



MedStar Health

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

**We are
Magnet[®]!**



Nursing Annual Report
January 2023 to June 2024

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



In October 2024, we traveled to New Orleans to attend the ANCC National Magnet® Conference. I was thrilled to be surrounded by so many of our nursing team as we represented MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. It was a moment I will never forget!

A letter from our chief nursing officer. Celebrating nursing excellence

I would like to start this letter by congratulating you on achieving Magnet® recognition! I know it was a lot of work, but you did an amazing job! And in true MedStar St. Mary's Hospital fashion, you raised the bar by achieving eight exemplars! It was an incredible journey, and I am so proud of our team—not just in pursuit of this honor but in caring for our patients every day.

If this journey has taught us one thing, teamwork is the answer to almost everything we face. Whether finding new ways to work together or brainstorming and developing new ideas, we succeed when we join forces to tackle the challenges before us. This edition of the Nursing Annual Report provides multiple examples of how you have collaborated to improve patient care and advance the nursing profession. It takes a team that's comfortable working through challenges to find a better path forward. I am proud to say we have built such a team! It is no wonder our hospital is often asked to trial new initiatives in the system; you are known for your innovation and dedication to achieving a higher standard.

This Nursing Annual Report covers 18 months to realign the next edition with our Fiscal Year. While we cannot include all the great work you completed during that time, this publication highlights many of your accomplishments.

One topic that you will read out throughout the publication is professional development achievements, which surveys show is a key driver of nurse satisfaction. We want to help you achieve your goals, whether they involve advancing your clinical skills, pursuing leadership roles, or specializing in a particular care area. Our commitment to your professional development is more than filling shifts or meeting requirements; it's about empowering you to reach

your full potential and provide the best care possible to our patients.

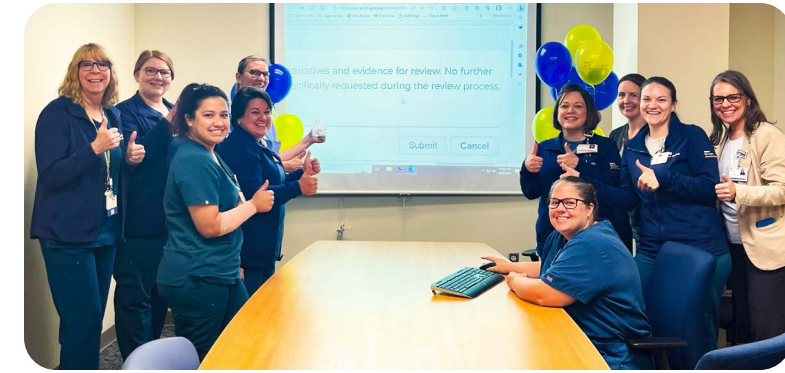
Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities on the horizon. We will continue to support innovation, foster an environment of continuous learning, and champion your well-being. I am confident that we will build on this momentum and accomplish even more in the coming years.

Thank you for your hard work, your heart, and your unwavering dedication to our patients, our hospital, and each other. You embody the spirit of MedStar St. Mary's, and I couldn't be prouder to practice alongside every one of you. Here's to the achievements of the past and the bright future we will create together!

Dawn Yeittrakis MS, BSN, RN, NEA-BC
Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer,
MedStar St. Mary's Hospital



Our Magnet® journey



Adopting the One Team Growing Together motto, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital officially launched its Magnet Journey in April 2022. There were many milestones along the way, culminating in Magnet® recognition in May 2024. Magnet® recognition is one of the most prestigious distinctions a healthcare organization can achieve in the United States with fewer than 10% of hospitals nationally holding the designation.



Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership shapes an organization's values, beliefs, and behaviors to meet the demands of the future. Transformational leadership requires vision, influence, clinical knowledge, and a strong expertise relating to professional nursing practice. Transformational leadership solves problems, fixes broken systems, and empowers staff to fuel organizational transformations.



In January, MedStar St. Mary's onboarded 22 student nurse externs—the largest group to date. Nurse externs gain valuable hands-on skills and training in the clinical setting as they prepare to leave the classroom.

Hands-on learning helps student nurse externs succeed

The Student Nurse Extern (SNE) program at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital offered senior nursing students an invaluable experience in patient care during their final year of school. Working alongside experienced nurses, the externs gained practical clinical and bedside skills in the hospital setting, bridging the gap between classroom learning and clinical practice.

"The SNE program has become a vital pathway to our nursing team," said **Kristie Dutrow, BSN, RN**, nursing professional development specialist, Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics and Telemetry who noted the program had a record number in FY24.

Over the past 18 months, the program has resulted in high conversion rates, improved retention, and increased nursing engagement, all important factors in the Magnet® journey. Additionally, as a result of the experience and hands-on skills gained as a student nurse extern, the professional development team has seen shortened orientation time due to exposure as an SNE.

"This engagement is instrumental in our commitment to excellence, supporting our journey toward Magnet® recognition and a stronger, more prepared nursing workforce," said Kristie.

Nurse residency program supports the newest members of the nursing team

The Nurse Residency program at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital offers an essential foundation for new nurses, easing their transition from student to practicing registered nurse. Focused on essential soft skills including communication, collaboration, delegation, patient care coordination, and professional growth, the program equips new nurses with the tools they need for career success. "In FY24, we celebrated a record 52 new-to-practice nurse hires, a testament to the program's effectiveness in nurturing confident, capable professionals," said **Dawn Leukhardt, MSN, RN, CNE**, nurse resident program coordinator.

The residency program continued to promote a supportive, psychologically safe environment in which new nurses feel encouraged and empowered, positively impacting retention rates. "By developing these skills and emphasizing best practices, our new nurses are better prepared to engage in patient care that leads to improved outcomes, benefiting the health and well-being of our community," added Dawn.



Preceptor Deyonna Harris, BSN, RN, enjoys working with her mentee, Gianni Estrada, RN.

Making an impact through dedicated leadership

Sydney Clement, BSN, RN, director of nursing (Intensive Care Center [ICC]), was awarded the 2023 DAISY Nurse Leader of the Year Award at the Maryland Organization of Nurse Leaders (MONL) Annual Gala!

Sydney was nominated for exemplifying servant leadership. She is persistent in her focus on the ICC nursing team's professional growth and wellbeing, which, in turn, shapes the exceptional quality outcomes for patients. Sydney nurtures talent, exercises emotional intelligence, and applies critical thinking to create a clinical environment focused on the safety of patients and staff alike—accomplished while improving efficiency and providing unwavering support to the entire team.

As an experienced ICC nurse, Sydney is often referred to as a subject matter expert. She leads and participates in several interdisciplinary teams at the system, entity, and unit level within MedStar Health and MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. Projects that Sydney engages in strive to



Above: Members of the Intensive Care Center team, from left, front row: **Liann Rodriguez, BSN, RN; Sydney Clement, BSN, RN, director; and Amber Pitner, unit secretary.** Back row: **Whitney Mattera, NT; Elizabeth Scott, RN; and Yvrose Charles, BSN, RN.**



At left: **Sydney, center, with MedStar Health Chief Nursing Officer LynnMarie Verzino, DNP, MHA, RN, CENP, NE-BC, left, and Lea Ann Carranza, MSN, RN, CNML, CWOCN, PCCN, former director of nursing (Telemetry).**

improve nursing work flows, optimize electronic health record documentation, and implement evidenced-based nursing practice.

Just a few examples of her impactful work include leading the revision of the complete Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy (CRRT) order set and improvements in products and documentation work flows surrounding CRRT, the implementation of an "About Me" initiative to improve individualized patient care plans, the optimization of the Code Heart process, and refining the Weight-Based Heparin Protocols for improved patient outcomes.

Comfort kits help patients overcome barriers to care



Imagine a patient not being able to view or complete important paperwork or missing detailed conversations with medical providers because of hearing difficulties. Witnessing these issues firsthand, Kimberleigh Beasley, palliative care social worker, partnered with nursing to bring these concerns to light and sought out a solution.

Nursing, Palliative Care, Infection Prevention, and Philanthropy teams got together to devise a plan for the creation of "Comfort Kits." Nursing and Palliative Care developed the list of common items

patients often needed and could borrow. Infection Prevention confirmed that these items could be effectively cleaned and sanitized and returned to the kit for use by the next patient. Kits were funded through the Power to Heal associate campaign funds designated to Palliative Care to positively impact patients.

"The Comfort Kits consist of items that offer dignity to patients and help them maintain a sense of control and autonomy," explained Kimberleigh. "The feedback is always so positive. The patients are grateful to have access to the items in these kits and we are pleased to offer them!"

In May 2023, Comfort Kits were provided to all inpatient units and included:

- Rechargeable amplification headsets to allow patients with hearing impairments to have more meaningful discussions with their medical team and families as well as for pain assessments and discharge instructions.
- Reading glasses for making meal choices from the menus or for completing Advance Directives and other important documents.
- Sleep machines with soothing sounds to help patients manage anxiety for improved rest.
- Charging cables and power blocks to keep electronic devices charged.
- Tackle boxes to store the kit items securely.

Structural empowerment

Direct care nurses are involved in shared decision-making groups. Direct care nurses from all levels can contribute to standards of practice and other issues. Nurses are encouraged to participate in local, national, or international professional organizations. Nurses are provided with educational opportunities, such as tuition reimbursement, preceptor training, certification preparation, and the Clinical Advancement Program.



As professional development specialist for the Perioperative Services team, **Hollie Ridgell, BSN, RNFA, CNOR**, helped four staff members grow into First Assist roles. Pictured from left to right are **Brandee Shotwell, CST III, SA-C; Sabrina Levin, CST, SA-C; Hollie Ridgell, BSN, RNFA, CNOR; Emily Bolin, BSN, RNFA IV, CNOR; and Kaylee Hartsfield BSN, RNFA, CNOR.**

New role helps Perioperative team grow their careers

In 2023, **Hollie Ridgell, BSN, RNFA, CNOR**, became the first professional development specialist for the MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Perioperative Services team.

"In her role, Hollie has had a significant impact on orientation and education," said **Rebecca Wathen, MSN, RN, CNOR**, director of nursing (Perioperative Services). Hollie supports orientation for all roles in the department, including first assistants, surgical technologists, operating room RNs, Peri-anesthesia RNs, Ambulatory Surgery RNs, and Sterile Processing Technicians.

"I restructured orientation for OR RNs by introducing the Tiered Skills Acquisition Model (TSAM) and implementing Periop 101. I also work to provide monthly education opportunities regarding preoperative best practices, new equipment/procedures/practices, and emergency preparedness for all staff," said Hollie. "As a Nursing Professional Development specialist, I work to support staff growing in their roles through the clinical surgical tech ladder and the RN Clinical Advancement Program."

Hollie has also been instrumental in starting the Surgical Tech Apprentices Program at MedStar St. Mary's. This system-wide program was created to combat the shortage of surgical technologists.

"I worked alongside the entire team of MedStar Health Perioperative Educators to support this program, and I am excited we were able to benefit by gaining one surgical tech from cohort 1 and we are looking forward to the completion of cohort 2 next year to gain another," said Hollie.

MedStar St. Mary's first Senior Director of Nursing Excellence & Resource Management

FY24 saw several firsts in nursing at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, including the appointment of its first senior director of Nursing Excellence & Resource Management (SDON), **Janet Smith, MHPE, BSN, RN, CNML, NPD-BC**. The charge of the SDON is to maintain an environment that supports the profession of nursing and provides a safe and high-quality experience for MedStar St. Mary's patients.

As the SDON, Janet focuses on resource management to ensure patients move efficiently through the hospital and receive excellent care from highly skilled nurses who enjoy their work and provide an exceptional patient experience. Janet also supports MedStar programs that provide opportunities for MedStar St. Mary's nursing associates to experience professional growth and development.

"We strive to sustain an environment of care that focuses on the delivery of a safe and enjoyable experience for both patients and nursing associates," stated Janet. "The overall philosophy for the senior director of Nursing Excellence and Resource Management position is that residents of St. Mary's County do not need to leave the local area to receive high quality health care services. That level of care is delivered at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital by exceptional nurses who care deeply about the community they serve and are committed to producing the best outcomes for their patients."



Janet Smith, MHPE, BSN, RN, CNML, NPD-BC, the first senior director of Nursing Excellence & Resource Management.



Collaborative governance: Giving nurses a voice

For nurses who want to have a voice in patient care and nursing practice, collaborative governance councils are open to all nursing associates. Councils and committees at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital include:

- Nursing Practice Council
- Nursing Professional Development Council
- Nursing Quality & Safety Council
- Nursing Evidenced Based Practice & Research Council
- Nursing Informatics Council
- Nursing Patient & Family Education Council
- NICHE Committee
- Falls/Safe Patient Handling Champion Committee
- Skin Champion Committee
- Pain Champion Committee
- Workplace Violence Committee
- Equity, Inclusion & Diversity Council
- Magnet® Steering Committee

In FY23/24, council and committee members were hard at work on projects that have improved patient care, safety, and quality outcomes. Pilot programs, research, and new initiatives that have been adopted in clinical settings over the past 18 months have included the insertion of coude catheters, the introduction of the purple diamond huddles for patients at risk for behavioral issues, domestic violence workflow updates, the Remote Visual Monitoring pilot, the implementation of SBIRT Screening in the ED for pediatric patients, the planning and execution of the annual MedStar St. Mary's Nurse's Week activities, the standardization of patient allergy identification and labeling, and much more.

"Nurses at every level are encouraged to take an active role in shaping their practice, whether it's through involvement in hospital-wide or unit-based councils, research, or evidence-based practice projects," stated **Amanda Dyson, MSN, RN, PCCN-K, CENP**, director of nursing (Nursing Practice Innovation) and Magnet® Program director. "Collaborative governance not only fosters professional growth but enables nurses to contribute and lead."

New nursing professional development programs enhance nursing practice

"The hospital's Nursing Professional Development (NPD) team, which was fully staffed in FY24, has been hard at work advancing nursing practice, supporting nurses' continuous growth, and providing resources and training to help nurses excel," said **Jeanne Hill, MSN, RN, CNE, RNC-OB, C-EFM**, director of nursing (Nursing Professional Development).

In FY24, the NPD team implemented a new orientation method, the Tiered Skills Acquisition Model, designed to boost confidence and competence in new nurses. By the end of this past fiscal year, most units had adopted this approach, strengthening the skill set of incoming associates.

The NPD team also launched the EDGE program, a residency specifically for new Emergency Department nurses, and Periop101, tailored to new nurses in perioperative areas, providing specialty focused, practical training. Overall, 110 nurses were onboarded throughout FY24, highlighting the team's role in helping nurses develop and thrive.

"Magnet® hospitals often emphasize continuous education for nurses, providing access to various training programs, workshops, and further education opportunities. This focus helps nurses stay current with best practices and advancements in the field," added Jeanne.



Members of the Nursing Professional Development Team

From left: **Staci Day, MA; Anna Simons, MSN, RN, FNE-A/P, CNL, CCRN; Kristie Dutrow, BSN, RN; Susan Bricker, BSN, RN; Jeanne Hill, MSN, RN, CNE, RNC-OB, C-EFM; Colleen Kinney, MSN, RN, IBCLC, RNC-OB, C-EFM; Dawn Leukhardt, MSN, RN, CNE; and Hollie Ridgell, BSN, RNFA, CNOR.**

Nursing statistics

Registered nurses: 427
Nursing residents: 52
Nursing resident projects: 9

CAP nurses: 10
Nurse techs: 150



Nursing degrees at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital*

Master's degrees: 126
Bachelor's degrees: 249
Associates degrees: 133

DNP: 19
Diploma: 3



Nationally Certified Nurses: 234*

*Includes MedStar St. Mary's Hospital-employed RNs and MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Medical Staff credentialed advance practice nurses (APRN)



Scholarship support:

Grant-funded nursing tuition support: \$150,423

Philanthropy Committee scholarships: \$64,117

Hospital associate scholarships: \$22,917



Clinical placements for nursing students:

ADN: 267
BSN: 11
MSN: 5
NP: 4

CRNA: 11
Midwives: 3
First Assist: 3

Dr. James Forrest Tech Center students: 225
Kings Christian Academy students (CNA): 3



Nurse sensitive indicators

Colors reflect hospital performance against national quarterly goals for top quartile performance for January 2023 to June 2024.

	Q3 FY23	Q4 FY23	Q1 FY24	Q2 FY24	Q3 FY24	Q4 FY24
Ambulatory Surgery: Facility/Personal Treatment (Goal >97.14%)	98.14%	96.43%	98.28%	96.52%	98.33%	97.89%
Emergency Department: Stroke –Time to Intravenous Thrombolytic Therapy (>Goal 85%)	75.00%	90.00%	85.71%	66.66%	90%	100%
Hospice Team Communication (Goal >86.75%)	84.99%	86.17%	89.52%	87.05%	92.55%	89.23%
Inpatient: Communication with Nurses (Goal >78.68%)	81.12%	78.68%	78.10%	76.75%	75.42%	86.17%
MGCI: Likelihood of Recommending (Goal >92.96%)	91.30%	95.12%	90.63%	93.48%	100%	94.55%
Inpatient Falls with Injury (Goal 2.31)*	3.03	3.07	2.94	3.07	2.19	3.82
ED Falls (Goal <0.43)*	0.10	0.39	0.29	0.09	0.87	0.46
Outpatient Falls (Goal <0.13)*	0.09	0.05	0.31	0.19	0.12	0.18
Hospital Acquired Pressure Injury (HAPI) (Goal <0.88)*	1.51	0.51	0.93	1.35	0.61	0.59
Hospital Acquired Pressure Injury (HAPI)-Advanced (Goal <0.62)*	0.88	0.26	0.27	0.49	0.12	0.15
Physical Restraint Events-Acute Care (Goal <0.83)	0.61	0.55	0.46	0.68	0.75	0.62
Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infection (CLABSI) (Goal <0.83)	0.00	0.00	1.64	0.00	0.00	0.00
Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract (CAUTI) Infection (Goal <0.66)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

*Rate per 1,000 Days

Exemplary professional practice

Direct care nurses are involved in shared decision-making groups. Direct care nurses from all levels can contribute to standards of practice and other issues. Nurses are encouraged to participate in local, national, or international professional organizations. Nurses are provided with educational opportunities, such as tuition reimbursement, preceptor training, certification preparation, and the Clinical Advancement program.

Hospice achieves level 2 in We Honor Veterans program

As a proud partner of We Honor Veterans, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Hospice of St. Mary's provides specialized care to veterans facing terminal illness. Services include coordinating a veteran-to-veteran volunteer program, training staff on medical and mental health concerns specific to military service, and ensuring up-to-date knowledge to assist veterans in navigating VA benefits such as burial assistance, healthcare, and survivor benefits. Upon admission, every veteran receives a thorough review of their military history to help staff tailor their care and the patients are offered a We Honor Veterans ceremony, during which active-duty and retired veteran volunteers give a final salute and express gratitude for their service.

In FY23/24, Hospice of St. Mary's achieved level 2 of 5 levels in the program, building organizational capacity to provide quality care to veterans. As part of level 2, Hospice participated in several community activities including the Veterans Resource Fair and the Annual Veterans Day Parade in Leonardtown, and coordinated end-of-life care for veterans at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.

Kara Rawlings, MBA, BSN, RN, CM/DN, director, Hospice of St. Mary's, proudly noted that the organization is currently looking to get to level 3 in the We Honor Veterans program. During the past year, Hospice of St. Mary's had 17 veteran volunteers, served 60 local veterans, and conducted 20 final salute ceremonies.

During 2023, Hospice of St. Mary's:



"The hospice staff feels it is a privilege to care for and honor the men and women who have served in the military," emphasized Kara.

Advocating for victims of domestic and sexual violence

Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault have a protected environment to receive care and advocacy at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, thanks to the dedicated efforts of nurses involved in these programs.

In FY23 and FY24, these initiatives have expanded to better support the community. New forms have been introduced to assess lethality risks in domestic violence cases, and the enhanced documentation process can be utilized as evidence in legal proceedings. By strengthening existing partnerships with local law enforcement and social service agencies, MedStar St. Mary's ensures every patient receiving care in these programs benefits from the interventions.

The SAFE team has expanded significantly since 2019, growing from two nurses to a current total of 14, including five dual-licensed professionals qualified to care for both adult and pediatric patients. As a result, the number of patients served has risen by over 15% in the past year.

"MedStar St. Mary's Hospital is committed to providing exceptional domestic violence and forensic nursing services to the survivors of violence in our community. Our SAFE program nurses are knowledgeable and compassionate individuals who are strong patient advocates," said **Dara Arnold, BSN, RN, FNE-A/P**, assistant director of nursing (Emergency Department), FNE program coordinator.

The SAFE Team, from left, Dara Arnold, BSN, RN, FNE-A/P, forensic nurse examiner program coordinator and assistant director of nursing (Emergency Department); Ashleigh Byers, RN, CM-DN, FNE-A, CPRC-ER; Lauren Proctor, BSN, RN, FNE-A; Anna Simons, MSN, RN, FNE-A/P, CCRN, CNL; Julie Marcos, BSN, RN, BS, C-EFM, RNC-OB, FNE-A; and Charlene English, BSN, RN, FNE-A/P.

Addressing food insecurity among patients

When access to nutrition is limited, a person's health may be severely impacted. For individuals facing food insecurity, the food pantry at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital offers all patients, including those in the emergency department, access to essential staples, tiding them over until they can visit a community-



Jessica Roberts, MSN, RN, PCCN, director of Case Management, displays items available from the food pantry which are available to patients identified as facing food insecurities.

based food pantry for additional assistance. The hospital's case managers, social workers, and community health advocates identify patients who would benefit from this service, ensuring food access aligns with dietary needs and sharing information about community resources for continued support.

"By identifying patients with social determinants of health-related food insecurity, we can ensure access to food is not a worry and help meet people's needs beyond medical care," said **Jessica Roberts, MSN, RN, PCCN**, director of Case Management.

"The pantry, which is stocked through twice-yearly food drives, provides non-perishable, nutritious, and easy-to-serve items. The drives are one of the community involvement projects that proactively address health and wellness needs in the community," added **Mary B. Cheseldine, EI&D** Community Involvement Chair.



Addressing social barriers to health care throughout the community

When faced with financial burdens such as housing, transportation, or feeding their families, many individuals struggle to prioritize their health.

The social determinants of health (SDOH) program at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital addresses these challenges through a program designed to identify and support patients facing social challenges that impact their health. Upon hospital admission, patients are assessed through a series of screening questions and later with an acute care case manager assessment.

The program includes follow-up calls after discharge to connect patients to essential services. Working together the hospital's Nurse Care Coordinators and Community Health Advocates help patients arrange transportation to follow-up medical appointments and, when necessary, provide home visits to assist with applications if they lack access to technology or are unable to read or write.

"By identifying patients with social barriers such as transportation issues, food insecurity, or housing instability immediately upon admission to the hospital, we're bridging the gaps to help achieve better health outcomes for individuals in our community," explained **Jessica Boothe, BSN, RN, CCM, ACM-RN**, outpatient care coordinator.

TSAM method increases confidence, satisfaction among nurses

The Tiered Skills Acquisition Model (TSAM) is an orientation method that helps nurses build competencies by advancing through structured skill tiers, from basic nursing practice to complex clinical tasks. The goals of a TSAM program include improved orientee competency, satisfaction, and confidence, as well as increased preceptor satisfaction, decreased orientation time, and increased nurse retention.

The TSAM pilot at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital began with four new-to-practice nurses in the Intensive Care Center in late 2022 and expanded to Telemetry and Intermediate Care units in January 2023. Collaboration among Nursing Professional Development (NPD), leadership, preceptors, and frontline staff facilitated a hospital-wide implementation.

Susan Bricker, MSN, RN, Nursing Professional Development specialist, said that the learner-specific TSAM model has shown significant reductions in orientation time, and nurses reported above-benchmark levels of support, prioritization skills, communication, leadership, professional satisfaction, and feeling a sense of ownership and belonging.

"The implementation of the TSAM orientation strategy exemplifies the dedication and interdisciplinary collaboration essential to implementing and upholding evidence-based practice. Driving patient outcomes indirectly through supporting and investing in our nursing workforce is both Magnet®-forward and what we strive to do as nurse educators," stated Susan.

Empirical outcomes

Empirical outcomes demonstrate solutions to numerous problems in healthcare systems. The data highlights our role as pioneers of the future, focusing on clinical outcomes related to nursing, workforce outcomes, patient and consumer outcomes, and organizational outcomes.



Nurses, from left, Hannah Tucker, RN; Devin Harris, RN; Virginia Allen-Anderson, RN; and Deyonna Harris, BSN, RN display the contents of the Fall Kit, which greatly reduced the amount of time it took to mobilize and transfer patients to Imaging following a fall.

New kit reduces response time after a patient fall

When a patient falls in the hospital, time is of the essence. The introduction of the Fall Kit on the Medical/Surgical/Pediatric (MSP) unit in FY23/24 significantly improved the response time when a patient experienced a fall. The kit was developed as an evidence-based nurse residency research project by **Hannah Tucker, RN, Deyonna Harris, RN, Virginia Allen-Anderson, RN, and Devin Harris, RN.** Before its implementation, it could take up to 50 minutes for staff to locate critical supplies such as cervical collars and backboards.

“Once the kit was implemented, the next fall took less than five minutes for the patient to be mobilized and transferred to diagnostic imaging,” noted **Anita Wetzel, BSN, RN,** interim director of nursing (Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics).

The Fall Kit includes a yellow backboard and a backpack stocked with a cervical collar, yellow non-slip socks in multiple sizes, ace wraps, gauze, backboard straps, bandages, tape, a blood pressure cuff, a gait belt, fall-risk wristbands, and a reposition sheet for use with lifting devices. As a result, nurses can now respond quickly and efficiently to a patient fall, enhancing safety.

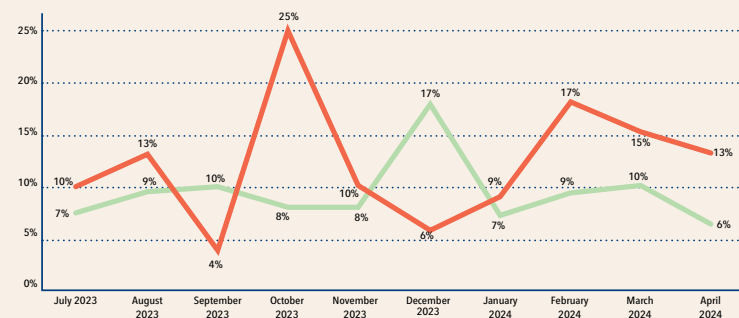
Preventing readmissions through care coordination

At MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, reducing patient readmissions continues to be a top priority. The hospital's transitional care program and its team of registered nurse care coordinators help patients with complex medical needs transition from the hospital to home by providing post-discharge support, including arranging follow-ups, offering medical guidance, and ensuring patients know how to manage their conditions at home to prevent hospital returns.

Readmission rates are closely monitored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, making these efforts significant. In FY23/24, the team focused on tracking data to identify high-risk patients based on specific diagnoses and demographics and tailor interventions and follow-up based on the individualized needs of the patients. Data showed that patients enrolled in the transitional care program had lower readmission rates overall from July 2023 to April 2024.

“Nurse care coordinators have become increasingly valuable for the management of medically complex patients who require more extensive support to keep them out of the hospital and impact positive long-term health outcomes,” said **Jessica Boothe, BSN, RN, CCM, ACM-RN,** outpatient care coordinator.

Internal readmission rates for enrolled and not enrolled patients



–Enrolled patients
–Not enrolled patients



Tackling workplace violence takes a team. Associates from Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics and Telemetry use the Purple Diamond door magnets to alert staff walking into the room of a potentially violent patient.

Masada roving training addresses workplace violence prevention and preparedness

The Workplace Violence Program (WVP) committee at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital has introduced several key initiatives since its inception in 2019, focusing on enhancing safety for staff and patients. In response to an increase in injuries and lost workdays in FY23, the WVP committee rolled out the Masada roving training program, providing an important refresher on the full Masada program that includes two courses: a 4-hour session on verbal de-escalation and an 8-hour course that includes hands-on self-defense, body positioning, and verbal skills. All nurses complete the four-hour course, while those in high-risk areas such as Behavioral Health, the Emergency Department, and Hospice, undergo the eight-hour training.

Rob Elrod, BSN, RN, director of Behavioral Health and Workplace Violence Chair, said the roving training allowed trainers to review real-life situations and provide education to nursing staff across the hospital. Additional program initiatives have also improved awareness of safety protocols, including the Purple Diamonds and Banner Bars initiatives, enhancing staff readiness for handling potential workplace violence.

Code Heart expands STEMI response to inpatient team



The Code Heart initiative was expanded to enhance comfort and increase knowledge among nurses in the inpatient setting, emphasizing the importance of timely care during STEMI (ST-elevated Myocardial Infarction) events when patients require immediate attention for cardiac care.

In December 2023, the Inpatient Code Heart Sprint Team was formed, bringing together the Emergency Department (ED) and Intensive Care Center (ICC) teams. Led by **Kim Stickney, PA,** from the ICC, and **Jim Damalouji, MD,** associate medical director, this initiative aimed to develop educational and simulation events related to Code Heart in collaboration with SiTEL. The event offered hands-on training for providers, nurses, patient care technicians, clinical administrators, and unit secretaries, focusing on their roles during inpatient Code Heart situations.

Nurses in the residency program further supported this initiative by developing unit-specific Code Heart algorithm boards to guide immediate responses by clinicians in their departments when a STEMI is identified.

“Educating the inpatient staff on Code Heart response increased the efficiency and quality of care for acute STEMI patients,” stated **Matthew Barrow, BSN, RN,** assistant director of nursing (ICC). “The collaboration between the ED and ICC teams has helped ensure these patients receive proper care and timely transfer for the best outcomes.”

Reducing maternal morbidity and mortality

With maternal morbidity and mortality on the rise nationally, especially in Black and Brown women in traditionally under served communities, the MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Severe Maternal Morbidity Disparity Reduction Action Team identified several areas in need of improvement on the local level. Spearheaded by **Anne Banfield, MD, FACOG,** Department of Obstetrics chair, and **Kathleen Sullivan, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM,** director of nursing (Women's Health & Family Birthing Center [WHFBC]), the team identified potential gaps in care after reviewing patient charts and recognizing maternal morbidity trends throughout FY23.

Action items identified for FY24 and beyond include:

- Development of a “Code Obstetrics (OB) Hemorrhage”
- Further development of the MedStar OB Hemorrhage protocols
- Simulation drills for OB Hemorrhage
- Updating the Postpartum hemorrhage SiTEL module
- Exploring Doula support at MedStar hospitals



From left: **Arika Parker, BSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM;** **Anne Banfield, MD, FACOG,** **Kathleen Sullivan, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM,** director of nursing (Women's Health & Family Birthing Center), and **Brielle Morgan, BSN, C-EFM** were among the members of the Severe Maternal Morbidity Disparity Reduction Action Team at MedStar St. Mary's.

In FY23, WHFBC nurses also received education on implicit bias specific to the OB population through the hospital's affiliation with MD Moms.

“Having these frank conversations with our nursing staff has made us all aware that Black maternal patients may enter our unit with a distrust of the medical community,” explained Kathleen. “These individuals have an increased risk of morbidity, and we need to listen to their concerns and embrace their needs. We are working toward being a part of the solution.”

New knowledge, innovation, and improvements

New knowledge, innovation, and improvements contribute to patient care, the organization, and nursing professional development.

The significance of nursing research

Nursing research is a crucial aspect of practice that impacts patient care, policies, and professional development. MedStar St. Mary's Hospital has many resources to support nurses' participation in all phases of the research process such as the local and system-level Nursing Research Council.

In March 2023, the findings from a retrospective analysis of risk factors for patient falls from 2019-2021 in the Emergency Department (ED), and inpatient settings were presented at the local fall champion committee and to a cohort of students at the College of Southern Maryland School of Nursing. The research showed that peak fall time for inpatients was between 4 and 8 p.m. and many falls were related to toileting activities. Falls in the ED were attributed more to males than females, with the majority occurring around 10 a.m.

The studies were completed by **Amanda Dyson, MSN, RN, PCCN-K, CENP**, director of nursing (Nursing Practice Innovation) and Magnet® Program director, and presented by **Cathy Kirk, MSN, RN, CCRN-K**, a clinical nurse in the Emergency Department.



"Nursing research provides a scientific basis to guide evidence-based practice, helping nurses to deliver the highest quality and safest patient care."

— **Amanda Dyson, RN, MSN, PCC-K, CENP**

"Virtual" nurses work alongside clinical staff for optimal patient care delivery

From delivery of care at the bedside to discharging patients home, nurses are constantly juggling responsibilities to ensure patients are well cared for and informed. Having a second pair of eyes and hands through the MedStar St. Mary's "Virtual Nursing" pilot, launched in May 2024, has been a welcome change on the Telemetry, Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics, and 3Central units.

Through the initiative, additional nursing staff collaborate with the patient's nurse, focusing on the admission process, providing patient education during their stay, and delivering discharge instructions. This frees up more time for bedside associates to deliver timely and quality clinical care.



Virtual nurses such as Natosha Vallandingham, RN, help free up more time for bedside staff to deliver clinical care.

While called the "Virtual Nursing" initiative, nursing staff involved in the program are currently on-site, noted **Lauren Burr, BSN, RN**, assistant director of nursing (Nursing Resources). "We will be moving toward remote associates working alongside bedside nurses in the future," she said.

Virtual or not, the program has been successful so far. Lauren added, "because of the collaboration between nurses and the division of responsibilities, our patient and nurse satisfaction scores have increased since the launch of this initiative."

Remote Virtual Monitoring helps prevent falls in high-risk patients

In May 2024, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital introduced a Remote Virtual Monitoring (RVM) pilot, also called telesitting. A nurse-driven protocol, RVM provides continuous, real-time observation of inpatients at high risk of falls by using a camera system in the patient room monitored remotely. The remote team can speak directly to the patient through the system, redirecting them as needed or contacting an inpatient nurse to intervene.

Patients are identified by nursing assessments, evaluations, and recommendations from the clinical team. RVM provides round-the-clock monitoring without the need for constant in-room staffing, offering an extra layer of safety.

This initiative aligns with MedStar Health's FY25 Presidential Goal of reducing inpatient falls with injuries. The pilot program was so successful that the hospital has rolled it out to several units including Telemetry, Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics (MSP), and 3Central.

"MedStar St. Mary's Hospital is leading the MedStar Health system in RVM utilization which reflects nursing's commitment to enhanced patient safety," said **Patty Hall, BSN, RN, DN/CM**, director of nursing (Nursing Resources).



Patty Hall, BSN, RN, DN/CM, director of nursing (Nursing Resources), left, sets up a remote Virtual Monitoring unit with the assistance of Kristi Cabbell, telehealth technology coordinator.

SBIRT screening supports pediatric patients in Emergency Department

Substance misuse in adolescents is a risky behavior often screened in the Emergency Department (ED). The SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) tool for patients may be started at age 12. Nurses at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital traditionally screened patients 18 and older at every visit to the ED.

In March 2023, **Catherine Kirk, MSN, RN, CCRN-K**, ED clinical nurse, saw an opportunity to better support adolescent and pediatric patients in the ED.

She presented research from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) on the screening of alcohol and substance misuse in adolescent and pediatric patients in the



Catherine Kirk, MSN, RN, CCRN-K

ED to the Nursing Practice Council, recommending the adoption of a new

practice. With the council's support, Catherine worked closely with **Amanda Dyson, MSN, RN, PCCN**, and **Steve Alvey, MSN, RN-BC**, to develop a policy that extended SBIRT screening to patients aged 12 to 17 at every ED visit. The new Pediatric SBIRT policy was approved and implemented in May 2023, and the team worked with **Danielle Joy, MS, RN, NRP**, to educate ED nurses about the change in practice.

The result

By screening younger patients, MedStar St. Mary's nurses can now provide education, community resources, and referrals to a peer recovery coach at a younger age, offering teens earlier intervention and a better chance to access valuable resources sooner.

SPIRIT winners, 2023

Jessica Boothe, BSN, RN, CCM, ACM-RN

Population & Community Health

Melissa Brady, RN, Case Management

Elizabeth Duncan, BSN, RN, CMSRN, Telemetry

Jenna Mattingly, BSN, RN, CCE, IBCLC, C-EFM

Women's Health & Family Birthing Center

Rachael Jones, BSN, RN, Women's Health & Family Birthing Center

Victoria Kidd, BSN, RN, Telemetry

Brandee Shotwell, CST III, SA-C, Perioperative Services

Rebecca Wood, MSN, RN, Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics

2024 (through June)

James Arvin, RN, Behavioral Health

Elizabeth Staufenberg, BSN, RN, Telemetry

MedStar Health Impact Award 2023

Polly Hansen, BSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM

Women's Health & Family Birthing Center

Maryland Organization of Nurse Leaders DAISY Nurse Leader of the Year 2023

Sydney Clement, BSN, RN, Intensive Care Center

DAISY Award Fall 2023

Dara Arnold, BSN, RN, FNE-A/P, Emergency Department

Patient Safety Awards FY24Q2

Kathleen Sullivan, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM; Polly Hansen, BSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM; Megan Dodge, BFA, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM; Sharon Dunn, MSN, RN, C-EFM; Victoria Canter, BSN, RN, C-EFM; Lindsay Stauffer, RN, C-EFM; and Ella Johnson, PCT; with Anne Banfield, MD; Zarine Broca, MBBS; and Laura Varney, PA

FY24Q4

Kim Raley, BSN, RN, Emergency Department

January 2023-June 2024 Awards and Designations

- American Heart Association Get with The Guidelines® Gold Plus Stroke Award
- Baby-Friendly USA Redesignation 2023-2028
- Healogics Wound Center of Distinction 2023; Robert A. Warriner, III, Clinical Excellence Award 2023; and President's Circle, 2023
- LeapFrog Patient Safety A Grade Spring 2024
- Magnet® Recognition May 2024

MedStar Institute for Quality and Safety's HeRO Awards

Melissa Brady, RN, Case Management

**Susan Bricker, MSN, RN,
Nursing Professional Development**

Nurse of the Year 2023

Erin Balderson, BSN, RN, Telemetry

2024

**Jessica Boothe, BSN, RN, CCM,
ACM-RN, Population &
Community Health**

Clinical Preceptor 2023

**Heather Barry, BSN, RN, CNE
Emergency Department**

2024

**Ruthlyn "Rudi" Adriani, BSN, RN,
Telemetry**

Cherry Blossom Awards 2023

Tikisha Hall, CNA, Perioperative Services

2024

**Sheneka Banks, CNA
MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute**



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