



**2023 NURSING
ANNUAL REPORT**

**UConn
HEALTH**



MESSAGES FROM NURSING LEADERSHIP



I am extremely grateful and proud to work with such an enormously talented and dedicated nursing staff at UConn Health. It is abundantly clear we are making a real difference in promoting health and well-being for our patients.

What has also become clear over these last several years is the importance of our health; that is, not only

our patients' health, but also our health – as their caregivers and as each other's colleagues.

As nurses, it's in our nature to put others' needs ahead of our own. This is why we continue to support our own well-being, because so many people rely on us for theirs.

Thanks to you, our nurses, nurse leaders, APRNs, and CRNAs, our patients experience the UConn Health difference in excellent, high-quality advanced academic medicine and personalized care across our health system. We have plenty

of accolades that reflect this, whether it's another A in patient safety from the Leapfrog Group, Best Hospital designations from Newsweek, or high marks from HealthGrades for patient experience.

But nursing is a calling, and the difference we make in people's lives is what's most meaningful and rewarding.

It is truly an honor to serve this amazing and growing institution. I'd like to thank all our nurses for your resiliency, teamwork, and commitment to ensuring our patients' health and safety above all else. Our nurses are a most integral part of UConn Health's continued success.

We hope everyone in Connecticut can experience the UConn Health difference and the care by our wonderful nurses. I applaud your outstanding work and your compassion for our patients.

Thank you for reading our 2023 Nursing Annual Report.

Sincerely,
Caryl Ryan, RN, MSN
Chief Nursing Officer, UConn Health
Chief Operating Officer, UConn John Dempsey Hospital



Our patients can count on the high-quality nursing skills and compassion of UConn Health nurses, and they can feel the UConn Health difference too. Our nurses put our patients first and it shows in our national honors for patient safety and patient experience.

Bruce T. Liang, MD
Former Interim CEO,
UConn Health
Dean of UConn School of Medicine



Our nurses are the pillar of our world-class care. Their dedication to our patients and clinical excellence is instrumental in the accolades we receive every year. We are extremely thankful to them for advancing the mission of superior clinical care, education, and research.

Scott Allen, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Assistant Dean for
Education

A TREMENDOUS YEAR OF GROWTH FOR NEW GRAD NURSES ON UT4

New beginnings are a mix of excitement and nerves. That was definitely the case for these newly graduated RNs hired in the UT4 unit in the summer of 2023. Originally positioned as an overflow unit, UT4 had transitioned during the pandemic into a med surg floor to accommodate the high patient census. Over the course of a few months, those aforementioned feelings morphed into something very different for these new nurses.

“Our team all have this really good mindset of wanting to help everyone,” says Rebecca Spinelli, BSN, RN, a new graduate. “Whether it’s a new grad or a nurse who’s been practicing for 15 years. We rely on each other. That teamwork has been really crucial to our success.”

Teamwork is crucial to the success of healthcare at large but even more so when nurses and other healthcare workers are given the opportunity to establish a new hospital unit. Rebecca Spinelli, Lauren Young, Emma Agli, and Mirlinda Rizvani were hired into UT4 together in the summer of 2023, and have been instrumental in establishing this new med/surg unit as one with a professional and supportive nursing culture. With the expert guidance and experienced nursing preceptors, as well as nurse manager Wendy Robinson and nurse educator Michelle Taylor-Davison, these new nurses have excelled in their practice and are eager to share about the teamwork they experience on a daily basis.

“You’re never alone on this floor,” says Lauren Young, BSN, RN. “I knew nursing was all about teamwork, but I didn’t expect this level of teamwork. I always feel supported and that everyone is always asking, probably at least once every hour, ‘Are you doing OK? Is there anything I can help you with?’ It’s just such a welcoming environment. It makes me want to go to work every day.”

When Emma Agli, BSN, RN, had her first patient pass away in April she felt as though every single person shared the load in some way, making it easier to maneuver through. “Mirlinda Rizvani actually helped with postmortem care. I had another nurse help me call the family. Another nurse to help me start filling out paperwork. It was honestly amazing,” she recalls. “The family was very kind and my preceptor, Clarenia Lawrence, told me exactly what to do, how to fill out the paperwork, what to say on the phone. I got a lot of advice and guidance.”

For Rizvani, there’s comfort in knowing help is always there if you need it. “There are days when I need help from my peers. They have shown me that when I ask for help they are there for me every time,” she says.

Like that time Rizvani and Spinelli had to call their first code strong and worked together to keep each other safe during an intense situation. “It was her patient, and it was something new for us and obviously our nerves came up because it’s all happening fast. So I ran to go get the restraints for her,” Rizvani recalls. “She was trying to calm the patient down and it was just such a big thing for us.”

Teamwork like that stays with you and molds you into the nurse you become, informing every situation after it. Their leaders, Michelle Taylor-Davison, MSN, RN, and Wendy Robinson, BSN, RN, were critical in helping them grow this year, offering enthusiastic support and an endless supply of knowledge whenever needed.

“Together they are just the sparkle of our unit,” says Spinelli. “Not only in our work but just being there to listen to us if we need to vent. I think that’s really important.”

Robinson noted that these new nurses faced unique challenges. “Our new grads had to come onto a brand new

unit with the majority of staff being new to UConn Health,” she explained. “These young women were flexible and understanding of the challenges of a new unit. They worked together and have been an integral part of creating the amazing team we have.”

“Their enthusiasm has been infectious,” added Taylor-Davison. “All of us had to work together, support each other, and build each other up.”

Assistant nurse manager Delva Brown, MSN, RN, was one of the few nurses working on the floor before, and she’s an essential resource to everyone in the UConn Health way of doing things. “She’s one of our go-to references. If you need to know anything, Delva is there. You can text her. You can call her. She has just been there consistently from day one for all of us,” Spinelli says.

Amy Zipf, RN, Ph.D., CMSRN, who leads the UConn Health New Grad RN Transition to Practice Program, a six-month nurse residency program that helped bridge these new nurses from school to practice, says that the program – which includes an average of 16 weeks of “hip-to-hip” preceptorship – prepared them in so many ways for their work on the floor.

“It’s a rigorous process that we bring them through, and it’s individualized. We really tailor it to the person because everybody is different,” she says, adding that it not only provided clinical skills but exposure to hospice and palliative care, case management, and more, including important practical tools like mindfulness taught by Elaine Cournean, APRN. “This is the best place to be a new grad. I think we do a good job of transitioning them, and we’re big enough that they get to see a lot and small enough that they don’t get lost.”

Extracurricular events have bonded this team as well, providing fun activities like hikes, bowling, and more as an



external outlet to patient care. “It’s nice to get together and meet in a different sense,” says Spinelli. “I think it’s really helping us grow as new graduates, to learn more about professionalism, and learn about the background aspect of hospitals instead of just learning directly at the bedside.”

Clearly, growth is a consistent theme, especially on the floor itself where the initial hospital-like feel is shifting thanks to the thoughtful work of Taylor-Davison and office assistants like Anna Sowinski, who added more personality to the unit by creating beautiful photo displays of staff pets.

“They are creating this sense of home and togetherness,” says Spinelli. “I could think of a hundred stories of teamwork. Every night someone helps you on the unit and you help someone. We’re there for each other.”

REINVIGORATED PERIOP 101 PROGRAM ADDRESSES THE OPERATING ROOM WORKFORCE CRISIS

Surgical volumes are on the rise nationally, and UConn Health is no exception. Critical staffing shortages in the operating room force hospitals to rely on contracted travel nurses. This crisis impacts UConn Health, where patients undergo the most complex and high-tech procedures in the state.

The first cohort of the restructured Periop 101 operating room nurse training kicked off in the fall, and at the helm of this reinvigorated program is Janice Hahn, MSN, RN, CNOR, CST, associate director of education for perioperative services. Hahn joined the hospital in March 2023 with the goal of training enough full-time nurses to reduce the need for costly travel nurses. UConn Health has introduced more than two dozen nurses and nursing students to the OR since she took on the role. “We have increased the number of Capstone nursing students and student interns that complete clinical experiences. Those who have completed these student experiences in the OR move along in their training more easily and quickly upon entry as new graduates,” says Hahn.

“The years of experience and talent of the periop leadership team is remarkable,” says Hahn, referring to the periop nursing leadership team of Karen Curley, MSN, BSN, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC, Ellen Benson, RN, BSN, CNOR, CST, and Meta Penwell, RN, CNOR, MBA, who work together to build and continuously improve upon the program. “It is only through strong leadership support and teamwork that a program of this nature can succeed.”

Designed to be a blended experience, Periop 101 involves classroom activities, hands-on training in a simulation operating room, preceptor based operating room experience, and the completion of the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses’ Periop 101 online course.

“We’re really fortunate to have formed a great partnership with our simulation team and make use of an old operating room that has been transitioned into a fully functioning operating room simulation lab,” Hahn explains. This provides a safe space to learn and practice those skills unique to the operating room.

In addition to the OR nursing crisis, there is an acute shortage of Surgical Technologists. “In order to address the need for scrub personnel and reduce the number of travel CSTs we contract, we will be training more of these new nurses in the scrub role than ever before,” Hahn adds. “These are exciting times for us at UConn Health and we look forward to building a stronger operating room workforce.”



2023 PROFESSIONAL & CLINICAL PRACTICE HONORS

Clinical Advancement – Promoted to CN3 Fall 2022

Laura Glynn – Surgery/Ortho 5
Julie Shea – Pulmonary Clinic
Lindsey Stefens – Oncology 6
Krista Thiele – Oncology 6

Spring 2023

Deborah Cowles – UMG IMA
Michelle Caprio – Intermediate Unit
Candace Maningas – Intermediate Unit
Kevin Thompson – Surgery/Ortho 5

Professional Certifications

Jill Alsgaard – Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP-BC) by the American Nurses Credentialing Center

Sarah Loschiavo – Advanced Certified Hospice & Palliative Nurse certification by the Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association

Sarah Abrams RN, CN2 – Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification (MEDSURG-BC) on February 2023

Mallory Edrich RN, CN2 – Seizure and Epilepsy Certification by American Board of Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN) on May 2022.

Deanna Greytak, RN, CMSRN – Certified Medical-Surgical RN on Oct. 1, 2022

Dayna Gambino, RN, CMSRN – Certified Medical-Surgical RN on Jan. 1, 2022

Kara Parker – Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN) by American Association of Critical Care Nurses

Sara Higley – Certified Ostomy Management Specialist (OMS) by the National Alliance of Wound Care and Ostomy (NAWCO) and Certified Ostomy Care Nurse (COCN) through the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board (WOCNCB)

Jordan Peterson – Wound Care Certified (WCC) by National Alliance of Wound Care and Ostomy (NAWCO) and certified Ostomy Management Specialist (OMS) by NAWCO

Domenic Roy – Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Certification (AGACNP-BC) by American Nurses Credentialing Center

Dawn Carroll – SAFE certification from the International Association of Forensic Nurses

Kathryn Medow – Advanced Certified Hospice & Palliative Nurse certification by the Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association

Tram Phan – Stroke Certified Registered Nurse SCRNP by The American Board of Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN)

GREATEST CATCH 2023: NURSE RECALLS CRITICAL ALLERGY DETAIL, SAVING PATIENT FROM SEVERE REACTION

The Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center infusion room is constantly teeming with patients, all of them receiving critical, life-saving care. On any given day, nurses like Jill Ligan, RN, can work with dozens of people undergoing treatments, receiving IV fluids, and more.

That's why it's quite miraculous that Ligan did what she did while covering another nurse's patient during lunch one day. The staff nurse stopped the line when that patient was about to receive carboplatin, a chemotherapy drug that she had a reaction to two years earlier. "I said, 'Let me just go check with the team and see,' so I went and checked with the nurse practitioner," Ligan remembers. "She looked it up and sure enough, she came back and was like, 'We need to discontinue this.'"

The treatment was discontinued on the spot and a potentially disastrous event was averted because Ligan recalled a crucial detail. "I work part-time, so luckily I was on that day," she says. "I'm so glad I remembered it."

Ligan received the Greatest Catch of the Year, an award designed to recognize UConn Health and UConn John Dempsey Hospital staffers who report a near-miss or safety situation that could have resulted in patient harm. Patient Safety and Quality Department staff review all Safety Intelligence (SI) reports submitted and identify the Good Catches. Each month, the Safety Coach CHAMP to Champions Committee vote and determine the Best Catch of the Month, and at the end of each year, they vote to select a Greatest Catch of the Year.

"Jill Ligan's use of the Safety CHAMP Tools, specifically: 'Practice and Accept a Questioning Attitude,'" highlights the fact that the small actions we take for granted and often think of as 'just a part of our job' can have an enormous impact on the care and safety of our patients," says quality assurance

specialist Christine Campbell, BSN, RN. "It is such an honor to be able to recognize Ligan for her commitment to patient safety here at UConn John Dempsey Hospital."

Ligan was surprised and overwhelmed by the accolades but most of all grateful she was able to protect her patient. "You need to put the pieces of the puzzle together as best you can," she says. "You can never be too careful."



2023 PROFESSIONAL & CLINICAL PRACTICE HONORS

Publications

Loschiavo, S., Holle, L., Elwell, J. Tannenbaum, S. (2022). Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating an Interprofessional Survivorship Model of Care in an Academic Cancer Center. *Journal of Oncology Navigation & Survivorship*, 13(12). <https://ampmed.site/j1222des>

Loschiavo, S. (2022). Chapter 10: Palliative Care in the Emergency Department. 2nd edition of *Advanced Practice Palliative Nursing* by Oxford University Press.

Research Poster Presentations

Loschiavo, S., Holle, L. "Assessment of Cancer Survivor Needs, Distress Levels and Patient Satisfaction Pre and Post Interprofessional Cancer Survivorship Clinic Visit: A Program Evaluation." Poster Presentation at the Northern New England Clinical Oncology Society: 2022 Annual Meeting & Palliative Care Symposium October 28-29, 2022 in Bretton Woods, NH.

Loschiavo, S., Holle, L., Elwell, J. Tannenbaum, S. "Designing, Implementing and Evaluating an Interprofessional Survivorship Model of Care in an Academic Cancer Center." UConn School of Nursing-School Selected DNP Poster presentation at the Eastern Nursing Research Society Conference March 31-April 1, 2022 in Providence, RI.

Carter, E., Schramm, C., Baron, K., Zolla, M., Zavez, K., Banach, D. "Perceived Usefulness of a Mnemonic to Improve Nurses' Evaluation of Reported Penicillin Allergies," has been accepted for publication in *Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiology*.

STROKE CENTER PROVIDES EXCELLENT CARE THROUGH MAJOR CHANGES

The UConn Health Primary Stroke Center continued to demonstrate state-of-the-art care for stroke patients in 2023 while navigating major changes and garnering important awards.

Kristen Bryant, MSN, RN, stepped in as the Stroke Center's Interim Clinical Program Coordinator and helped prepare for Primary Stroke Center recertification. The stroke team, along with nursing education and leadership, also collaborated on the transition of the 6th floor stroke unit to the 3rd floor medicine unit. This was a huge undertaking involving training and education in advance of a 2024 roll out.

"Stroke care is so specialized and can be very nuanced, so getting a good understanding of the care of the stroke patient is essential," says Bryant. "It's no small feat to be able to get all of this education done. They really did a great job."

Despite the changes, the Stroke Center continued to receive major recognitions, including the "Get With The Guidelines® — Stroke Gold Plus" designation from the American Heart Association for the seventh consecutive year. With that award came two distinctions: "Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite" and "Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll." The center also claimed the Best Hospitals Women Choice Award for Stroke Care, a high honor since patient satisfaction is always a goal.

New Clinical Program Coordinator Arlene Villahermosa-Labarda, MSN, RN, will spearhead 2024 goals like growing the program with continued community outreach but also internally by encouraging nurses to become stroke champions. "Moving the stroke unit to medicine 3 means we are continuing to grow together as a team," she says.



2023 PROFESSIONAL & CLINICAL PRACTICE HONORS

Conference and Poster Presenters

Babitha Mathew, international speaker at the 2023 Credence AHALIA conference in Abu Dhabi for nurses/hospital employees. Her presentation is "Compassion fatigue among health care workers."

Rachel Meehan, poster presenter, "Student Participation in a Purposeful Visitor Program: A Win-Win for Students and Hospitalized Elders" at the 2023 NICHE conference, highlighting innovations and research in the care of older adults.

Educational Advancement Doctoral Level Doctoral Level

Sarah Loschiavo - Doctor of Nursing Practice,
UConn School of Nursing, May, 2022

Masters Level

Marissa Mills-Burt RN to BSN Capella University,
December, 2022

Outstanding Undergraduate Student Mentoring Awards

Tammy Davino, APRN Acute Care - Adult Gerontology

Susan Solinsky, APRN Primary Care - Adult Gerontology

Angela Pianka, MS, APRN, FNP - UMG Ortho

Kara Parker, MS, RN - Nurse Educator JDH

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT BOARD WORKS TO UPDATE CLINICAL LADDERS SYSTEM

The purpose of the Professional Advancement Board is the promotion of nursing professionalism through supporting the core values of our Nursing Professional Practice Model: Empowerment, Collaboration, Inspiration and Excellence. Dawn Carroll is co-chair of this council, which is dedicated to the professional advancement of the nursing staff and is vested in the promotion of activities nurses identify as most valuable. This year the board was excited to welcome Erin Pietrowicz, RN, as co-chair.

This team continues to work with the Nursing Executive Board to make changes to the clinical ladder system and is in the final steps of updating the clinical ladders advancement packets for nursing by adding a secondary pathway for clinical advancement. This new pathway is expected to be ready for October 2024 applications.

The board has also combined resources with members from the Clinical Recognition Review Board and The Hospital's Professional Practice and Clinical Excellence Department to refresh the Clinical Advancement System (CAS) Manual in an effort to streamline, refresh, and update it.



By participating in the Professional Advancement Board, nurses have a voice in shared decision making between the bedside nurses and nurse leaders. The Advanced Practice Council meets the first Monday of every month, in person and virtual at 10 a.m. Email Dawn Carroll to join.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE BY THE NUMBERS



289 staff members
completed Advanced
Cardiovascular Life
Support (ACLS)
certification



29 staff members completed
Pediatric Advanced Life Support
(PALS) certification



291 staff members
completed Crisis Prevention
Institute (CPI) Training

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE BOARD SETS GOALS FOR SAFETY AND WORKFLOW

Improving workflow and promoting a safer practice environment are priorities of the Professional Governance Clinical Excellence Board, which is chaired by bedside nurses who actively participate in important decision-making processes. Kristin Henry, RN, and Stephanie Krusch, RN, took over as co-chairs of the board in 2023 and continued the work of accessing the availability of hospital supplies to ease workflows, follow best practices, and comply with regulatory requirements.

This year, the pharmacy department presented to the board on combating nationwide medicine shortages by updating best practices for things like Intravenous Piggyback. The board next will be charged with educating staff on new workflows, which is expected to go live in 2024. Building on the success of obtaining HoverMatts in 2022, former co-chair, clinical nurse specialist Kara Parker, MSN, RN, proposed the use of a new product called The Mat by Stryker. The single use cushioned mats – which are MRI, X-ray, and CT scan compatible – safely surround a patient being transported and require less exertion or lifting by staff. They are recycled by Stryker after use, too.

“There’s a huge emphasis on patient safety with a decrease in workplace injury and improvements for infection control,” Parker explains. This initiative is awaiting approval, but the board is hopeful to initiate a positive change by having these mats on hand on the units next year. That initiative is



a prime example of how the board’s work shapes the care experiences that our patients receive. Reach out to your unit manager and/or Kristin Henry and Stephanie Krusch about the opportunity to represent your unit at regular meetings by becoming a member of the Clinical Excellence Board. The Clinical Excellence Board meets the first Thursday of every month from 7:30-9:30 a.m.

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2023-2024

BSN - Prepared Nurse

Initiative: Previous goal was to continue to sustain or exceed our number of RNs with BSN or higher academic degrees in nursing for a new high of 92% in 2023-2024.

Current: We did not meet our 2022-2023 goal by attaining 92% of our RNs with a BSN or higher degree in nursing. Our number of RNs with BSN or higher academic degrees in nursing is 87%. Our partnership with the UConn School of Nursing is beneficial. It allows tuition benefits to our staff matriculated in a nursing program of study and brings us many UConn School of Nursing graduates applying for new RN positions.

Target: Sustain or exceed our number of RNs with BSN or higher academic degrees at 87% or higher in 2023-2024.

Patient Engagement

Initiative: Our goal for 2022-2023 was to continue to see our percentile ranking for “Nurses treat with courtesy and respect” (measure) exceed our end of 2022 top box percentile ranking of 72%.

Current: The 2023 top box score of 87% marks an increase from the 2022 top box score of 86% and a trending increase from the last few years, specific to the “Nurses treat with courtesy and respect” (survey question). Although greater than our goal of the 50th percentile, the percentile ranking decreased from a 2022 percentile ranking of 72 to 67.

Target: Continue to see increases in our top box scores for “Nurses treat with courtesy and respect” from 2023 and increase our percentile ranking greater than this year’s 67.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Top Box Score (PR)	Top Box Score (PR)	Top Box Score (PR)	Top Box Score (PR)	Top Box Score (PR)
Communication w/ Nurses Domain Performance	79 (22)	78 (25)	78 (44)	79 (65)	81(77)
Nurses treat with courtesy/respect	86 (43)	86 (45)	85 (44)	87 (72)	88 (67)
Nurses listen carefully to you	76 (21)	74 (22)	75 (38)	75 (60)	79(77)
Nurses expl in way you understand	75 (27)	73 (9)	74 (56)	75 (64)	77(61)

Data retrieved
from Press Ganey
06/13/2024

Professional Governance

Initiative: The 2022-2023 goal was to work on innovative measures to allow staff off their units to attend meetings. Continue recruitment open houses to attract new members. Assure that all unit-based councils are active and meeting.

Current: Unit based councils have been implemented. Most are active. The Unit Based Council Chair’s Board has begun meeting. Our Clinical Excellence and Professional Advancement Boards are continuing to meet regularly and are open to new membership. Ability of our RN staff to be available to attend meetings has been challenging especially with our frequent high inpatient census.

Target: Continue to work on innovative measures to allow staff off their units to attend meetings. Continue recruitment open houses to attract new members to the boards. Collaborate with nurse managers to assure that all unit-based councils are active and meeting.

WOUND AND OSTOMY CARE: DESPITE PATIENT INCREASE, HAPIs STILL BELOW NATIONAL AVERAGE

UConn Health's wound care RNs provide formal wound and ostomy consults – with an average of 156 wound care consults, 17 ostomy consults, and 247 total patient visits per month in 2023 – to meet the needs of a consistently rising inpatient population. This is a 14 percent increase in total patient visits in comparison to 2022 averages.

Our wound care staff is comprised of certified wound and ostomy nurses Tanya Paradis, MSN, RN, CWOCN, Sarah Higley, BSN, RN, WCC, OMS, COCN, Jordan Peterson, BSN, RN, WCC, OMS, DWC, CWON, and Kazuha Steele, BSN, RN, CWON.

In addition to providing consults, the team is responsible for implementing measures for hospital acquired pressure injury prevention and ongoing staff education (both formal and informal at the bedside). Thanks to their important work, the number of hospital acquired pressure injuries (HAPIs) at UConn Health has remained consistently below the national average. Quarterly NDNQI skin prevalence rounds were conducted throughout the year (with UT4 now a recognized inpatient unit) and HAPI prevalence rates were 0-0.67 percent for the entire year.

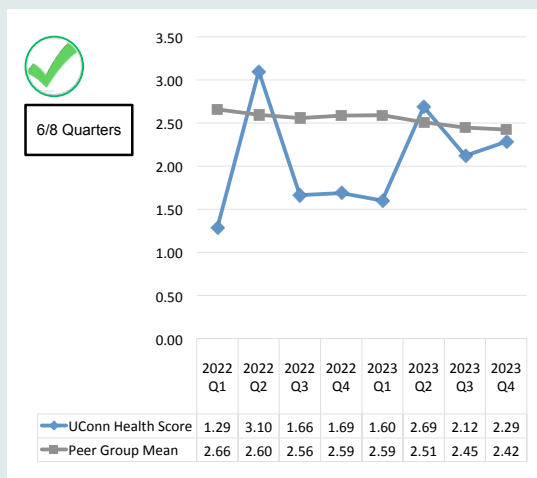
New employee orientation has also been updated to include current wound care practices, products, literature and JDH Nursing Practice Manual policies. Our team continues to work with the products committee to ensure appropriate products are in use regarding skin health and pressure injury prevention, as this is a top priority for patient safety and quality of care.



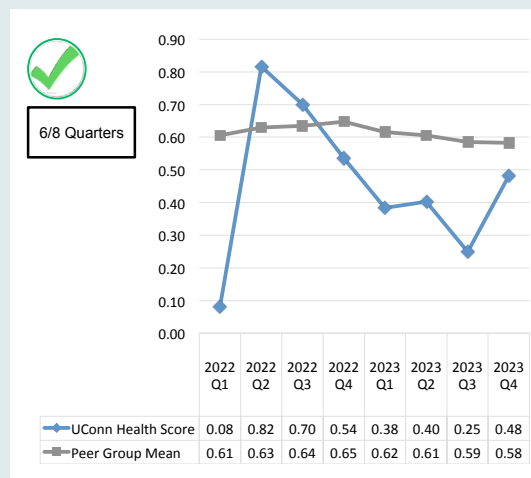
NDNQI MAGNET PROGRESS REPORT:

TOTAL ALL JDH REPORTING UNITS Q1 2022 – Q4 2023

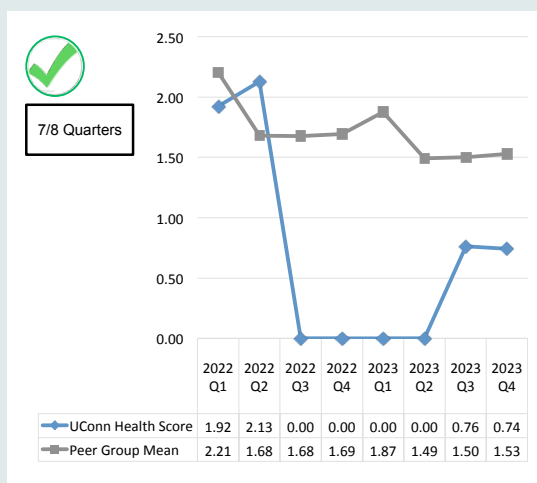
Total Patient Falls Per 1,000 Patient Days



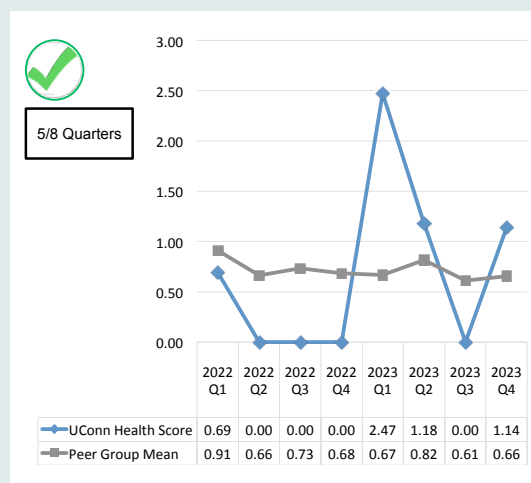
Injury Falls Per 1,000 Patient Days



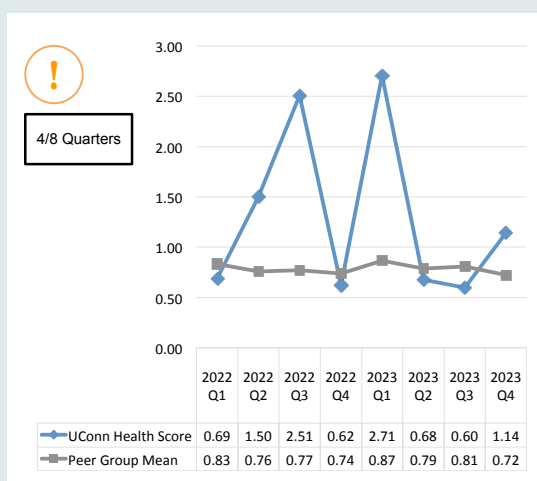
Percent of Patients w/ Hospital Acquired Pressure Injuries Stage 2+



Central Line Associated Blood Stream Infections Per 1000 Central Line Days



Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections Per 1000 Catheter Days



Key

Number of quarters unit OUT-PERFORMED the comparison peer group mean (academic medical centers)

 **5 to 8 quarters**

 **4 of 8 quarters**

 **0 to 3 quarters**

COLLABORATING ACROSS DISCIPLINES TO FURTHER IMPROVE ELDER PATIENT CARE

This year, NICHE coordinator Rachel Meehan, MSN, APRN, ACNS-BC, spread the word about the success of our Purposeful Visitor Program, which has continued to thrive at UConn Health with the involvement of UConn Allied Health undergraduate students.

Meehan was invited to do a poster presentation at the NICHE conference in New Orleans where she presented the positive impact of these students visiting hospitalized elderly patients and engaging them with therapeutic activities. Afterward, Meehan received calls from staff at other hospitals inquiring about how they too could create a program like this.

Our program has expanded to include even more students during the summer and winter, periods when many of the UConn Allied Health Science students are on break. It gave many of these students insight into the importance of personal interactions in healthcare and “it confirmed their commitment to healthcare as their future career goal,” she says.

Building on the success of NICHE, Meehan and her team are looking toward an even more collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to improving care by engaging in the Age-Friendly Health System framework — an initiative of the John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), in partnership with the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA) — which focuses on four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, also known as the “4Ms,” as they apply to all older adults:

What Matters

Know and align care with each older adult’s specific health outcome goals and care preferences including, but not limited to, end-of-life care, and across settings of care.

Medication

If medication is necessary, use age-friendly medication that does not interfere with What Matters to the older adult, Mobility, or Mentation across settings of care.



Mentation

Prevent, identify, treat, and manage dementia, depression, and delirium across settings of care.

Mobility

Ensure that older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do What Matters.

Coming into greater focus in 2023 was the Mobility element and how we as a hospital system can continue to safely mobilize patients — including using equipment as a way to prevent employee injury — so that patients can maintain their function and do What Matters most to them. Using this Age-Friendly Health System framework, Meehan and her team plan to further evolve the Safe Patient Handling Program in 2024.

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2023-2024

Nursing Research

Initiative: Previous 2022-2023 goals were to continue active participation in the Nursing Research Board meetings among professional nursing of varying educational levels and specialty areas, publish in a professional journal, and design a Nursing Research Study for submission to the IRB.

Current: Monthly Nursing Research Board meetings have continued, and participation across specialty areas and educational backgrounds has been consistent. In addition to monthly meetings, the NRB has also hosted a Journal Club with Dr. Eileen Carter from the UConn School of Nursing during Nurses' Week, which was well attended both in person and virtually. A Nursing Research Study proposal is in the process of being written, and one journal article is in revision as requested by a peer-reviewed journal for publication.

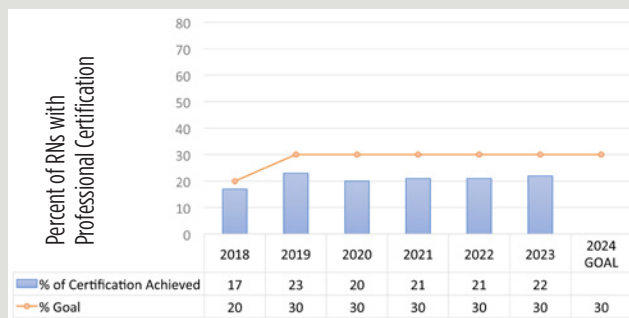
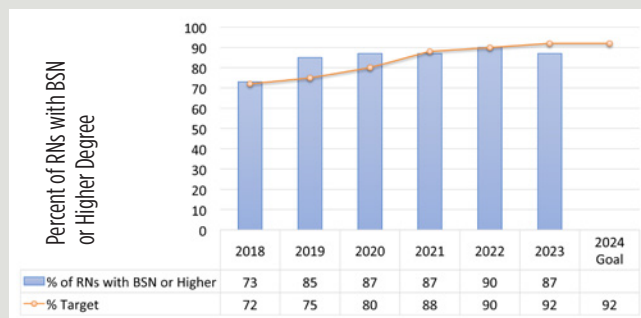
Target: Building on the active participation of the members of the Nursing Research Board, additional Journal Clubs will be offered in the next year, highlighting the research and work of both those in and outside of the UConn community. A Nursing Research Study has been designed, in collaboration with mentorship from the UConn School of Nursing, in such a way that the Nursing Research Board will collectively participate in the implementation, data collection, and data analysis work of the study. In the next year, the study will be submitted to the IRB, and the Nursing Research Board will begin the work of a program of study that will assist our profession in better understanding the needs of the new graduate RN transitioning into professional nursing.

RN Specialty Certification

Initiative: 2022-2023 goal was to increase the percentage of RNs with professional specialty certification to 30%. Resources and support are available to RNs who are interested in attending certification review courses in preparation for taking certification exams.

Current: We have been unable to meet our goal, however, we did have a slight increase from 21% to 22% of RNs currently with specialty certification. The Professional Advancement Board is currently considering innovative measures to increase professional specialty certification numbers. This includes offering a second pathway for application for clinical ladder advancement with evidence of professional certification.

Target: Increase the percent of RNs with professional specialty certification to 30%.



RN Satisfaction and Engagement

Initiative: Our goal is to outperform the mean on four of seven identified measures in the next Press Ganey's Nurse Engagement Survey.

Current: The last results from our Press Ganey's Nurse Engagement Survey completed in 2019 showed that we failed to outperform the mean in all seven categories measured. Our plan is to convene RN staff focus groups with representatives from various inpatient units to identify opportunities for improvement in RN satisfaction and engagement.

Target: After identifying specific opportunities to improve satisfaction and engagement, nursing leadership and professional shared governance will seek to make improvements. The Press Ganey's Nurse Engagement Survey will be made available to RN staff again in 2024. The goal will be to outperform our previous survey specifically in those identified measures recognized and targeted by our focus groups.

NURSE MANAGER'S MASTERS PROJECT FOCUSES ON REEVALUATING THE USE OF GRADUATED COMPRESSION STOCKINGS

In Ortho-Surgery 5, Nurse Manager Nanette Pink has an open door policy and a catchphrase for problem solving. “I call it, ‘Stop admiring the problem, let’s fix the problem,’” she explains. “If you don’t know where to start, bring your idea forward, and then together we’ll come up with where that idea needs to go.”

That mantra applied perfectly this year when Pink — who is currently enrolled in the Masters of Nursing Leadership program at UConn — needed to come up with a PICOT question for a fall poster project. She turned her focus to the use of graduated compression stockings, or GCSs, in post-operative patients. During her 14 years of practice, this has been the standard of care for patients, specifically orthopedic patients.

“In this past year, we have had two hospital acquired pressure injuries on my ortho-surgery unit, which are a big no-no. Both of them were related to wearing these compression stockings,” she says.

Her project aims to determine whether using GCSs on postoperative patients remains the best evidence-based practice, given the increase in hospital-acquired pressure injuries related to them. While changes in the length of patient stay, surgery approaches, and the importance of early mobility have all been critical patient improvement initiatives over the past decade, the thromboprophylaxis approach has yet to be questioned in our facility.

The main research question is this: In adults (P), is the use of TED (Thrombo-Embolic Deterrent) stockings with SCD (Sequential Compression Device) devices and pharmacological anticoagulants (oral and subcutaneous) treatment creating adverse effects (I) compared with the use of just SCD devices and pharmacological treatment (C) in postoperative complications of HAPIs (Healthcare Acquired Pressure Injury) (O)?



Over the next year, Pink intends to find out, with assistance from the nursing quality team and professional governance committees, by looking at a performance improvement project and adding additional meta-analyses research, which she’ll bring forward to UConn Health providers. The idea is that this research will show that GCSs should not be used on patients that are not bed bound.

While Pink’s project is a vehicle for positive change for the patient population, she is quick to say that she didn’t arrive here on her own. “I’m not the only one that is driving this change,” she says. “It’s really been a team effort to see what other hospitals are doing and what their practice is to really help drive where I wanted my research to go. It’s very collaborative.”

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE BY THE NUMBERS



189 RNs hired and attended
General Nursing Orientation



47 new RN
graduates hired



696 staff members attended
Safety Starts With Me



962 staff members completed
Basic Life Support (BLS)
certification



CONGRATULATIONS AND SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2023 NIGHTINGALE AWARD RECIPIENTS



Tammy Davino, DNP, APRN
Intensive Care Unit



Lorraine Hu, DNP, APRN, CRNA
Operating Room



Patricia Pavelchak, RN, WCC
Surgery/Urology



Wendy Thibodeau, MSN, RN, OCN
Neag Comprehensive
Cancer Center



Kevin Thompson, BSN, RN, CN III
Surgery/Orthopedics



**Robin Zingales-Browne, DNP,
APRN, ANP-BC**
Psychiatry



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