



MedStar Health

Designated Through Dedication

Celebrating the Spirit of Our Magnet
Designated Nursing Team



MedStar Harbor Hospital
FY24 Nursing Annual Report

It's how we **treat people.**

Nurse Leadership Directory



Karen L. Elliott, DNP, MHA, RN, NEA-BC
Chief Nursing Officer & Vice President
of Patient Care Services
Karen.L.Elliott@medstar.net



Marivic Bacwaden, MSN, RN, CCRN
Assistant Director of Nursing
Perioperative Services
Marivic.C.Bacwaden@medstar.net



**Amy Bartholomew, MSN, RN, CENP,
NPD-BC, CCRN**
Director of Nursing Practice Innovation
& Magnet Program Director
Amy.Bartholomew@medstar.net



Sharon Bonner, MS, RN-BC
Director of Informatics–Multi-Site
Sharon.Bonner@medstar.net



Lori Casey, MSN, RN, CENP, CNML
Senior Director of Nursing Operations and
Patient Care Services
Lori.A.Casey@medstar.net



Lisa Davison, MSN, RN, CEN
Assistant Director of Nursing
Neuro/Tele and Orthopedics
Lisa.Davison@medstar.net



Jasmine Dickens, RN
Assistant Director of Nursing
Behavioral Health
Jasmine.C.Dickens@medstar.net



Beth Gylan, MSN, RN, PMH-BC
Director of Nursing
Behavioral Health
Beth.Gylan@medstar.net



Megan High, BSN, RN, CEN
Assistant Director of Nursing
Resources & Capacity Management
Megan.L.High@medstar.net



Neary Hwang, BSN, RN
Assistant Director of Nursing
Women and Infants'
Neary.O.Hwang@medstar.net



Susan Jennings, BSN, RN, CCM
Director of Case Management and
Utilization Review
Susan.L.Jennings@medstar.net



Brian Kelley, MSN, RN
Assistant Director of Nursing
ICU and Telemetry
Brian.Kelley@medstar.net



Jaime Krasauskis, BSN, RN, CNML
Director of Nursing
ICU and Telemetry
Jaime.Krasauskis@medstar.net



Jenna Marrone, MS, RN, CCRN, NPD-BC
Director of Nursing Professional Development
Jenna.L.Marrone@medstar.net



**Angel Masemore, BSN, RNC-OB,
RNC-EFM, CPC**
Fetal Assessment Manager
Angel.A.Masemore@medstar.net



Nneka Mitchell, LL.M., BSN, RN, CPHRM
Manager, Clinical Patient Safety Program
Nneka.I.Mitchell@medstar.net



Amy Monteil, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM
Assistant Director of Nursing
Women and Infants'
Amy.Monteil@medstar.net



Kelly Morris, BSN, RN, CIC
Infection Prevention Manager
Kelly.Morris@medstar.net



Chris Roberge, MS, RN
Clinical Quality Manager
Quality Department
Chris.Roberge@medstar.net



Delaney Ross, BSN, RN, CEN
Assistant Director
Emergency Department
Delaney.L.Ross@medstar.net



Grace Smith, MSN, RN, CMSRN
Director of Nursing
Neuro/Tele and Orthopaedics
Grace.Smith@medstar.net



Nakia Steen, MPH, BSN, RN, CM/DN
Clinical Coordinator Breast and
Cervical Cancer Program
Nakia.Steen@medstar.net



Kristi Twigg, BSN, RN
Director of Nursing
Emergency Department
Kristi.L.Twigg@medstar.net



**Franz Henryk Vergara, PhD, DNP, MAS, RN,
CENP, ONC, CCM**
Senior Director of Nursing Operations and
Patient Care Services
Franz.Vergara@medstar.net



Harry Wolfe, MBA, RN
Director of Nursing
Perioperative Services
Harry.H.Wolfe@medstar.net

A message from our Chief Nursing Officer



When I assumed the role of Chief Nursing Officer at MedStar Harbor Hospital a few years ago, our team of dedicated nurses and nurse leaders were eagerly and passionately working toward achievement of our first Magnet designation. There was a lot of work to be done, but there was also a great sense of excitement and anticipation. We were on the right path, and without a doubt, the journey toward Magnet

underscores the importance and value of a hospital's nursing team in a special way.

What we know now is that the journey following designation is equally important, valuable, and special. The days, weeks, and months following our designation announcement have been among the most memorable of my career. You can feel the pride in the air as you walk through the hospital. Our team worked incredibly hard, succeeded, and deserves to be celebrated.

Today, with that celebratory spirit very much alive, we are focused on sustaining and growing our culture of nursing excellence. We have established significant operational goals, driven by our nursing Annual Operating Plan, and are engaging nurses in new and exciting ways. The pursuit of Magnet designation is and will remain a constant priority for our team. It may seem like Magnet designation number two should be a *future* priority. I can promise you, it's a *current* one.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend an extra special thanks to Amy Bartholomew, our Magnet Program leader who truly spearheaded our efforts, kept us organized, guided us toward achievement of key milestones, and has made Magnet designation a special experience for every nurse at our hospital. Amy's leadership and unwavering commitment have been so important and are valued more than words can say. I am so grateful!

And to every nurse who is part of the MedStar Harbor Hospital family—kudos to you! Your commitment to nursing excellence is what made this achievement possible. And I am so very proud of you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Elliott DNP, MHA, RN, NEA-BC, CNO & VP".

Karen Elliott, DNP, MHA, RN, NEA-BC
Vice President of Patient Care Services & Chief Nursing Officer

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Key Achievements

Proud to be Recertified as a Primary Stroke Center



MedStar Harbor Hospital's continued commitment to excellence in stroke care was affirmed in May 2024, when the hospital earned recertification as a Primary Stroke Center. Together, The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association deploy a comprehensive process to evaluate stroke programs and certify those that

demonstrate exemplary clinical care standards. They assess the patient intake process, including how stroke codes are called and responded to, the time it takes to move a patient from their point of entry to CT, and how Emergency Department teams and neurology teams collaborate. Patient outcomes data is also reviewed, demonstrating the hospital's core measures for stroke care and highlighting performance improvements, over time.

Nurses have played an instrumental role in the continuous growth of MedStar Harbor's Primary Stroke Center. With a goal to work efficiently as stroke patients present in need of urgent care, this year, a team of nurses took the lead in building Code Stroke Lab Kits. They compile all of the materials needed to process lab paperwork and blood draws, and start IV meds, in one place—allowing clinical teams to act quickly and efficiently.

"Our nurses bring very valuable perspective as we are addressing challenges and concerns, and identifying solutions, at our monthly stroke meetings," said Joseph Paren, MSN, RN, stroke coordinator at MedStar Harbor. "The development of the Code Stroke Lab Kits are one example that demonstrate their commitment and leadership."

The stroke team also earned a Get with the Guidelines® Stroke SILVER PLUS Award from the American Heart Association this year. This is national program that recognizes hospitals that demonstrate consistent adherence to the latest scientific treatment guidelines.



Shannon Rueda, RN, an Emergency Department nurse, won a Golden Brain Award after giving the first dose of TNKase to a patient at MedStar Harbor Hospital.



Celeste Agostini, RN, a charge nurse in the ICU, received a Golden Brain Award after successfully facilitating stroke medication in a record breaking 32 minutes.



Emily Brown, RN, is part of the team that utilizes Code Stroke Lab Kits at MedStar Harbor Hospital.

Skin Champions Focused on Engagement and Education

MedStar Harbor Hospital's Skin Champions are going the extra mile to engage and educate staff about the important role they play in the prevention and reduction of hospital-acquired pressure injuries (HAPIs) for patients. The team includes a group of committed nurses and technicians who monitor, track, and report HAPIs, and who also facilitate in-servicing on units across the hospital. In the first half of 2024, the Skin Champions lead educational efforts centered on the following topics:

- Using Preventative Dressings to Prevent HAPIs (January)
- Urinary Continence Management Using Purewicks/Primofits (February)
- Managing Venous and Arterial Ulcers (April)
- Device-Related Pressure Injuries (May)
- Products to Manage Moisture (June)

In March, the group launched a new HAPI survey and also took part in the MedStar Health Skin Champion Education Forum, hosted by MedStar Harbor Hospital.

"Our Skin Champions have grown in their roles and are recognized as resources by their peers," said Joan Sullivan, MSN, MAS, RN, CWON, GERO-BC, who serves as WOCN/NICHE coordinator at MedStar Harbor and leads the Skin Champion program. "They have been creative in identifying ways to educate patients and families about prevention techniques, and their efforts deserve to be recognized and applauded!"



Leapfrog Awards MedStar Harbor Hospital an "A"—Again



The Leapfrog Group is a nonprofit watchdog organization that serves as a voice for healthcare consumers and purchasers, using their collective influence to foster positive change in U.S. healthcare. The organization advocates for transparency in healthcare—collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data to inform value-based purchasing and improved decision-making.

Through Leapfrog's survey process, an organization can achieve a grade of A, B, C, D, or F. MedStar Harbor Hospital, along with other MedStar Health entities, have been participating in the survey process, with a goal to boost awareness about the level of quality-centric, safe, outcomes-based care delivered by the healthcare system.

MedStar Harbor Hospital has received a grade of A, two times in a row; this past fall and then again this past spring. This consistency earned the organization accolades as a "Top Hospital" and is a testament to the great care provided by MedStar Harbor's clinical teams.

Engaging Nurses in the Development of our Annual Operating Plan



MedStar Harbor Hospital's commitment to excellence in nursing is clear—and its Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) affirms it. Part of what makes the organization's team so strong is that nurses truly have an active voice. They are continuously engaged in conversations around what can be done differently and better, moving forward.

Nurses from all units, all shifts, and all levels of tenure are invited to participate as MedStar Harbor Hospital's Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the Department of Nursing takes shape each year. Teams come together to brainstorm and share ideas. As post-it notes begin covering walls during this planning meeting, opportunities and goals become clear—in alignment with the five core pillars of the AOP. Those pillars are:

- Best Place to Work
- Highest Quality and Safety
- Best Patient Experience
- Market Leader
- Financial Strength

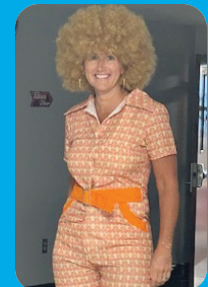
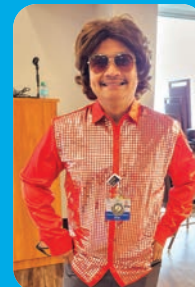
"The development of our Annual Operating Plan relies on and values the voice of every nurse," said Karen Elliott, DNP, MHA, RN, NEA-BC, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at MedStar Harbor Hospital. "We want our teams to be transparent with us about what they need and how leaders can better support them. This process also gives us an opportunity to build our goals in alignment with system-wide nursing goals."

AOP updates are published on a quarterly basis, in order to keep communication lines open and assure the nursing team remains up-to-date on progress made throughout the year. Updates clarify current action items, where positive change is being noted, and areas that may require a reassessment or pivot.

"We are always looking to move the needle forward and our AOP helps us define and activate specific ways to do exactly that," said Karen.

Just for fun!

A 70's theme was built into this year's AOP planning meeting. Here are a few snapshots showing how our leaders brought the idea to life!



Five Core Pillars of the AOP

<p>Best Place to Work</p>	<p>Promote the professional development of registered nurses through career planning and participation in the Clinical Advancement Program. Increase participation of eligible nurses compared to FY23.</p> <p>Develop and implement a MHH roadmap for nurse and patient care services associate experience and wellbeing to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging to improve retention. Maintain and/or reduce turnover rates.</p> <p>Implement three strategies to improve the PCS myVoice engagement survey results. Improve pulse survey results by 2 points compared to FY23.</p> <p>Implement recommendations from Magnet consultants and complete a successful site visit and designation.</p>
<p>Highest Quality & Safety</p>	<p>Implement strategies to improve the PSI-90 composite metric. Achieve improved benchmarks compared to FY23 based on the new FY24 MSH benchmarks.</p> <p>Advance nursing and associate safety through system-wide initiatives to reduce workplace violence and patient mobility-related injuries. Increase workplace violence reporting and reduce PCS associate patient mobility injuries compared to FY23.</p> <p>Optimize the membership and participation of the MHH Nursing Collaborative Governance Councils, Unit-based Councils, and Champion programs including formal orientation. Increase membership compared FY23.</p>
<p>Best Patient Experience</p>	<p>Use key drivers and MSH recommendations to execute performance improvement plans to improve patient experience scores compared to FY23.</p> <p>Implement strategies to improve hospital throughput including recommendations from the MHA Collaborative.</p> <p>Develop and implement a performance plan and apply for exemplar level NICHE designation.</p>
<p>Market Leader</p>	<p>Conduct at least one PCS retreat program for leaders focused on professional growth and development, supporting the PCS vision.</p> <p>Continue to optimize the new hire experience by implementing 2-3 strategies to improve their onboarding and initial experience.</p> <p>Increase BSN and Professional Certification rates by 1% compared to FY23.</p> <p>Strengthen engagement with clinical placement students through activities and leadership connections to improve student recruitment rates compared to FY23.</p>
<p>Financial Strength</p>	<p>Support business transformation by refining and implementing the models of nursing care delivery to effect nurse staffing and workflow efficiencies.</p>

Magnet Designated...At Last!

On January 19, 2024, leaders at MedStar Harbor Hospital were notified that the organization had officially earned Magnet® designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). It was a milestone moment for the hospital, reflecting years of hard work, dedication, and commitment to nursing excellence.

"The Commission on Magnet is proud to recognize your initial designation as a Magnet organization! This credential is a testament to the countless contributions your nurses, in collaboration with other team members, have made in their commitment to provide quality patient care through innovations in professional nursing practice. Congratulations to the entire organization on your significant achievement!"

—excerpt from the Magnet Recognition Program Executive Summary Report presented to MedStar Harbor Hospital by ANCC





Celebrating Nurse Certifications, in Style and with Sweets

Nurses who work for Magnet designated hospitals are encouraged to pursue ongoing and continuous education, as a way of refining and expanding their skills, remaining up-to-date on the latest clinical knowledge, and positioning themselves for career advancement opportunities. One way nurses can accomplish this is through completion of certification programs. In 2024, MedStar Harbor Hospital held a special celebratory event to recognize nurses who expanded their credentials through achievement of new certifications. Certificates of achievement and some sweet treats were delivered to nurses across the hospital!



"The professionalism, engagement, and enthusiasm of the clinical nurses were pervasive throughout the organization. They consistently expressed gratitude and respect for the support and accessibility of their unit and organizational leaders. Nurses spoke freely about their ability to grow professionally through leader support, tuition assistance, scheduling flexibility, and the Clinical Advancement Program (CAP)."

—excerpt from the Magnet Recognition Program Executive Summary Report presented to MedStar Harbor Hospital by ANCC



A Different Kind of March Madness

“March Madness” is a term typically associated with college basketball championship games, but at MedStar Harbor Hospital, it carried different meaning in 2024. In celebration of the hospital’s Magnet designation achievement, staff had opportunities to participate in some special games and activities, and have some fun with the members of their team. It was one simple way for leadership to express their gratitude to everyone who worked so hard to make Magnet designation possible.

“Nursing leadership drives a culture that supports and encourages input from clinical nurses in all aspects of care delivery and the work environment. Quality patient outcomes, clinical expertise, patient centeredness, professionalism, and use of evidence-based practice were evident throughout our site visit.”

—excerpt from the Magnet Recognition Program Executive Summary Report presented to MedStar Harbor Hospital by ANCC



The Annual Magnet Conference

Commemorating Our Achievement in New Orleans

Nurses from MedStar Harbor Hospital proudly walked the stage at the ANCC's Annual Magnet Conference—for the first time, in New Orleans. It was a special and memorable experience for all who attended, and underscored the importance and value of what it truly means to work for a Magnet designated hospital. Here, we share a few favorite snapshots that demonstrate how much fun we had celebrating in the Big Easy!





“Our appraisal team met with 350+ nurses and consistently heard clinical nurses express their pride in working at MedStar Harbor Hospital. Collaborative relationships were present throughout the hospital with strong focus on quality patient care. We heard numerous stories demonstrating how the nurses go above and beyond to provide high quality, culturally-sensitive care to patients and their families.”

—excerpt from the Magnet Recognition Program Executive Summary Report presented to MedStar Harbor Hospital by ANCC



Innovation in Nursing: What We Are Doing, How, and Why



Ask just about anyone who works at MedStar Harbor Hospital to reflect back on the COVID-19 pandemic, and chances are, two consistent answers would emerge.

“That was, without a doubt, the hardest, most demanding, and physically and emotionally exhausting time period of my career.”
And...



“We sure did learn a lot. And, we are better today, because of it.”

One of the most dominant lessons learned during “the COVID years” was that tremendous opportunity does exist for nursing teams to work smarter—not harder, through looking at operations from a different lens. The pandemic accelerated the need for innovation in nursing as leaders worked to resolve staffing, safety, and technology challenges. As new innovative systems were implemented for short-term reasons, potential long-term impacts became clear. And over time, many have been adopted as permanent best practices.



“Through the pandemic challenges, we learned to use technology to streamline our workflows in new ways. We also learned to think about staffing and how to work around shortages, in creative ways,” said Karen Elliott, DNP, MHA, RN, NEA-BC, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at MedStar Harbor Hospital. “The changes we made were very effective, and well received by our nursing team. So, we kept them and built upon them.”



Virtual nursing, remote visual monitoring, and the lead tech program are among the strategies that were launched in the midst of crisis, but sustained because of their potential to support MedStar Harbor Hospital’s nursing team and boost its efficiency. That, in turn, has positively impacted patient care.

“Putting the right tools and resources in place allows us to use our staff efficiently, and assures that each person on our team can stay focused on the tasks they should be doing,” said Karen. “That level of accountability makes it possible for us to optimize our clinical care environment in ways that are measurable. We are seeing the impact from quality improvement, patient experience, and nursing satisfaction standpoints.”

Remote Visual Monitoring



Some patients—especially those who are disoriented, confused, high-risk for falls, or high-risk for elopement—really do require that someone have a constant eye on them while they are being cared for in inpatient hospital environments. Remote Visual Monitoring (RVM) is an innovative nursing strategy which makes that possible.

In Fiscal Year 2024, in alignment with system nursing goals, MedStar Harbor Hospital launched the RVM initiative, starting with the development of a “Sprint Team” whose charter was to guide the implementation process. The Sprint Team, led by Kristi Twigg, BSN, RN, Director of Nursing, and Leif Coble, MSN, RN, NI-BC, clinical informatics nurse specialist (both pictured below), helped define criteria for which patients could benefit most from RVM, and helped develop workflows to optimize clinical staff efficiencies, with use of RVM technology.

“Through RVM, we have technicians monitoring the patient at all times, from another location,” said Leif. “The techs and patients can see and hear each other using a tablet and camera, and the techs can also quickly and easily communicate directly with the nurses who are working on the unit, when necessary.”



Technicians can monitor up to 16 patients at a time. In addition to giving technicians increased responsibilities and a new scope of work, RVM eases the burden on nursing units by allowing bedside nurses to remain focused on patient care. Additionally, RVM is a valuable asset for families, who find comfort in knowing their loved ones are being monitored constantly, and that clinical care teams can act quickly if any urgent situations arise. Each device has an embedded alarm, which can be activated if the remote visual monitor witnesses a situation in a patient room that requires immediate attention by a nurse or other on-site clinical care provider.



“The adoption of RVM has resulted in the establishment of new, nurse-driven protocols for ordering patient monitoring services,” said Kristi. “The inclusion criteria is clearly defined, which allows nurses to identify patients who really need the service. Prior to this implementation, nurses had to engage physicians in these conversations. The new protocols for ordering and activating RVM in patient rooms is much more efficient and streamlined now.”

Virtual Nursing



As part of MedStar Health's commitment to redefining the delivery of nursing care, post-COVID, Virtual Nursing was integrated into standard of care protocols at every hospital entity during Fiscal Year 2024.

"Nursing shortages during and following the pandemic motivated nursing leaders to think about how we could use existing resources to do things differently," said Jaime Krasauskis, BSN, RN, CNML, director of nursing in the intensive care and telemetry units at MedStar Harbor Hospital. "Innovation in nursing was the answer, with the realization that nurses are bombarded with tasks and to-do's that could be completed by someone else, in a more efficient way."

When leaders out of MedStar Health's corporate hospital asked for volunteers to pilot Virtual Nursing, MedStar Harbor stepped up to the plate, and offered to test the strategy on its third and fourth floor patient care units. Wireless devices, equipped with computer screens, microphones, and cameras, were installed, and new protocols were tested, allowing a nurse not physically present in the room to facilitate the patient admission process. Over time, discharge procedures were also added to the Virtual Nursing plan.

"We quickly saw processes being expedited, and lag times being reduced," said Jaime. "We also saw how Virtual Nursing streamlines workflows for nurses actively working on the unit. With time-consuming admission and discharge processes being handled by someone else, nurses on the units are able to remain focused on patient care. They can spend more time with each patient—taking care of them, engaging them in conversation, and providing education."

Another significant benefit of Virtual Nursing is the opportunity it provides nurses to pick up extra shifts, with some variation and flexibility in the mix. Virtual Nursing shifts are scheduled in four-hour increments, and can be picked up by nurses after they have undergone a half-day training course. Initially four MedStar Harbor Hospital nurses were trained, to get the program up and running. Today, 15 have been trained, and Virtual Nursing services have expanded to the intensive care unit and Emergency Department.



"There is appeal in the opportunity to do something different and new, including working in an administrative environment and having an opportunity to collaborate directly with nursing supervisors," said Jaime. "And those who are trained to do this love the flexibility it offers. They can pick up shifts on the days that work best for them. There are so many benefits associated with Virtual Nursing, for both patients and our staff."

New Technologies Optimizing Operations in Many Ways

Integration of new, top-of-the-line technologies in the clinical environment is always a priority at MedStar Harbor Hospital, and Fiscal Year 2024 was no exception. Sharon Bonner, MS, RN, NI-BC, multi-site director of clinical informatics, said that three major implementations took place this year from a clinical informatics standpoint:

Launch of CareAware Connect Communications



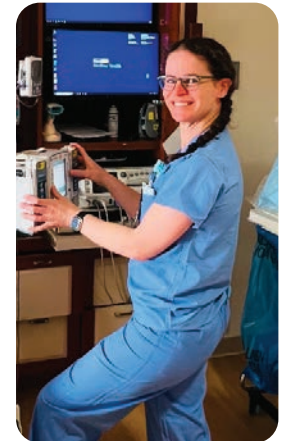
This initiative replaced the ASCOM phones previously carried by members of the patient care team. New devices were issued that aid in specimen collection and medication administration, while also

providing reliable communication features for sending and receiving both calls and secure text messages. Messaging can be transmitted to specific individuals or groups of people, and the new devices integrate with the nurse call system; as patients press the call button, nurses are notified on their new devices. Additionally, the new devices confirm who is working when, and in what roles. This assures calls go to the correct person during any given shift. This program launched in February 2024, and an average of 1,000 messages are transmitted each day.

“These devices centralize so much information in one place, and have given us a whole new way to communicate as a team,” said Sharon. “There is so much efficiency realized by connecting people based on their role and the needs of the patients they are caring for.”

Introduction of Smart Pump Programming on Women and Infants’ Unit

This initiative, launched on the Women and Infants’ unit in June 2024, removes the need for manual programming as intravenous (IV) medications are ordered and administered. When a medication order is placed, nurses now scan the patient’s identification bracelet, then scan the IV, then scan the pump. This technology has been in place on other units across the hospital, but was introduced on the Women and Infants’ unit last, due to special complexities associated with this patient population.



“Smart Pump Programming is safer and more efficient,” said Sharon. “It eliminates the possibility for human error as IV medications are being administered.”

Optimizing Data Presentation in Electronic Health Records

Conducting a standard patient assessment was taking more time than it should, in large part because of the amount of information clinical care teams needed to type into a patient’s electronic health record (EHR). With a goal to make the process more efficient, a new field—“chart with defined limits”—was added to the system. It allows many steps of the documentation process to be finalized with just one click. This implementation has decreased burdens for nurses and has also created a dashboard that presents comprehensive patient data on one screen.

“Our providers can now see all information relevant to patient issues and needs in a single view,” said Sharon. “It the information our team needs in one place that is easy to find and understand.”

Education and Nursing Professional Development Updates

Student nursing programs



Orientation and competencies



We facilitate both Student Nurse Assistant (SNA) and Student Nurse Extern (SNE) programs. Weekly educational activities focus on clinical skill development, simulation exercises, personal wellness, and NCLEX preparation. Students who are selected to participate in these programs gain invaluable clinical experience while getting paid for their time.

In 2024, we onboarded 119 RNs/GNs, 4 LPNs, 8 SNEs, 29 Cas/PCTs, 9 SNAs, 12 unit secretaries, 2 unit aides, and 2 surgical technicians. Once onboard, all staff is required to complete competencies on an annual basis to ensure nursing associates can perform regulatory and high-risk skills proficiently, accurately, and safely.

Nurse Residency Program



Professional development



Our 12-month, evidence-based residency program leverages curriculum developed by Vizient and the ANCC. New-to-practice nurses implement an evidence-based practice/quality improvement project and are required to measure and report outcomes. This program is currently on the CCNE Accreditation Pathway for Excellence, with continued focus on professionalism, ethics, health equity, prioritization and time management, patient safety, and the delivery of quality healthcare.

Our nurses are encouraged to grow professionally through involvement in our shared governance committees and unit-based councils. Our Champion programs work to reduce hospital-acquired wounds, pain, and falls. Our Clinical Advancement Program inspires continuous education for nurses with financial incentives. And our life-long learning initiatives fund tuition, conference attendance, certification preparation and exams, training, nursing grand rounds, and engagement with external professional organizations.

Celebrating Nurses Week



National Nurses Week is celebrated in May of each year. It's a way for organizations and communities to recognize the talents and contributions of nurses, and demonstrate appreciation for the work they do each day. Nurses at MedStar Harbor Hospital are honored throughout Nurses Week in special ways. Here, we share some snapshots from our celebrations.





Celebrating Our Nurse of the Year

Abigail Darko, BSN, RN

What Abigail Darko, BSN, RN, loves most about being a nurse is knowing she plays an important part as patients come into the hospital, gradually heal and recover, and become well enough to go back home. A close second is that as a nurse at MedStar Harbor Hospital, she works with a team that functions like a family. And, equally important to Abigail is that she works for a hospital where continuous education, learning, and skill development is a clear priority.

"I am proud to work at MedStar Harbor Hospital," said Abigail. "There is so much encouragement, understanding, and support here."

In recognition of her extraordinary commitment to excellence in nursing, Abigail was named MedStar Harbor Hospital's 2024 Nurse of the Year during the hospital's annual Nurses Week Celebration. It is a moment she will never forget, and that will inspire her to continue doing more, for many years to come.

"As I stood alongside the other nominees, I was not expecting my name to be called as the winner of this award," recalls Abigail. "On one side of me stood my preceptor—the person who helped me orient to my job and build new skills. On the other side of me stood a very, very experienced nurse. It feels good to know my hard work was noticed and matters."

Abigail joined MedStar Harbor Hospital three years ago and has worked on North 4, the telemetry unit, ever since. Patients admitted to this unit are treated for a diverse range of medical issues, from acute illnesses and chronic diseases to surgery recovery, stroke rehabilitation, and observation. Abigail makes it a point to connect with patient on a personal level and goes the extra mile to show them she cares. For example, one patient who was hospitalized for a long period of time mentioned her love for chocolate. The next day, that patient was practically speechless



when her nurse, Abigail, came into her room with family-sized bags of Hershey's chocolates, simple to put a smile on her face. On other occasions, she has been known to make home-cooked meals for patients.

"Abigail greets everyone with the biggest, brightest smile, and has a big heart," noted her award nominator. "She meets the needs of her patients by going to lengths that most people will not, and does the nicest things to make her patients' hospital stay a little bit easier. Abigail respects patients by including them in decisions made about their care. She is always courteous and caring."

Outside of work, Abigail and her husband Bismark enjoy watching movies, listening to county music, cooking, and being active within their church.

Jean Watson Award

Presented to Rachel Stracke, RN



The Jean Watson Award at MedStar Harbor Hospital recognizes a nurse who embodies an extraordinary commitment to caring for others—both patients and peers. Rachel Stracke, RN, the recipient of this year’s Jean Watson Award, is one of those unique people. She exemplifies a deep passion for helping others and handles every challenge and opportunity in the workplace with positivity.

Rachel’s nominator expressed genuine respect for her work on South Main 3.

“Rachel establishes a rapport with her patients and has a way of addressing people that puts them at ease and builds trust. She is consistently approachable and willing to help any member of the team. She takes stressful situations in stride and her caring, calm, and supportive demeanor inspires her peers and promotes teamwork,” they wrote.

Additionally, Rachel’s colleagues agree that her ability to connect with people fosters deep personal relationships that are invaluable within the healing environment. She is a leader who works well under pressure and whose focus is always on doing what is best for the patient. Her peers view her as someone to be counted on to effectively and steadily lead in all situations. For these reasons and many others, in addition to winning this year’s Jean Watson Award, Rachel also received a MedStar Harbor Hospital Pillar of Nursing Award in 2023. She says that being recognized underscores why she is proud to be a nurse, and to be doing work that positively impacts others.

“Receiving the Jean Watson Award makes me feel happy, appreciated, and recognized for the work I do,” said Rachel. “The most rewarding aspect of my job is helping others during a difficult time in their lives. Being sick in a hospital can be scary, and I hope that my services as their nurse can help relieve some of the anxiety and fear patients and their families may be facing.”

Rachel demonstrates the Jean Watson philosophy of care by treating every patient with respect and with the same exceptional care she would want for her own family members. Side-by-side with the healthcare team, she works to identify issues and find appropriate resources to optimize patient safety, care, and experience.

“I always remind myself that the patients I am taking care of are sick and it may be a scary time for them,” said Rachel. “If I can bring a little bit of light into their day, then I have done my job.”

Pillar of Nursing Award

Michelle Hayes, BSN, RN, C-EFM



Michelle Hayes, BSN, RN, C-EFM, from the Women and Infants' Unit, is known for her clinical expertise, leadership qualities, and teamwork. Leading by example, she inspires others to be their best in her day-to-day work. These are the qualities that led to Michelle's selection as MedStar Harbor Hospital's 2024 Pillar of Nursing Award winner. This award recognizes an individual or team that provides the necessary foundation for the hospital to deliver high-quality, safe, and efficient patient care, as well as a positive patient experience. It also recognizes nurses who demonstrate a balanced approach to leadership and decision-making, and who are resources for every member of their team.

"Michelle leads with respect. She takes the time to understand the needs of her staff and the patients. She is always smiling and encouraging others," her nominator wrote. "Michelle inspires me every day to be my most authentic self. She is always there for me when I have questions, provides career advice, and takes the time to help me work through problems, whether

personal or professional."

Preceptor of the Year Award

Amanda Takovich, BSN, RN, C-EF



Known as a nurse who always puts the patient first, Amanda Takovich, BSN, RN, C-EFM, exemplifies what it means to be a true mentor and role model. Her commitment to teaching and leading with respect shines through as she ensures every new team member has the tools needed for success on the Women and Infants' Unit. For these reasons, during Nurses Week, Amanda won MedStar Harbor Hospital's 2024 Preceptor of the Year Award.

Amanda is dedicated to helping those around her grow their skills and knowledge, and thinks outside of the box as she looks for ways to motivate positive change in her work environment. She has introduced new processes to optimize efficiency, quality, and safety on her unit.

"Amanda builds a good rapport with her patients and coworkers," her nominator wrote. "She treats everyone with respect and dignity, offering help whenever needed on the unit while also mentoring orientees and making sure they feel welcome."

Tech of the Year Award

Dakota Jackson, CNA



Recognized as MedStar Harbor Hospital's 2024 Tech of the Year, Dakota Jackson, CNA, from Float Pool, is known as a team player who has earned the respect and admiration of all those he works with. He is loved by patients and colleagues alike for his gentle and kind demeanor, and his ability to put people at ease. Simply put, Dakota is attentive, respectful, and professional.

"Dakota is one of the best techs I work with," his nominator commented. "He takes the time to make sure he addresses the patients' needs. He helps everyone on this team—the patients, nurses, and other techs."

In a profession that requires meticulous attention to detail as well as constant collaboration, Dakota has truly set himself apart, and stands as a role model for others to follow. His open communication with nurses and his ability to listen and deliver exceptional and safe care to his patients make him an invaluable part of the care team. Dakota's colleagues greatly appreciate his commitment to excellence in the patient care environment, and the pride he takes his day-to-day work.

Unit Secretary of the Year Award

Trudy Frederick



During Nurses Week, Trudy Frederick was named MedStar Harbor Hospital's 2024 Unit Secretary of the Year. The award is a testament to her exceptional dedication and willingness to go above and beyond for patients and her colleagues. Trudy's attention to detail assures the Behavioral Health Department runs smoothly. She is responsible for completing documentation pertaining to patient care accurately and promptly, with focus on ensuring the patient's rights and valuables are protected and respected. Additionally, Trudy assists with administrative training and the development of new procedures to streamline the admission and discharge processes.

"All of the care providers, nurses, managers, and social workers depend on their communication with Trudy," explained her nominator. "She always knows what is going on and provides information that people need to do their jobs. Our unit would not run the same without her."

Baltimore Magazine 2024 Excellence in Nursing Awards

Congratulations to the five MedStar Harbor Hospital nurses named to *Baltimore* magazine's 2024 "Excellence in Nursing" list.

Shown left to right are **Angelica Marrero, MSN, RN, CEN**; **Sherry Reisler, MSN, RN, NPD-BC**; **Leif Coble, MSN, RN, NI-BC**; **Delaney Ross, BSN, RN, CEN**; and **Gelila Teklu, MSN, RN, CEN**.



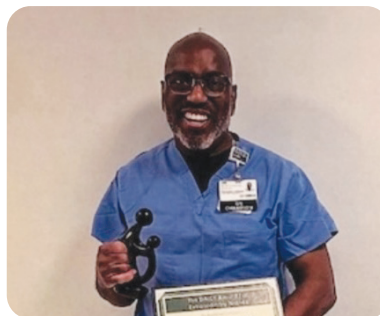
DAISY Awards

The DAISY Award honors extraordinary nurses for extraordinary service and excellence in their day-to-day work. Congratulations to our Fiscal Year 2024 winners!



First Quarter

Ivelisse Acevedo, BSN, RN
Cardiac Telemetry Unit



Second Quarter

Fernando Johnson, RN
Post-Anesthesia Care Unit



Third Quarter

Britney Davis, BSN, RN
Intensive Care Unit

Connecting with the CNO

Engagement Rounds and “Ketchup with Karen” Meetings

When Karen Elliott was named chief nursing officer at MedStar Harbor Hospital in May 2022, one of her first priorities was to create spaces for nurses to share their thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns with her. The establishment of two new programs, centered around creating opportunities for nurses to connect with their CNO, allowed her to accomplish that goal.

The first program was launch of Karen’s “Engagement Rounds.” She selects a few units to visit each month, and varies the shifts, to ensure nurses around-the-clock have opportunities to see and hear from her.



“Engagement rounds give me an opportunity to work my way through the hospital to cover all units and all shifts, over time,” said Karen. “I want people to see me, and to be able to tell me in their own words what is going well, what needs improvement, what their equipment and technology challenges are, what their safety concerns are, and who they feel deserves recognition. It is really about connecting with people and demonstrating that I care about their work and am here to help provide solutions.”



The second program is formatted as an open forum—essentially a town hall discussion, cleverly named “Ketchup with Karen.” All topics of conversation center around nurses, their jobs, people and projects that should be celebrated, and where opportunities exist to do things differently and better. Karen wants nurses to know that their voices matter, not just within the organization as a whole, but to her personally. She wants to hear their questions, and is committed to providing or finding answers.

Nursing recruitment and retention tends to be a “hot topic” during just about every Ketchup with Karen conversation that occurs. The feedback Karen has received from front line nurses has helped shape Annual Operating Plan goals and innovation in nursing strategies at MedStar Harbor Hospital.

“Nursing engagement is very important to me personally, and has been essential in building a culture of excellence and paving the way for our hospital to achieve Magnet designation,” said Karen. “I truly value each and every nurse who is part of our team, and I want people to know and feel that.”

Why are you proud to be part of **this Magnet designated nursing team?**

"I am proud to be part of this Magnet-designated nursing team because it reflects our commitment to providing high-quality, evidence-based care that prioritizes patient outcomes. Being part of a team that consistently strives for excellence and continuous improvement inspires me to grow both professionally and personally."

–Elizabeth Yesker, BSN, RN
(employed 6 years at MHH)
Nurse on the Behavioral Health Inpatient Unit

"I am proud to work at Magnet designated hospital because it affirms that I would send my own family here for great and safe care. It also means that continuity in care is the same, and priority throughout the entire hospital."

–Emily Brown, RN
(employed 2.5 years at MHH)
Nurse in the Emergency Department

"Being a part of this Magnet team has given me a sense of pride that after thirty years as a nurse, I was able to contribute my experience to achieve a landmark goal for my hospital. I knew being a nurse meant making a difference to my patients as individuals, but with this team we have been able to reach a goal that will impact other nurses, our facility, and even our community as a Magnet designated hospital."

–DJ Jones, RN
(employed 5 years at MHH)
Nurse in the NICU

"I'm proud to work alongside nurses who value patients, best outcomes, best practices, and each other. MedStar Harbor is so deserving of this recognition for the great work our nurses do every day!!"

–Amy Bartholomew, MSN, RN, CENP, NPD-BC, CCRN
(employed 25 years at MHH)
Director, Nursing Practice Innovation & Magnet Program Director

"I have loved being part of a team that thrives and excels because nurses collaborate and share a joint goal to improve patient outcomes. This played a big part in our hospital's ability to achieve Magnet designation, and I am proud to have been part of that journey."

–Sandy Issac, BSN, RN
(employed 30 years at MHH)
Nurse on SM3 Cardiac Telemetry

MedStar Harbor Hospital
3001 S Hanover St.
Baltimore, MD 21225
MedStarHarbor.org



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