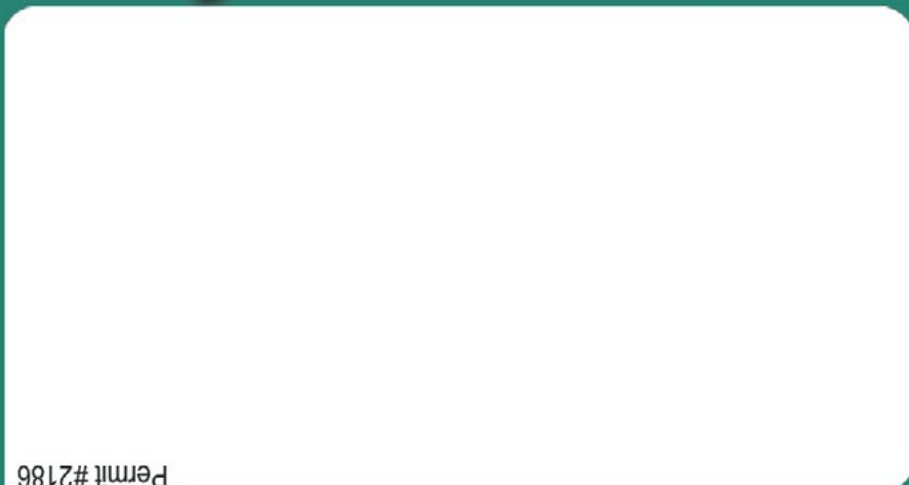




## Celebrating National Nurses Month May 2026 - *The Power of Nurses*



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# History, Themes, and How to Celebrate

May is designated as National Nurses Month to honor the vital role nurses play in healthcare, with special focus on National Nurses Week (May 6–12) and National Nurses Day on May 6.

## ORIGINS AND SIGNIFICANCE

The observance began with National Nurses Day on May 6, 1953, proposed by Dorothy Sunderland to President Eisenhower, and later officially proclaimed in the U.S. It coincides with National Nurses Week (May 6–12), which started in 1974 and ends on International Nurses Day on Florence Nightingale's birthday, May 12 ANA Enterprise.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) expanded the week into a month-long celebration in 2020, creating Nurses Month with weekly themes:

**Self-care Week (May 1–9)**

**Recognition Week (May 10–16)**

**Professional Development Week (May 17–23)**

**Community Engagement Week (May 24–31) American Nurse Journal**

## HOW TO CELEBRATE

**Public Recognition:** Share thank-you messages, cards, or social media posts using hashtags like #NationalNursesWeek and #ThankANurse The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)+1.

**Lighting Up the Sky:** Participate in the ANA's Nurses Light Up the Sky campaign, where landmarks in cities like Chicago, Portland, Minneapolis, and Houston are illuminated to honor nurses Nurse.com.

**Special Grants & Resources:** Organizations like AACN offer grants, career center boosts, and educational supplements during the month The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).

**Community Events:** Hospitals, schools, and nursing associations host events, webinars, and storytelling sessions to highlight nursing contributions American Nurse Journal.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Nurses are the largest group of healthcare professionals, providing essential care in diverse settings. Celebrating them raises public awareness, supports professional growth, and acknowledges the challenges they face, such as burnout and inequities in healthcare Nurse.com.

# Tender care is healing medicine

By James Coburn, staff writer

It's all hands-on-deck at the INTEGRIS Health Paul Silverstein Burn Center.

Last year was the 50th anniversary of the center. The only certified burn center in Oklahoma accepts people of all ages.

"We try to get them back to a normal life, or a new normal life for them. And then we get to see them walk out," said Victoria Fletcher, a registered nurse in the burn center's ICU.

The burn center includes outpatient burn and wound care and an intensive care unit. Patients are admitted to the ICU when burns cover more than 15 percent of their bodies and certainly for burns covering more than 20 percent, Fletcher said. Med/surg hospital beds are designated for less serious or downgraded conditions.

Many patients are oil field workers or were injured in house fires. To save time, some patients are transported by helicopter to INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center and are taken directly to the unit.

The doctor will come in to investigate the burn size. Patients are thoroughly cleaned before the family enters the room. Families are usually scared when entering the unit. The patient is understandably in acute pain.

"Pain control is kind of like our bread and butter in the nursing world as far as burns go," Fletcher said. "Burns are one of the most painful things you can go through. We're often giving pain medication. We're trying to help them cope with pain in different avenues like listening to music or watching TV."

Nurses recently began using nitrous oxide, used by dentists, as a safe and effective means of managing pain and anxiety. So far, they've seen a lot of success with that during dressing changes in addition to the typical intravenous pain medication given.

Fletcher's approach is to speak calmly and be brutally honest when saying she must clean their burn wound. She may say, "I have to do these things. I don't care what you have to do to cope with it. I'm going to give you pain medication. If you need to scream; we need to listen to music, you need to cry — I'm here for you no matter what."

Fletcher never takes their reactions personally, she said. Quite simply, there is no better way to say it. Being brutally honest can help the patient break down a wall, and think, 'She's trying to prepare me for this'. And then, I usually encourage them afterwards. "You did so good," she continued. "Let me know how that went. We'll try to plan something a little bit better for next time."

She will share with the burn team when a patient asks to clean the wound fast. The same applies when asked to clean the wound more slowly.

"So, I really try to advocate for the patient and pay attention to what they're saying," Fletcher said.

After all, Fletcher became a nurse to take care of people. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Oklahoma Panhandle State University. While working toward her first degree in nutrition, Fletcher had always been fascinated with how nutrition plays a role in tissue and skin regrowth.

The burn center uses vitamin C resuscitation through a drip. Vitamin C is a free radical that goes in the body where it grabs the oxidizing tissues to help with the burn shock, Fletcher explained.



**Victoria Fletcher, a registered nurse at the INTEGRIS Health Paul Silverstein Burn Center, located in Oklahoma City, helps patients recover from severe burn injuries**

"Not every burn center uses that. It is something our medical director used at other burn centers. He brought it here and really likes it," she said.

Her focus on healing, galvanizes her spirit to rise with best practices.

An oil field accident caused an extended ICU stay for an oil field worker. The day came when he would accomplish standing for the first time since his accident. Fletcher then told him that on the following day he would be helped to the door.

He said, 'No, we're doing it now.' I said, 'Hold on a second. This is the first time you've stood up in months. You've only been excavated for maybe a week.'

The man replied, "No, we're going to do it," Fletcher said. After two or three steps she told him they would try again in an hour. She complimented his motivation.

"By the end of the shift, he was walking from his room to the ICU door," she explained.

Today, when Fletcher is having a hard time at the gym, she tells herself she can do another repetition because of his motivation to walk.

"A lot of my motivation comes from my patients in the things they accomplish daily, in the things they had once thought as hopeless," she added.

Her Christian faith is a huge part of who she is and how she lives.

Fletcher is passionate about a new support group with healing conversation. Survivors share that only a few people understand what they have endured.

"I think it will ultimately help them feel heard," Fletcher said.

Fletcher encourages people interested in the support group to email [burnpeersupport@integris.org](mailto:burnpeersupport@integris.org), or call the INTEGRIS Health Paul Silverstein Burn Center at 405-949-3345.

# Avedis Foundation Announces Gift

The SSM Health St. Anthony Foundation is proud to announce a transformative \$3 million gift from the Avedis Foundation to support the renovation and modernization of the Cancer Center at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital-Shawnee. This critical investment marks a major step forward in expanding access to high-quality cancer care for patients across Pottawatomie, Seminole, Lincoln counties, and surrounding rural communities.

“The Avedis Foundation is honored to support this important investment in cancer care for our region,” said Kathy Laster, President and CEO of the Avedis Foundation. “Access to high-quality, advanced treatment close to home is critical for patients and their families. This renovation will not only enhance the patient experience, but also strengthen the long-term health and well-being of communities across our service area.”

The need for this project has been driven by a steady rise in cancer cases, increasing patient volumes, and aging infrastructure that no longer meets the demands of modern oncology care. Since opening in 1996, the Cancer Center has experienced a 26.95% increase in total patient volume across all cancer-related services. At the same time, Oklahoma’s cancer incidence rate exceeds the national average, with the Center’s primary service area reporting even higher rates, including Pottawatomie County, which ranks among the highest in the state.

As one of the only comprehensive cancer centers offering integrated oncology services, including medical oncology, radiation therapy, infusion, PET imaging, and nuclear medicine, the facility serves as a vital lifeline for thousands of patients. Many individuals in this largely rural region face significant barriers to care, including transportation challenges, financial hardship, and limited access to specialized services.

“This generous gift from the Avedis Foundation is a powerful investment in the health and future of our community,” said Angi Mohr, President, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital-Shawnee. “It allows us to take a major step toward ensuring that patients can receive timely, advanced cancer care close to home.”

## The renovation project will be completed in three phases:

Phase 1 (December 2025 – May 2026): Replacement of the 18-year-old linear accelerator (LINAC) with a state-of-the-art system, enhancing treatment precision, efficiency, and patient outcomes.

Phase 2 (Expected completion prior to May 2026): Renovation of the Cancer Center’s entrance and waiting areas to improve comfort, privacy, and accessibility for patients and families.

Phase 3 (12–18 months, pending funding): A comprehensive remodel, including a 43% expansion in infusion treatment capacity, redesigned clinical spaces, and improved workflow across nuclear medicine, cardiac stress testing, and clinic operations.

Together, these upgrades will significantly reduce wait times, improve patient throughput, and enable more individuals to receive care locally, eliminating the need for many to travel long distances for treatment.

To build on this momentum, the Foundation is launching a community-wide fundraising campaign to secure the remaining funds needed to complete Phase 3 of the project. The campaign will be led by community leaders Cami Engles and Mindy Palmer and will include a series of outreach efforts culminating in a community event to engage supporters and raise awareness.

“Our goal is to bring the community together around this vital cause,” said Lynann Sterk-Brooks, VP of Philanthropy and Foundation at St. Anthony

Foundation. “This Cancer Center belongs to all of us, and together we can ensure it continues to serve our families, friends, and neighbors for generations to come.”

The renovation will not interrupt patient care, and the Cancer Center team is committed to maintaining clear communication to minimize disruption for patients and their families throughout construction.

SSM Health remains dedicated to serving all individuals regardless of financial status, insurance coverage, or geographic location. Through financial assistance programs, transportation coordination, and compassionate care, the organization works to eliminate barriers and ensure equitable access to life-saving treatment.

This project reflects SSM Health’s mission: “Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.” By modernizing the Cancer Center, SSM Health is reaffirming its commitment to clinical excellence, compassion, and the long-term health of rural Oklahoma communities.



 The graphic features a central image of several hands of diverse skin tones clasped together in a circle. Some hands wear white beaded bracelets with the words "POWER OF NURSES" written on them. A red heart and a yellow bandage are also visible among the hands.
 

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### Registered Nurse - Med Surg - Days - Yukon

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### RN- Lakeside Women's Hospital - Nights - Days

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# OU Begins CRNA Program

Long a coveted path for advancement in nursing, opportunities for nurse anesthesia education in our state have historically been limited.

But as advanced practiced nursing is more and more a driver in today's health care delivery system, the demand has reached a critical juncture.

That's why leaders at the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma are excited about the upcoming Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)-Nurse Anesthesia track.

"As the flagship College of Nursing in Oklahoma, it is our mission to meet the nursing workforce needs of the state with the urgency that it deserves," said Melissa Kraft, Ph. D., OU Dean of Nursing. "That mission is going to be substantially bolstered by this new DNP CRNA track. The support for this from the legislature, OU leadership, faculty and staff at OU College of Nursing, and clinical partners across the state, has been a joy to experience. This support is the reason we are so clear about the need, so proud to be able to offer this education, and why we are absolutely confident it will be an overwhelming success, said Dr. Melissa Craft, dean of the college."

Charged with beginning the first CRNA clinical pathway at OU is Angela Mund, DNP CRNA FAANA FAAN.

"There's been so much excitement about this program," she said. "I get non-stop emails from interested applicants, which is good."

The university is in the process of obtaining initial accreditation from the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs. Applications are open and the first class is expected to launch in January 2027, pending accreditation.

The application window closes July 15.

Mund expects several hundred applicants for the inaugural class.

Mund has been active in nurse anesthesia for more than 20 years including serving as President of the Association of Veteran's Affairs Nurse Anesthetists and the President of the South Carolina Association of Nurse Anesthetists. She was the 2022-2023 President of the AANA.

She is a proud veteran of the US Army Nurse Corps. In 2022, she was appointed by the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs to serve on the Veterans Administration Rural Health Advisory Committee.

Mund said the healthcare needs that CRNAs are currently filling in our state is outstanding.

"I've never been so impressed by the clinical practice of CRNAs in Oklahoma compared with all the states I've been involved in," she said. "

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)-Nurse Anesthesia track is intentionally designed to prepare Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) for advanced clinical practice and leadership in complex healthcare environments.

It is a 36-month program resulting in a DNP degree.

The curriculum follows a deliberate progression, beginning with rigorous didactic coursework, advancing to high-fidelity simulation experiences, and culminating in immersive, longitudinal clinical education.

This structure ensures that students develop a strong foundation in



advanced science and anesthesia principles prior to assuming increasing responsibility in patient care settings.

According to the Oklahoma Board of Nursing, 52 of Oklahoma's 77 counties lack an anesthesiologist. At the same time, CRNAs represent more than 80% of anesthesia providers statewide and are the primary anesthesia professionals in 75 counties.

By creating this pathway, the College of Nursing is directly addressing the state's need for advanced practice CRNAs, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

In Oklahoma, CRNAs play an indispensable role in ensuring access to surgical, obstetric, trauma, and pain management services across the state. They are the primary, and often only, anesthesia providers in many rural and critical access hospitals, enabling communities to maintain local surgical care rather than requiring patients to travel long distances for essential procedures.

CRNAs in Oklahoma practice at the top of their education and training, supporting high-acuity care in academic medical centers while also sustaining anesthesia services in smaller community facilities. Their impact is direct and measurable: improved access to care, continuity of services, and a resilient healthcare infrastructure that depends on CRNAs to meet the state's diverse and growing healthcare needs.

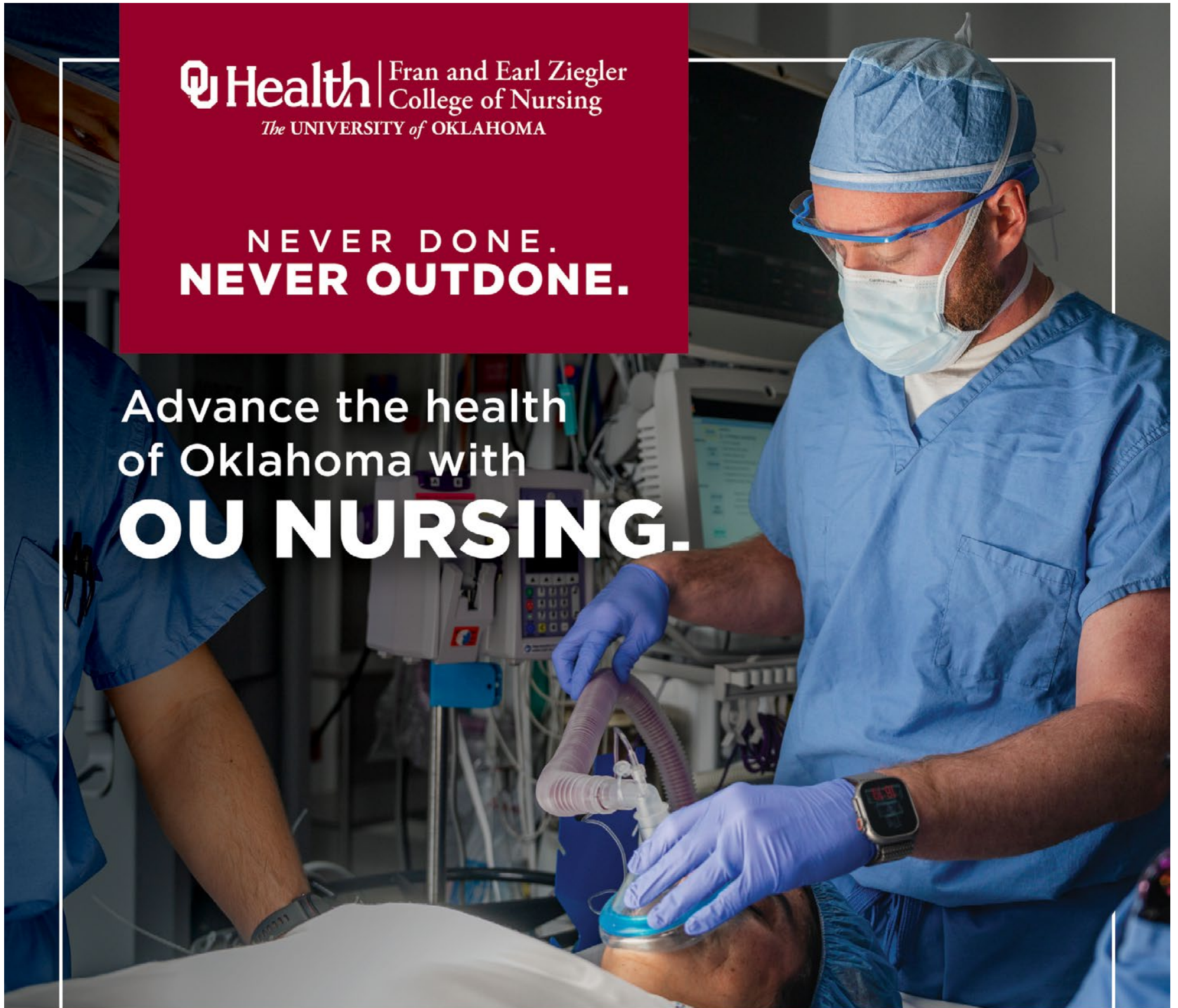
The announcement of the new CRNA track last fall was a continuation of OU's commitment to expand access to care and ensure alignment with workforce needs.

"These program enhancements reflect the innovation and adaptability that define our approach to preparing the next generation of nurses in Oklahoma," said Gary Raskob, senior vice president and provost, University of Oklahoma Health Campus. "From accelerating degree completion to expanding advanced practice opportunities, we are committed to meeting Oklahoma's workforce needs while upholding the highest standards of nursing education."

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*\*Program is seeking initial accreditation.*



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## Mercy OKC Ranked State's Top Maternity Hospital

*Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City on Newsweek's list of the best American maternity hospitals*

The maternity care at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City is more than just the best in Oklahoma — it's among the best across the entire country.

A birthing suite in the Love Family Women's Center at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. It shows a queen-sized, home-style bed used to mimic a home birth setting in the hospital. There is recessed lighting and crown-wood molding on the ceiling, a large sleeping couch and a rocking chair behind the bed, plus a large TV, and two large windows with blinds and curtains. Newsweek's just-released annual list of America's Best Maternity Hospitals includes Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City as the top ranked in the state. It joins five other Mercy birth centers across three states on the list.

"The Love Family Women's Center here at Mercy is a special place to work, because every day our caregivers welcome new lives into the world and are part of a family's most memorable moments," said Dr. Lance Watson, Mercy's chief medical officer. "We're proud that the data shows we're among the best in the country at what we do. It means those families are getting the compassionate care they deserve and that we work so hard to provide."

### Maternity Care Data

Newsweek used three data points to compile its list of top maternity hospitals this year: hospital quality metrics, patient experience and reputation score.

The data is pulled from public sources and recommendations from leading health care professionals in maternity care, including neonatal and perinatal physicians, nurses and midwives.

After crunching the numbers, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City was the only Oklahoma hospital to earn all five ribbons on the magazine's rating scale.

Four Mercy hospitals in Missouri also made the list (Jefferson, Southeast, Springfield and St. Louis) along with the Mercy birthplace in Northwest Arkansas. Mercy has more hospitals on the list than any other health care system across those states and Oklahoma.

### Maternity Care With Mercy in Oklahoma City

The foundation of Mercy's maternity care in Oklahoma City is the hospital's new Love Family Women's Center.

Included in the center's comprehensive health care programs for women are extensive wrap-around services for before, during and after childbirth:

- 73 rooms dedicated to women's health care, including new childbirth suites
- Oklahoma City's first obstetrics emergency department
- Oklahoma's first hospital-based midwifery birthing program
- Three large Caesarian birth (C-section) suites
- Outpatient therapy, including pelvic floor therapy
- Outpatient dietitian services
- Massage therapy

Education programs, childbirth classes, support groups and women's events  
Mercy OB-GYNs and other providers across the Mercy system provide seamless access and referrals to the services at the Love Family Women's Center for all women's health care needs, including maternity.

Visit [mercy.net/lfw](http://mercy.net/lfw) to learn more about the Love Family Women's Center and Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City's maternity care services.



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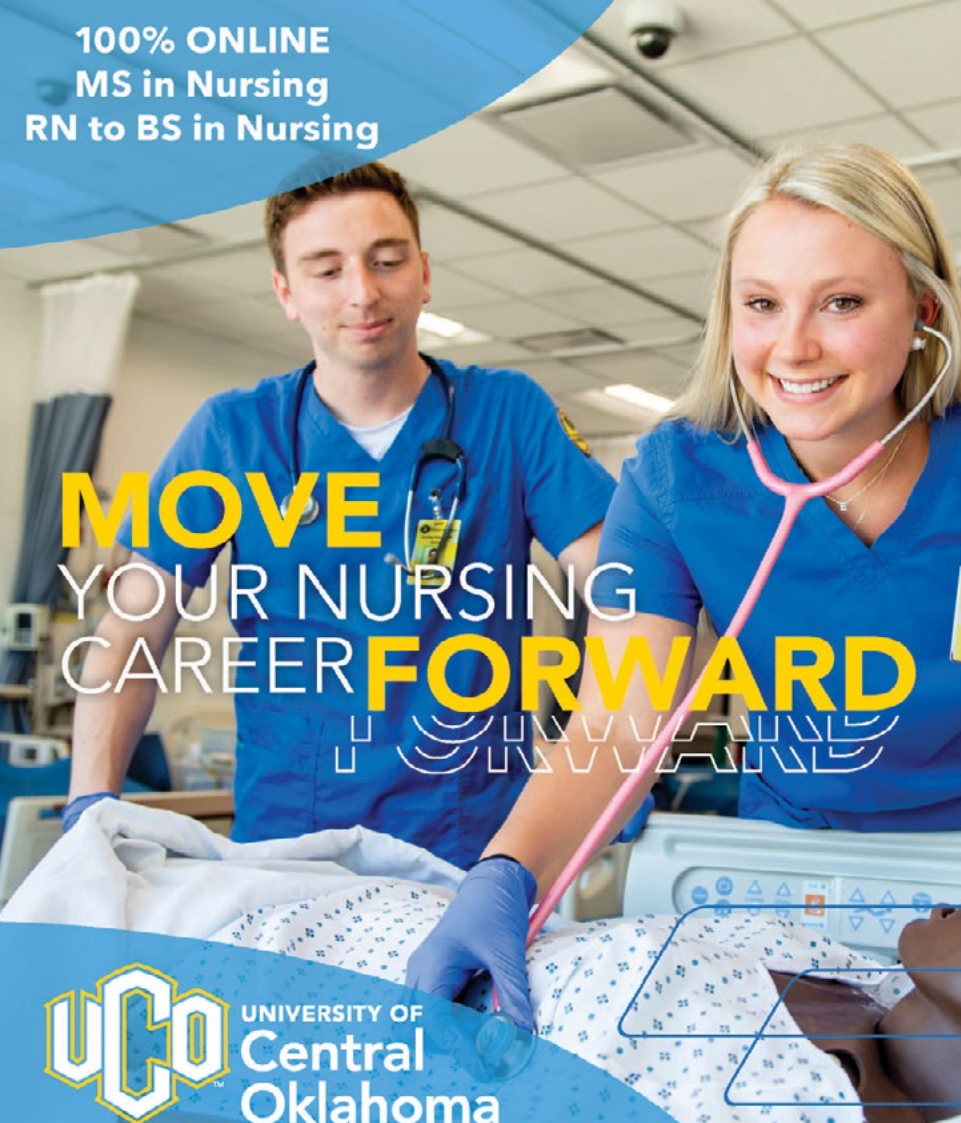


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# A CALLING TO CARE

## Celebrating Motherhood and Miracles

By Vickie Jenkins, staff writer

Labor and delivery nurse finds purpose in guiding families through life's most meaningful moments.

As Mother's Day approaches, few places reflect the meaning of the holiday more than the labor and delivery unit at the Love Family Women's Center, where new life begins and nurses like Trista Thomason, RN, BSN, witness miracles every day.

For Trista, becoming a nurse wasn't simply a career choice, it was a calling she recognized early in life. "I always wanted to be a nurse," she said. "Even when I was little, I knew I wanted to help deliver babies. That was always my dream."

Growing up in Guthrie, Oklahoma, Trista was the oldest of three girls. Her natural nurturing spirit was evident early on, but a defining moment helped solidify her path. When her five-year-old sister was involved in a serious car accident, Trista stepped in to help care for her during recovery. "That really impacted me," she said. "I already had that motherly instinct, but helping take care of my sister made me realize I truly wanted to go into the medical field."

She later attended Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, where she earned her nursing degree. While nursing school was rewarding, it also came with its share of challenges. During that time, Trista leaned on a special friendship that helped guide her both personally and spiritually. "I had a mentor and friend named Misty," she said. "We would meet weekly for coffee, especially during stressful times. She encouraged me not just in school, but in my walk with the Lord. That meant so much to me, especially when I needed advice about life and relationships."

After graduation, Trista began her nursing career at OU Children's Hospital, working in the pediatric intensive care unit for two years. While she loved caring for children, the emotional weight of the job eventually led her to consider a change. "I became very attached to the children," she said. "It was rewarding, but also very hard. You carry those experiences with you."

That journey ultimately led her to labor and delivery at the Love Family Women's Center. A place she now describes as exactly where she is meant to be. "I truly feel like I have the perfect job," she said. "It's such a beautiful and inviting environment, and I get to be part of one of the most important days in a family's life."

Now five years into her nursing career, Trista works three 12-hour shifts each week alongside a team she deeply values. "We all support each other," she said. "My coworkers feel like my best friends. That makes such a difference in the kind of care we're able to give."

Inside the delivery room, teamwork is essential. Trista helps guide mothers through labor, supports physicians, and assists in ensuring both mother and baby are safe and cared for.

"There's usually one labor nurse and two nurses for the baby," she



Trista Thomason, RN, BSN is a labor and delivery nurse at Love Family Women's Center. She has a heart of gold, full of love and compassion for each bundle of joy that is born.

explained. "We all work together, especially if the doctor needs help during delivery or with repairs afterward."

For Trista, the most rewarding part of her job is caring for women and their families during such a life-changing experience. "It's incredible to watch a mother see her baby for the first time," she said. "You

See **TRISTA** page 12

# NURSE



# TALK

**What candy best describes you and your personality?**



"It would definitely be a Snickers bar because it has several layers to it, sweet, strong, passionate... Just like me."



Katie Altizer, LPN

"I would be a Snickers! Sometimes I'm not at my best, but if I eat a Snickers, everything is much better!"



Brittany Cardenas, RN

"I would choose a Reese's peanut-butter cup because it is sweet and everyone likes me."

Trista Thomason, RN, BSN



## OKNT CROSSWORD: NURSING HISTORY - FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

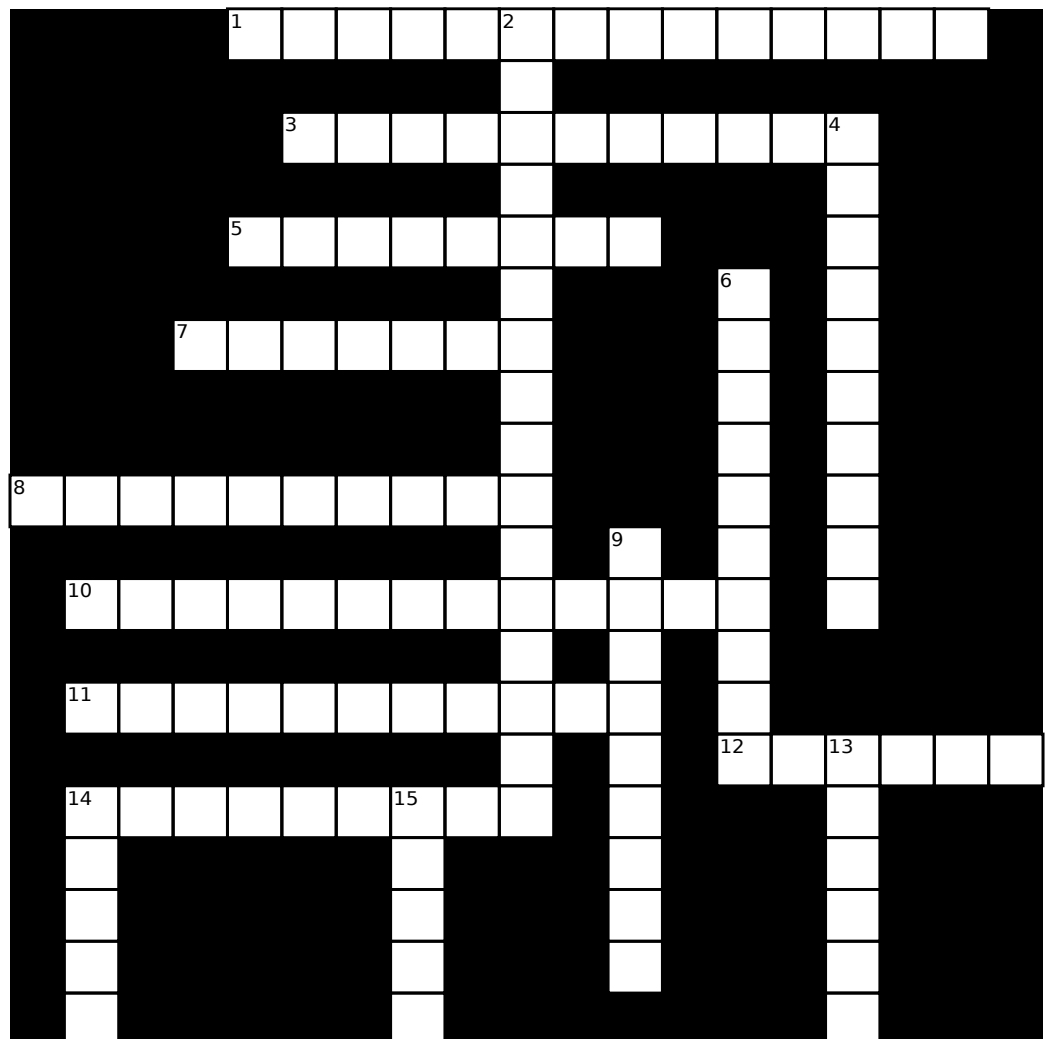
**Across**

- 1. 1887 Nurses would maintain an even temperature in your ward by \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. 1887 Nurses must daily \_\_\_\_\_ their ward
- 5. Florence's work inspired Jean Henri Dunant to found \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Florence insisted on adequate lighting, diet and \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. 1887 Nurses must not frequent \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Where was Florence Nightingale born
- 11. Florence was called "The Lady \_\_\_\_\_"
- 12. Where did Florence set up her Training School for Nurses

- 14. 1887 Nurses would \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the ward well lit

**Down**


- 2. Florence wrote "Notes on Hospitals" explaining how to \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Florence's high standards helped transform nursing into a respectable \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Florence was known to keep a \_\_\_\_\_ in her pocket
- 9. Florence is buried in East Wellow \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. How old was Florence when she died
- 14. 1887 Nurses would care for \_\_\_\_\_ patients
- 15. Florence never did \_\_\_\_\_






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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2026 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# OSU Nursing Program Grads Addressing Health Care Shortages

Medical facilities throughout Oklahoma are getting a much-needed shot in the arm.

Oklahoma State University's four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing program is making great strides toward closing the gap in the state and national shortage of nursing professionals, producing a new generation of highly qualified nurses equipped to lead with confidence.

Housed within the College of Education and Human Sciences, the BSN program is the culmination of years of dedication and collaboration. From its early planning stages to celebrating the first graduating class, this initiative continues to grow with purpose and momentum.

Now in its third year, the program welcomed over 165 aspiring nurses to the Stillwater campus for 2025-26. Since its inception in the fall of 2023, the program has accepted over 300 students.

Director of nursing Dr. Alana Cluck says it has been incredibly



rewarding to lead and witness the transformation of a vision into a thriving reality.

"I am immensely proud that the BSN program at OSU is built on a strong foundation of academic excellence, a supportive and compassionate learning environment, and a commitment to high expectations," Cluck said.

"We strive to empower our students with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to thrive in today's health care landscape. Our nursing faculty represents a cohesive, highly experienced, compassionate and exceptionally knowledgeable team of nurse educators whose collective expertise and dedication to student success set them apart."

Substantial growth has been found in enrollment capacity, faculty size and facilities.

Eight new faculty members have joined the team for the 2025-26 academic year.

Backed by rigorous courses, hands-on clinicals and statewide support, program graduates are ready to make an impact from day one.

OSU BSN students have the unique experience of being embedded in campus life, like any other student.

Dr. Diane Cannon, assistant professor of nursing, believes this illustrates the well-rounded nature of the program.

"Yes, they're training to become highly competent, compassionate nurses in an intensive academic program. But they're also getting the full OSU experience - something many nursing students in other programs simply don't have," Cannon said.

"Our students are part of a vibrant, traditional college campus. They cheer on the Cowboys at Boone Pickens Stadium, join Greek life, attend concerts and cultural events, and make lifelong friendships in student organizations. They study hard but feel connected to a larger community that celebrates who they are and who they're becoming."

Just as important, they're surrounded by top-tier campus resources - from the LASSO Center and the Reboot Center, to mental health support, tutoring, academic coaching and career services. These wraparound supports ensure they don't just survive nursing school, they thrive.

"It's not just about becoming a nurse," Cannon said. "It's about growing into a well-rounded, resilient and connected leader. That's the Cowboy way - and it's a difference you can feel." For more information, visit [www.go.okstate.edu](http://www.go.okstate.edu) or scan the QR CODE.

## Oklahoma Nursing Students' Association





JOIN NOW!

"The Oklahoma Nursing Students' Association (ONSA) is a statewide organization dedicated to supporting nursing students at every stage of their education. ONSA provides opportunities for leadership development, professional growth, and meaningful connection with peers across Oklahoma.

Through annual conventions, advocacy initiatives, and service projects, ONSA empowers nursing students to strengthen their voices, expand their knowledge, and shape the future of nursing. Members gain exposure to professional organizations, current issues in healthcare, and resources that support both academic and career success.

Whether you are just beginning your nursing journey or looking to take the next step as a student leader, ONSA offers a welcoming space to grow, learn, and lead."

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# National Volunteer Appreciation Spotlight

## *A Guiding Presence at INTEGRIS Health*

At INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center Portland Avenue and the INTEGRIS Health Heart Hospital, Sam Haque is quietly transforming moments of uncertainty into experiences of comfort, clarity and connection.

A retired engineer who emigrated from Bangladesh in 1980 after completing his education, Sam has built a life centered on service, family and community. He and his wife, Lisa Carol, are proud parents of two adult sons—both in the medical field—and grandparents to two grandchildren. In March 2023, Sam began a new chapter of service as a volunteer, continuing a lifelong commitment to helping others.

### **From Inspiration to Impact**

Sam's journey into hospital volunteering began during a routine visit for a shoulder X-ray at the Portland campus. While waiting, a chance encounter with a hospital volunteer sparked his interest. After learning how to get involved, he saw an opportunity to make a meaningful difference.

That moment revealed something powerful: hospitals, while places of healing, can often feel overwhelming—especially for those in crisis. Inspired by this realization, Sam committed himself to becoming a steady, reassuring presence for others navigating those unfamiliar hallways. "Healing begins at the front door," he shared. "I wanted to be part of that first moment—to ensure no one feels like just another case number."

### **The Heart of Volunteering**

For Sam, service goes far beyond completing tasks. "Volunteering isn't just about giving my time; it's about giving my presence," he said. "It's a reminder that while we cannot always cure, we can always care."

Each week, Sam volunteers from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, serving at the main information desks at both INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center Portland Avenue and the INTEGRIS Health Heart Hospital. His shifts are filled with meaningful interactions—greeting visitors, offering directions, escorting patients, assisting with wheelchairs, answering calls and most importantly, listening.

### **Moments That Matter**

Some of Sam's most impactful moments happen quietly. One experience stands out: a young woman, visibly shaken, approached the desk but couldn't find the words to ask for help. Rather than pointing the way, Sam walked beside her to the Emergency Department, offering silent support when words weren't enough.

"She told me, 'I was so lost until you walked with me.' That stayed with me," he recalled.

Moments like this reflect a deeper truth: sometimes, the greatest impact comes not from solving problems, but from recognizing the person behind them.



### **Leadership and Service**

In addition to his frontline role, Sam serves on the Volunteer Auxiliary Board as a committee member for the Portland campus. In this role, he provides updates on facility improvements and new medical equipment while collaborating with hospital leadership and staff. The opportunity to connect with experienced board members and various departments continues to deepen his engagement and broaden his perspective.

### **A Lasting Impact**

Volunteering has shaped not only the lives of those Sam serves, but his own perspective as well. "I've developed a deep commitment to patient advocacy and human-centered service," he said. "It's about balancing efficiency with empathy—making sure everyone feels seen, heard and respected."

He believes volunteers play a unique and vital role in health care environments.

"While doctors and nurses focus on saving lives, volunteers focus on honoring the life being saved."

For more information about volunteer opportunities at INTEGRIS Health visit [integrishhealth.org/volunteer](https://www.integrishhealth.org/volunteer) or call 405-949-3183 to find the perfect opportunity for you.



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**CVTECH**Canadian Valley Technology Center  
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## CV Tech Preps You for A Career Helping Others

Looking for a career that makes a real impact? Canadian Valley Technology Center's campuses in both Chickasha and Yukon offer exciting, hands-on programs that launch students into high-demand healthcare fields.

### Practical Nursing

Oklahoma's nursing shortage just received a massive, well ... shot in the arm.

A new partnership between the State Regents for Higher Education and the state's Career Tech system is intended to rapidly increase the number of people who obtain a highly coveted (by healthcare facilities) Bachelor of Science in nursing degree (BSN).

Students who complete a Practical Nursing program at one of the 29 technology participating centers statewide now receive a minimum of 22 credit hours toward the completion of a BSN at one of eight regional universities in Oklahoma. Most in-state universities require 120 hours to complete a BSN.

The data studied, which led to the partnership, indicated the state routinely sits among the lowest ranking nationwide for health outcomes. Analytics show the gap between expected and actual employment for registered nurses (RNs) is expected to increase nearly 3 percent over the next five years.

Regents and Career Tech share a mutual interest in improving education opportunities, and this agreement minimizes repetition of coursework, said Pam Roberts, Nursing Director at CV Tech.

"This clearly shows that universities respect the education students have gotten while earning their LPN," Roberts said. "The 22 credits represents about one-fifth of the requirements and cost for a BSN degree."

Half the 22 credit hours can be applied to pre-requisites and the other half to nursing courses, Roberts said. An average hour of credit at in-state, regional universities is about \$300. There is no cost for the hours credited once a person passes their exam to become a licenses practical nurse.



*Surgical Technology (pictured) is among several healthcare career fields provided at CV Tech's Chickasha and Yukon locations.*

### Surgical Technology

While surgeons and nurses are often in the spotlight, surgical technologists, more commonly known as "scrub techs," work behind the scenes to ensure procedures run seamlessly.

Scrub techs serve as the backbone of the surgical team. They meticulously prepare a sterile operating room, prep patients for procedures and hand instruments to medical personnel during surgeries. Their vigilance helps prevent infections and ensures patient safety. After surgery, they are responsible for sterilizing and storing instruments, an essential step in preventing contamination.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data shows a predicted 5 percent growth in this field over the next eight years, or faster than average.

### Vision Care Technician

CV Tech also offers a career prep program for those interested in becoming eyecare professionals.

More specifically, a certified ophthalmic assistant (COA) learns to perform diagnostic testing and attains clerical skills. Instruction centers on teaching students how to accurately record patient information. Additionally, COA's clean and maintain ophthalmic instruments, assist during patient visits and provide instruction for corrective lenses.

BLS data for ophthalmic careers is expected to remain stable, with opportunities primarily driven by the need to replace workers.

### Medical Assistant

Among the fastest rising careers, according to BLS projections, is medical assisting. In fact, Job growth for the profession is expected to increase by 12 percent by 2034.

Registered medical assistants support physicians and other healthcare providers in a medical office or clinic setting. Core courses in CV Tech's program include CPR, First Aid, medical terminology and anatomy and physiology. Specialized courses include pharmacology and clinical procedures for disorders of each body system. Medical assistants also aid physicians with minor office surgeries.

CV Tech also offers health career education for adults in **Medical Coding Specialist** and **Patient Account Representative**. If you're ready to jump-start your future, you can complete most options in just one year. Take the first step toward a rewarding career in health care, and visit [www.cvtech.edu](http://www.cvtech.edu) to learn more or to apply.



(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2026 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

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# Health Care Ed

## Medical Assistant

Yukon

Prepares students to assist physicians and other healthcare providers in a medical office or clinic setting. Some core courses include CPR, First Aid, medical terminology and anatomy and physiology. Specialized courses include pharmacology and clinical procedures for disorders of each body system. Medical assistants also assist physicians with minor office surgeries.



## Medical Coding Specialist

Yukon

Students learn administrative medical assisting, medical terminology, basic anatomy and physiology. Acquire skills and knowledge in medical coding, medical insurance, and electronic health records. Careers include employment in a medical office, medical billing and medical coding field and administrative medical assistant.



## Patient Account Representative

Yukon

Students receive training in administrative medical assisting, medical billing and electronic health records. This program prepares students for employment in a medical office setting in an administrative capacity.



## Adult Classes 2026-27



## Practical Nursing

Chickasha | Yukon

This year-round, self-paced class preps you to take the NCLEX-PN exam for Practical Nursing



licensure. Students who complete the program receive 22 credits toward a bachelor of science degree at area colleges and universities.

## Surgical Technology

Chickasha | Yukon

Students prepare to be a critical part of a surgical team by ensuring a sterile environment and great outcomes for patients. Learn to be the backbone of surgeries by assisting surgeons and nurses during procedures by handing them instruments and supplies.



## Vision Care Technician

Yukon

Prep for licensure as a Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA). Learn to perform diagnostic testing and clerical skills. You will be instructed how to record patient info, clean and maintain ophthalmic instruments, assist during patient visits and provide instruction for corrective lenses.



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