

Where nurses mean the world
2020 YEAR OF THE



LEADERSHIP | INNOVATION | EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH

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A message from

ANDREA MAZZOCOLI

**Where nurses mean the world:
2020 Year of the Nurse**

2020, a year that marks the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth year, was named by the World Health Organization as the Year of the Nurse. Although it may have been conceived in part as a tribute to her legacy, it was also a way to bring recognition and resources to the vital role of nurses and midwives globally.

Nurses are often called the "heart of health care." In fact, nurses and midwives make up the largest group of health workers in the world. So it's no secret how important nurses are — how much your knowledge, skills and compassion mean to patients and colleagues. Investing in nurses and supporting your ability to work to your full potential benefits not only patients, but communities and multidisciplinary care teams.

And yet, with the rise of COVID-19, the Year of the Nurse became even more significant. The pandemic brought your essential role in the delivery of health care into sharp relief. And as the pandemic spread through our communities creating unforeseen obstacles, you continued to do what you do best: answer the call to bring good help to those in need.

In 2020, each of you truly brought your best selves to this ministry. During a year of near-constant challenges, you demonstrated all those qualities that are the essence of our core culture behaviors. You were empowered to share ideas, agile as you embraced change with courageous hearts, unified in your determination to find the best solutions and support one another, and committed to the ministry in its Mission to extend the compassionate ministry of Jesus.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to all nursing staff, from leadership to frontline nurses. Your kindness, dedication and healing touch are what make the nurses in this organization stand out. Thank you for continually putting those we serve first and treating them with empathy and compassion. Thank you for embracing our values of human dignity, integrity, compassion, stewardship and service every step of the way. Thank you for being a rock when waters get rough.

Today, I am more grateful than ever to be a part of a strong organization with empowered nurses who put themselves at risk daily and dedicate long hours of work to meet the needs of our patients, residents, community and each other. Our nurses are a vital presence in every aspect of care.

This commemorative booklet is a token of our ministry's thanks and a symbol of how much each of you is valued by this organization. In it, you'll find some of the many stories of leadership, innovation and excellence that defined our nurses in 2020. I hope that in reading through these stories, you will gain a sense of the respect and appreciation you inspire.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Andrea Mazzoccoli, RN, PhD, FAAN
Chief Nurse & Quality Officer
Bon Secours Mercy Health

CELEBRATING NURSES' WEEK 2020

In a special edition of the Nursing Now newsletter, the ministry shared a huge outpouring of support for Bon Secours Mercy Health nurses. Clinicians and associates throughout our markets shared videos and photos expressing their thanks and appreciation. Many of these messages were compiled into a touching video that can be viewed at vimeo.com/415486647.

The sisters also penned their own heartfelt messages of support...



A message from SISTER PAT ECK, CBS

Chair, Bon Secours Mercy Ministries

As we begin this Nurses' Week during the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, the world is seeing the gift you are and the courage and care you provide. In his message of January 22, 2020, Pope Francis recognized this International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, praising the "noblest of professions."

As we begin this week, I encourage you to return to your first call... that first time you realized the work you have chosen, the work that has chosen you, is also a call... a vocation. It is a treasure you hold closely.

I wonder how many of you have special items you cherish from that first call!

A first pair of bandage scissors...

A nursing cap...

A school pin...

Your first stethoscope.

How do these treasures and memories bring to life that call in your daily work today?

We at Bon Secours Mercy Health are called to "extend the compassionate ministry of Jesus." You in your roles are at the heart of the matter; you are the centerpiece of our compassionate ministry.

This pandemic has brought your courage and care into the limelight. Your knowledge and skill are being seen and experienced by the world. What seems surprising to many is the relationship you bring to your care. Your compassion and "being with" are as essential as your knowledge and skill. The stories of you being "present" and "family" as your patients suffer and sometimes die are a gift for the world.

We see your knowledge and skill surrounded with compassion. We know the special presence you are, the sense of hope you bring.

So, as we begin this Nurses' Week, we offer our gratitude and pray that you will know for yourselves the courage and care you bring to others. You are the heart of the matter... you are our everyday heroes!



A message from

SR. DORIS GOTTEMOELLER, RSM

Vice-Chair, Bon Secours Mercy Ministries

Our core values — human respect, compassion, integrity, justice and stewardship — have never been more evident than in the work you are doing now. I know that many of you have children at home or elderly parents you have to care for. And yet you are here at the bedsides of patients suffering from coronavirus, as well

as others who are unfortunate enough to be hospitalized at this time.

With all my heart, I thank you for your generosity and steadfastness in the face of these unprecedented challenges! You make me proud to be associated with Bon Secours Mercy Health, and I pray for you daily.



A message from

SR. CAROL ANNE SMITH, HM

**Bon Secours Mercy Health Board and Bon Secours Mercy Ministries
The Sisters of the Humility of Mary**

You know best of all how singularly and painfully unique this 2020 Nurses' Week is. We, Sisters of the Humility of Mary, honor and salute you with hearts overflowing with esteem and gratitude.

We borrow and adapt the words of St. Paul to convey to each of you from each of us (many of whom are nurses and have spent a life of ministry as nurses) our deep thanks and love:

“ We thank our God for you every time we think of you; and every time we pray for you we pray with joy because of the way in which you have helped in the work of the Gospel from the very first day until now. And so we are sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus. ”

— Philippians 1:3-6

We pray for your strength, perseverance and courage. We send our love and promise our continuing prayers for you, your colleagues and your families.

PART ONE:

LEADERSHIP

Nurses help lead the fight against COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic brought into stark relief the critical need for nurses' skills, knowledge, innovation, compassion and commitment. More than ever, Bon Secours Mercy Health nurses have been key in helping patients and families navigate through a care landscape that has been sometimes frightening, sometimes discouraging and always challenging.

Whether on the front lines of care or managing essential services, your work has been exemplary:

- Infection preventionists, safety and quality specialists and the nurse professional development team rushed to meet the ministry's need for extensive, accurate and up-to-date information to support both care delivery and associate safety — no easy task, especially given how rapidly government recommendations changed.
- Nurse leaders quickly adjusted to challenging staffing needs and process changes while keeping their teams well informed and as safe as possible.

- Nursing informatics experts ensured that ConnectCare and CarePATH continued to meet our clinical needs as screening and treatment guidelines were continuously adjusted in alignment with new knowledge.
- Nurses in our long-term care facilities and hospice environments, as well as those delivering home care, have been caring for some of our most vulnerable populations. While hospitals experienced periodic surges of patients during 2020, these nurses have experienced the pandemic as a marathon, with their patients being among the first affected and in need of continuous vigilance.
- Nurses across the ministry and in a variety of roles volunteered to disrupt their own lives in order to shift roles, responsibilities and even locations to meet the needs of our organization and communities. Many also experienced personal hardships, yet they continued to provide compassionate, high-quality care.

COVID-19 truly changed the experience of being a nurse in 2020. You have been on the front lines of this crisis and have risen to its challenges beyond all expectations. Thanks to your extraordinary compassion and commitment, lives were — and continue to be — saved.

Nurse launches daily prayer services for patients and health care heroes

Providers, nurses, caregivers and hospital staff everywhere are working tirelessly to care for patients during this pandemic. Associates, patients, families and the local community at Mercy Health — West Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, are joining together to pray for these health care heroes and their patients twice daily at 3 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Mario Apodaca, BSN, RN, manager of emergency services, and **Deacon Mike Cassani**, director of mission integration, started the prayer service.

Called 3 at 3, the prayer service marks the hour of mercy at 3 p.m. and is repeated at 3 a.m. for associates who work night shifts.

“It became a sacred time to pray for our patients, their loved ones and to pray for our staff,” said Deacon Mike. “We knew that all of these people needed prayer.”

When sharing the motivation for starting this prayer service, Mario said, “This team shows up every day and puts themselves in harm’s way to serve patients and they don’t ask for

much. They come to work and do their job and don’t realize the enormity of their work. They are my heroes and the reason I show up every day. They truly amaze me.”

Many associates now have alarms on their phones as a reminder to pray, and an announcement is made over the intercom system every day. As word of 3 at 3 spread across social media and into the community, local churches and people in the area have started joining the hospital in prayer as well.

“

You can always stop for three minutes and take some time for reflection, explained Mario.

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Clinical research coordinator steps up to help combat COVID-19

Convalescent plasma has been used in the past to help treat certain infectious diseases, including some respiratory illnesses. To help high-risk patients with COVID-19, Mayo Clinic launched an expanded access study to evaluate the impact of convalescent plasma when used to treat COVID-19.

Barbie Warner, RN, BSN, OCN, is the coordinator of clinical research at Mercy Health — Paducah Medical Oncology and Hematology and manages Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital's participation in this study. Barbie typically coordinates clinical trials for cancer patients, but she didn't hesitate to help with this important research when asked to serve.

“

We are a small oncology clinical trials department, but Barbie stepped up to the plate to assist with this, without question, given her commitment to keeping our community healthy and coming from her long commitment in oncology, said John Montville, executive director, oncology service line at Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital.

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Patients who have severe or life-threatening COVID-19 or who are at high risk for progressing to severe or life-threatening disease are offered the opportunity to participate in the study. If the patient consents, they are entered into the study and their treatment follows the designated protocol, which includes convalescent plasma transfusions. The goal is to determine whether convalescent plasma helps the patient fight the virus and recover more quickly.

Although Barbie coordinates the trial, inputting data, registering patients and getting approval codes for the plasma, she says that this study could not be successful without the collaboration of the entire team.

“I'm working with infectious disease doctors, the blood bank team and the CCU nurses,” said Barbie. “I work in a doctor's office and am not in the hospital, so I have to call the nurses and see how the patients are doing, so it's really a team effort. As a patient comes into the hospital, the doctors and nurses handle consent. I work with the blood bank to coordinate the plasma and the doctors and nurses then administer the treatment and provide data on the patient's condition, reactions and progress for me to input into Mayo Clinic's electronic system.”

For Barbie, the most rewarding part about working on this study and other trials is watching patients improve.

“There's no cure for this disease,” she said. “With this convalescent plasma study, hopefully it is saving lives and giving patients options. Without it, the outcome could be different for patients. I want to see the best for my patients and seeing our patients fight and then improve means so much to be a part of. To know I have a very small part in that is rewarding.”





Bilingual nurse proudly serves her community

Eight years ago, **Irene Peña**, a registered nurse of 20 years, proudly became the first bilingual nurse for the Bon Secours Community Wellness Outreach program in Greenville, SC.

“I truly feel as if I found my calling,” said Irene. “I love having the opportunity to look into the patient’s needs holistically. This means not just helping them with their flu shot or diabetes treatment, but listening to them and addressing any other needs is so important.”

The Community Wellness Outreach Program was created to provide community-based, client-centered health care to people in poverty. Irene spends her days meeting people where they live, work and relax. Without this type of outreach, many in this community would not seek out care due to a lack of health insurance or language barriers. Irene says that fear of immigration issues can also prevent people from getting the care they need.

“This program puts us in an amazing position to lend a hand and make the transition a little smoother for these individuals and families,” she said. “If they come here that way, without proper documentation, they face so many issues that prevent them from getting health care or a lot of the social services that would otherwise be available to them.”

Amidst COVID-19, the team is also working virtually to connect people with resources to help with medical bills, food, medication and transportation. More than anything, Irene wants to restore dignity to the process of poverty aid in the community.

“Recently at these flu clinics we held, we had this big group of immigrants from Latin America who organized themselves and came in shifts to help us with traffic control,” she said. “They helped with guiding people through, handing in consents and other tasks.”

She almost cried, because some of them were her patients back when she started.

“When I met them, they were so afraid to talk and wouldn’t even share their real name,” she said. “So, to see them grow in their confidence to the point that they’re now empowered and giving back to their community — it’s a trickle-down effect. We join forces, build that trust and just look at where we are now!”

Nurse practitioner helps launch congestive heart failure center

The providers at Springfield Heart House see more than 10,000 patients a year — a huge number considering that Springfield, Ohio, has about 60,000 residents. It's no surprise that congestive heart failure is a major health concern for the community.

Responding to this need, **Tiffany Beedy**, CNP, was instrumental in establishing a congestive heart failure center at Springfield Heart House in 2019. She is one of several nurse practitioners now working at the center, which provides extra support for individuals managing this potentially life-threatening condition.

This is one of many great examples where a nurse practitioner has created an innovative model in which clinicians and patients form relationships to optimize their health and well-being,” said **Kevin Letz, DNP**, vice president nursing, continuum of care and advanced practice. “Nurse practitioners and other advanced practice clinicians are trained to approach care in a way where you look at all aspects of life.

One great example of this is a patient who was not taking his heart medication because it was causing frequent urination. As a truck driver, he was unable to stop driving regularly to use the restroom. However, once this obstacle was identified, Tiffany was able to adjust his medication to better fit his lifestyle.



New nurse role and educational program support patients with heart failure

While pursuing her Master of Science in Nursing at the Mercy College of Ohio, an assignment challenged **Alisha Faya** to find ways to improve patient outcomes at Mercy Health — St. Elizabeth Boardman Hospital, where she worked full time as a floor nurse and unit-based educator.

Realizing there was a high readmission rate for heart failure patients, Alisha went to work on finding a solution.

“In August 2018, I piloted a heart failure navigator position for three months,” Alisha explained. “The course I was taking generated a lot of questions and thoughts about improving education, as well as the care we deliver to our heart failure patient population.”

Alisha’s pilot program was so successful that it led to a permanent position for Alisha as a heart failure navigator, a role designed in conjunction with the hospital’s goal to decrease heart failure readmissions. The readmission rate has stayed low (at 19% overall) since Alisha has been in the new role full time.

She also created and launched the Cardiovascular Outpatient Program and Education (COPE), an event to inform the Youngstown, Ohio, community about the risks of heart failure. COPE promotes heart health awareness to patients and families, teaches patients to better assess and manage their own heart health and involves families and support systems to help patients with heart failure.

Alisha hopes to continue to grow COPE and potentially branch out to other areas of health care she believes deserve similar community awareness and education.

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Whether it be in this role or another management or leadership role, I want to keep on making an impact across this ministry, she said.

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RN case manager goes where he is needed most

The past year’s adversity has shown the true strength and heart of health care heroes. Many Bon Secours Mercy Health nurses, like **Phil Sheridan, RN**, moved into different and difficult roles to meet the needs of our community.

Phil, an RN case manager, voluntarily left his role at Mercy Health — St. Elizabeth Boardman Hospital to join the front lines in the battle against COVID-19. Not only did he choose to return to the bedside, he also offered to return to the most acute level:

Mercy Health — St. Elizabeth Youngstown’s intensive care unit. Phil’s selflessness and eagerness to support the frontline nurses during this global pandemic is truly inspirational.

Although his decision to support patient care was intended to be temporary, it only took him a short time to realize he felt at home at the bedside. He felt he could better serve the ministry’s Mission doing what he does best when it was needed the most.

Tami Cook, MSN, RN-BC, ACM, director care coordination at Youngstown, said, “Although we miss Phil’s smile and hard work here in our department, I am impressed and humbled by his heroic decision to return to the bedside during such a critical time in health care.”

PART TWO:

INNOVATION

Nursing shared services education goes virtual and embraces new learning technology

Nursing has traditionally depended largely on classroom teaching for knowledge, skill and competency checks for new hires as well as professional development experiences. As we entered the height of the COVID-19 crisis, it was important to think differently about education.

We needed to onboard and educate more nurses and nursing support staff than ever. Our most immediate needs were preparing nurses to care for patients in a pandemic with frequently changing guidance. The nursing practice, education and research team consistently demonstrated agility by creating and delivering education through rounding, written materials and videos available through QR reader codes, as well as promoting new care guidelines based on existing and developing evidence.

Erica Lewis, MSN, RN, CCRN, took the lead in coordinating COVID-19 education. She worked with our infection prevention, physician, pharmacy and respiratory leadership teams to coordinate information and education as the guidelines evolved.

The nursing practice, education and research team also partnered with the culture and learning team to move nearly all system nursing education programs to virtual platforms.

Under the leadership of **Allison Schlinkert, MSN, RN; Maureen Whiteside, MSN, RN** and **Barbra Turner, DNP, RN**, the team condensed



and redesigned clinical nursing orientation for virtual delivery on WebEx and Skype. This met our immediate needs but was not a sustainable solution, so the culture and learning team purchased Adobe Connect to support nursing in moving to a long-term virtual solution.

After just one Adobe class, the team had the first week of nursing orientation running online. The Nurse Residency Program, Basic and Advanced Cardiac Arrhythmia and Preceptor Academy are almost 100% virtual and have received high marks from participants on the design, content and delivery of the courses.

Our nursing professional development associates, specialists and leaders have tirelessly worked side by side with operational nursing leaders and the clinical front line to encourage nurses and support patient care. Their willingness to embrace new technology, continually revise programs to meet emerging needs and consistently deliver standard curriculum across markets and practice settings highlights an empowered, agile and unified team. In the spirit of the Year of the Nurse, they have modeled “lead, innovate and excel.”

Home care nurses use telehealth to provide safe care

Although COVID-19 has been the leading topic of conversation in health care, the need to properly manage chronic disease certainly hasn't slowed down. Care has been complicated, however, by the desire to limit in-person interactions that might contribute to the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In Youngstown, Ohio, Mercy Health — Home Care nurses have been key to the success of a robust program that uses telehealth technology to closely monitor patients who have such diseases as heart failure, COPD and diabetes without asking them to leave the comfort of their own homes.

Once the patient is in the program, telehealth technology records their data and transmits it to a portal where the home

care registered nurse can analyze the information and determine if intervention is needed. Interventions may include physician notification, medication administration and in-person or video visits.

“

It has really been an amazing program to offer during the pandemic to allow us to continue to provide uninterrupted care to patients, said **Melanie Boyts, MSN, RN**, director of clinical services for Home Care and Hospice of the Valley.

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Mercy Health — Youngstown Home Care nurses have been instrumental in the

development, implementation and success of the program. They actively participated in the development of care pathways and identification of patients who would benefit from additional oversight of their chronic disease. The nurses are also consistently educating patients about chronic disease management and use of the equipment, as well as coaching them to watch educational videos, complete quizzes and perform daily symptom surveys.

Thanks in large part to their efforts, the ministry is better able to promote community health and improve patient access while providing additional clinical oversight of chronic disease processes and engaging the patient in managing their disease.

Nurses find creative ways to bring comfort to patients

MERCY HEALTH — FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL

COVID-19 has left many patients hospitalized for extended periods of time. These long-term hospital stays can weigh heavily on a patient's spirit, especially with visitor restrictions in place that keep patients separated from their loved ones. Our nurses have found creative ways to comfort patients and help them feel connected.

Several nurses at Mercy Health — Fairfield Hospital brought smiles to their patients by giving them stuffed animals to lift their spirits during their stay.

“Our team wanted to make them smile and have a sense of comfort,” said **Natalie Goforth, MSN, RN**, manager of Fairfield Hospital's Cardiovascular Unit and 5 Tower Oncology Medical Surgical Unit. “When the bears and stuffed animals were presented,

the patients got the biggest smiles. We would peek into their rooms through the window and they were often holding the

bears when they were alone. That was the greatest heartfelt moment.”



BON SECOURS — ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL

Michelle Vaughan, BSN, RN, a nurse in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Bon Secours — St. Mary's Hospital, was inspired to find a way for patients to hear the voices of their loved ones.

Her idea was to create Be There Bears: family members can have a message recorded over the phone and tucked into a plush bear to be played for their loved ones in the ICU.

Michelle takes time on her days off to assemble these bears. Once the message has been successfully recorded in the stuffed animal, it is delivered directly into the arms of the patients. Nurses then play the recording for patients any time they are in their room.

Michelle said that hearing the messages brought her to tears.

“

Getting to put the bears in the arms of the patients, I was overcome with pride and happiness to know that my patients might be able to feel their families' presence,” she said. “It's so important not only for our patients to feel the love and support of their families, but for us as nurses to feel connected to our patients and their families as well.

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Michelle's creative idea even received attention in the local news, as well as on social media.



MERCY HEALTH — YOUNGSTOWN

In Youngstown, Ohio, nurses found a new way to use clinical equipment to help connect families and COVID-19 patients without taking providers and nurses away from bedside care priorities.

Providers use devices with the Intouch software when caring for COVID-19 patients. These devices are also equipped with Zoom video communication software.

Vanessa Zimmerlee, stroke nurse navigator and telestroke program lead for the three hospitals in Youngstown, Ohio, worked with her team to use the equipment a little differently.

They quickly developed a plan to redeploy some furloughed associates (like x-ray technicians, office coordinators and sleep

lab technicians) to lead daily Zoom rounding to connect patients with their families when visitors are not permitted. This is particularly important for patients who don't have smart mobile devices or are not well enough to connect on their own.

“The key to success with this program is to be flexible, transparent and creative,” Vanessa said. “Keep it simple and make it work for your particular hospital. You don't need tech-savvy associates to put this together. I told our team that this is one of the most rewarding jobs in our COVID-19 work today. Your compassion and energy will bring much happiness and joy to families at a very difficult time for those either facing end of life or on the road to recovery and home.”

Vanessa said they moved swiftly to set up the program within one week. They held a train the trainer session with their first group of four associates and then had those associates train the next group. They run two shifts at each of the three hospitals from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and rotate to be sure they give this group some downtime to re-energize.

Each unit has a rounding sheet with a list of patients that is generated by the nurses of the unit. The Zoom Rounders take it from there, contacting the family member and walking the patient through the process.

Nurses work together to help a couple's wedding dreams come true

In March, the nursing staff at Bon Secours — St. Francis Downtown helped make David Lee Nelson and Jaimie Malphrus' wedding dreams come true after the couple's original wedding plans were impacted by a hospitalization and COVID-19.

Award winning performer David Lee Nelson, battling stage 4 cancer, was supposed to marry his fiancée, Jaimie Malphrus, on Friday, March 20.

"On my way back from being on the road, I got sick," said David. "I had severe pain in my hip and back, so I ended up in the hospital the week before I was supposed to be married. Then, the coronavirus happened."

Not only did the hospitalization mean ruined wedding plans, it also meant most medical facilities were on lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak. While Jaimie was already staying with David, other family members weren't allowed in the building. Hearing the pair talking in disappointment about their derailed wedding plans, the nurses at Bon Secours jumped into action to keep their hopes and dreams alive. They all agreed they would help David and Jaimie by planning a wedding at the hospital instead.

"The more we talked about it, the better I started to feel as the week went on, and the crazier the world seemed, the less silly it seemed to get married amidst it all," David said.

The nursing staff ordered food from the same restaurant where the couple had eaten right after getting engaged back in August. They made arrangements for flowers, a cake and even got Jaimie's family to drop off her dress at the hospital.

On the morning of March 20, David had radiation. By that afternoon, he and Jaimie were saying their vows in the empty Hawkins Family Center for Adolescent and Young Adults on the 5th floor of St. Francis Downtown. While the couple's family couldn't attend the wedding due to visitor restrictions, some of the staff members stood in as guests and took pictures of the ceremony for the couple to share later.

The couple hadn't known a single person who was at the wedding for more than five days. Yet those staff members were the ones who had pulled everything together, as if they were part of the family.

“It was just really beautiful,” recalled Jaimie. “I think the nurses were just as excited as we were, and it wouldn't have happened without them.”

David passed away in late September due to complications caused by cancer.



Director of surgical services boosts nurse morale

Peggy Dunn, RN, is the director of surgical services at Bon Secours — Southern Virginia Medical Center and the unofficial motivation champion at the facility. Since the start of the pandemic, Peggy has gone above and beyond for her fellow associates, showing small acts of kindness to boost morale.

From posting notes of affirmation on cars to creating a wall of fame, Peggy has made

it her mission to make sure her colleagues feel appreciated and recognized during this challenging time. Peggy gifts a basket of snacks and treats to different units every week, hosted a spin-the-wheel game for prizes and continues to look for fun ways to lift spirits — all to express gratitude for the hospital's health care heroes.

"I was inspired to do this because it is the right thing to do," Peggy said. "We are all

in this together during this stressful time and I didn't want anyone to feel the work they were doing was going unnoticed. It is the small things we do that are big in other people's eyes."

She continued, "Serving during this pandemic is what God has us to do for our fellow man. Whether it is a kind word, a smile or a treat, it shows we care and we are going to make it through this together."

Advance care planning processes help deliver goal-aligned care

Tammy Kill and her team lead advance care planning at Mercy Health — St. Rita's Medical Center in Lima, Ohio. Under Tammy's leadership, St. Rita's has implemented processes that have strengthened the quality of care, promoted interdisciplinary commitment and improved patient satisfaction.

Seven members of her team serve as advance care planning activators who rotate one day each week in the emergency department to discuss advance care planning with patients. They also work closely with the providers, nurses, hospice, spiritual staff and case managers to make sure the patient's needs are met across the care continuum.

Since the start of the pandemic, these vital conversations are happening more frequently across the ministry. Making sure advance care planning occurs before a health crisis — with attention to a health care decision-maker and preferences for hospitalization, ventilation and resuscitation — has been a fundamental element of the ministry's response to COVID-19. It is important that we understand what matters most to a patient and who they want making decisions if they become seriously ill.

These conversations take bravery and compassion, but they are essential to seeing that a patient receives the care they want.

“

The most basic thing that we can do is honor a patient's wishes," Tammy said. "During this pandemic, that's the most important aspect of what we do — that we, across the board, can honor what the patient wants.

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Care redesigned for at-risk patients

Lu Bowman, MSN, RN, CCM, system director of clinical services, leads two interdisciplinary teams of nearly 200 associates who are responsible for transitions of care and ambulatory care management for patients with chronic conditions. On March 13, when little was known about the complexities of COVID-19, she knew they could keep infected and at-risk patients in their homes and safe.

Lu's team of directors and clinical specialists worked over that weekend to redesign how they would identify patients from all care settings and begin clinical outreach. They then launched a remote patient monitoring program within just 19 days.

Through Lu's leadership alongside **Anita Mattingly, RN**, system director of clinical services for the Bon Secours Mercy Health Medical Group, they successfully collaborated with I&T, informatics and analytics teams to launch the program.

The proactive outreach to at-risk patients quickly grew in volume because these patients were often isolated from their support system, had limited access to groceries and pharmacy and faced greater impact from social determinants of health. Remote patient monitoring became the innovative technology that would expand clinical care to more patients.

By April 1, patients with COVID-19 and those at high risk were being enrolled in monitoring programs such as active symptom or exposure, self-monitoring and pediatric patient care plans. **Angela Orrell, BSN, RN, CCM**, and **Miriam Makruski, RN**, began daily monitoring for patients who "red alert." The nurses contact those patients to assess their condition, provide nursing care, refer to a longer-term care manager or social worker and direct them to their primary care providers or emergency department.

As of November, all patients and associates diagnosed with COVID-19 at our care settings — and over 150,000 Bon Secours Mercy Health patients with at-risk conditions — have received follow-up outreach. More than 17,000 patients were enrolled in remote patient monitoring. These professional nursing teams continue to provide invaluable care through their clinical expertise and seamless adoption of new care delivery tools.

Innumerable people have been identified in distress or in situations that would lead to preventable hospitalization. The care these nurses provide embodies the compassionate ministry that differentiates Bon Secours Mercy Health.

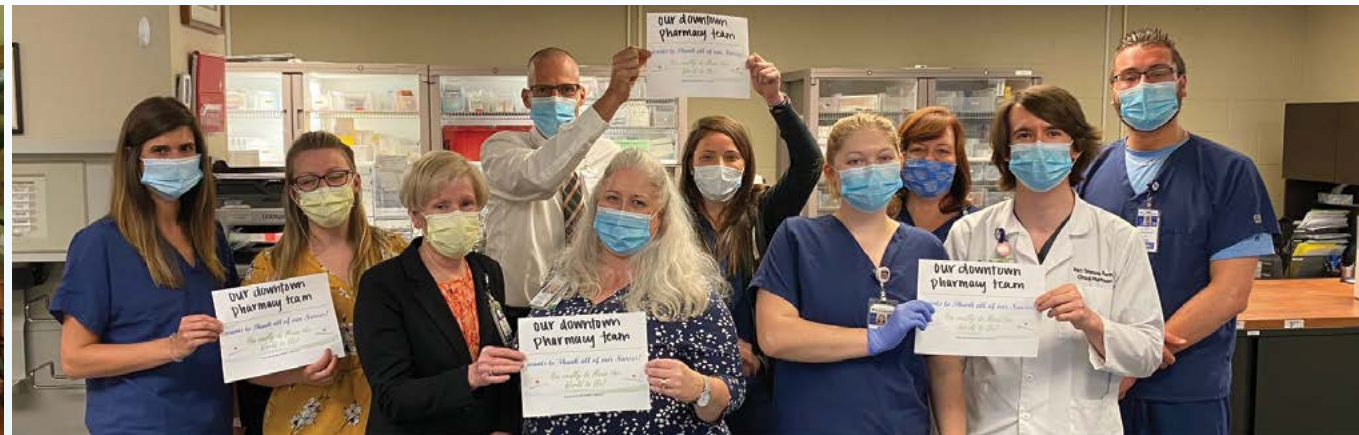
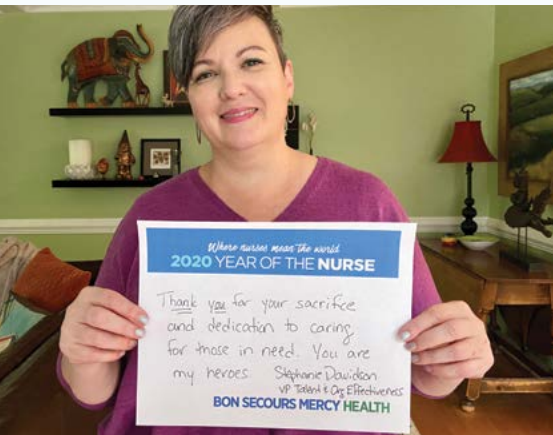
Caregivers use technology to improve communication and ensure the safety of patients in isolation

The nursing team at Mercy Health — Lorain Hospital wanted to safely and consistently monitor patients while also protecting caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Cheryl Rieves**, Lorain market CNO; **Tina Allgood**, nurse manager; **Britany Dominguez**, application analyst; and **Beth McGinnis**, team lead for field services, came up with an alternative way to use the market's telesitters and AvaSys technology.

Typical use of the AvaSys Mobile Unit (AMU) consists of placing the AMU in the rooms of patients who are considered at high risk for falling. A telesitter then watches the patient remotely and redirects them if they try to get out of bed on their own. To see if this technology could be useful in reducing exposure while treating patients with COVID-19, the team tested the viability of using a workstation on wheels (WOW) and one AMU with isolated patients.

The WOW was recabled to allow for a connection to the headset used by the telesitter and the AvaSys software was installed. The team has now incorporated this technology on a number of the WOWs used throughout the COVID-19 units. This has allowed nurses and other caregivers to have compassionate, engaging two-way dialogue with isolated patients while also being able to see the patients and their rooms.





Caring for patients in long-term care facilities

Those called to be nurses thrive on the human connections that drive compassionate care, which may take place in the hospital, ambulatory settings, skilled nursing facilities or even patients' homes. Each care setting has its own unique challenges and rewards.

In our ministry's long-term care senior living locations, nurses often have especially close relationships with patients. They're caring for vulnerable individuals who may not ever return to their family homes, which makes Bon Secours Mercy Health facilities their home and our associates their families.

Our nurses must carefully balance safety and other special precautions with the emotional and spiritual needs of residents and their families. During the pandemic, they not only

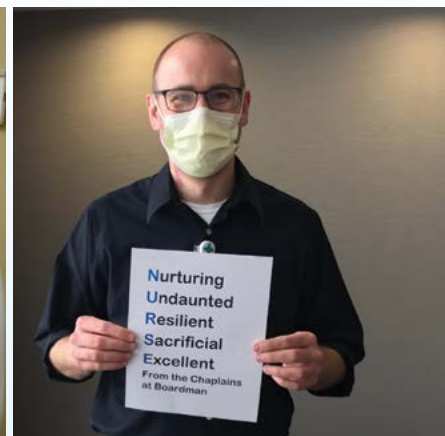
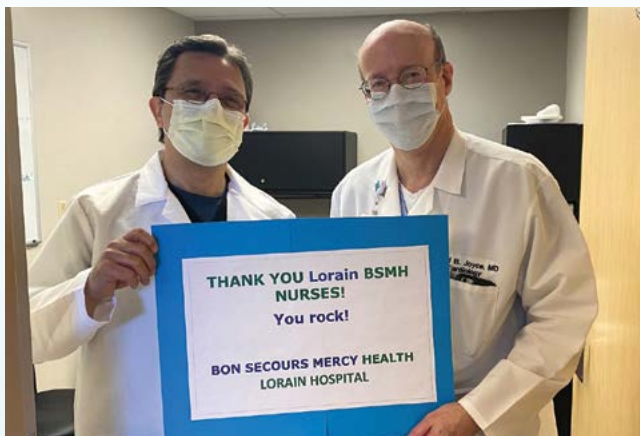
quickly adapted to new environments and requirements, they also sought out creative ways to help residents continue to visit with loved ones and even stepped in as a surrogate family.

Kristin Bottelier, LPN, is one of our nurses who exemplifies compassionate care. At Mercy Health — Oakwood Village Senior Living, she committed herself to giving loving care on her unit. She made every effort to encourage critically ill patients to sip water through a straw. When residents were taking their last breath, she stayed by their side, knowing family members could not be present. And despite losing people she deeply cared for, she continued the daily care of other residents without any doubt or uncertainty.

Other nurses, such as **Rosa Saatci, LPN**, with Bon Secours Home Care in St. Petersburg, Florida, have worked long hours and taken on additional responsibilities like respiratory assessments. At Bon Secours Place, an assisted living facility in St. Petersburg, **P.J. Cox, RN**, provided daily respiratory screenings for all of the residents, conducted visitor screenings and arranged telehealth visits — and even covered as the 7-3 nurse when needed.

"Thank you for the commitment, dedication and love you have for what you do and the seniors we care for," said **Candy Wetherall, RN, BHSA, MSHR, LNHA, LHCRM, LCHP**, director of quality/risk, Bon Secours Mercy Health Post Acute. "I appreciate you!"





Struggling young mother responds to kindness of her nursing teams

During a very busy summer, a young mother of two touched many caregivers' hearts at Mercy Health — St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital, but especially several case managers and social workers.

The woman was driving across the state when a semi-truck hit her car. She was severely injured and needed extensive treatments, including being on a ventilator. She did not speak English, made little physical progress and sometimes seemed depressed.

Family members visited her but were fearful of the intentions of case management to move her to the next level of care since she had no insurance coverage.

The staff and case management manager were able to work with her family to sign up with a marketplace insurance health plan, find a primary care provider close to her home in another state and arrange for follow-up visits when she was able to leave the area. The team couldn't find any outside facility to accept this patient, but they were able to move her to the Assumption Village, a Mercy Health skilled nursing facility. The next day, staff helped her to take a shower and wash her hair — something that she really wanted after weeks in the hospital.

The report the hospital received was outstanding. This patient was like a new woman. She was sitting up in a chair, eating, talking to her child via an iPad and visiting

with other family members through the window.

This experience was rewarding for all of the staff, but especially for the nurses who cared for her along the continuum of care, from the trauma intensive care unit to the step-down unit, the RN case managers and then the long-term care RNs and LPNs. They never gave up on this patient, regardless of the language barriers, lack of insurance coverage and being from outside the community. None of that mattered. She was a patient, a woman, a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend — an individual who deserved the best care possible. And her care teams provided it every day, living out our ministry's Mission.



PART THREE:

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

Conduit nurses ensure stroke patient receives lifesaving care

Patients experiencing stroke usually come to the emergency department. But an inpatient can also experience this health emergency, and the speed of treatment is just as important. Thanks to quick thinking by a Conduit nurse and expert coordination with the care team at The Jewish Hospital — Mercy Health, a patient received the life-saving care he needed in less than two hours.

A physician started his day at Mercy Health — Fairfield Hospital as usual. But his first patient of the day didn't seem to be acting right, and the bedside nurse, **Heather Robbins, RN**, confirmed that the patient's behavior wasn't normal for him. Heather called a stroke alert, and within five minutes the patient was receiving a CT scan.

The scan confirmed their fears, and they consulted with the stroke neurologist at The

Jewish Hospital. The team determined the patient needed an immediate thrombectomy and would be transferred to The Jewish Hospital for the procedure. That's when the Transfer Center, run by Conduit, stepped in. The team reached nurse **Lauren Kobert**, who teamed up with nurse **Anastasia Hegener** to arrange for transport.

The Transfer Center called the University of Cincinnati's air care first, but they weren't flying that morning. They contacted ground care — but the vehicle was 45 minutes away. With their usual transport options limited, Lauren and Anastasia looked outside our hospital system and found a helicopter that could be there in just 10 minutes.

Bonnie Hollandsworth, BSN, RN, stroke coordinator at Fairfield Hospital, met the responders in the ED and helped transport the patient to the waiting helicopter. She

explained that the goal with any stroke is to transfer the patient within two hours of arrival to the ED — or for an inpatient, within two hours after the stroke alert is called. This patient was being transported in one hour and 26 minutes.

“

That's an amazing transfer time,” said Bonnie. “The transfer center making those extra calls and pushing the priority of this transfer may have saved this man's life!

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The patient is recovering well. His family member even contacted the hospital to ask if she could share a video with his caregivers to show him walking and talking.

Pop-up ceremonies welcome nursing graduates

A pinning ceremony is an important rite of passage that signifies the welcoming of nursing graduates into the nursing profession. During COVID-19, our nursing graduates were unable to experience this symbolic event. Many nurses had to hit the ground running immediately after graduation with no time to celebrate or reflect.

Recognizing an opportunity to support these new RN team members, the leadership at Mercy Health — St. Vincent Medical Center in Toledo, Ohio, found a way to still celebrate this milestone: they provided a pop up pinning ceremony. The CNO, along with directors and spiritual care, popped up on around 50 newly graduated RNs and provided a poem, words of wisdom, a nursing pin and flowers to celebrate their achievement.

Each graduate's manager, plus nurse professional development associates and other team members, were able to participate in the event to celebrate each of the nurses. This event became so powerful that the local TV station, CBS affiliate WTOL11, did a story to share our excitement with the community.

Healing patients with COVID-19

This year, many of our nurses have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is no greater joy for them than seeing a patient return home healed. We wanted to share two of the many stories of patients healing across our ministry, with nurses playing a vital role in treating not just the bodies, but the spirits of these individuals.

Nurse's words inspire her patient

This past spring, Walter Ruiz, 60, from Hamilton, Ohio, suspected something was wrong. The screen printer remembers going to the supermarket and feeling tired. He initially assumed it was related to his diabetes. However, the fatigue persisted. In late April when he was at work by himself, Walter fainted.

"I don't know what time I went down or what time I came to," he said. "I couldn't get up and had to crawl to the wall for support to stand up. I thought my blood sugar was low, but when I got home and measured my sugar it was fine. I laid down and slept. I remember feeling feverish and sometimes cold. My back and leg hurt. I thought maybe I hit a paint can when I fainted."

Four days after his symptoms began, Walter was still tired and got dizzy while brushing his teeth. He had his suspicions about what

was happening. When he went to enjoy his customary evening glass of milk and found it had no taste, he knew.

"I was sure I had COVID-19," he recalled.

Walter bathed, shaved and went to Mercy Health — Fairfield Hospital. This is where he would spend the next 12 days.

“

I was well cared for from the moment I came in," he said. "Caregivers were by my side the whole time and I had excellent care.

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There was one nurse who stood out the most to Walter.

"As she gave me oxygen, she sat next to me and talked with me, he recalled. "She said

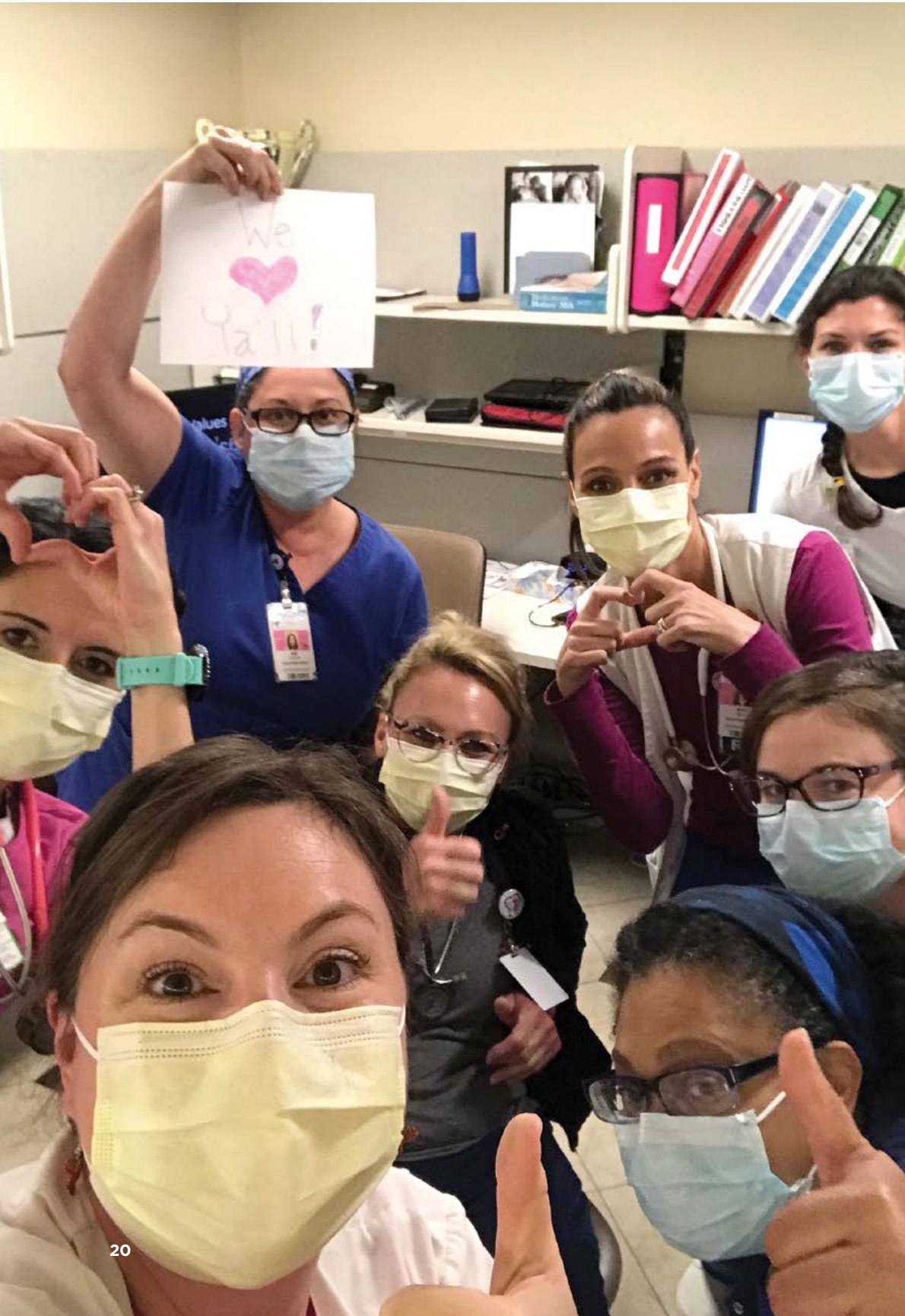
something that has stayed with me — 'Don't give up. Don't quit. Fight. You can do this.' I felt it in my soul."

Walter couldn't describe what the nurse looked like due to her mask and PPE. However, the nurse manager of the COVID-19 unit revealed that it was **Lisa Lane**.

Walter and Lisa reunited recently at Fairfield Hospital, where he put up a banner he made at his screen printing business to thank all the hospital's caregivers for their heroic work throughout the pandemic.

Walter recognized Lisa immediately by her voice. When he thanked her for his care and mentioned how she'd inspired him, Lisa hugged him and noted that it was her honor to care for him and that she didn't do anything any other nurse wouldn't have done.





Nurses support mother with COVID-19



Pregnant with her second child, Krishonna Williams thought she knew what to expect with her birth experience. Then COVID-19 happened.

While it was clear the pandemic would cancel any post-delivery hospital room celebrations with family and friends, Krishonna never expected it would also prevent her husband from being in the room to welcome their baby girl into the world.

Krishonna's problems started when she began experiencing cold-like symptoms during the final stretch of her pregnancy.

"I just started praying that I had the flu," Krishonna recalled. "I've never wanted to have the flu so bad in my life. It sounds crazy, but being pregnant, I was scared. I had no idea how the coronavirus would affect my pregnancy, and at least if I had the flu, I'd know how to deal with it."

The soon-to-be mother of two tested positive for COVID-19 and was given an appointment with a physician who specializes in high-risk pregnancies. That's when the next unsettling discovery was made.

"They found I had severely low fluids," Krishonna said. "So, in a way, COVID-19 kind of saved my daughter, because I had no idea it was that close to her not being able to survive in my belly any longer."

Krishonna was immediately sent to the hospital for a C-section. Her husband could not be by her side, and she had to wear an N95 mask to ensure she wasn't exposing her care team to the virus. She was also not

allowed to hold her baby, Marlee, after she made her debut into the world.

“They showed her to me, but I only got to glance at her for a second before they took her away,” Krishonna said. “I didn’t even get a good look at her face, but at that point, I understood that I couldn’t have anyone, including my daughter, around me to protect them and that’s just how it was going to be.”

Krishonna’s nurses were inspired by her strength and positive attitude throughout this unusual experience.

“I’d go home and think about how tough she had it,” said **Meagan**, a nurse in the unit. “This life-changing experience is usually happy for everybody. You have all the family coming to visit, your husband is there and you’re excited to see your other child experience being a sibling for the first time. I was so sad for her that she didn’t get to experience any of that, but being with her and seeing how strong she was through it made me happy. So, I didn’t have to be sad for her.”

Meagan and the other staff members went out of their way to make sure Krishonna’s experience was positive in spite of all the challenges. One of the first things they did was come up with a way for Krishonna to connect with her baby virtually.

“They let me video chat with my baby, saying anytime I wanted to see her we could set it up,” said Krishonna. “I saw her during her feedings and sometimes when she was sleeping. I even got to see her open her eyes. I would also video chat with my husband at the same time so he could see what was going on, too.”

The nurses also did what they could to keep Krishonna company. They dropped off playing cards, challenged her to coloring contests and spent time making sure she never felt alone.

“I couldn’t have my family with me, but they really stepped in as my support system and made sure I was comfortable,” said Krishonna. “They really helped me tremendously in getting through that time.”

Going home was a bittersweet experience for Krishonna. Because she could still potentially pass COVID-19 to her newborn daughter and her family at home had already been exposed, little Marlee had to go stay with Krishonna’s grandmother (Marlee has since been reunited with her parents as well as her big brother.)

“With any mother, you worry about postpartum depression,” said Meagan. “Then, she’s sick on top of that and being quarantined without her baby. Everyone was just a ball of nerves and it was really sad, but things worked out. There was light at the end of the tunnel for her.”

Krishonna says she gained some new, lifelong friends in the nurses she bonded with during her hospital stay.

“She had this baby that she couldn’t take care of all the while trying to heal from everything,” said Meagan. “Getting to know her and just seeing her spirit was really uplifting to me. We became so close. I was sad to see her go, but I’m happy that I get to keep in touch via Facebook.”

The caring staff is one reason Krishonna says other mothers-to-be shouldn’t worry about how the pandemic will impact their own pregnancies. She says if there’s anything else she’s learned from the experience, it’s that you’re stronger than you think.

“It’s all going to be there, swirling around in your mind,” Krishonna said. “However, you’re strong enough to give birth so you’re strong enough to get through this.”

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Language services associates ensure patients have equitable access to care and communication

Patients rely on us during their greatest time of need. Imagine being one of those patients, but not being able to communicate symptoms or other needs because of a communication barrier. That's where our language services associates step in, helping patients with limited English proficiency or those who are deaf or hard of hearing receive equitable access to care and communication.

In Richmond, Virginia, this team of quiet-but-mighty heroes supports our frontline staff and patients to remove language barriers. Since the start of the pandemic, their work has been amplified, moving to a remote operation and serving even more patients across the ministry. The team now communicates with patients and families over the phone, giving them direct access to an interpreter when they need it.

"Our team now provides patients and families, many of whom are immigrants from very vulnerable communities, with a direct access number to the team so they can reach the clinical staff caring for their loved one without delay and in a more efficient and convenient way for our clinical staff," explained **Patty Gavilan, RN**, language services manager. "We are coordinating communication between families of very critical patients and the staff caring for them. By being able to reach us directly, they have more equitable access to their family members at this time when they cannot be present with them."

Current visitor restrictions have made it even more challenging for families who speak another language, as they can't be on-site with their loved one. The direct access they now have to our language services associates helps connect them to caregivers faster. This has been especially helpful for



the families of patients on ventilators who can't speak with them about their treatment.

"Throughout our response to COVID-19, when a patient was really ill, critical, fighting for their life, we found families were having a hard time connecting with the hospitals and getting information," Patty said. "We found if the family calls us, we can call into the unit and if it is an appropriate time for the nurse, we do a three-way call or we schedule another time to talk. That way family members don't have to struggle with a language barrier and receive improved equity of access to care."

This team has also been working behind the scenes to coordinate and donate supplies to a group of women in the community who are making masks for a local non-profit. Together, they have donated more than 200 masks to the Sacred Heart Center, a

Bon Secours Mercy Health partner that connects Latino families with tools to thrive and flourish. The language services team often works closely with the center to help patients receive groceries, emergency rent assistance and other services.

Recently, the team also delivered masks, groceries and cleaning products to a discharged COVID-19 patient who they knew may need some assistance.



We are proud of the Mission and work of our ministry," said Patty. "The Bon Secours Mercy Health team continues working passionately to address social determinants of health in a very vulnerable community during this pandemic.



PPE team helps keep patients and caregivers safe

Due to COVID-19, our routines and the way we approach things look completely different now than they did in early 2020. Information and protocols are changing daily. To help ensure all hospital team members were following the latest personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines, Mercy Health — Fairfield Hospital formed a special group at the start of this pandemic.

The PPE team is a multidisciplinary team of two nurses and two physical therapists: **Bonnie Hollandsworth, RN**, stroke program coordinator; **Patty Bennett, RN**, clinical coordinator — recovery room/PACU; **Jeremy Hesselbrock, PT, DPT**; and **Ryan Baker, DPT**.

This team works with providers, caregivers and other hospital associates to clearly communicate guidelines regarding PPE usage and conservation, as well as patient care and provider safety. The PPE team rounded on each unit in the hospital to share the latest updates, working every day of the week to cover all shifts and departments.

“The staff looked forward to our visits and gathered around so they could hear the daily updates,” Bonnie said. “They knew we reported their issues and they saw action from our senior leadership in response to their concerns. It was rewarding to hear the creativity and ingenuity from different staff in various areas as we pulled together to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.”

The team also helped develop workflows for patient care, PPE usage and reprocessing N95 masks. They worked diligently to connect isolated patients with their loved ones through video chats, as well.

“One of my favorite aspects of being on the PPE team was being able to connect families to see their loved ones through the virtual visits,” said Ryan.

“Families were so grateful to be able to see their loved ones’ faces. To be able to spread joy and happiness during this time was very rewarding.”

The consistency the PPE team provides during these uncertain times is comforting as well as critical to the hospital’s response to COVID-19.



“ I truly can’t say enough about the PPE team and their commitment to our hospital during these past challenging months,” said **Jeremy Heinrich**, rehab manager. “I believe they made a difference not only in the safety of our patients and employees, but also in reducing the level of anxiety in the hospital throughout these difficult times. ”

Nursing trio goes above and beyond to provide end-of-life care

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, so do visitor restrictions at hospitals. These precautions are in place to protect the health and safety of both patients and visitors, but hospital staff members recognize how difficult it is when friends and family can't be at the bedside of loved ones.

Three sympathetic Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital nurses recently went above and beyond to provide care and closure for one patient and her family.

Even though the hospital's current visitor restrictions allow for visitation during end-of-life situations, **Hannah Hoover** recently had a patient whose family lived too far away and had other circumstances that were preventing them from being able to say their goodbyes in person.

"I had experience with Zoom calling because my family has been using it to connect during social distancing, but this was the first time I have used it for a patient," Hannah said. "We were lucky enough that the new isolation robot computer has Zoom already installed. All I had to do was set up the meeting and instruct the family on how to sign in."

Eliza Hill, Hannah's supervisor, says Hannah's innovative thinking and humility are typical of her work.

"Hannah is a quiet but powerful presence to her patients and team," said Eliza. "What seems to be a simple, small act to Hannah has impacted a family forever."

Eliza also supervises nurses **Ali Lampert** and **Katelyn Wuchte**. They both jumped in as well to provide more than just medical care to this patient.

"Ali and Katelyn both recognized the patient's last breaths were coming to an end,



and both stayed to hold the patient's hand and to play church hymns for the patient," Eliza said. "The family was very grateful for the love and compassion given during their loved one's last moments."

Katelyn said this wasn't the first time she played music for a patient, but it was her first time under end-of-life circumstances.

"I have played music for patients that were anxious before procedures or surgeries," Katelyn said. "Our patient did not request a hymn, but Ali and I both felt it's what would comfort the patient best, along with talking softly and holding the patient's hand."

Ali noticed during the Zoom call that a family member read scripture from Psalms.

"We knew faith was important to the patient," she said. "I have always felt the hymn 'Amazing Grace' has certain calming powers. This was something I have done before to calm my patients, and it is a tool I will continue to use when appropriate."

"The patient was so kindhearted," Katelyn

added. "I am thankful that I was able to be there to provide comfort to the patient when the family couldn't be there due to the current situation."

Hannah also felt fortunate to be able to provide some closure to all involved.

“It feels good to know I was able to facilitate interaction at the end of life for a patient in isolation,” she said. “It is so important for the grieving process for family to get an opportunity to say goodbye.”

Ali shared that she considers it a privilege to be able to soothe a patient when they pass away.

"In some instances, like this one, the nurse's voice and touch is the last thing he or she will hear or feel. This is part of our calling as nurses, to be there for our patients in all stages of life, from the beginning to the very end."

Magnet recognition highlights strong nursing culture

Congratulations to The Jewish Hospital — Mercy Health and Mercy Health — West Hospital in Cincinnati for achieving Magnet recognition in September 2020! Only a select group of U.S. health care organizations (8% of all registered hospitals) have achieved Magnet recognition, widely recognized as the gold standard for nursing excellence.



West Hospital's CNO, **Jen Jackson**, described Magnet recognition as “tangible evidence of our nurses’ commitment to providing the very best care to our patients, of which we are extremely proud.”

“Achieving Magnet recognition reinforces to our nurses the culture of excellence that is a cornerstone of how we serve our community,” added **Vanessa Vonderhaar-Picard**, The Jewish Hospital's CNO.

According to a 13-year study published in the journal Health Affairs, patient outcomes were significantly better in hospitals that had been awarded Magnet status. It has also been linked to improved hospital financial performance.

For Bon Secours Mercy Health nurses, Magnet designation means having a voice within the organization and feeling empowered to make changes in the work environment through council membership, research projects and education. Magnet status is an indication that our nurses strive for excellence and continued improvements.

The Jewish Hospital and West Hospital bring the number of Bon Secours Mercy Health Magnet hospitals to 11:

Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital
Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center
Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center
Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital
Mercy Health — St. Elizabeth Boardman Hospital
Mercy Health — St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital
Mercy Health — Fairfield Hospital
Mercy Health — St. Joseph Warren Hospital
Mercy Health — St. Rita's Medical Center
Mercy Health — West Hospital
The Jewish Hospital — Mercy Health

In addition, Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center is designated as a Pathway to Excellence® organization. This program recognizes health care organizations with a “commitment to creating a positive practice environment that empowers and engages staff.”

*You are health care heroes every day!
You are strong. You are amazing.
You are role models. Thank you!*

- Andrea Mazzocoli, RN, PhD, FAAN

BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH

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