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EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

Infection Prevention Nurse Educates Staff

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EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

Infection prevention nurse educates staff

By James Coburn, staff writer

Debbie Dahl, RN, knows that viruses don't take a holiday. And she's dedicated her career to preventing them from infecting others. Nursing became the second career for Dahl, the infection prevention nurse at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital Midwest.

"I really enjoy microbiology. I love germs — I love diseases — so it's a great background," Dahl said.

Dahl taught biology at Moore High School before becoming a nurse. Dahl earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at Kramer School of Nursing Oklahoma City University. She was in her 50s and the oldest student in her nursing class.

Dahl later earned her Master of Science degree in Nursing at Oklahoma Baptist University which was fully paid for by the State of Oklahoma.

"I saw a scholarship listed in Oklahoma's Nursing Times. It said free scholarships and I applied for it out of the Nursing Times, and I got it. There's always stuff in the Nursing Times people can find," said Dahl, 68.

She's been with SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital Midwest for nearly two years. It's her second time at Midwest because the day she passed her NCLEX exam, she walked into the hospital and was hired as a med/surg nurse.

"Many of the nurses are still here that I worked with over 15 years ago," she said. "I really felt like I was coming home. I loved coming back to SSM."

She does not do hands-on nursing with patients. Her role as the infection prevention nurse brings her in contact with the hospital staff. Dahl never thought she would face an unprecedented event like the COVID pandemic. Many infectious disease nurses in the U.S. retired during the pandemic. But they made it through and since then nurses have taken a deep breath about lessons learned, Dahl continued.

It's respiratory season in Oklahoma. There is a deadly, contagious fungus called *Candida aureus* spreading in the state, Dahl said. It spreads easily among patients and healthcare facilities, according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. "It is a fungus. It can get into your blood, your urine and it is a 60 percent mortality rate," Dahl said. "It is going around Oklahoma now. As of last Friday (December 26), I think Oklahoma had 178 cases already this year (2025)."

The fungus is not airborne but is contagious by touching by contact. There

is no vaccination or treatment for it, Dahl said. So, the patient will live with the fungus all their life, Dahl said. People may not realize it, but tuberculosis still exists, however there is a treatment for it.

The prevalence of measles is on the rise in the U.S. It had surpassed 2,012 cases at the end of the year, according to the CDC. With 12 continuous months of measles, the U.S. is set to lose its elimination status.

"I wish people would take their vaccines, but it is a free country and you do not have to vaccinate your children, your loved ones. But it is highly contagious. It can stay in the air for 72 hours," Dahl cautioned. "An outbreak of measles actually happened last summer here in Oklahoma. And the flu vaccines, those are always good to get."

Virology is ever changing. What biomedical researchers know about the flu today and its treatment, is based on what virologists knew at the time.

"Next year they'll say, 'you did it wrong,' but that's how we learn from it all," she said.

Flu vaccination always provides protection although not always 100 percent, Dahl explained. She talks with nurses and staff to keep them informed about what is happening in the facility and community around the state. People become worried when they read information in the news or social media. Dahl keeps things in perspective.

"We know we use the right chemicals. We use the right products that can stop the spread of diseases," Dahl said.

She cited a great accomplishment at SSM Health St. Anthony Midwest. On December 26 at the time of this interview, there had not been a catheter induced urinary tract infection for more than 790 days. This means the nurses and physicians are upholding best practices in doing the right things.

"We try to take out your lines, so people are not getting an infection from the lines being there too long," Dahl explained.





Debbie Dahl, RN, the infection prevention nurse at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital Midwest sometimes wears a costume to remind staff to wash their hands.

The hospital has been cited in several magazines for its low rate of surgical infections including MRSA, a type of staph bacteria that's become resistant to many of the antibiotics used to treat ordinary staph infections.

"That means all of our staff are washing their hands, using the right precautions, and not spreading any diseases among the patients," Dahl said.

When someone is in isolation, signs are placed alerting the staff to the type of isolation, whether they need to wear a gown, mask, face shield, or maybe an M-95 mask.

Dahl makes her husband wear the M-95 mask to fend off his allergies when mowing the lawn.

"They're so tight. It does keep micro-particles from getting into your mucus membranes," she said.

Not all masks are the same. The M-95 mask absolutely decreases the viral load that the person wearing it releases into the air, Dahl emphasized. So, it decreases the prospect of an infection to another person.

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Answers on page 15

INTEGRIS HEALTH

Nurses Recognized by March of Dimes

The March of Dimes recognized five INTEGRIS Health nurses during its 16th annual Oklahoma Nurse of the Year gala in Norman. The event honors exceptional nurses across a range of specialties and supports the organization's mission to improve the health of mothers and babies.

INTEGRIS Health's March of Dimes 2025 Nurse of the Year winners are:

- Kacey Price, Medical/Surgical, INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital
- Matthew Newcomb, House Supervisor, INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital
- Rebecca Lewis, Quality and Risk Management, INTEGRIS Health Clinical Leadership
- Terra Collie, Nursing Executive, INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital
- Robin Osborn, Women's Health, INTEGRIS Health Grove Hospital

The March of Dimes reported a record 1,200 nominations statewide across multiple nursing disciplines. Of those, 29 INTEGRIS Health nurses were named finalists from locations throughout the system, including:

Eryn Smith (Advanced Practice, Rising Star); Tonya Carver (Charge Nurse); Stacey Puritan (Charge Nurse); Victoria Fletcher (Critical Care); Jess Matthews (Critical Care); Shawn Svob (Critical Care); Kellie Westfahl (Education); Amber Cotton (Emergency); Shirley Font (Emergency); Anne Quinn (House Supervisor); Jodi Wilson (House Supervisor); Jon Oppel (Infection Control, Occupational Health and Risk Management); Brenda Southwell (Infection Control, Occupational Health and Risk Management); Michele Bradshaw (Nursing Management); Heather Lamb (Nursing Management); Misty Rhea (Nursing Management); Sarah Kitchen (Nursing Innovation in Clinical Advancement and/or Health Care Technology Partner); Angela Lilienthal (Nursing Innovation in Clinical Advancement and/or Technology Partner); Alyssa Hamill (Rising Star); Haley Kromer (Surgical Services); Barbie Trent (Surgical Services); and Stephanie Lowe (Women's Health).

We congratulate all of our finalists and winners for representing INTEGRIS Health with such excellence.



Kacey Price



Matthew Newcomb



Terra Collie



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Beginning July 1 the U.S. Department of Education has placed new student loan caps for nursing school graduates aspiring to attain advanced degrees.

Change for Nursing Graduates

Student loans reduced for advanced degrees

By James Coburn, staff writer

The Trump administration no longer classifies nursing as a professional degree when it comes to graduate student loan applications. Changes are part of President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA). Student loans for advanced graduate degrees in nursing will be reduced beginning July 1.

The U.S. Department of Education announced, "The definition of a "professional degree" is an internal definition used by the Department to distinguish among programs that qualify for higher loan limits, not a value judgement about the importance of programs. It has no bearing on whether a program is professional in nature or not."

The new rules will cap loans based on whether the degree is deemed a graduate or professional program. Reduced borrowing programs include nursing, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, physical therapy, and audiology programs.

The Department stated the changes "place common sense limits and guardrails on future student loan borrowing and simplify the federal student loan repayment system."

This news does not impact undergraduate nursing students' ability to receive federal loans, said Gina Crawford DNP, MS, RN, CNE, Dean, College of Health Professions at Kramer School of Nursing Oklahoma City University.

"The concern is more about the potential impact it could have on nurses going back to school to advance their degrees. Our concern is our ability to be able to educate future nurses, nurse administrators, nurse practitioners — advance practice nurses," Crawford said.

Student loan repayment plans will be replaced by a new Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP).

"Beginning in July 2026, the OBBBA caps annual loans for new borrowers at \$20,500 for graduate students (\$100,000 aggregate limit), and \$50,000 for professional students (\$200,000 aggregate limit) - a term the committee defined consistent with existing regulatory text. Previously, graduate students could borrow up to the cost of attendance, which led institutions to offer expensive graduate programs with a negative return on investment," the U.S. Department of Education stated.

New rules will eliminate the Grad PLUS program which the department states fuel unsustainable student loan borrowing. Parent PLUS Loans will be capped.

Current students who have already borrowed a GradPLUS loan before July 1 will likely be grandfathered in.

According to the Department, "Since 2007, graduate and professional students have been able to borrow up to the full cost of attendance. This has allowed colleges and universities to dramatically increase tuition rates, even for credentials with modest earnings potential, which has saddled too many borrowers with debts they find difficult to repay."

According to a 2021 National Center for Health Workforce Analysis: 40.2% of the nursing workforce (1,750,277 RNs) have completed a second degree or advanced certificate since first entering the workforce.

- For nearly 2.0 million RNs who entered the workforce with a bachelor's degree, 342,678 (17.3%) went on to obtain a master's degree and 56,464 (2.9%) obtained a doctorate.
- RNs finance their education in a variety of ways, including using their own income or savings, taking out a student loan, obtaining a scholarship, or using employment benefits. 3.4 million RNs (78.2% of the workforce) indicated that they paid for at least part of their education using personal income and savings or money from family and friends.
- Nearly 2.0 million RNs (45.2% of the workforce) indicated that they used federally assisted student loans to finance at least part of their initial nursing degree, while 16.9% indicated that they used other (non-federal) student loans. In the previous survey, 38.3% of RNs used federally assisted student loans while 16.2% used other (non-federal) student loans.

One in six of the nation's registered nurses held a master's degree as of 2022, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Capping federal student loans will force students to seek more expensive private loans and uproot the stability of patient care.

"When we're talking about decreasing funding for nursing education in a time when we're looking for affordability and access, I don't know why we would take this away," said American Nurses Association President Jennifer Mensik Kennedy, Ph.D., when interviewed on NewsNation. "So, we have a looming nursing shortage even greater than before. So, this is going to stop nurses from going to school to become teachers for other nurses. So, we need faculty for nursing. If we don't have that we're not going to be able to continue to teach nurses. And these are also for nurses who want to continue their education. We're looking at men and women who are in communities that want to go back to school to be nurse practitioners to serve their communities when we're in a shortage of tens of thousands of primary care providers."

The nursing industry has not seen what the impact will be, but only speculate on what it could be, Crawford said.

"Keep chasing your dreams," Crawford said. "Your heart led you to healing, now let it lead you to classrooms, leadership, whatever's next. Someone out there needs what you'll bring, and you can make a difference."

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Forbes Names Mercy Hospital OKC to Top Hospitals List

Mercy recognized for excellence in patient care, other key metrics

Crunching numbers from data sets tied to patient outcomes and experience, a group of leading experts named Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City to Forbes' list of America's Top Hospitals.

Forbes' inaugural list evaluates acute care hospitals on health care quality measures like patient outcomes, patient experience, best practices and value.

"Our caregivers come to work every day with one goal: to provide exceptional, compassionate care to every patient we serve," said Dr. John Mohart, Mercy's executive vice president and chief operating officer. "Everyone at Mercy has a singular focus on our mission to deliver expert and compassionate care. We're all pulling on the same rope, every day and every shift, and we're thankful to see that recognized."

Another seven Mercy facilities are also on the list: Mercy hospitals in Ada and Ardmore in Oklahoma, Fort Smith and Northwest Arkansas in Arkansas and Carthage, Lebanon and St. Louis in Missouri.

About Forbes' Top Hospitals List

Forbes' inaugural list of top hospitals uses a rating system produced by a panel of health care management experts, including clinicians and patient advocates. Partnering with a health care data and analytics firm, the magazine based its methodology on data from

"Our caregivers come to work every day with one goal: to provide exceptional, compassionate care to every patient we serve."

Dr. John Mohart, VP, COO

the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Provider Data Catalog.

Patient outcomes like rates of mortality and infection are given the most weight in the calculations. Social drivers of health and other factors are used to adjust the numbers to provide a quality comparison that accounts for differences in locations and patient populations.

About 5,400 acute care hospitals were eligible for consideration, with about 2,500 ultimately meeting criteria for inclusion. Of those, 762 hospitals earned either four or five stars and made the Top Hospitals list. See the full list on forbes.com.

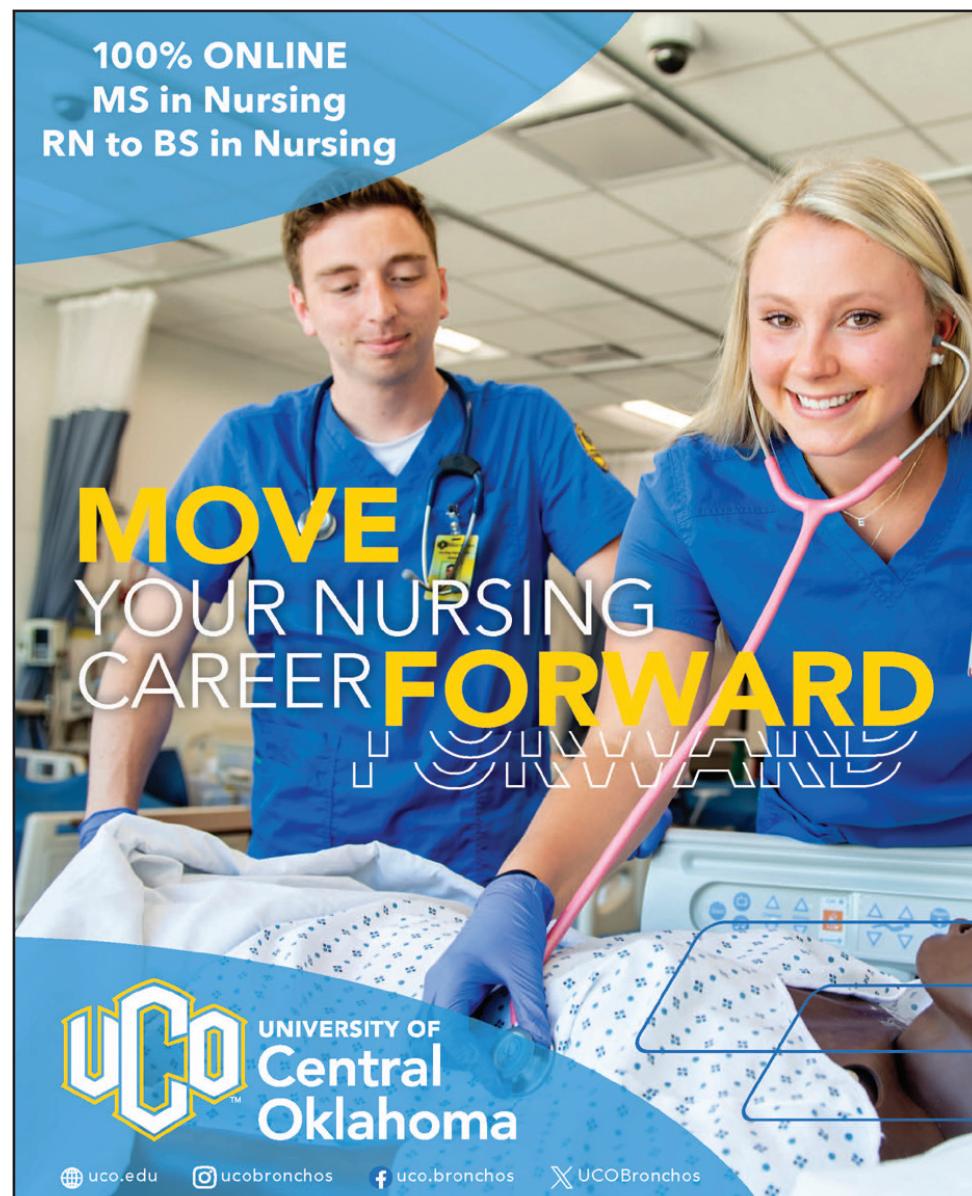
About Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City

Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City is a 307-bed multispecialty hospital serving the Oklahoma City metro.

The hospital includes the award-winning Love Family Women's Center, Coletta Cancer Center, Mercy Breast Center – Coletta, Meinders NeuroScience Institute, a stroke center, emergency services, the Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City – South campus and much more.

Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City has earned four consecutive A grades for patient safety from The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit watchdog.

Visit the Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City webpage on mercy.net for more information.



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OU Health Welcomes Dean McGee Eye Institute

Sustaining 50-year Legacy of Advancing Eye Care in Oklahoma

OU Health, Oklahoma's flagship academic health system, has signed a Letter of Intent to acquire the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI), a nationally recognized freestanding eye institute. The acquisition will create the OU Health Dean McGee Eye Institute, strengthen a longstanding relationship, advance DMEI's role in the academic health mission and honor its legacy in eye care, research and education.

Leaders from OU Health, DMEI and the University of Oklahoma have spent several months discussing and planning the integration, which is expected to be finalized by Jan. 1, 2026. This next chapter builds on DMEI's decades-long role as the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine Department of Ophthalmology. Pending Board of Regents approval, the department will be named the Dean McGee Department of Ophthalmology. The transition reinforces a shared commitment to academic medicine: delivering exceptional patient care, advancing research and training the next generation of physicians and health professionals.

By bringing DMEI into the academic health system, OU Health will strengthen the foundation of eye care in Oklahoma and position DMEI, under the support and leadership of OU Health, to drive innovation, expand access and set new standards of excellence in vision health.

"As Oklahoma's flagship academic health system, OU Health is dedicated to advancing health care excellence for all Oklahomans," said Richard P. Lofgren, M.D., MPH, president and CEO of OU Health. "By acquiring Dean McGee, we are ensuring that its 50-year legacy of distinguished eye care not only endures but thrives under the strength and stability of OU Health. Joining the health system secures the institute's future and reinforces its leadership in innovation that will benefit generations to come. Together, we are expanding our mission to deliver exceptional care, foster groundbreaking discoveries and serve our communities with unwavering excellence."

The Dean McGee Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine will continue to train future ophthalmologists through robust residency and fellowship programs and conduct research and clinical trials that advance the science

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

and innovation of eye care. As part of the acquisition, the OU Health Dean McGee Eye Institute will support these programs, creating a unified, mission-driven structure to enhance quality and outcomes.

Integration efforts have already begun, focusing on provider and staff alignment as team members join OU Health. As part of the agreement, OU Health will acquire DMEI's clinical operations — including its flagship OU Health campus location, three Oklahoma City metro satellite clinics and a Lawton site — ensuring patients continue to receive seamless care from their trusted providers at these locations.

Ownership of the DMEI buildings and real estate will be transferred to the Dean McGee Eye Institute Foundation. The OU Health Dean McGee Eye Institute and the Dean McGee Department of Ophthalmology will continue to occupy the buildings, and the Foundation will continue with its charitable mission to support the Dean McGee Department of Ophthalmology.

"By formalizing the alignment of Dean McGee into OU Health, we are elevating specialty care within our academic health system through stronger positioning of clinical excellence, education and a commitment to changing lives through discovery and healing," said Ian Dunn, M.D., FACS, FAANS, chief physician executive for OU Health and executive dean for the OU College of Medicine. "This step enhances our ability to deliver leading-edge eye care and train the next generation of ophthalmologists."

DMEI providers already contribute to OU Health's trauma, diabetes, cancer and pediatric care programs. DMEI's specialized surgical and diagnostic expertise supports these multidisciplinary programs, enhancing patient outcomes across complex conditions.

"Joining OU Health represents a natural evolution of the relationships between Dean McGee Eye Institute and OU Health. We have a shared purpose to deliver on the three-part mission of education, research and clinical care. Becoming part of OU Health will solidify and amplify this mission," said R. Michael Siatkowski, M.D., MBA, President and CEO of DMEI and Edward L. Gaylord Professor and chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at OU College of Medicine.

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.

For more information, visit OUHealth.com.



ANA President Named Among 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is proud to announce that ANA President Dr. Jennifer Mensik Kennedy, PhD, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, was recognized by Modern Healthcare as one of the 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare for 2025.

The complete ranking can be found in the December issue of MH magazine, and profiles of all the honorees are available online at ModernHealthcare.com/100MostInfluential.

This prestigious recognition program acknowledges and honors individuals who are deemed by the Modern Healthcare newsroom to be the most influential figures in the industry in terms of leadership and impact.

"Influence can be exerted in many ways but regardless of whether it is used to internally shape organizations, the healthcare industry as a whole or both, playing a positive role benefits patients and the professionals responsible for their health," said Mary Ellen Podmolik, editor-in-chief of Modern Healthcare. "Our ranked list of the 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare highlights the executives in all corners of the industry who are striving to advance medicine and how care is delivered — and succeeding in doing so."

Dr. Mensik Kennedy was recognized for her exceptional advocacy and impact on behalf of the nursing profession. Her leadership continues to elevate the voice of nurses in shaping policy, advancing innovation, and improving healthcare for all.

"It is an incredible honor to be recognized among so many distinguished leaders who are shaping the future of healthcare," said Dr. Mensik Kennedy. "This recognition reflects the collective strength and influence of the nursing profession. Every day, nurses across the country lead with skill, compassion, and courage, and it is their unwavering commitment to patients and communities that continues to inspire my work and drive our advocacy."

Dr. Mensik Kennedy is continuing her second term as the 38th president of ANA, which began on January 1, 2025. This is her 3rd time placing on Modern Healthcare's 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare list.



From your friends at
Oklahoma Nursing Times!

NURSE TALK

How do you enjoy spending your leisure time?



SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital
Midwest



Debbie Dahl, RN



"I spend my leisure time dancing. I'm a clogger. It's great because I perform at assisted living and nursing homes bringing joy to others."

"I have three kids so I spend it with them on my few off-days that I have. We have five acres and do four-wheelers and playing outside."

"With my youngest daughter; she is a student pilot and a cheerleader. So we do a lot of cheer, a lot of tumbling, and spend a lot of time at the airport."



Ashley Fisher, RN



Jayne Martinez, RN

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Currently we represent 8 organizations which offer 73 products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Program to get information on all your options.



INTEGRIS Health Celebrates Malachi,

Mattie and Joshua Davis of Oklahoma City consider their son, Malachi, a Christmas miracle. While the outcome was everything they ever wanted, they anticipate this holiday season will be more joy filled than the last.

Early Delivery

Dec. 26, 2024, began like any other day. The glow of Christmas still lingered in their home, and the young couple were filled with anticipation, dreaming about the arrival of their baby in the coming months.

But by the afternoon, everything changed. Mattie was rushed to the hospital. She had gone into premature labor. Less than 24 hours later, their son, Malachi, was born at just 22 weeks, weighing barely over a pound. He was impossibly small, his life hanging by a thread. Mattie held him for only a moment, his tiny body fitting into the palm of her hand before he was whisked away to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at INTEGRIS Health Children's inside INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center. A team of caregivers surrounded him, working tirelessly to give him a fighting chance.

Tiny Fighter

For the first eight days, Malachi held on. But on day nine, his condition took a devastating turn. Doctors gathered the Davis family and gently prepared them for the worst. The odds of survival for a baby born this early were heartbreakingly slim. Mattie and Joshua were in shock.

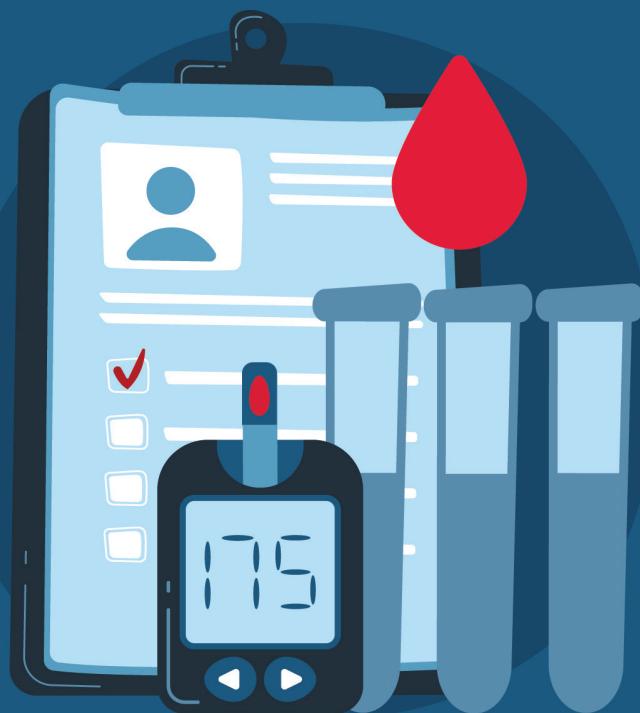
"Seeing how many wires and tubes were keeping him alive, and how tiny he was — it just didn't feel real," Mattie recalled.



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A Christmas Miracle

In the weeks that followed, Malachi's health remained unstable, but on day 28, it sharply declined. The hospital called the Davis family throughout the night with updates, each one more urgent than the last. By 6:00 a.m., the final call came. The young couple raced to the hospital, bracing themselves to say goodbye.

The Miracle

As Mattie held her son, for only the second time, her heart broke with the fear it might be the last time. But then, something miraculously changed. Against all odds, Malachi's condition began to improve the next day. Slowly, steadily, he began to grow stronger. Each milestone brought renewed hope. And with time, Mattie and Joshua were finally able to hold their son—not just in fear, but in love.

Donations Matter

Thanks to donor-funded kangaroo care chairs in every NICU room at the hospital, Malachi's parents could cradle him with skin-to-skin contact. This simple act—proven to regulate a baby's body temperature, heart rate and breathing—helped them bond and helped Malachi heal.

Because of the generosity of donors, Mattie and Joshua no longer had to connect with their son through the glass of an isolette crib. They could hold him, comfort him and be part of his journey toward health.



Facilities Named Perinatal Quality Spotlight Hospitals

Recently, several INTEGRIS Health facilities were honored by the Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (OPQIC) for their excellence in care for Oklahoma mothers and newborns.

These facilities are designated as "Spotlight Hospitals," meeting certain criteria, such as breastfeeding and baby friendliness, safe sleep hospital designation, TeamBirth participation and recognition and more. We're extremely proud of the following facilities that continue to embody our mission and serve perinatal patients with care and compassion.

Gold Level Awardees

INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center
INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital

Silver Level Awardees

INTEGRIS Health Edmond Hospital
INTEGRIS Health Southwest Medical Center

Bronze Level Awardees

INTEGRIS Health Enid Hospital

Additionally, Jennifer Smith, M.D., Ph.D., was recognized with the Warren M. Crosby Champion for Maternal and Infant Health Award. This prestigious award, named in honor of Dr. Warren M. Crosby, recognizes individuals who embody his extraordinary commitment to improving maternal and infant health outcomes.

Smith exemplifies this legacy through her sustained leadership, expertise and dedication to improving outcomes for Oklahoma families. She serves as the specialty council medical director for women's services at INTEGRIS Health. With twenty years of experience in maternal-fetal medicine, she leads evidence-based care initiatives that foster patient safety and promote a culture of continuous improvement and clinical excellence.

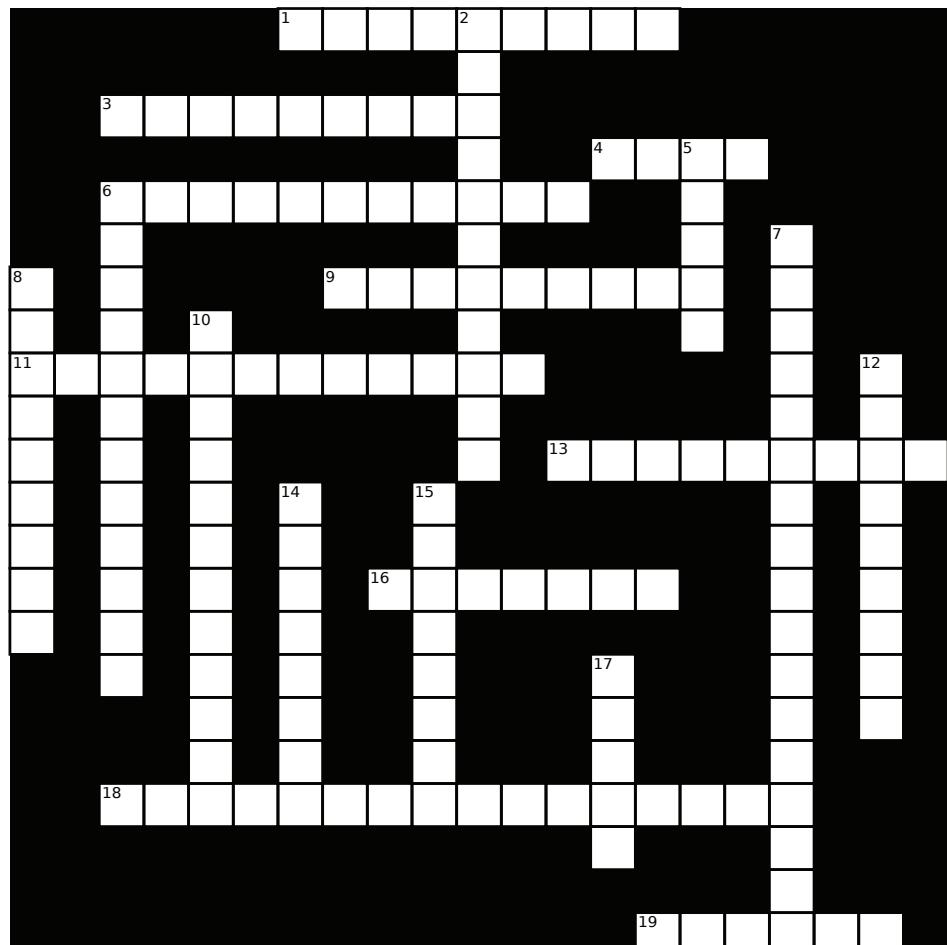
OKNT CROSSWORD: NEWBORN ASSESSMENT

Across

1. A yellow pigment derived from hemoglobin release with the breakdown of RBCs.
3. Initiation of breathing is stimulated by the clamping of the _____ which causes a rise in BP which increases lung perfusion
4. 37 weeks gestation is considered what?
6. A protective mechanism that allows the infants to become accustomed to environmental stimuli.
9. Ophthalmia neonatorum is an inflammation of the eyes resulting from an infection when passing through the birth canal of a mother who has what STD.
11. The removal of the male foreskin.
13. Type of adipose tissue that is unique to newborns?
16. Touching the infants lip or cheek with the nipple will elicit the _____ reflex.
18. The maintenance of balance between heat loss and heat production.
19. A term newborn heart rate of 120 is considered _____.

Down

2. Nasal flaring, retractions and grunting when expiring are sign of _____ distress.
5. If the baby does not void within 48 hours of birth the doctor may suspect _____ impairment.
6. A newborn BP of 110/70 is indicative of _____.
7. A generalized edematous area of the scalp most commonly found on the occiput.
8. Greater than 60 respirations per minute.
10. A _____ is used to suction the baby's airway.
12. Wrapping of the baby in a blanket.
14. Stools while in utero.
15. _____ is clearly visible when bilirubin levels reach 5 to 7 mg/dl
17. The _____ score permits a rapid assessment of the need for resuscitation of the neonate.



Oklahoma Children's OU Health Earns ELSO Gold Center of Excellence Designation

National honor confirms Oklahoma families can access world-class lifesaving care.

When a child's heart or lungs fail, every second counts. Families across Oklahoma's 77 counties can trust they're receiving world-class care at Oklahoma Children's OU Health, which has earned the prestigious Gold Center of Excellence designation from the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO). This national recognition affirms the hospital's expertise in delivering lifesaving extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) treatment to critically ill children.

ELSO recognizes programs worldwide that have systems processes and procedures in place that promote excellence and exceptional care. The Gold Center of Excellence designation, which is effective Jan. 1, 2026, places Oklahoma Children's among an elite group nationwide and confirms its ability to deliver the highest level of care when seconds matter.

In 2024, Oklahoma Children's provided 39 seriously ill children with ECMO. This year, the hospital estimates it will provide 35 to 40 ECMO treatments.

As part of the University of Oklahoma's academic health system — and the state's only comprehensive pediatric provider with a statewide network of experts and clinics — Oklahoma Children's offers the expertise, technology and outcomes needed to treat the most critically ill children without requiring families to leave Oklahoma.

"This recognition from ELSO is a reflection of the incredible teamwork, training and dedication it takes to care for the sickest children. Families can feel confident knowing that their child is being treated at one of the top pediatric ECMO centers in the country," said pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Harold Burkhart, M.D., pediatric cardiothoracic surgical program director at OU Health and professor of surgery and chief of the Division of Cardiac, Thoracic and Vascular Surgery at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine.

ECMO is a sophisticated technology that temporarily takes over the function of the heart and lungs when a child is too sick to survive without support. It can mean the difference between life and death — buying time for tiny hearts and lungs to heal or for a child to receive transplant.

Earning Gold Center status requires more than advanced equipment. It means having a team of highly specialized doctors, nurses, surgeons, perfusionists and technicians available 24/7. Their coordinated efforts drive a program that continuously measures outcomes, improves care and follows best practices to give critically ill children the best chance at survival and recovery.

Oklahoma Children's treats newborns with severe heart defects, children with life-threatening infections, teenagers in cardiac arrest and patients whose lungs are failing from pneumonia or other conditions. These are the patients who need more than any standard intensive care unit can provide.

In addition to ELSO recognition, Oklahoma Children's heart program is ranked among the top 50 in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, reflecting its excellence in pediatric cardiac care and outcomes.

Building on this, the recent announcement of the expansion of the pediatric heart program, supported by a historic \$20 million gift from the Presbyterian Health Foundation and \$200 million in state funding, will establish the Oklahoma Children's OU Health Presbyterian Health Foundation Heart Center. A new 200,500-square-foot facility will open in 2030 and centralize cardiac services, increase inpatient capacity and enhance surgical, diagnostic and transplant capabilities, ensuring more children can receive advanced heart care without leaving the state.

As part of OU Health's academic mission, the center will also integrate research, education and clinical excellence in a child-focused environment designed to support healing, innovation and hope.

"These types of recognitions reflect our unwavering commitment to providing the highest level of care," said Paul Paulisich, MSN, R.N., NE-BC, associate vice president of the Oklahoma Children's OU Health Presbyterian Health Foundation Heart Center. "We take this opportunity to celebrate our accomplishments with our teams. At the same time, we look to see how we can continue to innovate and provide even better care."

When your child needs advanced care recognized among the nation's best, you can find it here in Oklahoma.

As a part of the state's flagship academic health system, OU Health combines patient care with research and education, constantly advancing what is possible in healthcare while changing lives through discovery and healing. The ELSO Gold Center of Excellence designation reinforces that commitment and confirms Oklahoma Children's standing among the nation's leading pediatric hospitals.

For more information about pediatric critical care services at Oklahoma Children's OU Health, visit OklahomaChildrens.org.



OKLAHOMA CHILDREN'S OU HEALTH

Oklahoma Children's OU Health is anchored by the state's only comprehensive, freestanding children's hospital and powered by a statewide team of pediatric experts — delivering care through hospital-based services and pediatric clinics located across the Oklahoma City metro area, including the University of Oklahoma Health Campus and communities throughout the state. Proudly serving all 77 counties, we bring breakthroughs to every child and every family. With unshakable optimism and a family-centered approach, our pediatric specialists lead with empathy, innovation and unstoppable drive.

As part of the University of Oklahoma's academic health system, OU Health, the pediatric specialists at Oklahoma Children's are at the forefront of medical innovation, conducting groundbreaking research and training future healthcare leaders. Families trust our pediatric expertise, from leading-edge heart surgery to 24/7 emergency care.

We offer the state's only pediatric Level I Trauma Center, the most comprehensive Level IV neonatal intensive care unit, the region's sole pediatric heart transplant program, and a dedicated pediatric mental and behavioral health facility coming in 2026. At Oklahoma Children's, we provide a family-centered approach to healing, supported by resources like pet therapy, music therapy, and child life specialists.

Discover more at OklahomaChildrens.org.



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- 6% retirement match, 100% vesting after two years
- Up to \$25,000 student loan repayment
- Up to \$5,250 tuition assistance per year
- Degree Accelerator Program
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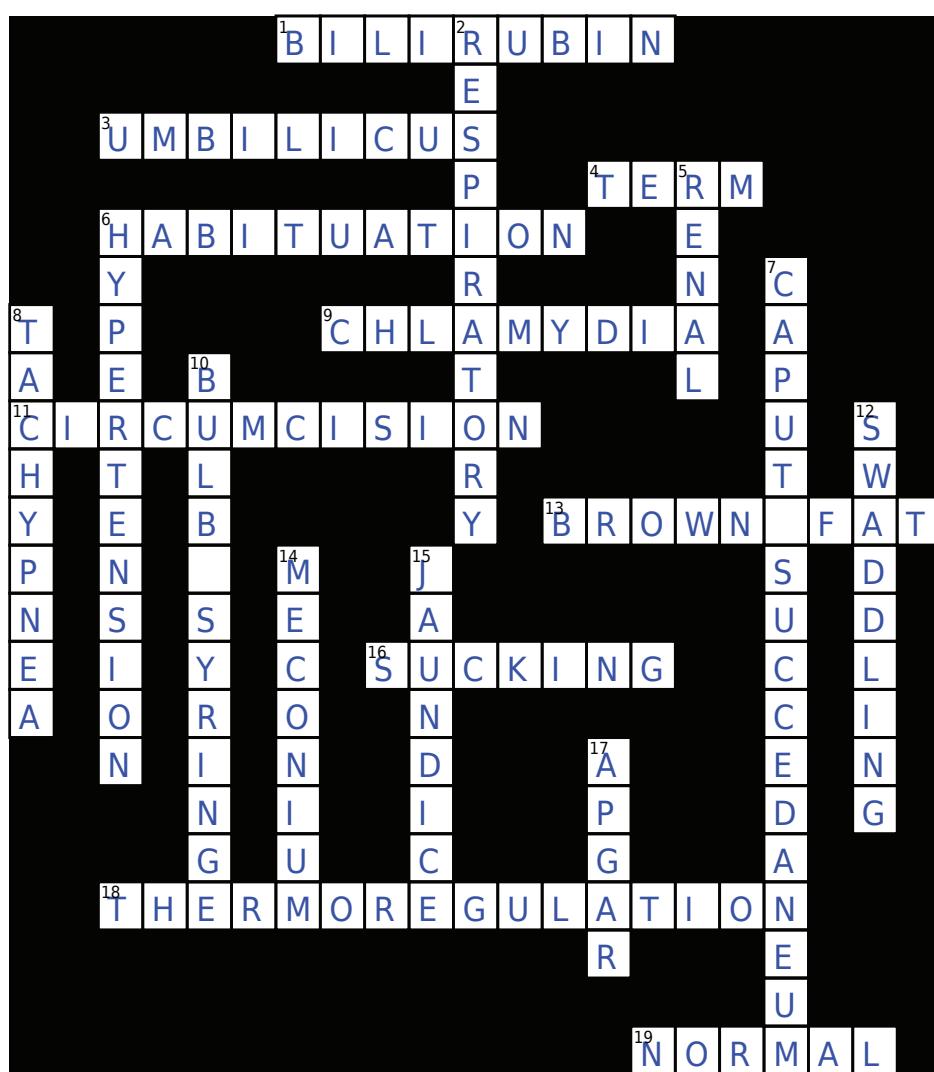
Visit OUHealth.com/Careers or email Talent@ouhealth.com for current openings.

OKNT Puzzle Answers: Newborn Assessment

MINI SUDOKU

Answer

5	3	4	2	1	6
6	1	2	3	5	4
3	4	5	1	6	2
1	2	6	4	3	5
2	6	3	5	4	1
4	5	1	6	2	3



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