Taking Pride In Our Work

One of the strongest impressions I have gained of the employees at University Hospital during my time here has been the pride they take in their work. We are reminded each year of this commitment to UH when we honor employees who have dedicated 20, 30, 40 and even 45 years of their careers to the hospital. In this month’s issue, we highlight some of these outstanding employees, including the staff in Materials Management who are featured on this month’s cover and in the centerspread.

We have made a concerted effort to attract more mothers to give birth here and the hard work is paying off. Our nursery discharges for the budget year that ended June 30 beat their target as well as our performance during the prior year. We are a leader among New Jersey hospitals in limiting the number of C-sections as well as in our low infant mortality rate. And we remain committed to our mission as a Baby Friendly Hospital by helping new mothers master the art of breastfeeding and by following up with them after their discharge.

The ability of our employees to come together to achieve a common goal was never more evident than in August when units ranging from Palliative Care to the General Counsel’s Office helped a terminally ill cancer patient realize a 21-year dream by marrying his fiancée in the Intensive Care Unit. All the details were put in place, down to the cake, flowers and musical accompaniment.

These type of achievements are the result of employees who take pride in their jobs. As your President and CEO, I am proud to work alongside you every day in delivering the best care for our patients and providing meaningful service to our community.

With Kind Regards,

John N. Kastanis, MBA, FACHE
President and CEO

University Hospital

Putting Patients First

Each month we feature news from the chief experience office. This month we look at how patient safety impacts the patient experience.

Chief Experience Officer Joan Daughajie asked Connie Cowley, DNP, RN, CPHQ, NE-BC, Director of Patient Safety and Clinical Risk Management to present at her September monthly meeting on the relationship between patient safety and patient satisfaction. “As a hospital, we need to be able to provide care that is safe and meets or exceeds our patients’ expectations for service quality,” Daughajie said.

University Hospital has embarked on an aggressive campaign to achieve “zero harm” in providing patient care that entails culture change, open communication and systems improvements. For the patient, the goal is more than just assuring their personal safety, it is to instill a sense of confidence in them that bedside staff are able to respond to their problems.

“We’re solving systems issues to make things safer, which makes the staff feel more confident that they can solve problems for the patient,” said Cowley. “The patient sees a staff that feels safe in their work processes, that knows they can raise issues that will be heard and solved. That absolutely translates to the patient who feels safer, and experiences less harm.”

Working with Chief Medical Officer Dr. Lawrence Ramunno and other clinical leaders, Cowley is part of a broad-based effort to transform the safety culture at UH and how it impacts quality, staff satisfaction and patient experience. The initiative is focusing on systems, values, attitudes and behaviors that affect patient safety. The goal is to achieve “zero harm” from the care provided or not provided while a patient is in the hospital. The incidence of the infections, which has played prominently in UH’s low safety scores, has begun to decline.

New procedures and new products are being explored to further reduce the incidence of infections.

Key to the success of the “zero harm” campaign is the role of leadership in modeling behavior and eliminating a “blame culture,” Cowley said.

“In meetings, people will say, ‘Oh, I’ll take the hit for that.’ No, it’s not about that,” she said. “It’s an opportunity for us to learn what things we need to fix. When we know about what’s going on and what concerns people have, then we can address them.”

Daughajie said safety and satisfaction are linked because both are manifestations of an underlying hospital culture that is committed to patient wellness. “Hospital staff in that culture takes steps to meet or exceed patient expectations while communicating well, then that travels over to the patient experience,” Cowley said.

“That commitment is consistent, it’s not the flavor-of-the-week. We’re going to continuously look at it.”

One initiative — daily safety huddles — has already begun to yield results.

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Heart of UH Winners Honored

Three nurses and a patient scheduler became the latest quarterly winners of the Heart of UH Awards for outstanding employee performance. Marla Morris, RN, who was honored for providing outstanding patient care, recently passed after a battle with cancer and was represented by her husband.

Celenia Diaz, a patient scheduler, was recognized for outstanding service and support, and the outstanding TEAM award was presented to two RNs in the Wound Care Center, Diane De Peri and Bernadette Pecphinski.

Created earlier this year by the Human Resources Department, Heart of UH offers an online peer-to-peer platform to publicly acknowledge special achievements or milestones by employees. The program enables employees to nominate colleagues for outstanding patient care or service excellence. The TEAM award was included for departments or teams of employees.

“It is your energy, talent and hard work that have created outstanding ‘Moments of Truth’ for our patients, families and each other,” President & CEO John N. Kastanis, MBA, FACHE, said at the awards ceremony.

“It’s about being there for the patient and jumping in when the team needs help in spite of your personal struggles, staying after hours to ensure a patient’s procedure isn’t delayed despite the inclement weather, spearheading the successful design and implementation of a new decision-support system, taking the initiative to create OB/GYN scheduling guidelines, or serving as exemplary role models by providing the best possible learning environment for our student nurses, one of our primary missions,” he said. “These are just some of the examples of outstanding performance for this quarter.”

Marla Morris was nominated by two co-workers in the OB/GYN Department, Karol Meindl, an ACT, and Velislue Covington, an MOA. Meindl said Morris took on many responsibilities to keep the clinic moving, including helping out with tasks for ACTs when they became busy.

“Marla was always willing to help out no matter how much she had on her plate and what she was going through,” Meindl said. “If a patient needed help, she would always stop, listen and go out of her way to help them.”

Venus Winn, a supervisor in Central Access, nominated Diaz for her role in facilitating the development of OB/Gyn scheduling guidelines. The task was not her responsibility, but Diaz saw the need to have documentation to insure consistency and accuracy.

“Celenia is a pleasant, empathetic and industrious person,” Winn said. “She is a team player who will constantly advocate for her patients, especially those who are afflicted with serious conditions such as cancer.”

A Rutgers School of Nursing student, Catherine Koosm, nominated the two Wound Care Center nurses for the TEAM award.

Partners in Health: UH and Newark Public Schools

University Hospital and the Newark Public Schools (NPS) have launched a long-term partnership to address the health of students and their families that will include medical screenings, health education, workshops, smoking cessation classes, and insurance enrollment.

The new venture kicked off at an event in late August at the Rafael Hernandez School with Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, Newark Public Schools Superintendent Roger León and officials from UH.

“We believe our duty as healthcare providers extends beyond the walls of the hospital and necessitates a greater presence in the Newark community,” said UH President & CEO John N. Kastanis, MBA, FACHE. “Ensuring the health and safety of Newark’s students will help to develop a culture of health in the city.”

During the August event, school nurses and security personnel began receiving training in emergency bleeding control from UH staff. The training program, part of a national initiative known as “Stop the Bleed,” will eventually prepare nearly 5,000 bleeding control kits that will be distributed to each of Newark’s 66 public schools.

The bleeding control kits contain tourniquets, pressure dressing, hemostatic agents, chest shields, gloves, and scissors, and can treat up to four patients each, depending on the severity of the wounds.

The Stop the Bleed campaign is funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the New Jersey Department of Health. Stop the Bleed is designed to equip bystanders with the skills needed to assist wounded individuals in the critical period before medical help arrives. According to research conducted by the National Health Service in the United Kingdom, around 40 percent of trauma-related deaths result from uncontrolled bleeding and hemorrhaging as victims await medical attention.

Baraka and León addressed the importance of the new partnership at the event.

“Schools are much more than just places of learning because they serve as community hubs where teachers and families can work together to create a better environment for our children,” León said. “Partnering with University Hospital to expand health education and access to medical services is not only good for the 55,000+ students attending Newark’s schools - it’s good for Newark as a whole.”

Baraka said, “Good health, wellness, and public safety require that health care providers form meaningful, long-lasting relationships with the communities they serve. The new partnership between University Hospital and Newark Public Schools is a step in the right direction.”
D
own a series of winding corridors on A-Level, a warren of warehouses, storage units and “clean rooms” hum with activity around the clock keeping University Hospital fully stocked in medical and surgical supplies. This is the province of Materials Management, a 40-member team that delivers everything from crash carts to the mail.

“It’s not just a warehouse,” said Hany Attia, Director, Supply Chain Management. “It’s a lot of moving parts that people don’t see,” said Quiamah Hanson, Operations Manager.

Attia, Hanson and Doug Dennis, Executive Director of Supply Chain Management, oversee the operation which has undergone a significant transformation in recent years. During October 7-13, the team will celebrate National Health Care Supply Chain Week, an initiative of the American Hospital Association.

“If you ask anyone, we had a reputation years ago as unreliable, unresponsive, and with weak customer service,” said Attia. “Now we focus on customer service. It’s not for the clinicians alone, it’s for the patients because at the end of the day, if the product is not available, we impact the patient more than we impact anyone else.”

“We have new staff, a new feeling of teamwork. The camaraderie, the team spirit is there. We like to have a good time, we like to laugh. We didn’t really have that before.”

The Materials Management team negotiates pricing, manages inventory control and maintains vendor relationships. “Getting the product from the warehouse up to the units is actually the easy part; everything else can be a fight,” said Attia. “We have been concentrating on standardization and cost savings over the last five years,” he said. “We’ve saved hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past few years by standardizing and eliminating waste, eliminating dead stock and products that have not been used in the hospital and people continued to order. We put a stop to that.”

Attia and Hanson said Materials Management has experienced an influx of new female employees in recent years which has facilitated the focus on customer service. “We went from a department that was mostly dominated by males to where we are probably more female-dominated at this point,” said Hanson.

Through standardization, Materials Management has narrowed its list of vendors in order to improve the hospital’s bargaining power. “If you standardize and shift market share from one vendor to another, you’ll have the product you want on the shelf at a better price which is less cost for your department,” Attia said.

Clinicians were initially hesitant about the shift to standardization, but became more comfortable upon seeing cost savings with no drop in quality. “It has to be a partnership,” Hanson said. “They’re clinical and we’re financial.”

We have new staff, a new feeling of teamwork. The camaraderie, the team spirit is there.

—Quiamah Hanson
Teresa Brown and Vincent Scott met 22 years ago in Newark’s Ironbound section through a mutual friend, launching a romance that culminated with an improbable marriage ceremony in a University Hospital intensive care unit where Scott was being treated for advanced cancer.

Over a 24-hour span, the UH MICU department, Chaplain, General Counsel, Patient Relations Office, Food & Nutrition Services, and Palliative Care Unit pulled together a wedding ceremony, arranged an emergency court hearing to obtain a marriage certificate, and called in members of the community clergy to perform the ceremony. Rutgers NJMS University Hospital intensive care unit where Brown and Scott were determined to get it done. I said, ‘I married for years, then some setback would come along, now I want to marry before that happens.’”

At 6 pm, Kurczynski then contacted UH General Counsel Paul Matyé who spoke with the couple and the patient’s attending physician, Dr. Alfred A. Lardizabal, and then set his legal team to work obtaining a marriage license from the Newark City Clerk’s Office. Because New Jersey law requires a 72-hour waiting period between the application and granting of a marriage license, a waiver was required from the municipal court.

The next morning, the hearing was conducted and the waiver granted on the local municipal court.

The couple were asked what drew them to each other: "Everything, she makes me smile,” Scott said. “She’s everything my mother was.” Brown said, “He’s like the air that I breathe. I want nobody else.”

For Bernstein, the NJMS student, the event will be remembered as a high point for his time at NJMS and University Hospital.

“I think it was one of the most important things I have been able to help out with during my four years here—far more than all the medications, procedures, or other daily activities that fill a hospital’s walls,” he said.

The Vocal Chords, to provide their services. Berenson and the Vocal Chords—vocalist Jessica Ti and pianist Hoa Pham, assisted by Maxine Chan and Travis Mok—are part of The Healthcare Foundation Center for Humanism and Medicine at NJMS.

The marriage license arrived from Newark City Hall and after 4 pm the bed side ceremony was conducted by the Reverend Dr. Willie L. Moody, Jr., of The House of God in Matawan, assisted by community clergy members Chaplain Dawn Bowles of the First Baptist Church of South Orange, and Pastor Warren White of Refuge Apostolic Church in Newark.

 Ars Hurricane Florence swept ashore through the Carolinas, Emergency Management Coordinator Michael Feravolo conducted a month-long awareness campaign during September to help UH employees prepare themselves and their families for emergencies and their aftermath.

“As we have been reminded by Hurricane Florence, disasters can have a profound impact on our normal way of life,” Feravolo said. “Locally, we recall the snowstorms of 2018 and Superstorm Sandy in 2012. It is important for you and your family to have a plan, make a kit and be prepared.”

University Hospital Emergency Management encourages all hospital staff to create an individual or family disaster plan in order to be prepared during and immediately after a disaster or significant weather event. A regional hospital survey showed that employees want to ensure the safety of their loved ones before they fully commit to their work responsibilities.

Research by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) found that 40 percent of respondents had no disaster plan for their household, and that 60 percent were unaware of their insurance policy.

Everyone prepare themselves and their household—including children and people with disabilities, others with access and functional needs, and outside caregivers—know how to reach each other and where to meet up in an emergency.

Families also should become acquainted with their neighbors for assistance and coordination in the event of an emergency.

Practicing home safety drills can be valuable, particularly for younger children. Families should prepare for emergencies by developing their own emergency plan. This includes creating and creating and sharing a paper copy of contact information for family members and important contacts, such as medical facilities, doctors, schools, or service providers.

“Planning in advance will help ensure that all the members of your household—including children and people with disabilities, others with access and functional needs, and outside caregivers—know how to reach each other and where to meet up in an emergency.

The current paper-based systems will be replaced with online programs. We will update you further in the next issue of @University Hospital.

SOUNDING THE ALARM ON SEPSIS

What is the Number 1 cause of death in hospitals and the leading cause for readmissions? The answer is sepsis, a response to infection so overwhelming it can lead to tissue damage, organ failure and death.

This and other useful information was provided to UH employees and visitors during a cafeteria presentation on September 13, Sepsis Awareness Day.

Every year, sepsis causes 8 million deaths around the world, including 258,000 in the United States. More than 18 children a day die of sepsis, over 90 percent of the cases originate in the community from a playground scrape that gets infected, the flu or some other cause.

An employee member is in the works that will simplify how you report attendance, request time off and perform scheduling. The new system is scheduled to go live in February 2019.

The current paper-based systems will be replaced with online programs. We will update you further in the next issue of @University Hospital.
University Hospital celebrated World Breastfeeding Week in August with a series of community engagement events to inform mothers, families, and community health organizations on how breastfeeding provides the best foundation of lifelong health for babies and mothers. An annual celebration coordinated by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), the theme for 2018 was “Breastfeeding: Foundation of Life.”

Designated as a Baby Friendly Hospital, University Hospital is committed to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding.

The celebration kicked off with an interactive workshop about Cross-Cultural Babywearing, a traditional practice that fosters parent-baby bonding. Babies cry less and the practice promotes the physical and emotional development of babies. Several mothers and fathers shared their personal experiences with babywearing and offered tips from their home countries. Baby wraps were also given to each of the participants.

At Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, UH Lactation Consultant Danielle Tropea explained to a group of pregnant and new mothers what the Baby-Friendly Hospital designation means for patients. UH Mother Baby Unit nurse Charity Onyechi, two mothers, and an area lactation consultant discussed how to overcome breastfeeding challenges while in the hospital.

A Breastfeeding Information Table session was held in the cafeteria where staff members, patients, and visitors were provided breastfeeding information.

The celebrations culminated with a Breastfeeding Health Fair and Luncheon in the reception area of the Obstetrics Department. Community partners included the Leaguers Inc., Chocolate Milk Cafe, Rutgers NJMS WIC Program, and KinderSmile. Mothers and their families learned about services and resources available to them, such as Head Start, home visiting, and dental care for the insured, underinsured and uninsured patients.

President and Chief Executive Officer John N. Kastanis, MBA, FACHE, welcomed the participants and spoke about how the Baby Friendly initiative had increased the breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among our patient population.

Dr. Damali Campbell and Dr. Adaora Madubuko spoke about how breastfeeding helps decrease mortality for both babies and mothers. Mackieba Reyes, LPN, and Akossa Nitiamoah, RD, shared with the audience how the mother needs to eat to care for herself while breastfeeding.

Kailyn and Brandon Williams, the children of Dr. Lisa Gittens-Williams, performed a series of lullabies, including the famous Brahms’s Lullaby that is played throughout the hospital each time a baby is born. Many of the participants won gift baskets filled with special gifts for babies and parents, donated by UH staff. These included nursing scarfs, t-shirts for infants, fleece jackets for dads and grandparents, and breastfeeding shopping bags.
Yaminah Smith
Distribution Materials Handler

I like **Recovery**, they’re very friendly up there. Moe always lets me know their needs which makes our job easier.

Marian Gohar
Distribution Materials Handler

I like to visit **F-Yellow**. Evelyne always greets me, “How are you baby?” She’ll let me know what she needs.

Precious LaCosta, Distribution Materials Handler

**I-Yellow.** The nurse manager, LaVern Allen, is very hands on. She knows her inventory which makes our job easier.

Kerstin Israiel
Senior Materials Handler

**The Cancer Center.** I like helping people and because my mother passed away from cancer, this has special meaning for me. Diego in the infusion center is always very friendly.

Each issue, we save the last page for something that is of special interest. With the focus this month on Materials Management, we asked four team members where they most like to visit in the hospital as they make their daily rounds.