



Metro Tech Practical Nursing Instructor and Coordinator, Jenny Pinkerton, MSN, RN, CNE, received the 2025 March of Dimes Oklahoma Foundation Education Nurse of the Year and Influencer of the Year Awards during a ceremony Nov.6 at Riverwind Casino. Pictured left to right: Theresa Ramsey, BSN, RN Practical Nursing Instructor, Brandi Castle, DNP, RN, CNE Practical Nursing Instructor, Jenny Pinkerton, MSN, RN, CNE Practical Nursing Coordinator, Chelsey Slattery, MSN, RN, Practical Nursing and Simulation Instructor, and Jenn Killman, BSN, RN Practical Nursing Instructor.

By Van Mitchell

March of Dimes is a nonprofit organization committed to ending preventable maternal health risks and death, ending preventable preterm birth and infant death and closing the health equity gap for all families.

Pinkerton has been a Registered Nurse for 18 years and currently serves as a nurse administrator for the Practical Nursing Program at Metro Technology Centers.

Before transitioning to education, she spent 15 years at OU Health as a labor and delivery nurse where she developed a lasting passion for maternity and newborn care.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Oklahoma State University, Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Oklahoma and a Master of Science in Nursing Education from the University of Texas. Pinkerton said she was surprised at winning both awards.

"It was a huge honor because all the nurses in every category were outstanding. So, it's a big deal to be nominated and even bigger deal to be recognized as a finalist. I did not think that would happen, and so yeah, it was a huge shock to win," she said.

Pinkerton said a reception was held in August that all the nominees were invited to.

"While we were there in August, they asked the nominees to create an ambassador page to further the mission of March of Dimes by using their platform, like their leadership, to make an even greater impact," she said. "They (March of Dimes) are all about ensuring that every baby gets a healthy start in life and the work they do is vitally important".

Pinkerton said March of Dimes mission is deeply personal to her and her husband Chad who lost a child at 23 weeks of pregnancy.

"It's obviously near and dear to my heart because my husband and I also have lost a baby due to premature delivery. So, all our friends and family know that March of Dimes is very special to us," she said. "When I posted my fundraising, the ambassador page for the Nurse of the Year, a lot of people donated in support of us and in support of our first baby that we lost. Her name was Payton Marie."

Pinkerton said her journey from labor and delivery nurse into education started during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In 2020, there was a moment in my career that has stayed with me, and it is the reason I changed careers," she said.

Pinkerton was floated to the adult tower at OU Health to care for a pregnant patient in the COVID unit.

"I was sitting at the nurse's station, when I saw a very seasoned ICU nurse pick up the phone to call her mom," Pinkerton said. "She was essentially asking her mom for permission to walk off the floor and quit. She was sobbing and said, "I can't, Mom. I can't do it anymore. I cannot call another family member and tell them that their loved one has died. I cannot do it. And there was just something in that moment that it was so deafening, that silence, because there was nothing to do. It was the reality that this is not good."

Pinkerton said for the next two years she saw an exodus of more nurses. "It really bothered me. There was a lot that happened with COVID to the nursing profession that we are trying to recover from," she said. "I am passionate about my profession and want to make an impact. And I knew I could not just do it from the bedside, and so I just felt deeply called to move towards the education side to try to help."

Pinkerton transitioned to working at the Metro Tech Springlake campus in Oklahoma City.

"It's hard to leave industry, and it's even harder for any nurse to go from industry to academia," she said. "It is a much bigger transition than we are aware of. But when I got here, I fell in love with our students."

Pinkerton said one of the challenges was helping students overcome barriers.

"There were barriers standing in our student's way that were keeping them from being successful," she said. "These were not the typical barriers that most students face, many carry the weight of unimaginable hardships while trying to change their lives through education." Pinkerton said Metro Tech's mission is to help make students' success possible.

"We wanted to create a place where we met students where they were and took the time to truly get to know them. I always say the key to student success is consistency, transparency, and building strong relationships between faculty and students," she said. "It is like running a marathon. We run it together. We find every barrier and knock it down. People know us for creating the kind of environment students want to come back to."

Pinkerton said sometimes that barrier help comes from personal help.

"I don't think having a child should ever be a barrier for a mom that's trying to change the trajectory of her life," she said. "So, have I babysat babies? Yep. Have I called a daycare close to clinical sites, so that they can get there on time? Yep. Have I driven students to Palomar that needed protection from domestic violence? Yep. So, there's just a lot of things that were a little bit different that were preventing students from being successful, that basically, we walked the journey with them to get them to the finish line."

Pinkerton said nursing graduates are encouraged to give back to their local communities.

"It's not just changing their life or their children's life," she said. "One by one, it's going to change communities because how many times do we reach out to a neighbor that's a nurse or a safe person to ask questions? When a community doesn't have that, that's another level of not having some sort of access to care. And when you look at all these health disparities, you've got to start somewhere. So, one by one, every time a nurse finishes the program, and goes back into their community, that's making a difference. I feel as a nurse, the core of who we are is to serve. That's how you serve."





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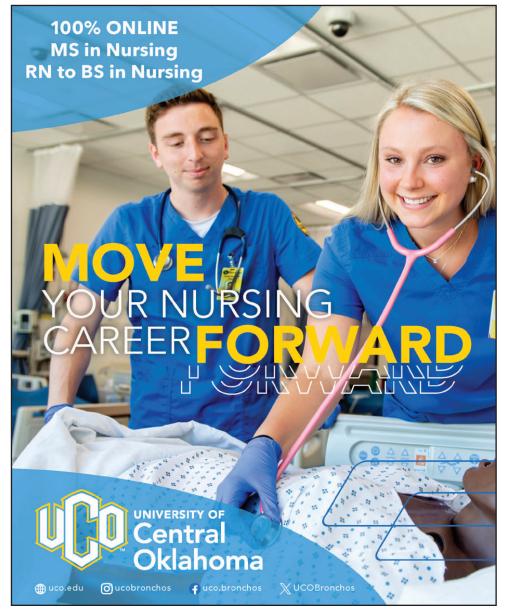


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INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital recently celebrated a major milestone in the construction of its newest medical office building with a topping out ceremony. The event marked the placement of the final structural beam, symbolizing the completion of the building's framework and the continued growth of the Edmond hospital campus.

"We're proud to see this project taking shape," said Jonathan Rule, the chief hospital executive of INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital. "This new medical office building will allow us to better serve our patients and provide even more comprehensive care close to home."

Caregivers and project partners gathered to commemorate the occasion and sign the final beam before it was raised into place. The new facility, which will be the third medical office building on the INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital campus, will expand access to specialty and outpatient care for the growing Edmond community. The estimated completion date for the project is fall 2026.







INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center - OKC

INTEGRIS Health

Edmond Hospital -

Enid

EDMOND

PRN Nurse Tech - Med Surg -

Charge Nurse - Portland **Emergency Dept - Nights**

INTEGRIS Health Portland Avenue Medical Center - OKC

Registered Nurse - IMC - Nights

INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital - YUKON

Clinic Nurse Supervisor - Memorial **West Primary Care - Days**

Registered Nurse - Emergency

INTEGRIS Health Medical Group -**EDMOND**

Department - PRN

- PRN Days

Nurse Tech - Med Surg

Registered Nurse - Lakeside Women's Hospital - Nights

INTEGRIS Health Lakeside Women's Hospital - OKC

Nurse Resident - Med Surg -Bass - Day

INTEGRIS Health Bass Baptist Health Center -**ENID**

Licensed Practical Nurse - Med Surg - Nights

INTEGRIS Health Woodward Hospital -WOODWARD

MA or LPN - OBGYN Clinic -**Davs**

INTEGRIS Health Ponca City Hospital -**PONCA CITY**



Certified Nursing Assistant -Progressive Care - PRN

INTEGRIS Health Miami Hospital - MIAMI

Registered Nurse - Surgery -Davs

INTEGRIS Health Medical Group Grove Express Care



















LIFE MATTERS

RN Gives Her All to Save Lives

By James Coburn, staff writer

Megan Jordan, RN, has experienced many indelible moments as a trauma unit ICU charge nurse at OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center, located in Oklahoma City.

She recalled a patient she will never forget who passed away. The man was in a traumatic motorcycle crash resulting in a femur leg break. She picked up some overtime that week.

"I was with him throughout the whole process," Jordan said. "And he especially will always have a piece of my heart because that one hurt really bad. And I will never forget him."

His doctors, her manager, and the nursing staff consoled Jordan. They are always supportive of each other, she said.

"I always tell new nurses it's okay to cry, it's okay to feel your emotions. And then, you kind of just have to feel them and pick it back up, because we're not here for ourselves. We're here for our patients and their families," Morgan said.

Jordan handles intense hours of stress by relying on her family and friends. She will play loud music on her way home and suggests having a cry when one is needed. She said her husband is extra caring when recognizing she has had a hard day. They have two children, ages 17 and 22.

"I hang out with my family. We went to Seattle and not too long ago we went to a concert. I feel that is great for nurses because it gives us a chance to kind of unwind, decompress, step away from the sadness for a while," Jordan said.

OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center (OU Medical Center) is distinguished by being the first level-1 trauma center in the state. In July Ascension St. John Medical Center officially became Tulsa's first and only level-1 trauma center by the American College of Surgeons. Level-1 trauma centers see injuries resulting from motor vehicle collisions, falls from 20 feet or more, stabbings,

Megan Jordan, RN, a trauma unit ICU charge nurse at OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center says, 'We're here for our patients and their families.'





"During the most traumatic days of some people's lives, I feel that we are very good at handling that emotion."

gunshot wounds, and other severe trauma.

"I like that adrenaline and I like helping people when they are at their most critical (condition)," Jordan said.

She said nursing students who aspire to work in a level-1 trauma center will need to have a lot of adrenaline, compassion, and the ability to stay calm in hectic and very stressful situations.

Jordan earned her Associate Nursing degree at Oklahoma City Community College. When working as an LPN at another hospital she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and joined OU Medical Center in 2024 to work in the trauma ICU unit.

She was welcomed by a compassionate group of nurses who appreciate teamwork, she said. When time becomes hectic the team can rely on each other's precise grasp of best practices. Some days are quieter as they help people through their healing process. But other days are busy with a plethora of level-1 admissions, going to CT-scans and having blood tests.

"During the most traumatic days of some people's lives, I feel that we are very good at handling that emotion," she continued.

It takes a lot of emotional intelligence to communicate with patients and families. Nurses develop coping methods when being with patients and families experiencing emotional turmoil. They also translate a lot of medical jargon for them.

"We just try to put ourselves in their shoes the best donate their organs," she said.

we can and try to at least empathize with them," she explained. "We also offer them resources. We'll get our chaplain involved. Our upper management is great in helping deal with those emotions."

She needed a career that would sustain life giving care. She sensed the power of compassion as a child when a kind and personable nurse sparked her passion for nursing. The nurse helped Jordan when she was hospitalized with pneumonia for a week. After high school she worked in the insurance business before changing course at age 26.

There is an obvious need for more nurses in today's world of a nationwide nursing shortage, Jordan said.

"Anybody that's interested in something like that, then follow your dreams and go for it," Jordan said.

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences reports that 1.2 million new registered nurses will be needed by 2030 to address the current nursing shortage in the United States.

Her career has influenced her view of the world around her. She's very aware of her surroundings when driving a car. She cautions her children to be careful, wear a seatbelt, and to stay off their phones. She has seen the aftermath of car wrecks.

"Whenever we have patients that are going to donate their organs, that's when we have an honor walk. That's when family and friends, workers at the hospital all get to line the halls and honor that person after not only passing away, but them making the decision or their families making the decision to donate their organs," she said.



Northern Oklahoma College A Shining Star

Tucked away in Tonkawa, Northern Oklahoma College has been turning out some of the state's best nurses for more than half a century.

One-hundred percent NCLEX pass rates going on three years now, small class sizes, three campuses and multiple pathways make NOC a leader in nursing education.

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

"Faculty really get to know our students and help to provide them with resources to be successful," said Hicks, who has seen Northern Oklahoma College's reach expand to campuses in Enid and Stillwater. "They have lots of support. We have faculty who specialize in success coaching and a structured remediation program for those who are struggling with exams or clinicals."

The College has learning partnerships with both large and small facilities to provide experience in both urban and rural inpatient and outpatient settings.

Hicks said students come from a variety of backgrounds and age groups.

"We have a lot of diversity.

We have traditional college students coming out of high school ... we also have students embarking on nursing as a second

Tonkawa | Enid | Stillwater

"To see the impact starting from one location - one small program - the impact in producing nurses who go on to care for thousands of people in our communities was really remarkable." - Dr. Nikole Hicks

or third career choice," Hicks said. "We really have a wide variety and the positive of that is students can learn from each other. There are students with experience who can help mentor other students.

"There is no typical Northern student. It's a wide variety of people who want to go into nursing, help people, make a difference and improve their communities."

In 2023, the college celebrated a half century of success.

Fifty years of success included more than a few accolades including a Top 10 Nursing Program in the state ranking, according to Nursing Hub.

The celebration was marked with a gathering of past and present nursing students, even members of the first graduating class.

"It was wonderful," Hicks said. "People from the community talked about how Northern Nursing graduates have made a difference to them. (It was rewarding) just to see the things this program provided a foundation for people to be able to do; innovative things, practice areas, advanced degrees

and people in education in all areas of nursing.

"To see the impact starting from one location - one small program - the impact in producing nurses who go on

to care for thousands of people in our communities was really remarkable."

Northern Oklahoma College, the State's first



Dr. Nikole Hicks, NOC Nursing Division Chair.

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

NOC also offers an opportunity for students to complete their fourth semester clinical experiences and be paid by the clinical site through Academic Practice Partnerships.

"It's part of onboarding and a commitment the clinical facilities make to help partner in their education and it's a great opportunity for our students to dedicate more time to their studies the last semester because they

are receiving payment for their clinical hours," Hicks said. "It's a very unique opportunity." For more information about

For more information about the Northern Oklahoma College nursing program, visit https://www.noc.edu.



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AN ICONIC STAFF

By James Coburn, staff writer

Bradford Village Healthcare Center was recently awarded this year's Silver Award for the American College Healthcare Association/National Center for Assisted Living National Quality Awards Program, said Astrid Chatham, Bradford Village administrator.

The program helps facilities evaluate organizational strengths and opportunities, identify critical areas for improvement, and implement a plan to be stronger, more resilient, and successful than ever before. The three-level program evaluates long term care organizations' capabilities against nationally recognized standards for excellence, making it one of the most comprehensive and cost-effective performance assessments available to providers.

Each progressive award level — Bronze, Commitment to Quality; Silver, Achievement in Quality; and Gold, Excellence in Quality, requires a more detailed demonstration of superior performance, according to AHCA/NCAL.

"If you win the Bronze Award, you have two years after that to apply for the Silver Award and to be recognized for it. And Bradford Village and St. Ann's Skilled Nursing and Therapy were the first two buildings in this company to be recognized with the Silver Award," Chatham said.

Bradford Village's next step involves applying for the Gold Award.

"I think the award demonstrates all the dedication the employees have to this facility," Chatham continued. "We have a very high tenure of department heads and lay staff that work the floor."

Director of Nursing Kary Dillingham, RN, and Chatham enjoy a 10-year professional relationship. They work together to make processes and outcomes effective.

"Things that don't quite work, we maneuver them around and make them work," Dillingham added.

Employees understand the valuable role they have in nursing care. Their individual strengths excel in roles they flourish in. Bradford nurses are committed and reliable, Dillingham said.

"Unfortunately, there are a lot of nurses (across the nation) that don't want to work in this field. So, the nurses that do want to work in this field, you know they have a heart for the elderly and want to make sure they are comforted, cared for and feel protected," Dillingham said.

It touches her heart knowing that when a resident is passing without much family involvement, Bradford Village make sure that when a resident is dying, there is somebody with them. There will be somebody, even a specialized hospice employee or a volunteer by their side.

Her 30-year career has enabled Dillingham to share her compassion.

"You don't lose that in this profession. Dealing with families and the residents, even through difficult times you have to show compassion and caring. I feel like it keeps you from having a wall put up and, just going through the process in a day-to-day job," Dillingham explained.

Bradford Village nurses and staff enjoy bringing seasonal joy to residents by joining them for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners with families and friends.

Derenda Davis, LPN, values the importance of getting to know residents and family members. Nobody knows the residents better than they do. So,



From left, Kary Dillingham, RN, DON, Bradford Village Healthcare Center; Astrid Chatham, administrator; and Derenda Davis, LPN, spend a morning reminiscing about Bradford Village, located in Edmond

conversations with those families are "super important," Davis said.

Nursing has influenced Davis's life by taking a different look about how people react, she said. Long-term care exposes people to illness and end-of-life

"Not everybody knows how to go through those phases of grief or how to deal with those emotions. So, sometimes it's just a step back to let people feel those feelings a little bit," Davis said. "That kind of made me take a different look at how I talk with people and know they have other things going on, just out in the world and not just at work."

Stability and a safe environment means a lot to residents, by knowing when they wake up every morning, there is someone to care for them, Davis noted.

Sometimes residents tell stories or color life with humor. Chatham recalled a resident who was very much a character. He was one of those people who never knew a stranger. One day he wanted Chatham to take him to see his daughter who lived down the street.

"I drove down there because she was not answering her phone," Chatham said. "So, he went to the door — his daughter's boyfriend answered the door in his underwear. It was super embarrassing for him, and he would always say to me, 'Remember when her boyfriend answered the door in his underwear?"

And Chatham would say, "Yes I do." And he would tell everyone that. He was a character, and he would always say to every woman, 'You're iconic.' So, I was an iconic driver. Our admissions director was an iconic dancer. Kari was an iconic dresser. He had a name for everybody, and he was very complimentary to everyone here — just a wonderful person."

NURSE

What do

you admire

about your

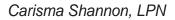
coworkers?

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HEALTHCARE CENTER

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TALK

"I admire the teamwork here. You can ask anyone to help and they will help you."



Sky Brown, LPN

"The camaraderie. We work together as a team. We help each other with all the work we do here."



Prince Yebo, LPN

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ENDURING MOTIVATION LPN's confidence furthers career

By James Coburn, staff writer

Kiara Calip, LPN, Golden Age Nursing Facility, has been a caretaker for her family. She took care of her grandmother and uncle in their declining years. So, a nursing career only made sense. Her mother is a registered nurse and encouraged Calip to go to nursing school. At age 16, Calip became a CNA at a Midwest City nursing home where her mother worked.

The rewards of connecting with residents boosted her confidence. And, in 2024 she earned her LPN certificate at Metro Technology Center, located in Oklahoma City. She had already fine-tuned her caretaking skills as a CNA. And today, she shares her wisdom by mentoring CNAs on best practices. CNAs are the backbones of nursing wherever they go, Calip said.

An affinity with the elderly motivated her focus on older adults. Calip celebrates her first year at Golden Age in October. She had visited several long-term care centers and chose Golden Age in Guthrie. It feels like home, she explained. Calip found teamwork to be phenomenal in taking care of every aspect of residents' needs.

"We are so very impressed with Kiara, the way she takes ownership of the home and her residents. She's very attentive to their needs," said Diego Chavarria, administrator.

"The residents just love her. She has a really good bedside manner, and we get a lot of compliments about her from families and residents alike," he added.

Her easy going, down-to-earth persona establishes trust among the residents, with empathetic listening and observational skills to learn how they feel daily. She will communicate with the doctors to problem solve.

"And then be able to see my residents smile again," Calip said, describing her motivation.

She listens to amazing stories about home life, careers, families, children, their childhoods, and careers. Residents also ask about Calip's twin 12-year-old daughter and son, and her youngest daughter, age four. She may tell them about her youngest daughter's enrollment in an intergenerational preschool program at Golden Age. And her curious residents might learn that Calip was a high school cheerleader in Clinton, played sports and likes to remain active.

"I have a few residents who share recipes with me and our cultures." Calip said. "They ask me questions and I give them an honest answer. How they were raised is totally different from my generation."

A resident's room is their privacy. Calip will always respectfully knock on their door prior to entering to do assessments. She introduces herself to new residents with her name and asks if they need anything. They usually remember her days off. If Calip takes a vacation, upon her return she will commonly hear the friendly compliment, "Where were you?"

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Oklahoma Nursing Times December 2025 Page 13



Kiara Calip, LPN, Golden Age Nursing Facility, learns a lot about the curious residents she cares for and answers their questions about her own life.

Her residents are active in the sense that they get up to move around as much as they can. Calip encourages them but does not force them.

Calip's next step is to become a registered nurse. She has already enrolled in two online classes at OSU/OKC. Being an RN will open business management opportunities in nursing for her.

"I think I would be good at delegating in management because I started as a CNA and then LPN," Calip said.

Nursing had deepened kindness in Calip's life in the sense of how she treats people because nobody knows every bit of hurt or sadness a person has experienced in life, she said. Nurses should be non-judgmental, she added. Golden Age residents are all different and unique and they all have a different story, she said.

"Being at Golden Age, residents will be loved and cared for. They will be loved, and we are very attentive to our residents," Calip said.

Every situation as to why a person's transition to a nursing home is different. Family members would likely keep a loved one at home if they had the proper caretakers. But there may come a time when a loved one's health and safety requires long-term care.

"By me having the confidence I have, I try to build a relationship with the family. Also, the residents themselves — I want them to know that they're okay in my hands, and to know I have talked to the doctor, I'm following up," Calip emphasized. "I keep communication open with the family. I don't want them to feel that bringing them to a nursing home is a bad decision. So, I feel if they could keep their family members at home and get the proper care, then they would. I want them to know they can trust the care they're getting at a nursing home."

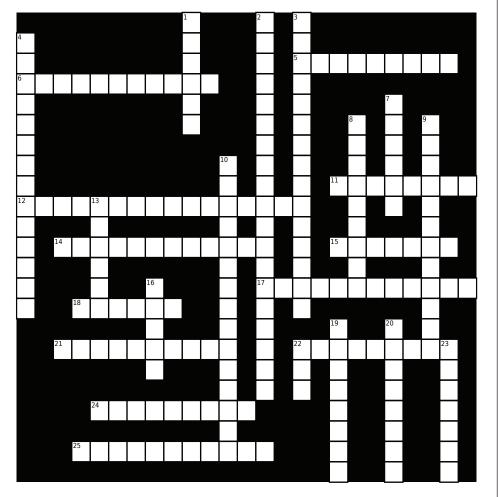
OKNT CROSSWORD: DIGESTIVE PHARMACOLOGY

Across

- 5. Classified as an antiemetic.
- 6.H2 histamine _____ are used fo the treatment of Ulcers.
- 11. Side effects of long term use of these drugs include psychotic behaviors adn stomach ulcers.
- 12.A common side effect of this classification is a dry mouth!
- 14. This type of laxative swells up and adds to the contents of the intestines.
- 15. Given to effectively treat diarrhea!
- 17.Reduces the risk of hemorrhage in Cirrhosis of the Liver.
- 18.Increases stomach and intestinal peristalsis therefore relieving reflux espophagitis.
- 21.A cation exhange resin used to treat hyperkalemia.
- 22.Example of a proton pump inhibitor used to treat ulcers.
- 24.Example of a bulk forming laxative.
- 25. Paregoric is used to treat diarrhea by inhibiting this....

Down

- 1.Relieves intestinal spasms in the treatment of IBS
- 2.A classification of medications commonly used to treat IBS.
- 3.The generic name for Colace.
- 4. Given IM for the purpose of replacing B12 which is absent due to the lack of "instrinsic factor".
- 7. When treating nausea, it is best to give an antiemetic _____ the onset of nausea.
- 8. This laxative is used in the treatment of encephalopathy.
- 9.Required in adequate amts to insure the effectiveness of this classification..
- 10. The preferred medical treatment of active Crohn's disease with small intestinal involvement.
- 13. Example of a stool softener.
- 16.An example of an H2 histamine receptor antagonist.
- 19.Imodium, Lomotil and Kaopectate are used in the treatment of this....
- 20. When teaching your patient about this drug, it is best to advise the patient to remain close to a bathroom!
- 22.Antacids are sometimes used in the treatment of this...



23. The only drug in the US approved for use in prevention of gastric ulcers caused

by NSAIDS is...

Answers on page 16



Nurses Honored with 2025 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Awards

health system, were recognized at the 2025 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Awards, including three who received top honors for their exceptional contributions to patient care and the nursing profession in

Those top honors went to Susan Bedwell, Bailey Johnson and Monica Kraft — all from Oklahoma City — during a Nov. 6 ceremony at Riverwind Casino's Showplace Theatre in Norman. They were chosen as winners in their respective categories, while ten other OU Health nurses were recognized as finalists for their outstanding contributions to patient care.

"Having our nurses recognized for this prestigious award reflects the extraordinary level of care and commitment demonstrated by our nursing staff," said OU Health Chief Nurse Executive Stefanie Beavers, DNP, R.N., NEA-BC. "These healthcare professionals exemplify the highest standards of patient care, compassion and service excellence that define OU Health."

The 10 nurses recognized as finalists were Blayne Bordwine of Edmond; Susan Allen of Yukon; Dustin Brown of Meeker; Mikayla Gathers of Tuttle; Brittany Mullens of Oklahoma City; Laura Sweeney; Christine Washington; Melissa Rice of Oklahoma City; Stefanie Beavers; and Michelle Welander of Edmond.

These nurses represent nursing excellence across multiple specialties, from advanced practice and critical care to neonatal services and nursing leadership. OU Health's dedicated healthcare professionals serve patients at Oklahoma Children's OU Health, OU Health Stephenson

Thirteen nurses from OU Health, the University of Oklahoma's academic Cancer Center, OU Health Harold Hamm Diabetes Center, OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center, OU Health Edmond Medical Center as well as clinics statewide.

> The March of Dimes Oklahoma Nurse of the Year Awards recognize nurses across various categories who demonstrate excellence and achievements in research, education, quality patient care, innovation and leadership in their specific disciplines. Nominations are submitted by colleagues, supervisors or the families of those they have served. Winners are selected by a committee of healthcare professionals who review each confidential nomination. This year's awards drew a recordbreaking 1,200 nominations from across Oklahoma, underscoring the prestige of the recognition.

> "As Oklahoma's flagship academic health system, OU Health serves patients from all 77 counties and beyond by providing research-driven, multidisciplinary care," Beavers said. "We act as a statewide resource across our tripartite mission of clinical care, research and education, ensuring that every patient benefits from innovation and expertise."

> OU Health employs more than 11,000 team members, including thousands of nurses who provide care across the system's hospitals and clinics in both inpatient and ambulatory settings. The academic health system combines patient care with research and education, training the next generation of healthcare professionals while advancing medical knowledge through groundbreaking research.

> To learn more about nursing opportunities at OU Health, visit OUHealth. com/Nursing.



OU Health First Health System in Oklahoma to Join National Nurses on Boards Coalition

Partnership strengthens nursing leadership to improve care for communities across Oklahoma

OU Health, the University of Oklahoma's academic health system, has become the first health system in Oklahoma to join the Nurses on Boards Coalition as a Strategic Partner. This milestone ensures the state's nursing expertise helps shape the future of healthcare, benefiting Oklahomans through better care, stronger health policies and more innovative approaches to wellness.

The Nurses on Boards Coalition supports the presence of nurses on hospital, nonprofit and corporate boards to make an impact beyond the bedside. This means nurses, who understand firsthand the needs of patients, healthcare disparities and how to support diverse communities, will have greater influence in shaping policies and programs that affect healthcare and public health initiatives across Oklahoma's 77 counties.

"Nurses are at the heart of patient care, and their voices need to be heard in decisions that affect the health of our communities," said Stefanie Beavers, DNP, R.N., NEA-BC, OU Health chief nurse executive. "By becoming the first health system in Oklahoma to partner with the Nurses on Boards Coalition, we are investing in our nurses and ensuring they have the leadership skills and opportunities to shape healthcare far beyond our hospital walls. This benefits every family and community that we serve across Oklahoma."

Expanding Nursing Leadership and Strengthening Community Health

Nurses represent the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and spend more time with patients than any other healthcare professional. Their frontline perspective on patient care, safety and quality makes them invaluable voices in healthcare decision-making. OU Health's partnership with the Nurses on Boards Coalition provides educational resources,

networking opportunities and tools to pursue board service. It supports professional development programs that prepare nurses for leadership positions where they can advocate for patients, advance health equity and improve care delivery across communities.

"OU Health's commitment to supporting and elevating nurses and nurse leaders is a powerful example for healthcare systems across the country," said Cole Edmonson, DPN, R.N., FAAN, CEO of the Nurses on Boards Coalition. "As a Strategic Partner, OU Health is recognizing what we have long known, that nurses bring invaluable expertise to boardrooms and decision-making tables. This partnership will strengthen healthcare in Oklahoma by ensuring nurses have the platform and preparation to advocate for patients and drive meaningful change in their communities."

Commitment to Excellence

OU Health nurses care for Oklahoma's most complex cases, bringing advanced expertise to high-acuity specialties across the system. With thousands of nurses among its 11,000 team members, OU Health is investing directly in the leadership potential of its clinical workforce — strengthening its ability to drive innovation and improve health statewide.

OU Health combines patient care with research and education to advance healthcare. The nursing leadership developed through this partnership will contribute to OU Health's mission of training the next generation of healthcare professionals and expanding the boundaries of medical knowledge.

For more information about nursing careers and leadership opportunities at OU Health, visit OUHealth.com/Nursing.

OU Health is radically transforming health outcomes as the University of Oklahoma's academic health system. We are the destination of choice for complex care — with an unstoppable drive to change lives through discovery and healing. Patients turn to OU Health for leadership in clinical care, research and education, where advanced treatments and leading-edge therapies are developed and delivered by a nationally connected network of experts.

Our physicians serve as faculty at the OU College of Medicine and collaborate across all seven health professions colleges on the University of Oklahoma Health Campus — training the next generation of healthcare professionals and accelerating innovation that drives patient outcomes and fuels economic development.

With more than 11,000 employees and over 1,300 physicians and advanced practice providers, we serve all 77 Oklahoma counties and beyond with the state's only comprehensive children's hospital (Oklahoma Children's OU Health); National

Cancer Institute-designated cancer center (OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center); and the flagship academic hospital and Oklahoma's leading Level I trauma center (OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center). With selfless collaboration and Oklahoma Proud spirit, we deliver care that reflects our deep commitment to the communities we serve.

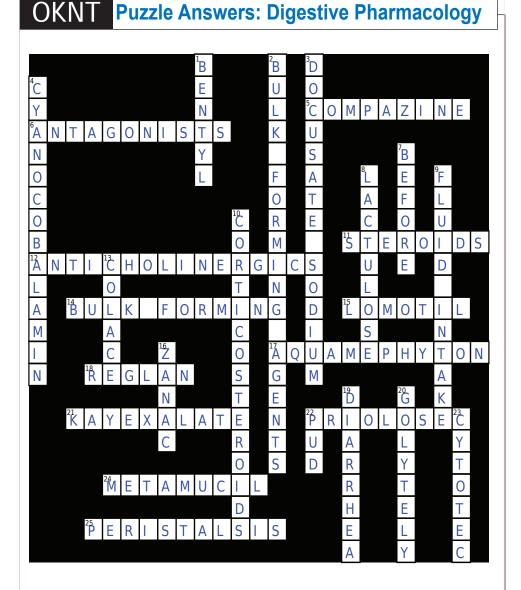
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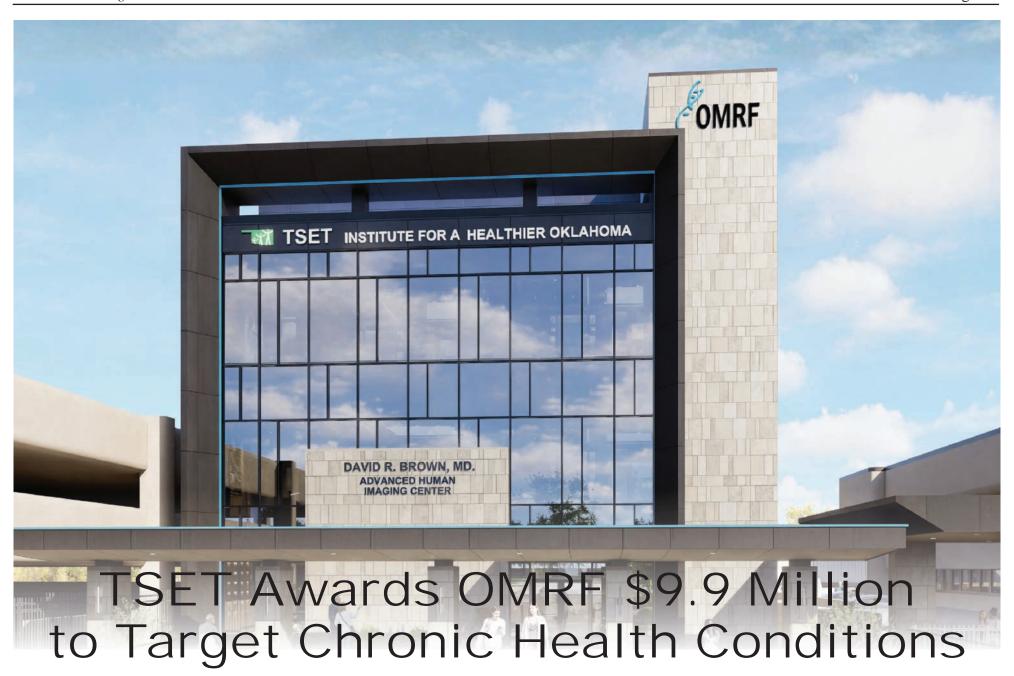












A \$9.9 million grant from the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust will help fund a new center at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation focused on laboratory and clinical studies of chronic health conditions.

The grant, coupled with philanthropic gifts, will create the TSET Institute for a Healthier Oklahoma at OMRF.

TSET announced Nov. 20 that OMRF was among 13 recipients of Legacy Grants totaling \$150 million. TSET is a state agency created by Oklahoma voters in 2000 following the settlement of a lawsuit filed by Oklahoma and 45 other states against the tobacco industry.

The new TSET institute at OMRF will support clinical and "bench-to-bedside" research exploring the three root causes of chronic disease: inflammation, impaired immunity and accelerated aging, said OMRF's executive vice president and chief medical officer, Judith James, M.D., Ph.D.

"On average, Oklahomans die nearly seven years before people in healthier states," said James, who will lead the new institute. "It's not coincidental that we also have one of the nation's highest rates in diabetes, heart disease, tobacco and substance abuse, autoimmunity and cancer. Through this new focused endeavor, we hope to improve the health of all Oklahomans."

The new TSET institute will include:

- A Center for Healthy Aging, where Oklahomans will receive interventions that have proven through clinical studies to reduce physical and biological signs of aging.
- A 4,500-square-foot telehealth facility to provide subspecialty care to

patients in practices throughout the state and to administer clinical trials to rural participants.

• A 33% capacity increase to OMRF's biorepository, which currently stores and processes samples from 71,000 participants in human clinical studies. Expansion of a new building that will house a state-of-the-art imaging center for OMRF's rheumatology and multiple sclerosis patients.

"We view these Legacy Grants as an opportunity to make an unprecedented investment in the health of current and future Oklahomans," said Julie Bisbee, TSET's executive director. "OMRF's proposal met our criteria for projects with the potential to truly tackle the underlying causes of chronic disease and premature death that affect people throughout the state. TSET is proud to build on OMRF's impressive track record for transformational lab research and clinical studies."

The Legacy Grants commemorate TSET's 25th anniversary. As part of a lawsuit settlement, tobacco companies make annual payments to TSET, resulting in an endowment currently valued at \$2 billion. The Legacy Grants were funded by investment revenue from that endowment.

OMRF scientists also receive smaller grants each year from another TSET program, the Oklahoma Center for Adult Stem Cell Research, or OCASCR. Those awards typically fund preliminary research or purchases of scientific equipment that enable scientists to apply for larger federal grants.

"We are deeply appreciative of TSET's continued support for our efforts to advance health for all Oklahomans," said OMRF President Andrew Weyrich, Ph.D. "The new TSET Institute for a Healthier Oklahoma at OMRF provides an avenue to tackle chronic disease research cohesively and collaboratively while involving study participants from communities throughout Oklahoma."





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Nissi Jordan's Nursing Journey: From Passion to Practice to DNP

Nissi Jordan's passion for nursing stems from an innate ability to nurture and a childhood emphasizing mind and body wellness. Her parents' belief in food as medicine shaped her entire approach to nursing care and remains a philosophy for future goals. These early lessons now drive her pursuit of a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree.

Jordan's undergraduate journey in nursing began at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree in 2017.

During her last year of nursing school, she became a first-time mom with husband Blake and struggled with postpartum depression.

It was during this time that Northwestern faculty members Dr. Leslie Collins, chair of the Charles Morton Share Trust Division of Nursing and associate professor of nursing; Dr. Krista Tilley, assistant professor of nursing; and Dr. Jennifer Mahieu, associate professor of nursing, played a crucial role in supporting her through the challenges of balancing motherhood and education.

"I confided in Dr. Collins and Dr. Tilley about my emotional challenges, and their empathy and support helped me navigate that problematic period and finish nursing school, which I am so thankful for," she said. "And Dr. Mahieu was instrumental in ensuring student success, providing endless resources that benefited me and my peers."

After graduating, Jordan took some time away from schooling and studying to focus on her new career as a nurse, where she gained hands-on experiences in various settings.

During this time, she became certified as an Infection Preventionist, a role that allowed



Nissi Jordan, RN, BSN began her journey at Northwestern Oklahoma State University where she credits Northwestern's rigorous nursing program and hands-on professional experiences for giving her the confidence to pursue a DNP.

her to gain insight into policymaking with long-term care facilities and exposed her to the broader political landscape of healthcare.

Her experiences as a Registered Nurse (RN) span longterm care, infection prevention, and emergency room and trauma nursing.

"These diverse roles have enabled me to collaborate closely with interdisciplinary healthcare teams and interact with patients and families to ensure optimal outcomes," she said.

Jordan added that while working with everyone from neonates and psychiatric patients to geriatrics, she has gained invaluable experience in assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

Jordan credits
Northwestern's rigorous nursing program and hands-on professional experiences for giving her the confidence to pursue a DNP. She also cites the university's affordability, quality education and strong faculty support as key reasons for returning in 2024.

"The school provided me with a solid foundation in clinical skills, evidence-based practice and hands-on experiences in various healthcare settings," she said of her undergraduate degree. "Over the years, my passion for nursing and patient care has only deepened, and pursuing a DNP is the next step in my professional journey."

As Jordan works through the stresses of her first year in the DNP program and family obligations (she now has two young children), she also is employed as an emergency room/trauma nurse at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center in Enid,

Oklahoma, a little more than one hour from her home in Alva, Oklahoma.

"I appreciate that the DNP program is self-paced with deadlines that align well with working professionals' schedules," Jordan said. "The faculty members have been incredibly supportive and accommodating to student needs."

According to U.S. News & World Report, No. 1 in the 100 Best Jobs list is Nurse Practitioner.

With that in mind, Jordan encourages both men and women

to consider an undergraduate degree in nursing at Northwestern and continue at the school to earn a DNP degree.

"Although nursing is a female-dominated field, men have an equally important place in the profession," she said. "They bring strength, honor and unique perspectives, and incorporating caregiving into their role only enhances their ability to serve others."

Upon earning her DNP, Jordan's goal is to work in a rural healthcare setting post-boards, focusing on functional medicine and becoming an Emergency Room Nurse Practitioner.

She also wants to be a provider who addresses the mind and body in assessment, diagnosis and treatment. Her passion for natural health and encouraging homeostasis guides her vision for the future of patient care.

"Education and credentials evolve together," Jordan said. "More education leads to more excellent knowledge, which is essential for nursing and developing strong critical thinking skills that apply to all aspects of life."

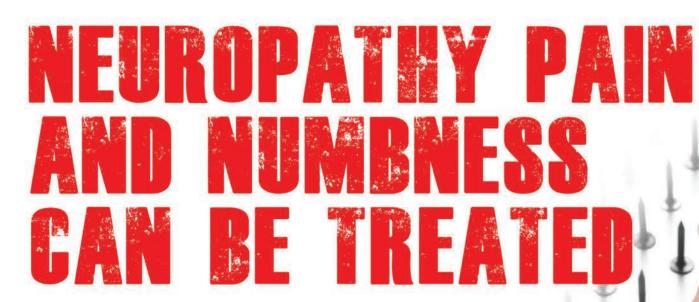
With a steadfast commitment to lifelong learning and patient-centered care, Jordan is poised to make a lasting impact in healthcare. Her journey from a passionate undergraduate nursing student to a future DNP graduate is a testament to the power of perseverance, education and an unwavering dedication to healing.

"Nissi is a shining example of a nurse who works hard to set her goals and achieve them while meeting the needs of her family and community," Collins said. "Nissi continues to embody what a Northwestern nursing graduate is known for and will continue to exemplify that through the DNP program and as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse."

Applications for entry into any of Northwestern's nursing programs are accepted Oct. 1 through Feb. 1. Interested students can apply for the traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing program that Jordan completed, the online RN-to-BSN program or the BSN-to-DNP program.

More information about each Northwestern program and their requirements may be found at www.nwosu.edu/school-of-professional-studies/nursing.





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