

THE NURSING IMPACT

November 2023

Dear nursing colleagues,





According to the American Nurses Association, “21st century nursing is the glue that holds a patient’s health care journey together. Across the entire patient experience, and wherever there is someone in need of care, nurses work tirelessly to identify and protect the needs of the individual.” This could not be more evident than in this Nursing Impact Report. The stories of nursing led care and improvements took my breath away. You all embrace leading with love, and you do it, as our mission states... Relentlessly. I want you to take time to reflect on the power of nursing and hold space for the pride you should all feel.

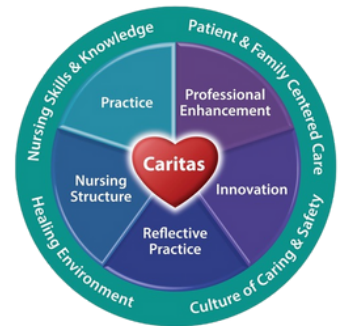


With admiration and gratitude,

Andrea Hauser, DNP, RN, CNL
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President
of Acute Care La Crosse Nursing

Nursing Strategic Vision*

-  Elevate the voice of the nurse
-  Become a destination workplace for staff and students
-  Be a leader in workforce innovations
-  Lead care delivery with top of licensure practice to drive optimal outcomes



*This vision is a draft and continues to be refined by the nursing councils.

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➤ Elevating the Voice of the Nurse through Nursing Professional Governance - Your Nursing Council

Growing our Governance

Utilizing professional governance to elevate the voice of nursing and bring nurses to the table has been a priority at Gundersen, with its strength and purpose only continuing to grow. This summer, through the support of the Medical Foundation and a generous donor, the Nursing Council chairpersons and mentor had the opportunity to attend the Professional Governance Leadership conference. Surrounded by nursing colleagues with a similar purpose; they found the opportunity to connect, network, and learn from each other invaluable.

In continuing to grow and develop this structure within our organization, these frontline leaders found it beneficial to hear first-hand the experiences and examples of how to proceed in moving toward our goal of growing and strengthening our model. They learned that they've been doing many things right, but also learned different strategies that could bring benefit to Gundersen's approach. They look forward to the work ahead and are excited to know they have the ability to touch so many Nursing colleagues through this important work and make a significant impact on the care provided to patients.

Let's Create a Nursing Strategic Plan!

This summer, Andrea Hauser Chief Nursing Officer, presented Nursing Councils with the exciting opportunity of embarking on a journey to create our Nursing Strategic Plan. Partnering with Director of Strategy, Patti Balacek, Council members learned the first step would be shaping the Nursing Strategic Vision to help set the aim for plan development. Council members participated in a Strength/Weakness/Opportunity/Threat (SWOT) analysis to share perspectives on the current state of nursing within the organization.

Council members then had the opportunity to gather insights from frontline nursing colleagues using a similar approach to ensure a collective voice with vast representation. Over the course of several months, Council members were able to extract themes from the analyses providing direction for each next step. They are now working to create a more focused vision with specific strategies and actions; with the launch of the finalized Nursing Strategic Plan coming in early 2024. Tune in for the December Nursing Town Hall to hear more about Council's experience in developing the Nursing Strategic Plan.





Inpatient Council- Elevating the Voice of Acute Nursing



Thanks to the inquiry of staff working in acute units/depts and as a result of much active work occurring within the organization, Inpatient Council representatives have had a busy year. They consistently discussed and processed improvement intakes or project ideas from bedside staff or nursing colleagues. With a primary responsibility of ensuring the acute nursing voice leads nursing care delivery, Inpatient Council takes pride in their involvement in decision making and engagement opportunities.

In response to one of the improvement intakes from MedSurg staff, an Inpatient Council task force partnered with the Chief Resident and Hospitalist champions to implement a Notification of Clinician Rounding Pilot. Considering the essential role bedside nursing plays in developing and managing a patient's plan of care, the goal was to enhance the nurse's ability to participate in rounding, supporting transparency and clarity of the plan of care while promoting advocacy and collaboration. An added benefit is to decrease the frequency of secure chats/pages to clinicians that often occur post-solo rounding. This process increases opportunities for nurses to connect with their clinician partners through patient rounding and shows the valuable role nurses play in shaping and leading through the delivery of patients' care plans. Council members look forward to the progress of this work and the future improvement opportunities.

Outpatient Council- Transforming Care for the Better



The Outpatient Council has also had a robust year. They have been actively working on addressing various practice changes identified by frontline nurses to improve the quality of care and enhance patient experience. Some of this work included successfully resolving confusion related to the various practices of the use of call lights. Council determined that this process could not be standardized due to differences in equipment, so they implemented resources cards for their respective areas and provided education on these to their colleagues.

They are also diligently working to streamline a process to ensure patients receive timely and appropriate oxygen therapy if their personal oxygen tank depletes while they are in the clinic. By optimizing this workflow, Outpatient Council aims to enhance patient safety and improve overall efficiency. In addition to these ongoing initiatives, they are actively working on addressing telephone etiquette concerns. They understand the significance of effective communication and are committed to providing courteous and professional service to all callers efficiently and timely. More to come!

Nursing Informatics

Inpatient C4NI



The Inpatient Council for Nursing Informatics (C4NI) processed 45 new intakes this year. The development of RN Onboarding Epic Education has given new staff a more well-rounded introduction to Epic. Members provided guidance for the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) workflow, Behavior and Wound flowsheet changes, and care planning documentation changes. Members are currently reviewing Epic Foundation flowsheets for future opportunities to reduce documentation. They have also partnered with Nursing News to provide Epic Tips for staff to create efficiencies.



► Nursing Informatics Cont.

Outpatient C4NI



The Outpatient Council for Nursing Informatics (C4NI) processed 40 new intakes this year. The Pediatric Rooming Checklist was developed to assist staff with the many components of rooming. The checklist reduces duplication by utilizing historical data to mark rooming elements complete as appropriate.

They were also part of testing the Hyperdrive environment prior to go-live. In 2024, they plan to continue to review and prioritize intakes submitted by their colleagues to help optimize Epic. Members will be actively involved in the quarterly upgrade content review and testing to ensure staff are prepared.

Peds Wellness Checklist	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Complaint Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accompanied By Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Learning Needs Assessment Status Complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Allergy Review Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Medication History Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tobacco Status Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Length - Laying Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Weight - Baby Scale Dry Diaper Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head Circumference Due
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Breastfeeding Complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Childcare/School Complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Water Supply Complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lead Screen Complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tuberculosis Complete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MyChart Status Complete
Reminder: Pend Immunizations & Orders	
Reminder: Prep any needed forms for signature (ex. Daycare & Sports forms)	
Reminder: Provide Reach Out & Read Book	

Embracing the Power of Smart Phones



For some time, nurses have voiced the need for a way to document and review patient information in Epic more efficiently and on the go. One example that has been a consistent pain point for nurses over recent years is the IV pump integration workflow, which is often time-consuming and cumbersome. Non-functional barcode scanners have also been identified as an obstacle for nurses in their daily work.

To solve some of these inefficiencies identified by frontline nurses, a project team was developed to implement smart mobile devices with the Epic Rover application in a variety of inpatient spaces. Using the Rover app, nursing staff can document flowsheets, scan and administer medications including IV infusions, secure chat, and take wound photos. They can also receive calls and call light notifications. "Rover is a quick, efficient way to document administering infusions no matter where you're located in the room" says Erica Cook, ICU Nurse.



Over the past year, Cisco smart phones, equipped with the Rover application, have been piloted on the Intensive Care and Medical Oncology units. To date, most of the med-surg units are running with these devices, incorporating the features into their workflows. Mobile documentation is the way of the future, and these phones will continue to provide more functions and opportunities for efficient workflows as the platform expands.



▶ 120 Day Cycles

Prepare and Protect: Violence Reduction while Caring for the Vulnerable



Medical Specialty unit staff provide care to patients with both a medical and psychiatric need, including those with substance use disorders, psychiatric disorders, and neurocognitive diseases, such as dementia. Recognizing staff were experiencing a higher rate of violence while providing care, a 120-day project kicked off with a goal to reduce the risk of violence towards caregivers. Frontline staff engaged with the project team to develop and test changes geared toward enhancing the experience of both staff and patients. Changes included altering rooms on the unit to enhance safety and comfort, creating a partnership with a geriatric nurse practitioner to streamline care, providing specialized training for staff, modifying workflows, and Epic documentation enhancements to better tell the story of the patients' individualized care needs and hospital experience.

Due to their efforts, the team has experienced many successes so far including a decrease in the number of safety events involving violence or aggression, staff with increased confidence in de-escalating behavior, decrease in the number of aggressive episodes per patient, and a reduction in utilization of violent/chemical restraints to manage behavior.



"It is pretty amazing to look back at everything we have accomplished in such a short time. We have seen behaviors decrease while patient and family satisfaction increase. With every small victory our unit and team become stronger. As we learn and grow, our skillset and resources will continue to rise as we provide top level care to our patients." Adam Dvorak, Medical Specialty Unit RN

MyChart Visits: The Future of Medical Consultation



The increased use of technology during and after the pandemic has empowered care teams to creatively care for patients in new ways. There is now a visit option for patients to be evaluated by their clinician through MyChart which is very convenient for patients. This has empowered nurses to use critical thinking to determine the patient's disposition and upgrade patients to the appropriate level of care.

This year, primary care teams piloted implementation of MyChart Online Visits. Nurses in these areas were leaders in the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) process to create efficiencies for themselves and for clinicians. With their help, quick fixes to the process were made before it rolled out to other departments.

Since late July 2023, Gundersen has completed nearly 1,000 MyChart Online Visits. Patients have expressed appreciation for this new option of care and survey results show they would recommend this alternative to others!



Fill out your MyChart Online Visit for Primary Care MyChart Online Visit Without Photo ordered by NP Catherine D. Wilson.

Begin MyChart Online Visit



► Highlights from the Frontline

10 Years of making an IMPACT

During a time when the nation is faced with the reality of the complexity-experience gap within the nursing workforce, our very own Surgical Digestive Care unit is celebrating longevity within. In July 2023, Becca Ames, Molly LeJeune, and Beau Ruehlow celebrated their shared 10-year anniversary working together as nurses on Surgical & Digestive. These three expert nurse leaders have spent the last decade shaping '6 Surgical' into a unit known for high standards in patient care, patient outcomes, patient experience, and nursing practice. Becca, Molly, and Beau have truly made an impact on Surgical & Digestive Care by creating a positive culture and sharing their knowledge with nursing colleagues.



Separated by Distance, United in Care

Gundersen has had a strong history of nursing professional governance. Our 6 affiliate hospitals care for similar patient populations and have similar resources. While some processes are the same at each site, other processes have variation. Not only that, but the driving distance between affiliates can be anywhere from 45 minutes to 3 hours.

This summer, the Affiliate Emergency Departments got together to start a monthly UPEQ meeting with RN representation from each of the 6 sites. They have developed a goal of providing systemness by implementing meaningful local changes brought forward by bedside staff and managers. In the short time the UPEQ has been active, they've completed a long list of intakes that have brought consistency to processes, supplies, policies, and care provided by the Affiliate ERs. Each meeting has been held at a different site, allowing the staff and managers to tour and experience the setting that their peers work in. This has brought a sense of community and collaboration across the committee.

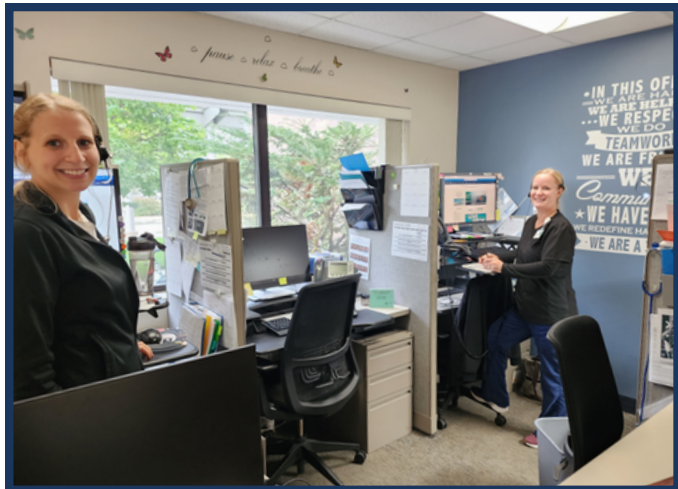


Program managers from Gundersen La Crosse have also been brought in as guests to interact with the council with the goal of opening channels of communication to the bedside staff. The program managers are encouraged to discuss what their program offers, metrics monitored, and ways they can work together towards shared goals. Overall the reception of this committee and their work has been outstanding. Leadership in all sites now look towards the UPEQ for ideas from other sites and collaboration on common issues.



▶ Highlights from the Frontline Cont.

Enhancing Communication

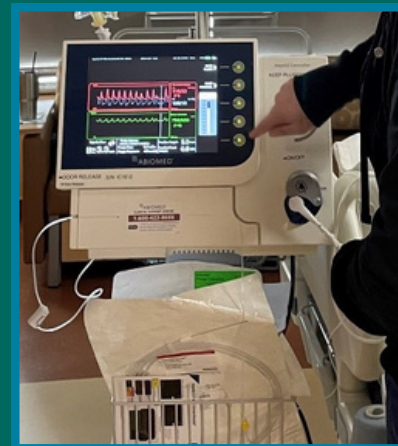


The nurses in La Crosse Family Medicine spear-headed improved communication processes over the last year to help foster better patient care and teamwork! They started using Epic Secure Chat for group conversations between nurses, MAs, schedulers, front desk staff, and clinicians which has created more connection between the team. In addition, they answer as many live calls as possible and partner with a Medical Assistant to stay until all patients have left the clinic to ensure their patients are safe.

Invitation to Innovation: Let's Impact Patient Outcomes!



As nurses, we play a critical role in supporting the advancement of nursing practice as technology evolves, ensuring our patients receive optimal care. The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) implemented the use of new technology this year with the Cardiothoracic team launching use of the Impella 5.5[®] with SmartAssist[®] Heart Pump. This minimally invasive temporary heart pump helps to circulate the blood, giving the heart time to rest and heal. Previous devices used a femoral (groin) approach, which required patients to remain on bedrest for an extended period of time. "This new technology involves an axial approach allowing staff to mobilize patients thus, expediting their recovery, minimizing possible complications, and improving their emotional well-being." Alla Sambur, ICU Nurse.



Theresa Reed, ICU RN pioneered long-distance ambulating with one of the first patients who received the Impella 5.5 heart pump and with great success! It took 5-6 staff (nurses/techs/therapy) to navigate all the lines, make sure the device was moving smoothly beside the patient, and keep the patient safe during their very first ambulation in the hall. It was an exciting day to be on the unit and witnessing this accomplishment as nursing led the way in evolving nursing care to improve patient outcomes!



► Highlights from the Frontline Cont.

Working together to be ready for our youngest patients



Young or old, the La Crosse Emergency Services (ES) team is prepared to take care of any patient who comes through the door. The ES peds committee empowers staff to implement best practices in pediatric emergency care. The team of nurses, paramedics, EMTs, and a pediatric emergency medicine physician have worked to ensure when a critically ill pediatric patient presents for care, everything is in place so that not a second is wasted.

The team reintroduced and reorganized the Broselow crash cart. This cart has 9 different colored drawers corresponding with the child's height so that the team can efficiently dose medications and choose the correct sized emergency equipment. Due to the success of the cart in ES, inpatient pediatrics also decided to work towards implementing this cart in their space as well. The committee has also dedicated a critical care room in ES for the sickest children. This active committee continues to seek out topics to provide ongoing education to all staff in Emergency Services.



Innovating through Teamwork



In the Family Medicine Residency Clinic, nursing staff work very closely with the medical residents which has helped to build a trusting relationship amongst the team. They participate in the residents' quality improvement projects and are continuously learning from each other to ensure quality patient care. The nurses feel they are valued by the residents, and the residents are appreciative of the nurses' expertise.

Making Time for a Special Goodbye



As nurses, caring is at the heart of what we do. Individualizing care to meet the needs of each unique person is at our core and why we do what we do every day. In May, the Heritage Unit had a long-term patient that was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Her child with special needs lived out West. As the patient's time on the Heritage Unit went on, her hope of seeing her daughter again to say goodbye was dwindling. With the help of various Gundersen staff members, the Heritage Unit arranged a special evening for the patient and her family who flew out to be with her. This included a private meeting space, a meal, flowers, and a couch for the daughter to spend one last night with her mom. The Heritage Unit truly embodied Love + Medicine.



▶ Highlights from the Frontline Cont.

Love for Community



In the Lansing clinic, nurses have been inviting preschool students into the clinic and teaching them how they can improve their health through lifestyle.

In the Waukon clinic, they have created the Holding a Teddy Bear clinic for pediatric patients which has helped to decrease anxiety and provide them comfort.

They have also started administering Vivitrol injections to offload access issues for Addiction Medicine to ensure patients get what they need.

Thank you all for improving the health of and inspiring our children and community!



Influencing Improvements: Enhancing the Experience



Nurses recognize the impact environment and supportive resources have on an individual's hospital experience. Over the last year, the Inpatient Behavioral Health (IBH) team has been engaged in improving the experience of the populations they serve; updating the environment to be more therapeutic with a new color palette and several new patient care spaces and programs.

Staff were able to provide input and influence the creation of a Sensory Room within the Adolescent inpatient unit, which creates an opportunity to assist these patients with sensory regulation.



This room offers stimulation via sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste in an environment that is controlled by the patient; reducing distress and agitation, as well as use of seclusion and restraints.

Remodeling the recreation room enhanced patient access to equipment; while also providing the opportunity to receive education on physical wellness and how it can affect mental wellness.



► Highlights from the Frontline Cont.

Just a call away- NICU Transport Team brings our newest patients to the La Crosse NICU for intensive care close to home



Have you ever wondered how neonates with intensive care needs from smaller hospitals arrive at the Gundersen NICU? Our specialty transport team brings newborns from outlying hospitals to Gundersen La Crosse for care. Neonates anywhere from 22 weeks to full term arrive via ambulance or helicopter with the support of our transport team.



Previously, the Neonatal Nurse Practitioners (NNPs) provided transport with specialty neonatal Respiratory Therapists (RTs). This year the team is transitioning to an RN/RT led transport team, allowing RNs to work at the top of their scope of practice. This summer 8 RNs onboarded to the team. Working alongside 4 RTs, these staff will cover transport 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By transitioning the nursing role from NNP to RN, we are able to bring our tiniest new community members to GHS with minimal disruption to patient care in the NICU. This new model means more capacity for neonates born in our service area to be brought to GHS for care rather than needing to go to a facility farther from home.

Out with the Old and In with the New

The nurses in Renal Dialysis are very excited that they are in the process of replacing their entire fleet of dialysis machines. The current machines are “well aged” and have created challenges in providing the best possible care to their patients. The new machines will allow the nurses to complete treatments more efficiently, especially in emergent settings.



Partnerships in Care

The Nephrology Clinic nurses are working to top of scope by bridging a gap in knowledge through providing an outstanding education session to patients with chronic kidney disease. By providing this foundation of information, patients and their families can partner with their care providers to make well informed decisions about their treatment options and help guide future decisions about their care.



Investing in Our Future

Shaping the Minds of the Next Generation



“As an intern, we are exposed to the raw work a nurse faces daily. It allows us to find out what type of unit we want to work on and whether our original plans are where we want to end up. We are exposed to how the real world runs compared to the pristine world of nursing school and evidence-based practice. I saw things that I could never see in a book.” - Brock, Medical Specialty Intern



Over the summer, 39 nursing students entering their last year of school spent 10 weeks at Gundersen immersed in patient care. They worked alongside a preceptor learning what it means to truly be a nurse- completing assessments, developing care plans and critically thinking about the patient’s condition and needs. Not only is this a great learning experience for the interns, but it’s also a great recruitment strategy for Gundersen. Of the 39 Nurse Interns this summer, 31 accepted a position at Gundersen following the internship

Nurses Supporting Nurses through the Nursing Education Fund



Nursing Professional Governance Councils partnered with The Gundersen Medical Foundation to identify opportunities to increase awareness of and promote support for the Nursing Education Fund. This fund provides support for nursing professional development opportunities such as education sessions, trainings, webinars, guest speakers, and conference registration fees. Recipients share personal stories highlighting the impact these offerings have had on advancing nursing practice or impacting patient care directly, allowing nursing to “give back” to our generous donors and support the cycle of giving.

In February 2024, we plan to host a ‘Soup-er Bowl’, a soup sampling fundraising event. Stay tuned for more information about the ‘Soup-er Bowl’ and future fundraising opportunities to support growth of this Nursing fund. To help support the Nursing Education Fund, you can scan or click the QR codes. Make sure to select the Nursing Education Fund as the fund you’d like to support.



Support Fund



Payroll Deduction



▶ Investing in Our Future Cont.

Unlocking Potential with the Professional Preceptor Program



Preceptors play an invaluable role in shaping the development and practice of our newest nurses. The Professional Preceptor Program was developed as a means of supporting and developing frontline leaders taking on this critical role. The program involves online modules and an in-person session which allows the opportunity for skill application.



During the in-person session, RN preceptors from across the organization (inpatient, procedural, and ambulatory) come together to learn new prioritization methods and behavioral models to promote learning. They partake in an interactive activity involving Standardized Patients (actors) allowing for application of the skills and methods in simulated preceptor-preceptee scenarios. Participant feedback and ideas to enhance the training have been incorporated to further develop the program for future learners. Connect with your Clinical Manager or Professional Development Nurse to discuss reserving your spot today.

“The layout of the course made it easy to stay engaged and truly feel beneficial in my practice.”
 - Lauren, Inpatient Rehab Nurse

▶ The Future of Nursing at Gundersen

A new frontier- Virtual Nursing in Acute Care



The Acute Virtual Nursing care model is a Wildly Important Goal (WIG) on the Bellin and Gundersen Health Systems 2024 strategic plans. Together our systems will pilot 2 units in each region with this new model of care that is finding success across the country. Virtual nursing leans into technology by having an experienced RN from our own system take on responsibilities of acute nursing practice that do not require physical presence. This could include admissions, patient education, discharge support, patient safety monitoring and more. The model has the capability to help staff focus, connect, and be more available to patients and each other.

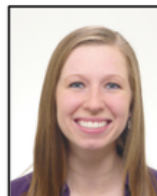
The results of the model will create efficiency in patient care and flow, improve safety, mitigate the complexity/experience gap by offering a quickly accessible expert resource and will improve the connection between the care team, patients and each other- because with love+medicine- relationships are everything.



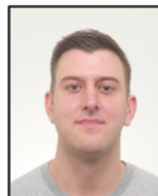
Diane Roth
Cardiopulmonary Unit



Taylor Knutson
Cardiopulmonary Unit



Emily Schueller
PreOp/PACU
Cardiopulmonary Unit



Jessie Hegy
Surgical Digestive Unit
Inpatient Council Rep



Renee Holzer
Heritage Unit

The Virtual Nursing Core Nursing Team are leaders in nursing practice and have the commitment, knowledge, and experience to make Virtual Nursing come to life. Together, this group of nurses has nearly 60 years of experience within our walls. This team is ready to build the future of Virtual Nursing!



➤ The Future of Nursing at Gundersen Cont.

Transforming Care for those who use it most



Chronic Care Management (CCM) is an exciting new program being implemented in primary care and will be led by our current Care Coordination nurses in partnership with primary care nurses! The CCM nurse will partner with patients to proactively manage their chronic diseases, improve quality of life, and prevent unnecessary health care interventions by building strong therapeutic relationships and bridging care between face-to-face visits.

The CCM nurse will utilize a patient-centered approach to educate, motivate, and empower our patients to make informed decisions and adopt healthier lifestyle choices with patient goal setting. They will work with an interdisciplinary team to identify needs and additional supports that patients can utilize to work towards achieving their individualized goals. Nurses are essential in delivering exceptional care to transform the lives and outcomes of our patients.

➤ Closing with Gratitude

The stories in this publication represent Gundersen nurses' incredible talent and commitment to excellence. Through the accomplishments highlighted in these stories we celebrate our profession, recognize your incredible service, and reaffirm the importance of our purpose to serve. Take a moment to congratulate yourselves for what we have achieved and look ahead to the exciting opportunities to continue our long history of outstanding care and shape a better future for those we serve.

With gratitude,

Dani Rathke, DNP, RN, CNL
Director of Nursing



Nominate a nurse for a Nurse Excellence Award!

If you know an outstanding nurse who demonstrates excellence in nursing practice, nominate them for a Nurse Excellence Award by clicking [here!](#)

Nominations are accepted year-round, January 1 - December 31. Nurses will be awarded each year in May. The nomination cut off for the May award is December 31 of the year prior.

To read more stories about Frontline nurses, check out the [Nursing Spotlight Page](#) on the website!