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Lori Page, RN, MSN, RNC-NIC, CCRN

Dedicated Manager of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Oklahoma Children's Hospital.

story by Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

At Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health, you will find top-quality, comprehensive child and family centered care, with pediatric services and specialists. Their neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) provides the state's highest level of newborn care.

Whether you are preparing for delivery with a high-risk pregnancy or you find out that your newborn needs to stay in the hospital for special care following birth, you will receive the expertise of top-quality neonatal experts in a family friendly environment.

Here you'll meet Lori Page, RN, MSN, RNC-NIC, CCRN, dedicated Manager of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Oklahoma Children's Hospital. With an impressive occupation of 31 years, Lori's journey at the hospital has shown responsibility

and dedication. From her beginning in NICU to her cross-training to adult medicine, flight nurse, Pediatric Cath Lab and beyond, she has now returned full circle to lead the NICU team. "Being here with the children is where my heart truly lies," Lori remarked. "The nurses' expertise, reliability and unwavering dedication ensure that each patient receives the highest level of care."

Raised in Oklahoma City, Lori pursued her bachelor's degree at OSU before earning her masters from SWOSU. From a young age, Lori's nurturing spirit drove her towards a career in nursing, fueled by a deep-seated passion for caregiving, intrigued by various science disciplines during her schooling. Lori recognized nursing as her calling early on, with a particular desire for pediatrics.

Lori juggles numerous roles in her daily routine. As she mentors

novice nurses, her emphasis spans patient-centered care, student initiatives, recruitments, and staff expansion. Additionally, she dedicates her time to teaching at the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences, with a commitment to growth and advancement in all areas of her nursing career.

Oklahoma Children's Hospital offers a Cuddlers Program recognizing the vital role affection plays in the well-being of all babies, particularly premature infants. During extended hospital stays, babies may not receive the constant cuddling they require from nurses or parents. This is where the Cuddlers Program steps in, providing parents with the opportunity to take a much-needed break while ensuring their baby receives the nurturing touch they need. Hospitals understand the benefits of touch, including soothing, bonding, and promoting growth, offering parents peace of mind.

When asked about the qualities that define a good nurse, Lori emphasized the diverse strength that is exhibited by the 380 nurses, each with their own trait

of passion and excellence. She highlighted the importance of effective communication, openness to learning and willingness to advocate for oneself, all crucial elements for success in nursing. Lori actively supports her team's professional development by providing information and educational opportunities, empowering them to continually invest in their growth and expertise.

The most gratifying reward of Lori's work at Oklahoma Children's Hospital is when the parents of the children she once cared for return to express their heartfelt gratitude. Whether it is a simple "thank-you" for nurturing their baby or witnessing the grown-up child Lori once tended to, these unexpected visitors never fail to give a sense of joy and warmth. "It's truly heartwarming and always catches me by surprise," Lori remarked, her smile reflecting the depth of her sentiment.

Lori's greatest strength lies in onboarding new employees and focusing on student programs. She empowers nurses to prioritize patient-centered care, striving to

Seeg PAGE Page 3

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Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health, is where you will find top-quality neonatal experts with the highest level of care. Lori Page, RN, MSN, RNC-NIC, CCRN is the dedicated Manager of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. She also teaches at the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences.

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elevate each patients experience to an ideal standard, making the patient feel comfortable and at ease, ensuring smooth and comfortable conditions for all.

During Easter, all children in the hospital, including those with new appointments, were treated to a spectacular display of Easter eggs filling the entire atrium. The excitement of the children was overwhelming! Looking ahead, a series of special activities are

planned, including a superhero day when children can dress up as their favorite superhero, with even the nurses joining in on the fun. These events are just a glimpse of the ongoing efforts to provide enjoyable experiences for the children at the hospital.

Despite Lori's demanding schedule at work, she prioritizes spending quality time with her family. Outside of work, she finds joy in traveling and engaging in various outdoor activities, such as hiking, kayaking and archery target shooting.

Visit Oklahoma Children's Hospital here:
<https://www.ouhealth.com/oklahoma-childrens-hospital>.

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CAREERS IN NURSING:

TRADITIONAL TRACK COORDINATOR CREDITS MOM FOR INSPIRATION

by Van Mitchell - staff writer

Cody Wilkerson credits his mom's life journey as an inspiration for him wanting to pursue a nursing career.

Wilkerson is a full-time faculty member of the Department of Nursing at the University of Central Oklahoma, and serves as the Traditional (Nursing) Track Coordinator.

"My mom (Cathy Maynard) is a nurse, and so I grew up hearing her experiences and seeing how much of an impact it made on us as a family," said Wilkerson, MSN, RN, CPN. "She went back to school. She was a non-traditional student, and it just totally changed our family's trajectory. And just seeing how much of a benefit that kind of was for her and for us, it just felt like, "You know I think all signs are pointing towards nursing instead of this med school business."

Wilkerson came to UCO as an undergraduate student from Antlers.

"I moved up here for college right after high school and have just never left. I've almost quite literally never left UCO. I've kind of been involved either as a student or in some other role almost for the last 12 years," he said.

Wilkerson started out as a pre-med major before switching to nursing.

"I started undergraduate as a pre-med major and then got a job in the hospital while I was in college," he said. "And that pretty much shifted my perspective. I think what nurses are actually doing is what drew me to medicine. I loved the relationship aspect, building relationships with your patients and getting to know them."

Wilkerson graduated in 2017 with his undergraduate degree, and then took a job at Oklahoma Children's Hospital working on the surgical unit.

"We take care of head-to-toe surgery, so it could be neuro, or ortho, or urology. I mean, we see them all," he said. That was my first job. I did that for a year. I was a night shift nurse."

Wilkerson continued his educational push receiving his M.S., Nursing, With Honors from UCO in 2020. He is pursuing his Doctorate of Nursing Practice as a Pediatric



Cody Wilkerson is a full-time faculty member of the Department of Nursing at the University of Central Oklahoma, and serves as the Traditional (Nursing) Track Coordinator.

Primary Care Nurse Practitioner from the University of South Alabama, with plans to graduate in Fall 2026.

"A master's in nursing education always kind of feels like a good idea, so I started back really quickly after I took just a year off of school and then was back at UCO again," he said. "I kept working at the hospital full-time. I graduated in May of 2020 with my master's in nursing education. I started with UCO as a full-time faculty in fall of 2020."

Students interested in earning a degree in nursing from the University of Central Oklahoma now have multiple options for their education. The core of the program is the traditional four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing however there is a five-year plan for program completion available.

"At UCO we have four different paths in nursing," Wilkerson said. "We have both our traditional and our fast-track programs. Those are

for students who are not licensed and who are getting a baccalaureate degree in nursing. We also have our online RNDBS program for nurses that are already certified or licensed, and then we have a master's program. We have a coordinator for each of those tracks. I coordinate the traditional undergraduate track (program)."

As the Traditional Track Coordinator, Wilkerson said his role is more behind-the-scenes.

"They (students) don't really see me as the traditional track coordinator afterwards necessarily, because a lot of my work has kind of been behind the scenes," he said. "A lot of my job is continued maintenance of those (nursing) programs. I am chairperson of our Traditional Track committee, so that's all the faculty

that teach in the traditional track."

Wilkerson, who also works as a Clinical RN, Oklahoma Children's Hospital, said he enjoys being a male nurse, and learning from his fellow UCO nursing faculty members.

"I definitely grew up being taught that women are capable of anything. And for me, it's been incredible to be mentored by, especially as a faculty member, to be mentored by this incredibly intelligent, smart, capable group of women," he said. "That to me, I think there's just something really cool about that, the ability to do that, to see that despite what some of these prejudices that may exist in society towards any field that's sort of predominantly female, there is hard evidence that these women are capable of anything they set their minds to."

For more information about UCO's nursing program visit <https://www.uco.edu/cms/academics/nursing>.

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NURSE TALK



What is your favorite thing about working with children?

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Jordyn LeClaire, RN, BSN, Supervisor of Operations

"My favorite thing about working with babies is watching them grow despite all of the obstacles and challenges they may face."



Katherine Bracken, RN, BSN

"My favorite thing about working with babies is helping them achieve goals and work towards home."



Lexi Howl, RN, BSN



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OKC Native Bennett Geister Named President of Mercy Hospital OKC Communities

Mercy has named Bennett Geister president of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City Communities. Geister will lead operations and strategy for Mercy's hospitals and clinics across the Oklahoma City metropolitan area beginning June 3.

Geister, who was born at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City, spent his early career working in health care in the Oklahoma City area. Since 2018, he has served as chief executive officer of Hillcrest Hospital South in Tulsa.

"I truly consider it a gift to have the opportunity to lead an already wonderful team at Mercy, and to do it at the hospital where I was born is a full circle moment for me personally," said Geister, who grew up in a family of health care providers, which influenced his career path. "Professionally, I've always considered Mercy a really strong organization across the state with so much potential to grow and serve more people who need care. I'm excited to be a part of that growth and honored to be a part of Mercy's legacy."

Geister is passionate about providing safe, high-quality patient care and building a strong workplace culture. He also considers himself an advocate for co-worker engagement and community involvement.

"Several things are immediately apparent when you talk to Bennett: his faith and his passion for providing the best health care to people in Oklahoma," said Dr. John Mohart, Mercy's president of community operations. "Bennett's experience is a great fit for Mercy, and his expertise in hospital operations, board relations and culture building will be an asset."

Geister will also provide leadership support to Mercy hospitals and clinics in Kingfisher, Logan County and Watonga. The Oklahoma Hospital Association recently named Geister chair-elect of the board.

He is a graduate of Heritage Hall, completed his bachelor's in business administration at University of Oklahoma in Norman, and earned a master's in health care administration at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.



Bennett Geister president of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City Communities.



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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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Redlands, Langston University Sign Agreement to Expand Nursing Education Opportunities



A new agreement between the Langston University School of Nursing and Health Professions and Redlands Community College will allow graduates of Redlands' nursing program to more easily obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from Langston University. The agreement was formally signed Friday on the LU Langston campus.

According to the agreement, students who graduate from Redlands Community College with an associate degree in nursing will



Langston University administration welcome Redlands Community College leadership to campus for the formal signing of an agreement to expand nursing education opportunities. Representing Langston University are Dr. Teressa Hunter, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Professions; Dr. Alonzo Peterson, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson, President; and representing Redlands are President Jena Marr; Annie Pearson, Vice President of Academic Affairs; and Dr. Jalelah Abdul-Raheem, head of the Redlands Nursing Program.

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be able to transfer all prerequisite courses in which they earned a grade of "C" or higher to Langston University. Additionally, they will be given Advanced Placement credit for up to 30 hours for classes such as Fundamentals of Nursing Practice, Childbearing Family Nursing and Psychosocial Nursing. These benefits will allow students to complete their BSN degrees more quickly and at an affordable price.

The agreement was first signed on Dec. 6 and was effective immediately, but the April 19 signing was a more formal event to commemorate the new partnership, which will benefit both Oklahoma nursing students and the nursing profession as a whole.

"We want to help increase the number of nurses who have earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree," said Dr. Teressa Hunter, the dean of Langston's School of Nursing and Health Professions. "According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 'BSN nurses are prized for their skills in critical thinking, leadership, case management, and health promotion, and their ability to

practice across various inpatient and outpatient settings.'

"I fully support their statement and want to help meet the goal of educating more RNs who have earned a BSN. This articulation agreement with Redlands Community College is a significant step to help meet this goal."

The School of Nursing and Health Professions offers students multiple ways to earn their BSN degrees. Students who prefer in-person instruction may take classes at Langston University's Langston or Tulsa campuses or at the University's Ardmore site. Students who are already registered nurses (RN) may also choose to complete their BSN online.

"We look forward to working with Langston as we continue to grow the nursing pipeline in the state," said Redlands President Jena Marr. "We have dedicated substantial resources to meeting the demand for nurses, particularly in rural and tribal areas. An associate degree in nursing is a great step in this direction, but we are excited to



Dr. Teresa Hunter, Dean of the Langston University School of Nursing and Health Professions gives a tour of the institution's nursing department facilities to Redlands Community College President Jena Marr and Dr. Jalelah Abdul-Raheem, head of the Redlands Nursing Program.

EXPAND

Continued from Page 10

partner with Langston to expand our efforts by supporting Redlands nursing graduates who want to pursue a bachelor's degree."

Langston University launched its online RN to BSN program in October 2023, allowing students to attend classes and complete assignments on a schedule that suits their needs with the convenience of not having to leave home. This format will also offer a personal connection within a supportive environment, which has decreased attrition, led to higher student satisfaction and enhanced learning. Students who are RNs can earn a BSN in 9 or 12 months, depending on their chosen course plan.

The deadline for applications for fall 2024 admission to the LU nursing program has passed, but the application deadline for spring admission is Oct. 1. The deadline to apply for admission to the Redlands' general nursing

program has passed, but the LPN-to-RN application opens Sept. 1.

Langston University is Oklahoma's only Historically Black College or University. Made up of six academic schools and offering 40 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, LU provides students with a world-class education that includes hands-on learning through impactful research and beneficial internships. LU has campuses in Langston, Oklahoma City and Tulsa as well as a site in Ardmore.

Redlands Community College provides a learner-centered environment committed to academic excellence strengthened through service and civic engagement. Redlands' rich academic environment provides opportunities for continuous growth through a challenging and rigorous curriculum enhanced by the application of research and technology, and the college engages in collaboration with public and private partners that reinforce the value of service to others and strengthen ethical development and civic engagement.



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Long Term Care Staffing Mandate Will Lead to Closures, Displaced Seniors, Without Help from Lawmakers

Care Providers Oklahoma today sounded the alarm on an impending crisis created by the Biden Administration's approval of a new staffing mandate. The new mandate requires nursing homes to significantly increase the number of nurse aides and registered nurses at each facility, without addressing 1) the financial impact of that new requirement or 2) the reality of an ongoing workforce shortage that has already led multiple facilities in Oklahoma to close.

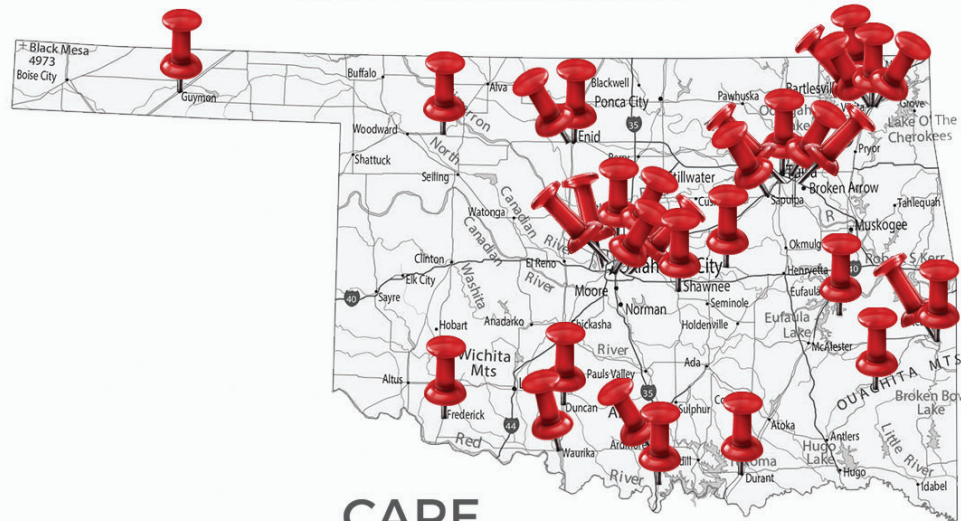
"For months, the White House has been signaling their plan is to mandate that nursing homes hire staffers that do not exist with money they do not have," said Care Providers Oklahoma President and CEO Steven Buck. "This is an impossible proposition that has gone

from a bad idea to a federal rule with the force of law. We are sounding the alarm that this policy will absolutely lead to closures, displaced residents, and the loss of quality care for elderly and vulnerable populations."

Care Providers Oklahoma estimates the new rule requires the average facility to hire two to three new registered nurses at a cost approaching \$17 per Medicaid resident per day. Total costs associated with new hires for Oklahoma's nursing homes will be as much as \$76 million annually.

Currently, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority already estimates that nursing homes are funded at \$44 per Medicaid resident per day under the projected cost-of-care. The Biden staffing mandate expands that funding gap to upwards of \$61

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Closures since Jan. 2022
Source: Oklahoma State Department of Health

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MADATE

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per Medicaid resident per day.

"Oklahoma homes have already been closing at a rapid clip because we are not funded at the cost-of-care," said Buck. "That is going to increase at an even faster rate, especially in rural areas, unless we can get some help."

See the Oklahoma State Department of Health's list of recent closures here.

Buck said that Care Providers Oklahoma was taking the following steps to protect its residents:

1. Asking the Oklahoma Legislature to increase funding to a level equal to the OHCA's projected cost-of-care;
2. Supporting the federal "Protecting Rural Seniors' Access to Care Act," a bill that would block implementation of the new mandate;
3. Educating the public on the devastating impact that the Biden mandate would have on Oklahoma's

vulnerable seniors.

Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt has already signed a letter, along with 14 other governors opposing the mandate.

Senator Lankford has also spoken out against the mandate and its impact on rural facilities.

Previously the Oklahoma Association of Health Care Providers (OAHCP), Care Providers Oklahoma represents the interests of more than 18,000 residents and 19,000 professionals that work in Oklahoma's long-term care facilities, including nursing homes, assisted living homes and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Care Providers Oklahoma's mission is to assist its members in providing the highest quality care to the seniors, individuals with disabilities and vulnerable Oklahomans who live in our facilities. We advocate for the enhancement of that care so that Oklahoma long-term care residents may live in the comfort and dignity they deserve.

New Stryker Mako Surgical Robot at INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital

A new surgical robot is on the cutting edge in advancing orthopedic surgery in Yukon. INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital announced this week that the Stryker Mako surgical robot will soon be successfully integrated into surgery, resulting in tangible benefits for patients.


Patients undergoing surgeries using the advanced technology can expect shorter hospital stays, minimized post-operative pain and faster return to daily lives.

"The Stryker Mako robotic system is transforming the way we as surgeons perform joint replacement procedures in an exciting way," said orthopedic surgeon Craig Rogers, D.O. "With this added technology, we are able to perform total hip replacement, total knee replacement and partial knee replacement with improved accuracy and less damage to surrounding tissues."

Key advantages of the new surgical robot include: Precision: The robot's high-definition imaging and precise instruments allow surgeons to perform intricate procedures with unparalleled accuracy, minimizing damage to surrounding tissues. Minimized Invasiveness: Smaller incisions mean reduced scarring and a quicker return to normal activities for patients. Enhanced Visualization: Surgeons benefit from 3D visualization, providing an immersive and detailed view of the surgical site. Improved Ergonomics: Surgeons can operate comfortably, reducing fatigue and enhancing their ability to focus during lengthy procedures.

"We are excited to offer the Stryker Mako SmartRobotics system as an option for our patients," said Teresa Gray, chief hospital executive at INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital. "This advanced technology demonstrates our commitment to providing the highest quality care to our patients as well as our continuing efforts to provide transformative surgical options for total knee, total hip and partial knee replacement patients."


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