

## Leader of Leaders Chief Nursing Officer Sets Example

*Read David's story on page 2*

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# David A. Allen, RN

## From Military Major to Influential Nurse Leader: Inspiring the Next Generation of Nurses

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Inspiring leadership means role modeling the leadership one expects, said David A. Allen, RN, chief nursing officer at OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center.

"My talent is leading people. My talent is galvanizing people and influencing individuals to do stuff they didn't think they could do," Allen said.

In his more than 90 days of leadership there, Allen is responsible for all the clinical operations along with the chief medical officer on two campuses with 550 patients. More than 1600 staff members report directly to him through his team members.

"I have the largest span of control in the hospital," Allen said.

He was first in his family to earn a degree and wanted to set an example for his children. Allen

entered the military, five years in the United States Air Force and 17 years in the US Army before retiring as a Major.

He earned his Doctor of Nursing Practice at the University of Alabama. His Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree was earned at The University of Nebraska Medical Center. In 2015, Allen earned advanced practice nurse credentials at The University of Texas Health Sciences Center in San Antonio. He will speak with nurses about the differences between them.

"I couldn't be a chief nurse just because I've got a doctorate degree. The RN behind my name is what allows me to be the chief nurse," he said. "The academic preparation may help me get the job."

Allen is in the process of reintroducing the concept of shared governance with the

nursing staff. The last time he was a bedside nurse was 2002. But he remains trained.

"And so, where shared governance comes in is I don't want to push down because I haven't technically done their job in years. So, I want those individuals to tell me what they need from a shared governance standpoint, what they need to be successful on the floor," Allen emphasized.

Nurses join OU Health because of the quality of the bedside nurses working there, he said. They know that nurses have a degree of autonomous practice.

"So, really what you want to do is give them parameters that they can function in," Allen noted.

There isn't too much he hasn't done as a nurse. He is a critical care nurse by training. And Allen has overseen every aspect of nursing during his 25 years of hospital service.

"They've got to have professionalism. And then there's got to be selfless service and compassion," Allen said. "I think what you see in the nursing field is an understanding that

this is more than a job - it's professionalism," he said. "...The difference is, we get to add to the body of the profession by writing articles, by sharing all of our experiences. We need to grow that profession and be better."

Unsuccessful hospitals have folks that come for a job. They clock in and clock out. They won't do anything different above and beyond what they're supposed to do, he continued.

"If we're asking our staff to do something, we must do something," he explained. "If we ask our staff to trust a certain way, we can't come in and not trust a certain way," Allen said.

Leadership means being transparent. The staff needs to know leaders are genuine in what they do, Allen said. He often tells patients and the nursing staff about being a retired Army officer.

"We just tell it like it is," he will say. "Folks pick up on that, and when they know that you care about them and you're genuine, you build that foundation and relationship."

He influences the next

Continued next page



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David A. Allen, RN, chief nursing officer at OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center, is proactive in enabling excellence.

## ALLEN

Continued from Page 2

generation of nurses, not that they need to be like Dave Allen. He guides them to reach their full potential.

Recently, he met a patient who had been hospitalized for 50-60 days. It was his birthday. The staff got with dietary and made sure the gentleman his favorite meal and had cake.

"There's an automatic thought that when you come to the hospital, there's things we're

going to do that you shouldn't have to worry about," he said.

Allen said it's OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center's job to do things exceeding a patient's expectations. Little things in life like getting them a cake or asking what they'd like to do when not hospitalized, brings a moment of peace, and takes their mind away from the stress of being sick.

Allen enjoys cooking when at home. He likes to golf and spend time with his three grandchildren.

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# Burned Out?

## Might be your EHR

story and photo by  
Bobby Anderson, RN, Staff Writer

In 35 years as a nurse, Mary Russell says her most fluid Electronic Health Record experience occurred as a Navy nurse in the midst of the Iraq War, caring for combat casualties.

"We received a huge influx of Marines from Tikrit, Fallujah and other battles and we had an EHR that was stable, up and ready to go," Russell said. "Documenting their complex wounds and injuries was pretty straight forward and seamless and retained in a database that would help them long-term, down the road.

"It was quick, easy and intuitive and we had other nurses onboarding rapidly to supplement our staff and it was very simple for them to adopt and learn and document accurately. It was a good time as far as EHR."

Back in civilian life, Russell found that EHR is a four-letter word for most nurses. Between outages, lack of education and scheduled downtimes, Russell says EHRs are contributing to the growing problem of nursing burnout.

Russell currently serves as the senior director of clinical implementation at CliniComp, International, a provider of seamless EHR systems across the globe.

According to KLAS Research's 2024 Arch Collaborative Nursing Guidebook, nearly one-third of nurses experiencing symptoms of burnout cited their electronic health records as a contributor.

Burned-out nurses are 192% more likely to leave their organization within the next two years compared to those who don't report experiencing burnout.

The 2024 Arch Collaborative Nursing Guidebook is based on the feedback of around 75,000 nurses who have measured their EHR satisfaction via the KLAS Arch Collaborative over the last three years.

KLAS is a research and insights firm on a global mission to improve healthcare delivery by amplifying the provider's voice.

The research directly represents the provider voice and acts as a catalyst for improving vendor performance.

Whatever EHR a health system uses, Russell says stability is the key.

"Honestly, I think it's No. 1," she said. "We come on duty and we're here for a 12-hour shift and we're documenting all day. We're in and out of that medical record numerous amounts of times. I need to know I have something that's reliable, when I click there I'm going to get the expected outcome of that click."

Russell also stressed that she believes scheduled downtime is a system failure.

"There's no need to schedule downtime. It should never go down in my opinion," she said.

Even though nurse satisfaction with their health records has increased over the past three years, they still report insufficient training and system reliability problems that could contribute to burnout, according to the report.

Training is also key to nurse satisfaction with their EHRs, but many nurses say their education was lacking — nearly 40% reported their ongoing EHR education wasn't sufficient, according to KLAS. Forty-two percent of respondents reported their initial training wasn't up to snuff, while 32% said it wasn't specific to their workflow.

Poor EHR reliability and response time create significant barriers to nurse EHR satisfaction, and these barriers must be addressed in order to create a foundation for nurse EHR success. 40% of nurses feel their EHR doesn't have the expected response time, and 23% feel it isn't reliable.

Earlier this year, KLAS announced its best in class EHRs based on



Mary Russell, RN, senior director of Clinical Services at Clinicomp, International says your facility's electronic health records system is probably stressing you out. *Photo provided*

user feedback.

Epic was recognized as the top Overall Software Suite, finishing ahead of MEDITECH and Oracle Health.

This marks the fourteenth consecutive year that Epic has earned the award. Additionally, Epic won fifteen other Best in KLAS awards in various market segments.

athenahealth won the Overall Physician Practice Vendor award, which is reserved for vendors whose ambulatory EHR and practice management systems are ranked in multiple size groups for independent practices.

Russell said companies should pay attention to the level of burnout their nurses are experiencing before it's too late.

According to a 2024 study by NSI Nursing Solutions, the average cost of turnover for a bedside RN is \$52,350 - leading the average organization to lose \$6.6-\$10.5 million per year due to nurse burnout.

Education is key.

Onboarding EHR education most commonly refers to the EHR training offered to newly hired clinicians during their first 90 days at an organization. Nurses who are satisfied with their initial training report a 135% higher agreement rate that their EHR is easy to learn.

However, 42% of nurses feel their initial training was insufficient, and 32% report their training wasn't specific to their workflow.

"If training isn't conducted by registered nurses that understand the workflow and complexities of the shift ... we know those are not effective," Russell said. "It's critical nurses are engaged in all levels of training.

"You have to pull nurses from the bedside. They can not learn and care for a patient simultaneously and try to chart. It's ineffective and it does lead to additional stress, which leads to dissatisfaction which leads to burnout which leads to leaving."





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# NURSE TALK



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*"I watched Gladiator 2 recently, and it was better than I expected for a sequel 15 years later."*



Remi Gutierrez, RN

*"The one I want to see is Bonhoeffer. I heard it's good."*



Abe Peters, RN

*"Wicked is the last one I saw. It's good. It's a musical I saw with my girlfriend."*



Patrick Spain, LPN



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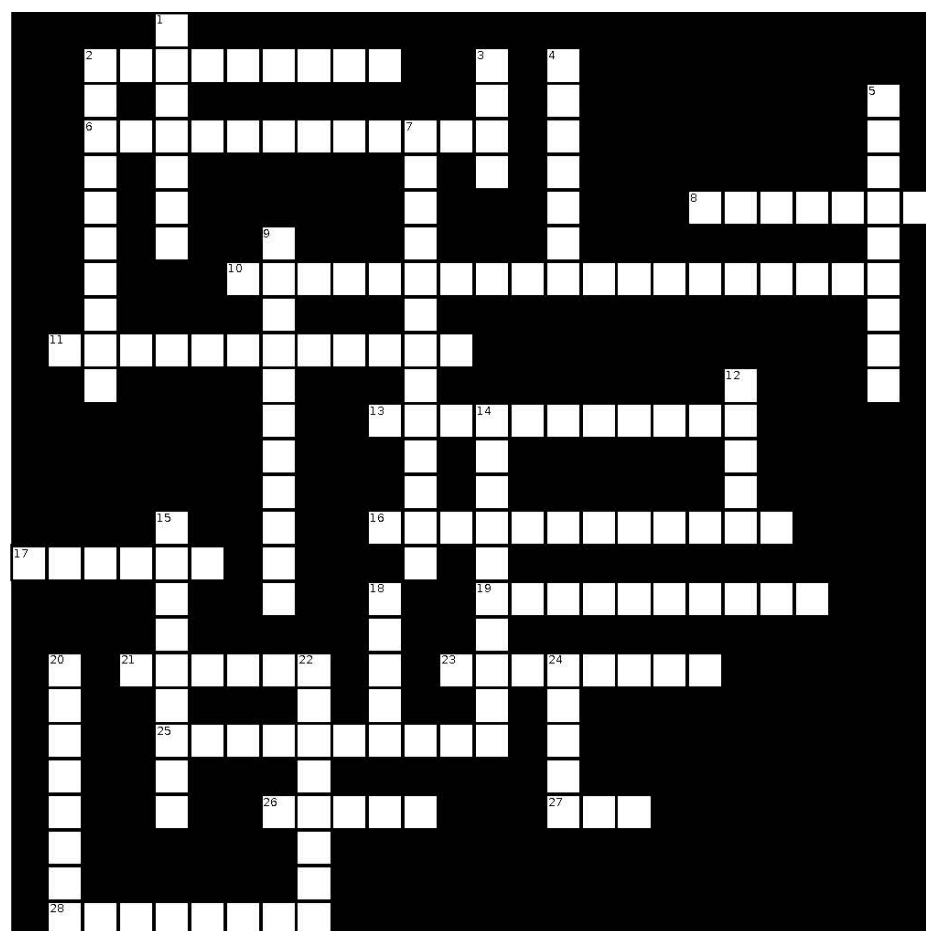
## OKNT CROSSWORD: INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

**Across**

- 2. Type of mask used for droplet precautions.
- 6. VRE is the abbreviation for Vancomycin-Resistant \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Antiviral used to treat influenza illness or exposure
- 10. Respiratory protection required for entry in airbourne isolation rooms (5 words)
- 11. Use this hand hygiene method for C DIFF
- 13. An example of high-touch surface in patient's environment
- 16. \_\_\_\_\_ healthcare workers can spread the flu to coworkers and patients
- 17. C DIFF \_\_\_\_\_ are known to survive at least 90 days in the environment
- 19. Pandemic flu is caused by this type of influenza virus.
- 21. Contact precautions require \_\_\_\_\_ upon entering the pagient's room
- 23. Precautions used for known/suspected TB
- 25. Preferred specimen for detecting VRE colonization
- 26. This infection causes

**Down**

- 1. Precautions used for C DIFF
- 2. Vaccination, Hand Hygiene, PPE use, and safe handling of soiled linen and sharps are \_\_\_\_\_ measures
- 3. Methicillin-resistant staph aureus abbrev
- 4. You should wash your hands for at least this many seconds
- 5. An infection that requires droplet precautions
- 7. Skin prep agent for line insertion
- 9. Most effective measure to prevent spread of infection
- 12. Number of negative speciments required to D/C airborne precautions
- 14. Healthcare workers should recieve this series of vaccines
- 15. Hepatitis A and C DIFF are spread by this route
- 18. Most common site of MRSA colonization
- 20. Tamiflu must be started within 48 hours of flu \_\_\_\_\_ to be effective
- 27. When decontaminating hands using a waterless alcohol product, hands should be rubbed together until they feel. \_\_\_\_\_
- 28. Type of precautions which assumes everyone is infected



22. A patient with salmonella gastroenteritis requires this type of precautions

24. Hepatitis B & C, and HIV are spread by this



# Leveraging Technology to Create a Safer Workplace

story by

Bobby Anderson RN, Staff Writer

Rhonda Collins, DNP, RN, FAAN, has spent 35 years in the nursing profession, helping innovate change along the way.

But admittedly, there are things in the nursing profession she wondered would ever change.

A decade ago, she was asked to speak at an Ohio nursing association event and found her answer.

"They said they really wanted me to speak on workplace violence. That was my first indication that this conversation was becoming formalized because in the past it was sort of one of those things we all just accepted behind the scenes as this is what happens. It's your patient so you can't respond to it, you just have to absorb it," Collins said.

"If we ever reported that a patient had been aggressive or violent towards us the first question asked was 'what did you do?' It just caused nurses to not really want to talk about it."

Over the last five years, Collins has noticed an uptick not only in the willingness to talk about the problem but organizations wanting to do something about it.

It's one of the reasons she's so passionate about her current role as chief nursing officer at Kontakt.io.

As the leader in Inpatient Journey Analytics, Kontakt.io optimizes processes and resources by revealing how patients move through a health system.

Using AI and other technologies, Kontakt.io helps healthcare organizations uncover waste, streamline capacity, improve workflows, and help staff and patients feel seen and valued.

Since 2013, Kontakt.io has provided solutions to more 32,000 end users, through more than 1,200 partners, and deployed more than four million devices in the field.

Collins began her nursing career more than three decades ago in Labor and Delivery, caring for high-risk mothers and their babies where emotions often run high.

After 10 years in direct care for patients, she assumed leadership positions in several hospitals across Texas. She was Vice President for Women and Children's Services at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, Texas when she made the decision to enter the healthcare business industry as a clinical

subject matter expert.

Like most nurses, workplace violence is a subject she knows all too well.

"Nurses are speaking out that they don't feel safe coming to work," Collins said. "It relates to an increase in job stress, decreased job satisfaction, absenteeism, sleep disorders, fatigue, PTSD, it just goes on and on."

"Working in that strain is something that is not tolerable for long periods of time."

Seven out of 10 nurses report experiencing violence at work. The American Nurses Association cites that one out of four nurses has experienced an actual event of workplace violence.

So, what do we do about it?

That's one of the questions Collins' company is trying to answer, with the help of technology.

Wearable Bluetooth low energy tags are one way. The tags allow for room-level location and real-time movement tracking, allowing security to locate and rapidly respond to an incident.

The adjoining software shows distribution of alert events by location and auto generates event reports while also measuring response times.

"I believe more administrations are paying more attention to it because nurse staffing is such an issue," she said. "(In the past) there were certain go-to strategies that always paid off. That is not happening anymore, and nurses are demanding a change in environment, a seat at the table, a voice in what happens to them and a complete intolerance for this kind of behavior in the workplace."

Collins also advocates for health systems taking a more active role in assessing patients for violence as they come into the hospital.

"I do believe in general that we live in an angry society," Collins said. "It has culminated over the last few years. Covid exacerbated that. Our politics exacerbated that, and people come to the hospital arguably on one of the worst days of their lives."

"I think we are finally addressing it. Let's assess the patient, let's put the policies and procedures in place. Then we put in place digital notification solutions where nurses can press a button to summon help immediately, when policies and protocols are not enough."



Rhonda Collins, DNP, RN, FAAN, is chief nursing officer of Kontakt.io, a company focusing on keeping nurses safer at work.

## ANA Celebrates The Power of Nurses: Nurses Take the #1 Spot on Gallup's Annual Poll for 23 Years Straight

**The Results of Gallup's Most Honest & Ethical Professions Poll Cites Nurses as The Nation's Most Trusted**

The American Nurses Association (ANA), the premier organization representing the nation's more than 5 million nurses, congratulates nurses for ranking #1 in Gallup Poll's annual Most Honest and Ethical Professions Poll for the 23rd consecutive year. The American public rated nurses the highest among a host of professionals, including military officers, pharmacists, and medical doctors.

"As the president of the American Nurses Association with 29 years of experience in nursing, this is a special, yet humbling honor. Every year, the results of this poll simply amaze me. For 23 years running, the American public continues to trust nurses not only as the most honest and ethical within healthcare, but across industries and professions," said ANA President Jennifer Mensik Kennedy, PhD, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN. "This acknowledgement is an undeniable reflection of the positive impact nurses have on the patients they diligently care for and on the health care system they support. What nurses do every day is nothing short of incredible. As the representative of the interests of nation's more than 5 million nurses, I give my word that we will continue to vigorously advocate for meaningful policies and solutions to the issues that inhibit a healthy workplace culture and quality patient care delivery throughout 2025 and beyond."

According to the poll, 76% of Americans rated nurses' honesty and ethical standards as "very high" or "high." The second highest-rated profession, Grade-school teachers, with 61% viewing them highly.

ANA will continue to advocate for, support and work on behalf of all nurses across this nation. Additionally, continuing to prioritize the education of the public about who nurses are, what they do, and how their vast knowledge and indisputable expertise touches and improves the lives of Americans everywhere.



(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# RSU Building Legacy of Compassionate Nurses

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

With a history of over 40 years of academic excellence, RSU's nursing program provides academic rigor and a reputation that gives RSU graduates an edge in the competitive job market. Upon graduation, RSU nursing graduate NCLEX pass rates exceed the state and national average. Approximately 95% of students report having obtained an RN position before graduation. These outcomes are credited to a quality curriculum, outstanding students, and a caring and dedicated faculty. RSU's nursing faculty have more than 130 years of experience in both academic teaching and practical experience. Several low and high-fidelity laboratories are utilized to provide hands-on learning so that students are well prepared to deliver safe, high-quality nursing care in a variety of settings.

For those interested in furthering their education and increasing their employment viability in the nursing field, the RN2BSN online nursing program offers them the chance to earn their BSN in a fully online format. Registered nurses who currently have an associate degree in nursing can complete their BSN in as few as three semesters. The program has start dates in both January and August.

The program provides nursing students with the means to earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), while the online format gives students the flexibility to accommodate their busy schedules. RSU's nationally recognized and fully accredited RN2BSN online program offers real-world practical experience, affordability and flexible coursework that builds upon a student's experience as an RN, preparing to advance them at their workplace, through a graduate program or even to help them find a new position.

In April 2023, Saint Francis Health System and Rogers State University announced a partnership to educate students in the nursing program at Saint Francis Hospital in Tulsa, with Saint Francis serving as an extended campus of the university where students can spend their final three semesters at Saint Francis in Tulsa as they earn their BSN from RSU. This partnership allows RSU to increase its capacity to educate nurses, with the first cohort beginning their time on campus at Saint Francis Hospital in January 2024. The opening of the extended campus at Saint Francis, as well as the recent addition of a spring cohort on RSU's main campus in Claremore, has significantly increased the capacity to graduate outstanding nurses from the RSU School of Nursing and Health Professions.

RSU consistently earns national recognition for affordability, both for



traditional classes and its online programs. The university is routinely recognized for having one of the region's lowest student debt loads with nearly half of its graduates earning a degree without any student loan assistance.

The traditional BSN and RN2BSN nursing programs are fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Being the only public residential university in the metropolitan Tulsa area, RSU gives students a traditional college experience. With the university's proximity to Tulsa, RSU is strategically positioned geographically, fiscally and reputationally to be Oklahoma's first choice in BSN education.

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



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# Dear Nurses: As You Advocate for Patients in 2025, Don't Forget to Advocate for Yourself

story by  
Michael Kaufman

Are you a nurse who will stay past their shift to comfort a frightened patient, advocating for additional resources or tests when you notice subtle changes in a patient's condition, or take the time to explain complex medical information to a family to ensure they feel informed and supported? In 2025, the world needs your dedication more than ever, but I'm here to remind you: while you fight for others, don't forget to fight for yourself.

As someone who started as a social worker and eventually transitioned into three CEO roles at service-based organizations, I know how easy it is to pour everything into the people you serve. But I also know how important it is to advocate for your own career advancement. Helping professionals like us have the passion, purpose, and skills to lead—we just need to believe it's possible.

## The Servant Leadership Connection

The philosophy of "servant leadership" captures the essence of how helpers approach their work. Coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, servant leadership is a non-traditional leadership style rooted in behaviors and practices that prioritize the well-being of those being served. According to Greenleaf, this approach begins with a "natural feeling" of wanting to serve above all else—a feeling that often precedes the aspiration to lead, but ultimately drives it.

Extensive research highlights the value of servant leadership. This holistic philosophy engages individuals on multiple levels—relational, ethical, emotional, and spiritual—empowering them to grow into their fullest potential. As helpers, we embody the traits servant leaders exhibit, traits like empathy, awareness, active listening, accountability, and community-building. We focus on the growth and well-being of the populations we serve, and we see ourselves as the stewards of the greater good.

In other words, we easily embrace the "servant" part of the servant leadership label. But what about the "leader" part? The same characteristics we possess—the aptitudes and abilities we practice every day as helping professionals—make us uniquely suited for

leadership roles. So it's a matter of reframing our self-perception. Leadership isn't about power or authority; it's about motivating and promoting others. And who better to do that than those of us already committed to improving lives?

## Why We Struggle to Advocate for Ourselves

If you're like me, your identity is deeply tied to helping others. You're the one championing your students, clients, or patients, but when it comes to championing your own goals, it's a different story. Many of us struggle to see ourselves as leaders. Running a whole school, heading a division, or managing an organization might feel out of reach, even though we advocate fiercely and effectively every day.

This mindset isn't just a personal limitation; it's a missed opportunity for the organizations in which we work. Imagine if more helping professionals stepped into leadership roles. We'd have leaders who truly understand frontline challenges and bring unmatched de-escalation and problem-solving skills to the table. This shift could transform the business landscape and improve countless lives.

## My Journey: From Social Worker to CEO

I've been in your shoes. When I started as a social worker, I never imagined I'd one day lead one of the largest private education companies in the U.S. or launch an online teletherapy platform. Today, I run my own special education management and consulting company with my partners, both of whom also started as and identify as helpers, not businesspeople. My journey has taught me that advocating for yourself doesn't mean abandoning your mission to help others—it means amplifying it. Leadership gave me the platform to drive systemic change on a much larger scale, reaching a wider expanse of people in need.

## How You Can Start Fighting for Yourself

If you're ready to take your first steps toward leadership, here are some of the strategies that worked for me:

### 1. Plan Early and Intentionally

From day one of any role, start preparing for your next career move. Identify the skills and experiences you'll need to achieve your long-term goals and take measures to move toward them.



### 2. Make Your Ambitions Known

Don't keep your aspirations a secret. Clearly and consistently communicate your desire to advance to your supervisors and managers. They can't support you and groom you if they don't know where you want to go.

### 3. Immerse Yourself in Learning

Leadership requires a particular skill set. Read books, listen to podcasts, and follow blogs that can help you understand management, strategy, and organizational dynamics.

### 4. Take on Leadership Roles

Volunteer for committees and initiatives at work and step up to spearhead them. This will give you hands-on experience and demonstrate your leadership know-how.

### 5. Invest in Professional Development

Take continuing education classes or enroll in workshops and seminars that build your leadership skills. Courses or trainings in organizational oversight, team building, financial management, corporate vision and culture, and public speaking are all great topics to pursue.

### 6. Find a Mentor

Seek out someone whose career path inspires you. A mentor can provide invaluable guidance and encouragement as you travel your envisioned path.

## Why 2025 Is the Year to Start

The challenges of today's world demand leaders who are compassionate, resourceful, and resilient. As a caring and devoted helping professional, you already exemplify these qualities. By stepping into leadership, you can enact policies, influence innovation, and create lasting change for the people, communities, and causes to which you're dedicated.

Advocating for yourself, for your own advancement, is not selfish. It's a necessary step to broaden your impact. The same determination you bring to fighting for others can propel you toward your own aspirations. And as you rise, you'll inspire others in your field to do the same.

### Take the First Step

You have the skills, the grit, and the heart to lead. Start small, but start now. Whether it's signing up for a leadership workshop, volunteering for a new responsibility, or simply telling your supervisor about your goals, every step counts.

Let's make 2025 the year for helping professionals to take their advocacy to the next level—for others and for themselves.

To learn more about my work and mission, visit [www.michaellkaufman.com](http://www.michaellkaufman.com).



# Data Could Help Address Maternal Health Concerns in Vulnerable Populations

story by  
Bonnie Rucker OU

According to the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the United States, Indigenous mothers, or those who self-identify as American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Native American, are three times more likely to die during or following pregnancy as non-Hispanic White mothers, and more than 90% of those deaths are preventable. The Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma is organizing data to attempt to change these trends.

“We discussed the scale of maternal morbidity and mortality, how many people it truly affects, and how much room we have for improvement if we can better define the problem and how to address it. That’s absolutely the type of thing that I want to do,” said Leremy Colf, Ph.D., an associate professor in the college and the project lead.

This research will link existing national data sources to allow for

further investigation of pregnancy-related health care. There is a critical need to better understand social and structural factors related to maternal morbidity and mortality, particularly among those from underserved, understudied and underrepresented populations.

Colf explains that it’s vital to better understand the reasons behind maternal morbidity and mortality to improve outcomes. Questions must be answered about what prevents pregnant people from receiving care. Many have multiple risk factors, such as being low-income, a member of a minority group or living in a rural area. But it’s important to identify which factors have the most significant impact and why, says Colf.

“We’re taking large data sets that look at the entire population to figure out exactly the contributing factors. If you look at data from ten people or one hundred people, you might identify something, but you are still only looking at one factor at a time,” says Colf. “If you look

at the entire population of the United States over multiple years, you can see the interplay and where all of these different risk factors connect, and figure out what’s really driving the outcomes.”

The project began in August 2024 using anonymized publicly available information. Colf reports that the resulting data is being compiled into easy-to-use software packages to support future and ongoing research efforts. Colf emphasizes the need for this information, especially in Oklahoma, which has a high representation of these vulnerable populations.

“There is no reason that we should have as many mothers and babies suffering and dying as we do; it is an absolutely critical problem,” says Colf. “There’s no reason that it should be as bad as



Better access to existing national data will further research into improving pregnancy-related health care. Image by Pituk via Adobe Stock.

it is, and there are ways that we can make it better if we identify those ways specifically. Not only is it helpful for the U.S. at large, but it also has an outsized impact here at home in Oklahoma. We have so many nurses interested in this area of research if we can figure out how to help them do their jobs better and avoid the heartbreak that comes with losing a mother or a child.”

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# Mercy Named Best-in-Class Employer by Global Business Giant Gallagher

The key ingredient that makes Mercy's expert care well known around Oklahoma is no secret – it's compassionate caregivers and their personal service to patients. Recognition as one of America's best employers shows why Mercy attracts and keeps professionals who love their work and do it well. Gallagher has named Mercy as a Best-in-Class Employer in its 2024 U.S. Benefits Strategy & Benchmarking Survey. Mercy was selected for its excellence in supporting its caregivers' health, financial stability and career growth while remaining sustainable as a nonprofit health care provider.

"We've always known our patients get the most benefit from their care at Mercy when our caregivers have a supportive, adaptive and collaborative culture at work," said Catherine Codispoti, Mercy's chief people officer. "We're proud of the work we do to support our coworkers and their families. The legacy of the Sisters of Mercy starts with a commitment to help the people around you, and that begins in

so many ways with supporting each other to ensure we're providing the best care possible for our patients."

Illinois-based Gallagher is a global giant in insurance, risk management and consulting, with operations in 130 countries. Recognition as a Best-in-Class Employer helps current and prospective caregivers understand how workplace culture makes Mercy stand out in the increasingly competitive health care labor market.

"Mercy recognizes the crucial link between people's well-being and organizational success," said William F. Ziebell, CEO of Gallagher's benefits and HR consulting division. "When employees enjoy their work, appreciate their benefits and feel connected, the organization thrives – boosting positivity, retention, performance and overall prosperity. That proactive people strategy helps make Mercy a Best-in-Class Employer."

#### Working at Mercy

Mercy operates hospitals and

clinics in Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, with more than 50,000 co-workers across its footprint.

Beyond competitive wages and a generous, comprehensive benefits package, Mercy offers a broad range of programs to support caregivers and their families.

Mercy helps reduce the cost of education for co-workers advancing their careers, with scholarships, loan forgiveness, university discount partners and other financial assistance programs. A wide-ranging employee assistance program helps with everyday needs and emergencies, while a robust system of internal continuing education ensures caregivers stay current on new technology and procedures as they build and maintain their skills.

As a nonprofit Catholic health care system, Mercy's legacy of faith-oriented service is the foundation of every interaction caregivers have with each other and with patients. Visit [www.careers.mercy.net](http://www.careers.mercy.net) to see open positions across Mercy.

#### About Best-in-Class Employers

Gallagher's benchmarking analysis uses data to identify employers that excel in optimizing wellbeing for staff and the organization.

Top-performing employers in the analysis showed strategic investment in benefits, compensation and the employee experience.

Key areas analyzed were:

- Planning horizons for benefits and compensation strategies
- Extent of the well-being strategy
- Employee turnover rate
- Completion of a workforce engagement survey
- Use of an HR technology strategy and its level of sophistication
- Difference in health care costs over the previous year



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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)



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# Founders of The DAISY Foundation Visit INTEGRIS Health Hospitals

INTEGRIS Health was honored to welcome Bonnie and Mark Barnes, co-founders of The DAISY Foundation, as they visited INTEGRIS Health hospitals across the metro. During their visit, Bonnie and Mark personally met nurses who have received the prestigious DAISY Award and expressed heartfelt gratitude to the INTEGRIS Health nursing team for their exceptional dedication to patient care.

On Jan. 14, INTEGRIS Health hosted a special event to honor the 2024 DAISY Award recipients. Bonnie and Mark Barnes shared their personal story of founding The DAISY Foundation and highlighted the extraordinary impact nurses have on patients and their families. The event featured inspiring stories of nurses who received the award, highlighting the profound difference they make in the lives of those they serve.

The DAISY Foundation is a global organization dedicated to honoring nurses for their compassionate care and exceptional clinical skills. Founded in 1999 by the Barnes family in memory of their son, J. Patrick Barnes, the foundation has grown to include over 5,800 health care facilities in 35 countries, making it one of the most significant nursing recognition programs worldwide.

The DAISY Award recognizes nurses who go above and beyond to provide extraordinary care. Nurses can be nominated by patients, families or colleagues, making it a deeply meaningful acknowledgment of their life-changing work.

For more information about The DAISY Foundation and its mission, visit [www.daisyfoundation.org](http://www.daisyfoundation.org).



Mark and Bonnie Barnes co-founders of The DAISY Foundation.

## Faith Community Nursing: Is it For You?

story by  
Donna Rockwell MS RN FCN

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# Francis Tuttle Helps Fill Healthcare Skills Gap

The math is simple: we need more healthcare workers.

Education and certification are the driving forces behind getting more people into vital healthcare jobs. Francis Tuttle Technology Center offers a clear and affordable path into the nursing profession.

"Healthcare facilities across Oklahoma are experiencing a staff shortage, but we are passionate about filling this skills gap and training these crucial healthcare workers," said Stephanie Harris, Director of Health Sciences. "We have full-time career training programs, flexible health class offerings, and customized courses to help meet our industry's needs. We partner with leaders in Oklahoma's healthcare industry to ensure that our hospitals, clinics, surgery centers, and medical offices have highly-trained staff to provide world-class healthcare for their patients."

Practical Nursing is a popular program for those seeking a career as a nurse in Oklahoma. Certified Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) provide direct care to patients in

hospitals, home health, doctors' offices, clinics, and other healthcare settings.

Students in the Practical Nursing program learn in real-world settings. They complete tasks in on-campus labs designed to mimic a hospital, complete with the machines and tools they will use as professionals.

Clinicals - often the final step to becoming certified - provide students with experience in professional settings. Students take clinicals at local hospitals where they work alongside healthcare professionals, and these experiences sometimes lead directly to job opportunities.

For those who want to pursue something different in nursing, the Respiratory Care Therapist program offers entry into an area of medicine that is increasingly in need. Due to many factors, Oklahoma has a higher-than-average number of patients who endure chronic breathing problems. The COVID-19 pandemic only made this worse.

Respiratory Care Therapists help these patients overcome the

daily challenges they face. Students learn in a hands-on environment surrounded by the tools and machines they will use professionally.

Practical Nursing and Respiratory Care are top-notch programs for post-secondary students. Still, there are other ways for students to find a career in nursing. Pre-Nursing is open to high school and post-secondary students and offers various certifications related to nursing.

Depending on the student's plan, they can become certified as an Advanced Unlicensed Assistant, a Certified Medical Assistant, or a Nurse Aid (CNA) through the Pre-Nursing program. Pre-Nursing students can also attend the program part-time, meaning they can seek a certification while they work.

Similarly, Francis Tuttle offers Flexible Health classes to earn nursing certifications. These classes are open for a set amount of time, during which students can attend until they reach the necessary



hours.

Flex Health classes are open for CNA, Home Health Aide (HHA), Certified Medication Aide (CMA), Medication Administration Technician (MAT), Pharmacy Technician, Phlebotomy Technician, EKG Technician, and Medical Assisting (MA) certifications. These classes are also eligible for scholarship or tuition waiver programs that apply to conventional Career Training Programs.

For more information visit <https://www.francistuttle.edu>.

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# Half-century success

## Northern Oklahoma College going strong

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Professional Program.

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

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

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

<https://www.noc.edu>.




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