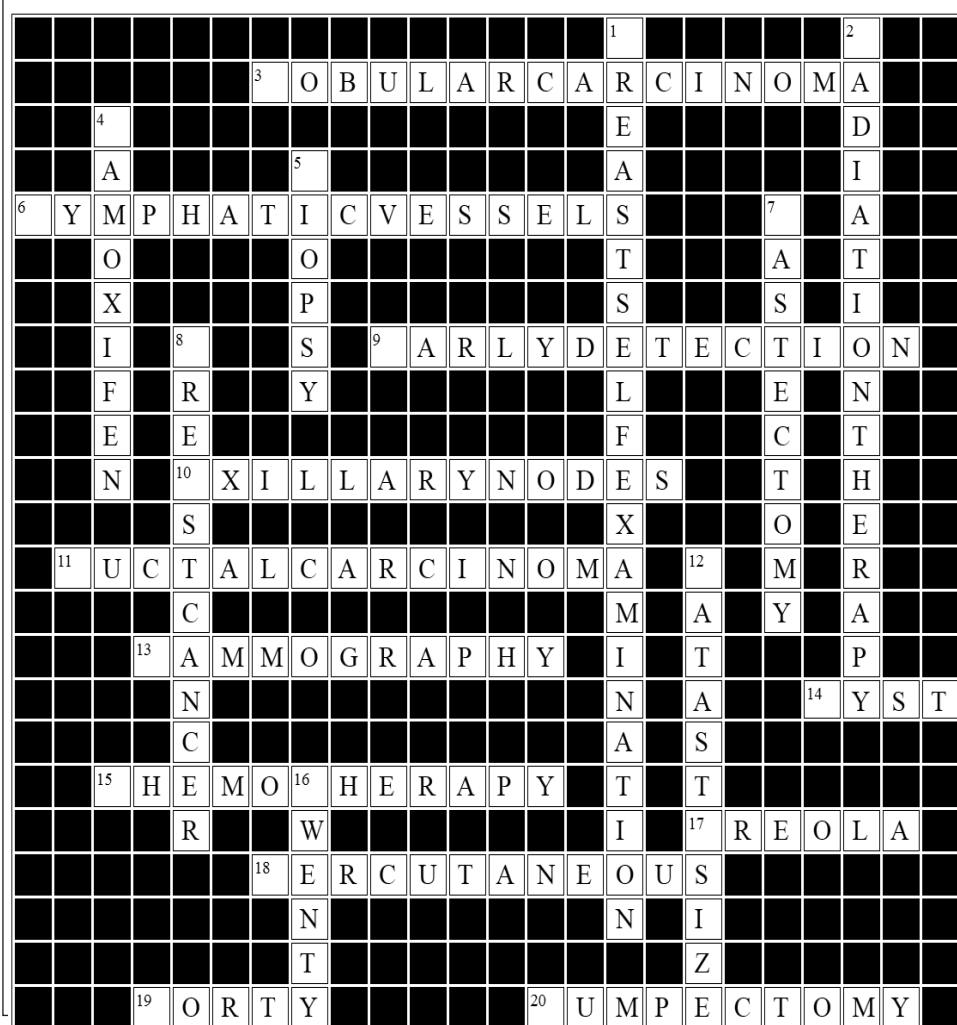
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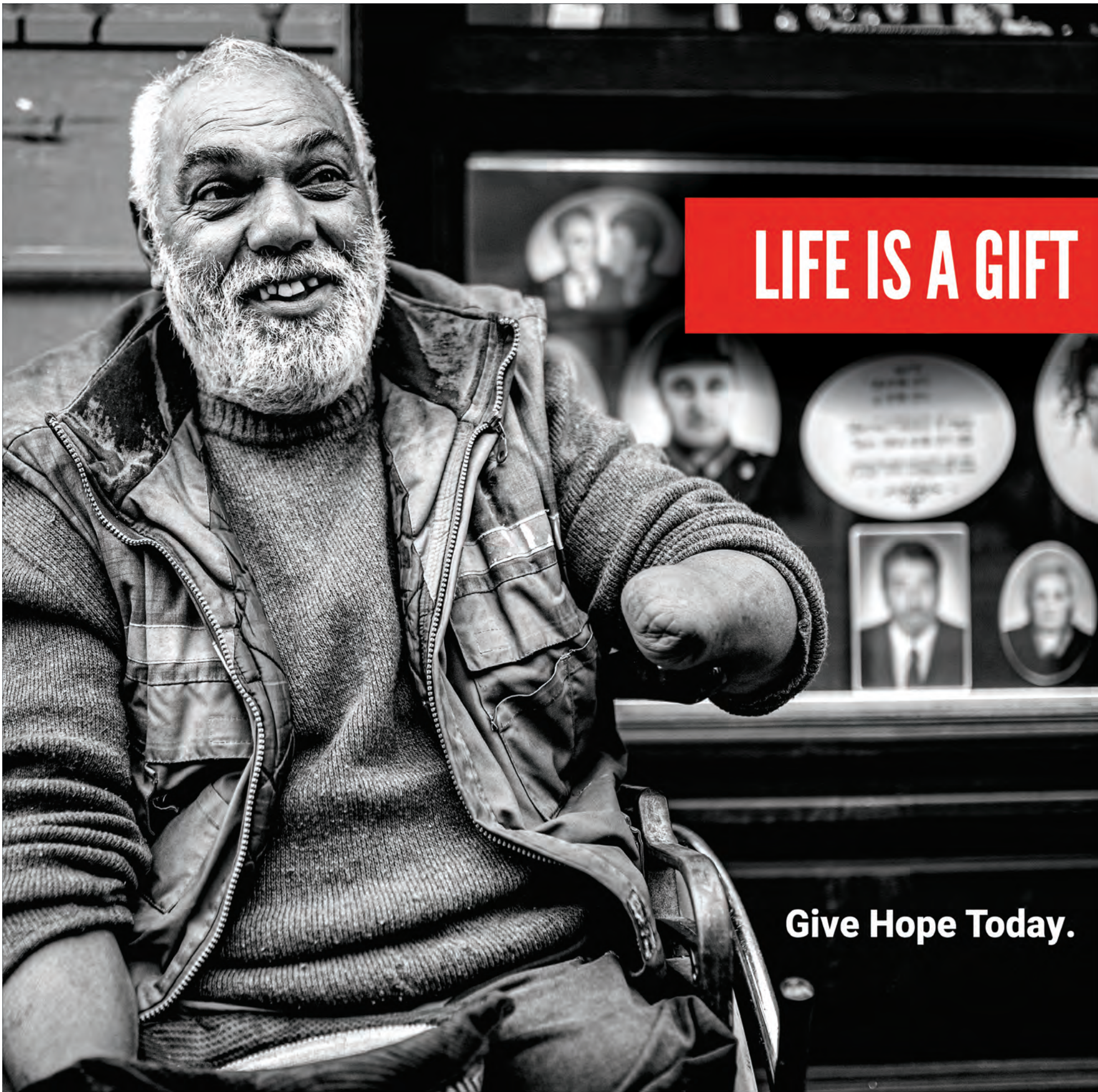
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We're so grateful for her dedication to making a difference in patients' lives. OSUMC applauds you, Shanna!





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Applications open for OMRF Fleming Scholar program

The Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation is accepting applications for its 2024 Sir Alexander Fleming Scholar Program. The deadline is Feb. 1.

The paid, eight-week summer biomedical research internship is open to high school seniors, college freshmen, sophomores and juniors. To be eligible, students must be 16 or older and an Oklahoma resident at the time of high school graduation. Participants earn \$5,000 and may also qualify for free housing.

Applicants must complete an online application and submit their academic transcripts, two letters of recommendation and a personal statement.

"This is an incredible experience for students who are excited about science and want to get some meaningful, hands-on research experience," said Ashley Cheyney, Ph.D., OMRF's assistant director of training programs and educational outreach. "Being a Fleming Scholar provides the opportunity to make

lifelong connections and contribute to work that makes a difference."

For Makayla Tillett, a junior at Oklahoma City University majoring in cell and molecular biology, serving as a Fleming Scholar last summer provided an introduction to a career in biomedical research. Tillett made proteins in the lab of OMRF scientist Umesh Deshmukh, Ph.D., who investigates how viruses and bacteria can activate the immune system, leading to the development of an autoimmune condition called Sjogren's disease.

"My original plan included medical school, but I learned that I really enjoy doing biomedical research, so now I plan to pursue a Ph.D. following my undergraduate studies," said Tillett, who returned to OMRF this fall to continue her work in Deshmukh's lab.

Founded in 1956 and named for Sir Alexander Fleming, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist who discovered penicillin and in 1949 dedicated OMRF's first building, the program offers students a



Oklahoma Baptist University student Austin Lopez of Tulsa with her Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation mentor, physician-scientist Matlock Jeffries, M.D.

summer packed with hands-on biomedical research.

Since its inception, more than 600 Oklahoma students have had the opportunity to work alongside world-class scientists at OMRF. Among those whose research careers

began as Fleming Scholars are OMRF Executive Vice President & Chief Medical Officer Judith James, M.D., Ph.D., and Distinguished Career Scientist Rod McEver, M.D.

For more information or to apply, [CLICK HERE](#).

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic raises over \$150,000 for hearing at its 19th Annual Red Feather Gala

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic (OKCIC), celebrates the Red Feather Gala each year during Native American Heritage month. This year's occasion raised over \$150,000 and will provide 30 pairs of hearing aids for patients in need.

Held at the Omni Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City, this year's Red Feather Gala was emceed by Ali Meyer and Joleen Chaney, news anchors from KFOR. They successfully united nearly

600 supporters, including tribal representatives from various parts of Oklahoma, to contribute to OKCIC's charitable mission. To support the cause, attendees had the opportunity to make donations through a silent and live auction



Rear Admiral, (Ret.) Kevin Meeks received the 2023 Spirit of the Urban Indian honor.

featuring items, such as trips, autographed sports memorabilia,

and Native art.

An outstanding moment of the evening was when RADM (Ret.) Kevin Meeks received the 2023

Spirit of the Urban Indian honor. RADM Meeks was honored for his lifelong commitment to improving the well-being of Native Americans in Oklahoma. As a proud citizen of Chickasaw Nation, he currently serves as Deputy Secretary of Health. Throughout his career, he has played a pivotal role in the enhancement of health care services for American Indians.

"I am very honored to receive the Spirit of the Urban Indian Honor," said RADM Meeks. "I'm so proud of Oklahoma City Indian Clinic's accomplishments. They have created outstanding and nurtured outstanding partnerships with area tribes and the Indian Health Service. OKCIC is a great example for other urban Indian programs to emulate."

The gala provided attendees with an opportunity to immerse themselves in Native American culture through a captivating dance performance by the Central Plains Dancers. Additionally, guests could make memories at the photo booth, while enjoying a night of dancing with live music and karaoke.

OU Health Breaks Ground on New Children's Behavioral Health Center

OU Health broke ground and kicked off a capital fundraising campaign Wednesday, Nov. 1, for a new pediatric Behavioral Health Center, an innovative facility where Oklahoma youth will receive the highest quality of treatment and support for mental and behavioral health conditions.

The facility, called the Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health Behavioral Health Center, will provide inpatient and outpatient services, delivered in a setting designed for family participation and healing. It will be the only such facility in the state that is part of a comprehensive children's hospital and will be located adjacent to Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health.

Oklahoma ranks 33rd in the nation for providing access to mental health services and support, and suicide is one of the leading causes of death among young people ages 10 to 24 in Oklahoma. The 172,775-square-foot, three-story facility will serve a critical role in the state, with two floors dedicated to inpatient services. It will have 72 beds for short-term stabilization and long-term care.

The Behavioral Health Center is projected to be fully operational by December 2026. Oklahoma Children's Hospital will also open a 10-bed emergency room expansion in February 2024.

"Oklahoma children are experiencing a mental and behavioral health crisis, and as the state's flagship academic health system, OU Health is dedicated to increasing our services to meet that need," said Richard Lofgren, M.D., MPH, president and CEO of OU Health. "Our health professionals are highly specialized with access to advanced treatments and resources that often aren't found elsewhere. Care is driven by research discoveries and delivered by multidisciplinary teams who leverage their combined expertise to provide an enhanced level of care."

The Behavioral Health Center reimagines the delivery of care to children and adolescents. For patients receiving inpatient care, parents can stay in the room with their child, a patient- and family-centered option not available anywhere else in Oklahoma. Partial hospitalization services and intensive outpatient services will also be offered, and the facility will house a gymnasium and several outdoor and garden spaces to enhance the healing process. Each area is designed to provide comfort, convenience and

safety for families and staff.

"The creation of the Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health Behavioral Health Center is a major achievement for the state," said Oklahoma First Lady Sarah Stitt, who will serve as the honorary chair for Behavioral Health Center capital campaign to raise and secure \$35 million in philanthropic support.

"Many patients and families simply cannot find the care they need in Oklahoma right now. The Behavioral Health Center will fill that gap by providing access and the expertise to treat a range of conditions. The State of Oklahoma is proud to play a role in the launch of the Behavioral Health Center. Together, we will ensure that Oklahoma's children — our most precious resources — can access high-quality care," Stitt said.

One in five Oklahoma youth struggles with mental health issues, and children from every background and economic status can be affected. The mental health crisis has worsened since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and is often amplified by factors like social media use and trauma in a child's home.

"I am proud to have been part of the team bringing this much-needed center to life," said Sen. Roger Thompson, R-Okemah. Together, we will ensure that Oklahoma's children can access high-quality mental and behavioral healthcare."

Many families in Oklahoma have difficulty finding services for their children. Some organizations decline to accept youth with complex conditions or additional medical complications, and some do not accept patients covered by SoonerCare, the state's Medicaid program. Other organizations have waitlists up to eight weeks long. At Oklahoma Children's Hospital, healthcare providers see the need daily when patients and families come to the emergency room seeking help.

"In 2007, our hospital treated one to two patients each month who were experiencing a mental health crisis so severe that they considered suicide. Today, our teams are seeing a patient with suicidal ideation during every shift," said Robyn Cowperthwaite, M.D., child and adolescent psychiatrist at Oklahoma Children's Hospital. "Many children need a longer and more robust level of care than we can provide in the hospital. The new Behavioral Health Center will be a place where children can receive the specialized care



that they need, whether that is a short inpatient stay, long-term treatment, or intensive outpatient care."

Rep. Kyle Hilbert, R-Bristow, said mental health is one of the top crises affecting our youth. "We know we must act, come together and do what's right for the future of our children and for Oklahoma," he said.

As part of an academic health system, the Behavioral Health Center will also serve as a premier training facility for future healthcare providers who are seeking a career in a mental health field.

As the academic partner of OU Health, the University of Oklahoma plays a leading role in educating the future healthcare workforce of Oklahoma, graduating more health professionals than any other institution in the state.

"The University of Oklahoma has educated generations of health care professionals who have uplifted the health of our state, and sustaining this longstanding tradition remains one of our foremost responsibilities," said OU President Joseph Harroz Jr. "OU is proud to play a role in the Behavioral Health Center, where our students will gain invaluable clinical experience to prepare them to serve a great need in our state as the mental and behavioral health care professionals of tomorrow."

Education partnerships with the OU College of Medicine, the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing, the Anne and Henry Zarrow College of Social Work and various graduate programs at The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences will allow students to receive clinical training in evidence-based healthcare while working with OU

Health professionals in a premier facility. These students will go on to serve as psychiatrists, psychologists, behavioral health nurses, social workers and other healthcare professionals.

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences is also partnering with OU Health to develop a Nurse Practitioner program emphasizing Behavioral Health.

The Behavioral Health Center will cost approximately \$140.6 million. The Oklahoma state Legislature has committed \$19.8 million in general revenue and facilitated \$39.4 million in federal funds. In addition, the University Hospitals Authority and Trust has committed \$46.4 million.

"We are grateful to our Legislature for their financial support of this much-needed facility and for the vision and expertise of so many who've committed time, financial resources and ideas to bring this center to life," said Rainey Williams Jr., University Hospitals Authority and Trust Board Chair and OU Health Board of Directors Chair.

Additionally, philanthropic giving from the Gaylord Family Foundation, Devon Energy, the Presbyterian Health Foundation and the Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation has helped lay the groundwork for the campaign.

"Together, we are laying the bricks for a facility that will provide our youth with the care they need so that they can see a bright future ahead of them," Lofgren said. "We will not turn away any patient in need, and we believe our approach will radically improve the treatment and care coordination for young people with mental health needs."

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