

Norman Regional Launches “Taco Talks” Summit to Help Students Gain Crucial Skills

Read the NRH story on page 2

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Lindsey Birdwell, MSN, RN, CEN and Cassie Chaffin, RN, MSN - Norman Regional Health

Twenty-Three years after graduating, They're now leading a transformative summit.

story and photo by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

Twenty-three years ago when Cassie Chaffin, MSN, RN, CEN graduated from nursing school she had received plenty of instruction on what to expect when she stepped onto the nursing floor for the first time.

But how to get there, from preparing a resume to excelling in interviews to selecting the right first step into her new career was an afterthought.

When she became the supervisor of Norman Regional's Nurse Residency and Extern program she knew something needed to happen.

That's why she was

instrumental in helping the health system develop a summit for students to gain those crucial skills before they signed on to put their crucial skills into the hospital.

"There was nothing like this," Chaffin said of when she graduated. "I think this is a needed bridge and it's coming from the standpoint where we have recruiters actually looking at them as opposed to a professor saying "this is what we think they're looking for."

The bi-annual event will be held Tuesday, September 10 from 6-8 p.m. at Norman

Regional Moore, 700 S Telephone Rd in Moore.

Titled "Taco Talks: Transitioning into Nursing With Confidence" the event will feature free tacos, door prizes, the opportunity to network as well as free headshots you can use for your resume.

Topics included in the event will be finding the right nursing fit for your first or your next job. Resume building pointers along with interview prep and a leadership panel. The event is free.

Last year, the health system started offering a summit each semester for students to come prepare for finding their first job.

"The goal is to help students because we know it's an overwhelming time," Chaffin said. "Obviously, we would like them to land at Norman Regional but at the end of the day we want to make sure they have a successful transition into professional practice. That first year coming out of nursing school to practice as a professional is very, very

challenging in a lot of different ways."

"This gave us an opportunity to bring some light to that and to tell them to give themselves some grace."

Lindsay Birdwell's experience was much the same graduating in 2016.

"There was zero prep in terms of transitioning from that student role to that professional practice role," Birdwell said. "I'm really proud of Norman Regional taking the lead in our community and putting this out there with the mindset that yes, we want you to work for us but it's more important we are preparing our healthcare force for tomorrow."

Now, Norman Regional's Education Specialist and Student Coordinator, Birdwell, MSN, RN, CEN gets to offer students what she never had.

"This is amazing," she said. "It's an opportunity to get an insight from a recruiter's point of view of what's in your resume and what does that look like. A lot of students don't realize resumes

Continued next page



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Lindsey Birdwell, MSN, RN, CEN (left) and Cassie Chaffin, RN, MSN are two of the organizers behind Norman Regional Health System's yearly student summer coming up on September 10.

SUMMIT

Continued from Page 2

are read by software now so if you're not including the right things in there you could have a great candidate getting missed."

From a hiring standpoint, Eric Shaw, Norman Regional's Talent Acquisitions Manager, sees lots of benefits.

"We are at the job fairs and the colleges talking to students and we have heard them ... that there are things that aren't covered in their courses," Shaw said. "We talk about what their resume looks like, what experience they may have and how that may translate into a medical professional's resume.

It's kind of the do's and the don'ts. I think it gives them a leg up on their peers as far as how to conduct themselves on paper and in the interview process."

"We give them a lot of feedback of what you should look for yourself. You're in demand, you're in the driver's seat right now."

For more information you can contact Birdwell at 405-307-3618 or email her at lbirdwell@nrh-ok.com

"It's getting the message across that you can do this and regardless of where you land the more prepared you are and knowing the right questions to ask of how you will be supported (is important)," she said.

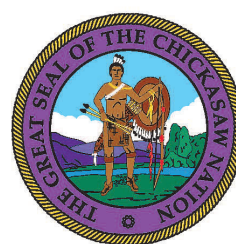
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A Helping Hand RN Finds Solutions in Life

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Being able to provide clients the care they need enriches the life of Amanda Tanner, RN, home-care manager for the Valir PACE field staff in Oklahoma City.

"There's so many of them who need help and they don't have the resources," Tanner said. "Hospice led me here because there are so many things people need before they get to that time of life."

Tanner became a registered nurse in 2017 after graduating from Brown Mackie College in Oklahoma City. She worked in labor and delivery for multiple years. Some of the babies passed away which led her to hospice. She felt drawn to help the senior population stay in their home when in critical need for assistance.

Tanner joined the team at Valir PACE in March and has since helped vulnerable people

through some of the toughest times of their lives.

"Someone reached out to me and gave me information on PACE. And I'd never heard of PACE and thought it intriguing with all the services we provide," she said. "I wish people knew about all of the resources that are available."

Valir PACE helps navigate about 360 clients, ages 55 and older, to be the strongest they can. Some patients are in their 90s. They learn how to remain safe at their personal best.

PACE stands for Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. Valir PACE utilizes a team-based care approach providing a personalized, comprehensive healthcare plan to those without access to quality healthcare. It provides a clinic and gym and offers speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, medicine, and counseling under the guidance of



Amanda Tanner, RN, home-care manager for Valir PACE, understands the struggles of impoverished Oklahomans.

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doctors, nurses, social workers, and therapists. A daycare center offers meals for those in need. A clothing pantry is made possible by community donations.

"It is an indefinite experience they can be on until they pass," she explained.

Tanner likes the all-encompassing atmosphere of Valir PACE. Some clients of Valir PACE have lived in fear that they will not be able to afford groceries.

Poverty had left them with few options of choosing between food, medicine, rent, and daily living expenses.

"We have been able to facilitate and find them housing," she said. "We do have a food pantry and we provide meals."

As a field manager she instructs all the LPNs, RNs, and home-care staff that visit participants in their homes when they are not feeling well.

"We have RN case managers that manage a set number of patients and talk through things with them," Tanner said. "If they feel we need to send somebody out, they'll let me know and I'll send one of our field staff out, too."

Social workers are available for assistance. The home-care staff goes out to help clients bathe or shower. Home-care assistants also provide housekeeping for participants.

Tanner admires the compassion and care of the

Continued next page

TANNER

Continued from Page 4

"They care very deeply for each of these participants. They've gotten to know them," Tanner said.

Some older participants will tell stories of when they were in the military. Valir PACE gives them opportunities to develop friendships. They come to sit in the facilities and enjoy hanging out, Tanner continued. People seem to open-up more to the world.

"It's enriching to me that we can help them through the phases of life that they're in," she added. "It is nice to see them be like family."

Tanner said her experiences as a nurse has enlightened her about the acute hardship experiences people endure.

"They can hide many things and you just have to be compassionate and care for them how you would want to be cared for. Some of these people are experiencing some of the hardest times of their life," Tanner said. "It just makes you go about your

day differently by thinking how you could help others. It's so sad because there's so many things we could do for people, and PACE itself could provide things for many people to help them struggle less."

Some participants have only Social Security or not even that.

"So many don't have much at all, and just seeing them struggle is heartbreaking. And I wish more people knew what we have to offer because we could help so many more."

Her inspiration to continue at Valir PACE comes from the participants themselves, she explained.

"If they can wake up every morning and just keep moving forward, that can help motivate me to do the same because they are struggling a lot more than I am," Tanner said. "If they can do it, then I should be able to as well."

Tanner has three daughters who are a rejuvenating influence in her life, too.

For more information about VALIR PACE: <https://valir.com/pace>



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NURSE TALK



What is the source of your inspiration at work?

"Making others happy and helping others. Being there when family can't always be there."



Khrishelle Queen, CNA

"I've always been energetic and bubbly with people and to help others."



Ama'ri Majors, CNA

"I love taking care of people because you never know what people are going through."



Tina Collier, CNA



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Commemorating Success Hospital Group Celebrates Five Successful Years

story by James Coburn, Staff Writer

INTEGRIS Health Community Hospitals recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of its facilities with The End of Summer Bash. The model for each facility was built around bringing health care closer to patients in the communities that they live, said Chris McAuliffe, CEO.

INTEGRIS Health Community Hospitals strives for shorter wait times, efficiency, and a more personalized care approach. INTEGRIS Health recognized a need for the community hospitals to offload their ER patients and create a better patient flow. Eight inpatient beds are in each of their four locations at 4801 SE 15th St. Del City, OKC West at 3000 S. Rockwell, 1401 SW 34th St. in Moore, and Council Crossing at 9417 N. Council Road. Each of those locations is partnered with full-service INTEGRIS Health partners for any necessary continued care.

The End of Summer Bash at INTEGRIS Health Community Hospital at Council Crossing was a casual meet and greet occasion with food, three individual tours of the inpatient unit.

Participants viewed the emergency department to understand its capabilities as well as the Telehealth system of 24/7 physician patient care.

It's healthcare in your neighborhood. Sometimes larger hospitals have a few patients that struggle with finding parking and getting in the door. But at INTEGRIS Health Community Hospitals, the average time in-and-out is an hour.

Patients are seen and screened promptly after entering the door. A patient needing surgery can be stabilized and transferred to an INTEGRIS partner, full service hospital as soon as possible.

"We get the medical team started. A physician comes and evaluates the patient for whatever care needs to be done," McAuliffe said.

Chief Nursing Officer Samantha Mitchell has been serving INTEGRIS Health Community



Hospitals for five and a half years and brings 34 years of experience to her leadership role.

"It was really exciting to open new buildings and see everything come from the ground floor up."

She oversees about 80 nurses who are part of the 180 employees at INTEGRIS Health Community Hospitals.

"I admire their compassion and their perseverance," Mitchell said. "Our unique model of nursing and staffing provides the opportunity for those nurses to be more one-on-one with the patient. So, they get to spend more time with the patient and their families.

Nursing became an avenue for Mitchell to help people and be involved in different aspects of healthcare.

Mitchell is well prepared with a Master of Science in Nursing degree earned from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences.

"I consider myself a servant leader," she continued. "I'm truly here to serve the people I've been fortunate enough to oversee."

Nurses present creative ideas and Mitchell is not afraid to try something to impact the patient

experience.

"I think when you do that and you include the front-line staff, you get their eye in - you get their creativity - you get their engagement which all results in higher quality of care for the patients," Mitchell said.

INTEGRIS Health provides many educational opportunities for the nursing staff. Some is as simple as watching a computer model to someone going shift to shift to discuss new products and processes.

"We even partner with our community such as EMS, Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, to provide educational opportunities for our staff," she added. "And we listen to them. We let them tell us what their interested in learning."

Additionally, INTEGRIS Health Community Hospitals reaches out to caring people to attract more RNs to the profession. The nursing profession ranks at the top of respected professions in the US.

Mitchell said the challenging years of COVID marked a change the nursing community.

"I think we as nurses who are still in the profession need to get back to some grass roots. We want this to be seen as a profession, as a career, as a calling verses a job," she said

The pandemic taught nurses

how resourceful they can be, Mitchell said. Being a smaller hospital, INTEGRIS Health Community Hospitals was still able to care for seriously ill patients while protecting the staff and facing a high learning curve.

"We can truly band together as a team with ways to treat new patients. We were all learning across the world how to best approach these patients, how to involve their families," she said. "There was a time during COVID when isolation was a huge issue. And we want to make sure that families are still plugged into their loved ones because we know patients are going to heal faster when they have their loved ones involved with them."

Mitchell believes there is always a glimmer of hope. There are always people performing acts of kindness for someone else, Mitchell said.

"And for me personally - I'm resilient. I've been able to overcome many challenges in my nursing career and led the team during the pandemic when we didn't really know what that looked like, what that meant, how patients were going to respond, what the treatment was. And we were able to bond together and figure it out one day at a time," she said.

Success is something to celebrate.



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Second White Coat Ceremony Celebrates Growing OSU Nursing Program

Oklahoma State University's nursing program celebrated the start of a new academic year on Friday, Aug. 16, with its second White Coat Ceremony, which recognized 85 students beginning the professional nursing program, the largest cohort yet for the growing department.

"This official White Coat Ceremony is used to symbolize the start of your education into the science and art of medicine," said Dr. Students holding White Coats Tonya Hammer, head of the School of Community Health Sciences, Counseling and Counseling Psychology. "So, when you put on your white coat, wear it with pride as you are not only representing Oklahoma State University, and furthermore, the nursing profession, but you are also representing the start of this stage of your education and the type of provider you want to be."



College of Education and Human Sciences Dean Jon Pedersen noted the importance of the nursing program.

"The nursing program is critical to us in the college, the university and the state," Dr. Pedersen said. "We are proud to have this program as a part of the College of Education and Human Sciences and look forward to its continued growth."

Dr. Alana Cluck, director of the OSU nursing program, congratulated the class of 2026 and led them in reciting the



Nursing Oath, officially beginning their path toward becoming licensed health care professionals.

The White Coat Ceremony is a longstanding tradition in medical education, marking students' transition from general education to focused professional training. At OSU, the ceremony is the culmination of a rigorous admissions process, with students completing prerequisites and an exam before being accepted into the final two years of the nursing program.

Nursing student receiving White Coat

Once admitted, OSU nursing students study and gain hands-on experience, including two years of in-lab simulations and clinical rotations focused on critical care, medical-surgical nursing, pediatrics, obstetrics, community and leadership.

"They spend time in the lab learning and practicing skills, as well as working through simulation patient care scenarios with manikins and virtual reality," Cluck said. "Clinical rotations include long-term care facilities and hospital settings."

The 85 students recognized Friday represent the second cohort in OSU's growing nursing program, which welcomed its

inaugural class in 2023. Cluck said enrollment in the program is expected to reach 300 students by its third year.

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<p>Nurse Tech - Emergency Department - Nights ☆</p> <p>Oklahoma City, OK, United States • Posting Dates 07/25/2024</p> <hr/> <p>Nurse Tech - Emergency Department - Nights - INTEGRIS Health Southwest Medical Center</p> <p> Click Here For More Information Or To Apply (Digital Edition) Or Visit https://integrishhealth.org/careers</p>	<p>Nurse Technician - Adult Psych - PRN ☆</p> <p>Spencer, OK, United States • Posting Dates 07/30/2024</p> <hr/> <p>Nurse Tech - Adult Psych - INTEGRIS Mental Health Spencer - PRN - Days</p> <p> Click Here For More Information Or To Apply (Digital Edition) Or Visit https://integrishhealth.org/careers</p>	<p>Registered Nurse - L&D - Nights ☆</p> <p>Edmond, OK, United States • Posting Dates 08/19/2024</p> <hr/> <p>Registered Nurse - L&D - Nights - INTEGRIS Health Edmond - \$10,000 Sign On Bonus</p> <p> Click Here For More Information Or To Apply (Digital Edition) Or Visit https://integrishhealth.org/careers</p>

HSC College of Nursing Earns Texas Board of Nursing Approvals for Newest Degree Programs

The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth's College of Nursing recently received final approvals from the Texas Board of Nursing for its new traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs.

Board members unanimously voted to approve the two new programs. The traditional BSN program is slated to begin in January while students in the new MSN program will start in August 2025. Applications for the traditional BSN are open.

"This approval by the Texas Board of Nursing is a huge milestone for our two new programs," said Cindy Weston, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CHSE, FAANP, FAAN, founding dean of the College of Nursing. "Students have already expressed interest in both the traditional BSN and the MSN, and communities in Texas are in desperate need for additional nurses and mental health practitioners. We are grateful that the board recognizes this urgency and are honored to do our part to improve health care access across the state with highly skilled, practice-ready nurses."

The BSN will be a 20-month undergraduate program. Students will complete two years of pre-requisite courses at a university or community college prior to admission to the HSC program. Once enrolled in HSC's College of Nursing, students will take focused courses along with hands-on clinical experiences to earn their BSN.

The MSN in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner will be a 47-credit-hour, graduate-level program for nurses with a BSN who want to become a mental health nurse practitioner. Students may opt for a full-time



program, completing the program in six semesters. A part-time option also will be available, extending the program to eight semesters.

Applications for the MSN in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs will open Nov. 1.

In 2023, the UNT System Board of Regents approved the creation of the HSC College of Nursing and in February greenlighted the traditional BSN and the MSN in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges also have approved the programs.

In addition, the College of Nursing's first degree program



will start this month for students enrolled in the MSN in Nursing Practice Innovation. The College of Nursing also will offer a Registered Nurse to BSN program starting in January, and students may now apply. The next cohort of all College of Nursing degree programs will start in August 2025 with applications opening Nov. 1.

The Texas Board of Nursing

regulates the safe practice of nursing in Texas, providing approval for more than 200 nursing education programs and issuing licenses to more than 27,000 nurses a year by examination to new nursing school graduates.

To learn more about HSC's College of Nursing, visit www.unthsc.edu/nursing.

OU Nursing Students Join Hospitals in Norman, Duncan

Students at the University of Oklahoma have continued to answer the call to fill the statewide nurse shortage.

The Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing is Oklahoma's largest nursing program. It spans five sites: the University of Oklahoma's Tulsa Schusterman Center; Lawton, housed on the Cameron University campus; Oklahoma City's Health Sciences; and two sites that hold the special designation of being embedded within two regional hospitals – Duncan Regional Hospital and Norman Regional Health System.

The strategy has paid off. In just three cycles of the expanded enrollment program implemented in 2022, each hospital has helped educate, train and retain a portion of each class's cohorts.

"The partnership has been mutually beneficial," said Brittni McGill, chief nursing officer at Norman Regional Health System. "We have collaborated on ways to smoothly transition students from the academic experience to the professional setting."

Recently, Norman Regional has added seven nursing graduates to its staff. Claire LaReau and Samantha Stevenson are two examples of the success story of this initiative to retain home-grown talent within the College of Nursing's program.

LaReau, who is from Norman, knew early on during her college career at OU that nursing was the route she needed to follow. She desired to have more of a day-to-day approach with her patients. Once she became entrenched within the Norman Regional Health System as a nursing student, she experienced first-hand what was to be her calling.

"The program prepared me through exposure to different clinical experiences and the amazing professors the College of Nursing has at its disposal," said LaReau. "I got to see a lot of variety and teamwork at Norman Regional, which ultimately helped me decide to apply there for further employment (following graduation)."

LaReau's experience shows the benefits of easing the inevitable hurdle many college graduates face. LaReau's experience is also shared by Stevenson, who came to OU from Eufaula, Oklahoma and has since adopted Norman as her home after completing her clinicals with the Norman Regional Health System, where she will begin her career.



Stevenson's career in nursing seemed certain early on. As a child, she watched both her grandmother and aunt go through nursing school together, an experience she describes as inspiring. Once she got to nursing school, she knew she was in the place she needed to be.

"The College of Nursing program prepared me for the rewarding and challenging role of nursing," said Stevenson. "Between the rigorous curriculum and the hands-on learning, I felt fully prepared graduating as a registered nurse."

"Norman has become my home," Stevenson added. "Learning within the community has provided me firsthand knowledge of the prevalent health issues and the needs of the population I now serve."

These testimonials are at the heart of the mission of the College of Nursing and the communities it hopes to serve within its five sites.

"The culture, the opportunity to learn and grow, the facilities are state-of-the-art, and nurses are well supported," said McGill. "This is an innovative collaboration that could be replicated in other colleges and disciplines."

Success has been synonymous with the College of Nursing's partnership with the Norman hospital. The program in Norman has only 32 spots available. This year resulted in a waiting list.

"Our next opportunity is [address] how to expand," McGill said.

Southwestern Oklahoma has also been a focal point of this collaborative effort to address in-state nursing needs. The College of Nursing's site at Duncan Regional Hospital has also

seen positive trends in the education and retention of nursing students.

"Duncan Regional Hospital has benefited from this partnership in so many ways," said Kristen Webb, chief nursing officer for the hospital. "We have increased our ability to recruit graduate nurses to work in Duncan."

OU has been present in Duncan since 2007. Thanks to the relationship and collaboration, the hospital has eliminated the use of contract (temporary) registered nurses they had previously used to fill vacancies since 2021.

Gavin Kizarr, a recent graduate from OU's program in Duncan, grew up in the area. Kizarr says his mom, a nurse at the local cancer center, likes to say he is following in her footsteps.

"But truly, I liked science and math and loved helping people," said Kizarr. "I think that's why I chose nursing school."

Kizarr also acknowledges that participating in a nursing program onsite where he could complete his clinicals was a huge jumpstart for his career.

"I think the ability to serve a community that raised me up feels great," he said. "I'm happy that my education allows me to help people in my community."

According to Webb, Duncan's employed nurses have had invaluable access to professional growth and engagement between the new staff and the College of Nursing community. This culture has led to more recently graduated registered nurses (RNs) mentoring nursing students at the hospital, developing a pipeline to sustain the continued

growth of highly qualified nurses.

Eight of the 13 nursing school graduates in Duncan were hired by the hospital. 2025's outlook is equally promising, with eight more students pledging their commitment to Duncan Regional Hospital upon graduation.

"This is very exciting and a much-needed infusion of well-qualified nursing workforce for the Duncan community," said Webb. "Those who live in southwest Oklahoma and desire to become a registered nurse can attend a top-notch nursing program without having to relocate to another community or drive hours to attend school."

As time goes on, the OU College of Nursing's relationship with its five sites, and specifically with the regional hospitals embedded in the program in Norman and Duncan, are serving the needs of the state, training the next generation of nurses and helping ensure Oklahomans have quality healthcare close to home.

"The Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing embraces the strategic goal of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences to be a leader in the development of the healthcare workforce," said Melissa Craft, Ph.D., interim dean for the college. "Collaborations with our community partners, such as Norman Regional Health System and Duncan Regional Hospital, provide a catalyst for building the workforce not only specific to Oklahoma but also specific for those communities. The opportunity for students to attend an OU College of Nursing extended site in the region they want to work and live post-graduation is an asset for the student and the community."

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