

THE NURSING IMPACT

May 2024

Dear nursing colleagues,





During Centralized Nursing Orientation, I have the privilege of greeting our new-to-Gundersen nurses by sharing my nursing story. Part of what I share is that my path has been a bit twisty, but my purpose has remained the same: to nurture an environment where nurses can be at their best for the patients they serve and for each other. I know that this purpose is never fully met as there is always opportunity to create better- and that is what shines in this report! Nurses leading strong nursing practice, infused with joy and innovation, for the betterment of both the nurse and patient experience. I hope as you read this, you are inspired to do the same!



With gratitude and pride,

Andrea Hauser, DNP, RN, CNL
Chief Nursing Officer, Gundersen Region

Nursing Strategic Vision supports Gundersen Region and Enterprise Strategic Plan

-  Elevate the Voice of the Nurse in Professional Practice
-  Be a Destination Workplace
-  Be a Leader in Workforce Innovations
-  Lead Care Delivery with Top of Licensure Practice to Drive Optimal Outcomes

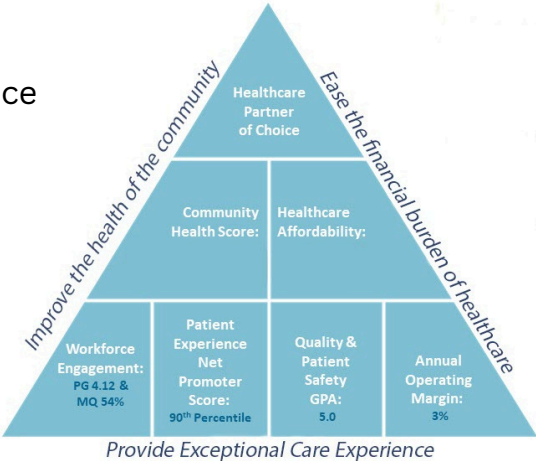


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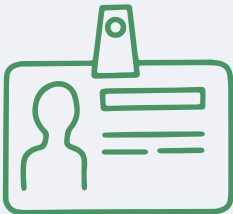


► Nursing by the Numbers

2,413
nurses



Count by
Role



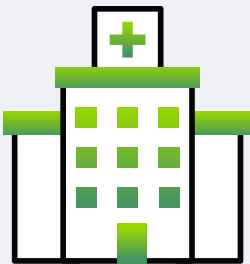
- 2,136 - Registered Nurses
- 82 - Licensed Practical Nurses
- 195 - Nurse Practitioners
- 424 - Medical Assistants
- 487 - Certified Nursing Assistants

Nursing
Average
Length of
Service



9.1
years

Length of
Service by
Role



- 8.9 YEARS
REGISTERED NURSES
- 10.6 YEARS
LICENSED PRACTICAL
NURSES
- 10.6 YEARS
NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Nurses
Hired in
2023

REGISTERED NURSES

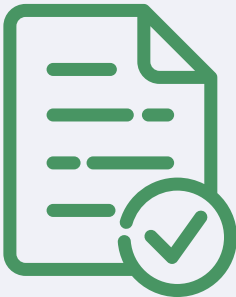
288

LICENSED PRACTICAL
NURSES

12

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

17





► Recognition & Accomplishments

Nurse Excellence Awards

For the last 24 years, Gundersen nurses have been recognized by fellow colleagues for their exceptional contributions in various areas of practice and exemplary expression of the Nursing Professional Framework, Caritas Processes, and GHS Mission, Vision & Values. Congratulations to the 2024 recipients!



Jill Wojta, BSN, RN
Excellence in Nursing
Education



Christine Parry, RN
Excellence in Nursing Practice
– Holistic Nursing



Olivia Schulz, BSN, RN
Excellence in Nursing Practice
– Rookie of the Year



Renee Herbst, BSN, RN
Excellence in Nursing
Management



Erick Baumgart, BSN, RN
Excellence in Nursing
Innovation



Mary Beth Balder-Schroeder, APNP
Excellence in Nursing Practice
– Lifetime Achievement



Tracy Weber, MSN, RN
Excellence in Nursing Practice
– Advanced Degree



Jessie Hegy, BSN, RN
Excellence in Nursing
Leadership



Legacy of Nursing Scholarships

Gundersen Medical Foundation maintains and funds six nursing scholarships that award eight recipients each year. These scholarships are part of the Foundations Legacy of Nursing Scholarship Program which encourage and support nurses at all levels of nursing education. We are thankful for the individuals and families that chose to give these philanthropic gifts in support of nursing education. Congratulations to the 2024 recipients!



Shana Wieser, BSN, RN
Alice Wehrenberg Scholarship
Viterbo University
FNP/DNP



Emily Summers, CNA
Karen Pretko-Arndt Scholarship
Viterbo University
Direct Entry MSN



Amy Segreto, RN
Barbara Kroner Scholarship
Viterbo University
ADN to BSN



Dawn Schuttemeier, RN
Julie MacDonald Scholarship
Winona State University
RN to BSN



Carlye Hart, BSN, RN
Heritage Scholarship
Western Governors University
BSN to MSN



Amber Reidt, RN
Heritage Scholarship
Frontier Nursing University
MSN/Nurse-Midwife



Emma Gilberts, CNA
Karen Pretko-Arndt Scholarship
Minnesota State University, Mankato
BSN



Alexandra Haedtke, BSN, RN
Dianna Myhre Scholarship
Winona State University, Rochester
DNP/AGAC-NP



On April 30th we learned the exciting news of our new brand- Emplify Health. It comes as no surprise that our new brand reflects so well who we are as an organization- Empathy Amplified, Empathy in Action. In an organization where almost 1 out of every 4 employees is a nurse, the resounding message is that at Gundersen we are empathy in action. For some, this will be something to aspire to be, but for the 2,143 nurses at Gundersen- we've been doing this for over 120 years. As early as 1904, Gundersen nurses have been Empathy in Action and we still are today. As we embark on this journey to becoming Emplify Health, consider where we have been. Nurses have been transforming healthcare since the beginning and we will never stop relentlessly caring, learning and innovating.

Nursing Professional Governance

Nursing Strategic Plan

A strategic plan defines an organization's direction and guides decision making to ensure alignment with its long-term goals. With a responsibility to represent our unique profession and recognizing that nurses comprise the largest number of healthcare workers within our organization, nursing leaders advocated for the development of a Nursing strategic plan. The goal is the creation of a roadmap for the future of nursing that complements the organizational strategic plan while aligning our nursing energy, resources, activities to work towards common goals of growing our impact as a profession, creating cohesiveness moving in the same direction, and helping us look to the future to stay relevant and responsive to the needs of our customers. Nursing councils partnered with their peers and nursing leaders to create the vision and direction for influencing health outcomes of those we serve.

The strategic plan finds its foundation in four vision statements:

- **Elevate the Voice of the Nurse in Professional Practice**
- **Be a Destination Workplace**
- **Be a Leader in Workforce Innovations**
- **Lead Care Delivery with Top of Licensure Practice to Drive Optimal Outcomes**

This collective vision, along with accompanying strategies that provide a framework for action, will move us towards ideal state as we put our plan into action. This work is just beginning but will continue relentlessly for years to come as we see our Nursing strategic plan come to fruition. The nurses' voice is the driving force behind the plan development, and will continue to be crucial as we implement strategies and tactics to move us towards our mission and vision as nurses at Gundersen.



Soup-er Bowl

Gundersen nurses are committed to staying up to date with new knowledge, best practice, and innovations in our profession. In support of building the Nursing Education Fund for future learning purposes, nursing council members activated their creativity to brainstorm ideas for a festive event that would bring people together and raise money for the fund. The winning idea was to host a "Soup-er" Bowl to coincide with the Super Bowl. On February 9, nurses representing both inpatient and outpatient came together to serve ten different kinds of soups, delicious breads, and tasty treats. Our Bellin partners provided us with Packer swag to raffle. In just 2 hours, this council-sponsored event resulted in a great time for attendees and \$1,500 raised for the Nursing Education Fund. We look forward to the second annual "Soup-er" Bowl on Friday February 7th, 2025.



Pictured above Leah Misch, RN

Nurses Day at the Capitol

Representatives from Nursing Professional Governance and nursing leadership attended Nurses Day at the Capitol in Madison, WI to participate in nurse advocacy. The Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA) hosted nurses and nursing students from across the state to provide an opportunity for learning about legislation the WNA was supporting or proposing.

Gundersen nurses and others, including Mayo nurses and Viterbo student nurses met with a staffer of Representative Jill Billings and then with Senator Brad Pfaff. It was a nice opportunity to feel heard for those who wished to advocate and to see how respected and appreciated nursing is as a profession. Our group also received a private tour of the Senate and Assembly rooms and learned more about the history of the Capitol from Senator Pfaff.

It was a wonderful day in which we learned a lot about the advocacy side of nursing and the importance of having our voices heard.



From left to right:
 Larissa Niedfeldt, RN, Clinical Manager, Department of Nursing,
 Jennifer Duchrow, RN, Moundview Emergency Services,
 Brittany Klocek, RN, Preadmission (PATT), Shannon Jibben, RN, Family Medicine Residency Clinic, Lauren Berger, RN, Cardiopulmonary Unit, and Andrea Hauser, RN, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President



► Nursing Informatics

Committee for Nursing Informatics (C4NI)

With the launch of Project Fusion, C4NI has shifted to support the enterprise journey toward a unified health record. The committee will continue to review quarterly upgrades and will focus on responsibilities in workgroups for Project Fusion. This is a big undertaking as we evaluate and align processes and work through changes with consideration to the impact for both Gundersen and Bellin. The voice of frontline workers is critical to making decisions for a successful launch, countdown to July 26, 2025!

Nurse Only Visit Express Lanes

Pictured below Lacey Fradette, RN

Nurses and medical assistants see hundreds of patients each week for nurse-only visits throughout the organization. Previously, all nurse-only visits required a manual review of both documentation and the billing code selection by our coding and documentation specialists. If documentation is missing any required components, follow up has to occur with the nurse before it can be billed.



Now, with Nurse Only Visit Express Lanes implemented for sixteen nurse only visits (blood pressure checks, catheter changes, bladder scan, suture/staple removal, etc.) this process is automated. There has been a lot of positive feedback from both our outpatient nursing staff as well as from our coding and documentation specialists. With the Express Lane functionality, everything needed for documenting these visits is in one location. You simply add the SmartPhrase and complete your documentation and once the Express Lane is signed, the correct code is automatically attached to that visit!

The overall goal of implementing an Express Lane for these visits is to streamline documentation and charge capture selection and make this process more automatic with SmartPhrase and CPT codes right at your fingertips.



► Highlights from the Frontline - Nurse Led Care

Pediatrics begins nurse initiated well child visits



The Pediatrics Primary Care Department rolled out registered nurse initiated well child visits in September and the program is off to a successful start.

These nurse initiated visits create a team-based approach to care, with each member practicing to the highest level of their scope. These visits allow nurses the opportunity to build relationships with patients and caregivers, decrease variation in practice, and improve the quality patient care. Registered nurses provide education and anticipatory guidance ensuring caregivers know what to expect as their child grows.

The nursing portion of the visit is completed before the clinician visit, thereby allowing the clinician more time to focus on the patient's medical needs and concerns. This model maximizes nurses' unique skillset and has the potential to reduce clinician burnout by level-loading work. Since these started last September, pediatric nurses have done over 1,000 visits!

The launch is the first phase of continuous expansion and improvement in Pediatric Primary Care.



"Our RN staff have risen to the challenge of learning this model, which is new to some. Clinicians have shared how valuable this has been with time management in a busy clinic day and how enjoyable more frequent collaboration with the RN staff has been."

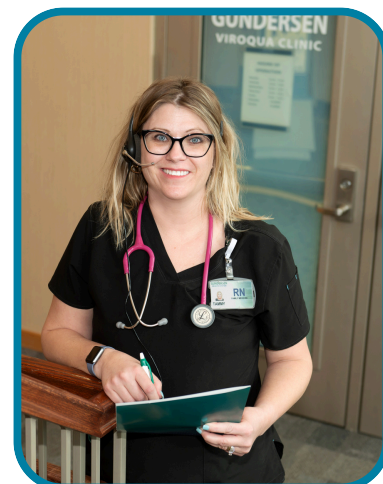
- David Gerhard, MD

Taking care to the next level in the regions



Nurse led Medicare Annual Wellness (MAW) visits were recently rolled out at the Viroqua Clinic and Tammy Zitzner, RN and Tina Williams, RN have taken this new care model and ran with it. In January and February 2024, they completed 162 patient visits. During these visits, they take medical histories, perform screenings and assessments, provide guidance, and order testing to bridge care gaps. Taking on this role elevates nursing scope of practice, increases patient access, and allows clinicians more time to focus on patient's acute needs and disease management!

"The RN MAW visits provide an excellent opportunity to identify and provide needed intervention, perform screenings, and provide a plan for individualized preventative care and a problem-oriented post MAW visit." ~ Tina Williams, RN



Pictured above
Tammy Zitzner, RN



Chronic Care Management updates

In the last Nursing Impact, we introduced a new program called Chronic Care Management (CCM). CCM is a Medicare program led by frontline nurses that focuses on providing support and education for patients who have two or more chronic health problems. The program is aimed to improve patients' overall quality of life by having the nurse empower them to create and reach their health goals. We started the program in November 2023 and to date we have enrolled over 400 patients across nine different primary care clinics!

Our Care Coordination RNs are leading this work and are partnering with patients and their care team to proactively manage their chronic disease states and focus on disease prevention. They utilize motivational interviewing to set patients up for success in reaching their goals. These nurses continue to find joy in this work and are making a difference!

From one grateful patient "Thank you for being the wonderful nurse and special person you are. You have made my medical journey so much easier."

The CCM program will be rolled out throughout all primary care to provide individualized support for those patients that need it the most.



Pictured above from L-R:

Deb Augedahl, RN, Beth Krage, RN, Deeanne Simmons, RN,
Kelly Kassien, Professional Development Nurse, Tammy Luoma, RN



"CCM is a program that allows you to get to know patients and help them to improve their health by working toward specific goals. I am happy to develop relationships with patients and see their health improve."

-Trisha Miller, CCM RN, Viroqua.



Highlights from the Frontline - Advancing Education **Foundation to specialty program**

As a new graduate nurse, did you just know what area you would end up in? For some nurses, their experiences and passions lead them to determining a specialty early in their career journey. In the fall of 2022, Gundersen started the Foundation to Specialty Program as a way for new graduate nurses who desire to be in a specialty department such as Intensive Care Unit or the Operating Room to have a direct path to these highly specialized areas. The designated pathway allows new graduate RNs to be hired by a specialty department, but have the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of nursing and develop their professional skills on the Medical Surgical Units before they are ready to transfer to the specialty unit. The MedSurg and specialty unit professional development nurses used their unique skillset to design the orientation process/curriculum to create a path for new nurses to be well-prepared and have the confidence to practice in a specialty area. The program also helps nurses develop a system view outside of just one specific department. Since the start of the program in 2022, there have been 4 successful transfers to specialty areas along with 11 specialty track nurses currently in the program.

"The time on MedSurg was necessary for the transition. Looking back, if I would have been hired directly into the ICU, I would have been overwhelmed."
- Shyler Harmsen, RN

"My favorite part is the shadow shifts every 6 weeks. It's so beneficial to get a few days of exposure to ICU, get familiar with the equipment, vents, lines and drips we don't get on the floor and have someone with you to show you things and explain."
- Taylor Holum, RN

"Without this program, the transition to ICU as a new grad would have been challenging."
- Ereik Devine, RN

Standardizing patient education practices

Recognizing the need to improve their process of patient education, Infusion Services nurses completed an in-depth analysis of current practice to elicit feedback from their colleagues. They created a standardized education checklist and teaching process for how they educate new patients about their infusion plans.

Following the change, an internal department survey showed higher job satisfaction, confidence in educating new patients, and understanding of what education to provide. Patients reported better understanding of treatment regimens and what to expect while in Infusion Services.

"The new process has helped me tremendously to streamline my expectations. I feel like I now know what is expected of me and my coworkers."



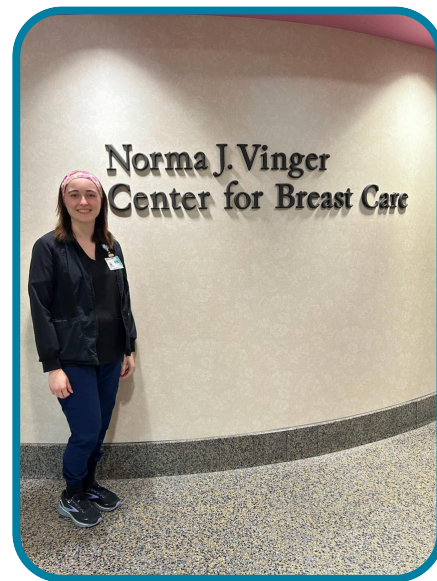
Pictured is Ashley Hutchinson, RN



Center for Breast Care innovates to better meet patients' needs

Maddie Leighty, RN, Center for Breast Care, came up with the idea to exchange complex instructions for three easy-to-view videos. This format has made education easier to digest for patients prepping for surgery. The three videos correlate with patient education handouts and explain the three different types of breast surgeries at the Center for Breast Care. This educational method has allowed RNs to become more efficient with their time so they can take care of more patients.

Patients can watch the videos while in pre-op via an iPad, in the hospital via get-well network, or from their home by scanning a QR code. Thank you to the nurses in the Center for Breast, Kacie Ebert, Department Secretary, and Medical Media for bringing this idea to life!



Pictured above is
Maddie Leighty, RN

AVADE® training launched

We heard you! Feedback from GHS learners regarding de-escalation education led to the formation of a workgroup to explore training solutions. De-escalation training is provided to hospital staff that serve in a continuous observation role or provide direct patient care in high-risk care areas. After reviewing several options, AVADE was selected as our new de-escalation program. The training uses a hybrid model of both knowledge acquisition through online modules and application through in-person training. The intention is to provide an optimal learning experience for staff and respond to previous feedback. The course includes interactive activities for learners to practice skills including scenarios with standardized patients for participants to pull all of their knowledge and skills together at the end of the program. The first successful in-person training occurred in February and sessions are offered every month. Ask your Professional Development Nurse about when you will have the opportunity to participate!



Thank you to workgroup members including the Training Center (ICE House), Safety Department, Security, and the Department of Nursing.



Wound education supports regional clinics to keep care close to home



Pictured above
Valerie Brunoni, RN

An education collaboration between certified Wound, Ostomy and Continence nurses (WOCNs) in La Crosse and nurses from regional clinics has resulted in more empowered staff and patients who can get care closer to home.

Nurses from Gundersen's regional clinics wanted to better serve patients presenting with pressure ulcers and complex wounds. WOCNs from La Crosse organized a series of Lunch and Learns where they showed nurses how to assess, measure and document a wound. Education was also provided on primary dressings, skin prevention and compression. The WOCNs even provided alternatives for wound dressings for patients who don't have access to primary dressings.

Regional nurses are now better equipped with the knowledge and resources to properly treat wounds and patients can receive treatment closer to home!

► Highlights from the Frontline - Top of Scope Practice

At Gundersen, patients requiring a specialized test work with a specialized team

Imaging nurses realized patients getting a myelogram needed post procedure care that could be done in their area. Through patient education, department collaboration, and organized communication, they helped to change the process, so the patient never has to leave the Imaging department.

Previously, these patients were seen in pre/post op which required utilization of a bed that can now be utilized by surgical patients.

When nurses are at the table, we can deliver an outstanding experience of care.



Pictured above is the Imaging Team



Cardio Pulmonary nurses care for patients with transvenous pacers

For patients who've just received a temporary pacemaker, a recent change is allowing them to receive care in the hands of a new team while empowering nurses to broaden their knowledge. Prior to January 2023, patients who had a transvenous pacer (TVP) in place would be monitored and cared for in the ICU. A partnership which led to process change, now supports many of these patients being admitted directly to the Cardio Pulmonary Unit. This, in turn, opens up ICU beds for more unstable patients.

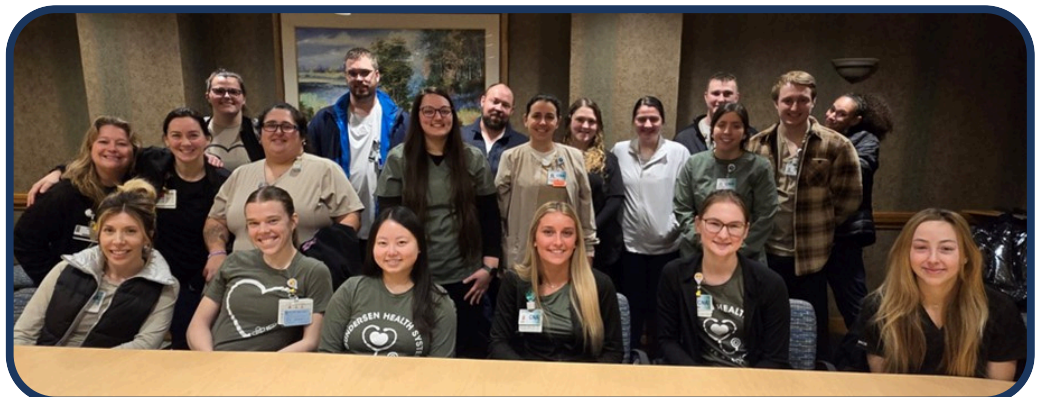
“Learning more about transvenous pacers has allowed me to expand my knowledge as a Registered Nurse. It has been a privilege to participate in this change to provide care to a new patient population while preserving rooms in the ICU for patients that are in need of a higher level of care.” - Danielle Devery, RN

Most of the time patients with a TVP will need a permanent pacemaker placed during their hospital stay. After they're admitted to Cardio Pulmonary, they can maintain their entire hospital stay on the unit, resulting in less transitions of care, which benefits not only patients and families, but the unit staff and hospital operations as well.

Helping wherever there's a need - Hospital Float Pool

“Hospital Float Pool staff are indispensable, they're the “jacks of all trades” and help us out a lot.”
Matt Post, RN GMU

“The float pool offers the luxury of autonomy and culture. As a float, I can mostly choose where I want to enhance my skill set versus having a one and only specialty to focus on. We have friends everywhere and are here to keep our teams 'afloat' throughout the hospital; this brings a sense of fulfillment.”





► Highlights from the Frontline - Enhancing Care Delivery

Time is Muscle- Improving Care for Cardiac Patients in Onalaska Urgent Care

When caring for patients at risk for myocardial infarction and cardiac concerns, loss of time equals loss of heart muscle. This familiar saying helps guide clinical practice when a patient presents to Onalaska Urgent Care (OUC) with complaints of chest pain, ensuring the priority is early identification and intervention. OUC staff have excelled in promptly performing EKGs for clear cardiac concerns such as chest pain, rapid heart rate, and chest pressure.



Pictured above Scott Stine, RN

OUC's UPEQ identified opportunities to improve EKG efficiency across all complaints with concerns for cardiac etiology, such as SOB, fatigue, and dizziness. OUC EMTs and RNs accepted this challenge, tapping on their triage experience, assessment skills, and critical thinking to increase their suspicion for cardiac concerns and decrease the threshold for which they perform an EKG. The unit has tracked individual performance and timing across chief complaints with remarkable improvements. Since May 2023, the unit has maintained their median Door-to-EKG times below the goal of 10 minutes. Connecting this practice improvement to patient care and outcomes, the staff have identified all OUC STEMI cases in under 10 minutes since Sept. 2023. Excellent work, OUC!

Vivitrol injections in La Crosse Internal Medicine

The La Crosse Internal Medicine Clinic is now offering Vivitrol injections for their patients to help offload referrals to Behavioral Health. Vivitrol is a medication used for alcohol and opioid dependence. With the need for more access to Behavioral Health providers and addiction treatments, this is a huge win to be able to offer this treatment in the Primary Care setting.



Brenda Williams, RN coordinated education for this treatment for her colleagues including how to administer Vivitrol injections, indications for use, and potential side effects. This has increased access to Vivitrol for those patients in need, elevated the scope of the RNs in Internal Medicine, and opened the door for new patients in Behavioral Health!



Accurately Quantifying Postpartum Blood Loss

One to five percent of individuals giving birth experience postpartum hemorrhage (PPH), a serious condition after childbirth. Over the past five years, the obstetrics nursing team worked to improve outcomes for PPH patients. One of these interventions is the Quantified Blood Loss (QBL) measurement tool. With QBL, items saturated during and after delivery are weighed by nursing staff and documented in Epic. The QBL tool then calculates the amount of blood lost during delivery. Not only is this an evidence based standard of care, but Epic also recognizes the importance of the QBL tool.

Implementing QBL in Epic helped the organization receive an Epic Gold Star for implementing a key feature to support quality and saving lives category. We are proud of our low PPH rates at GHS, and the PPH interventions in place allow us to identify and intervene quickly when hemorrhages occur.

Pictured from left to right: Jill Wojta, RN, Heather Herbst, RN, Danielle Rutzen, RN, Lori Jahr, RN, and Saryn Lacefield, RN



A specialized team catering to patients with complex female issues sees exponential growth

The OB/GYN team at Gundersen has added an advanced UROGYN team to help patients with complex female issues, such as uterine prolapse and bladder concerns. Within six months of forming this team, providers collectively saw 2,775 patients and nurses saw 616 patients!

The UROGYN team decreased wait times for patients while ensuring they were receiving the most optimal care. Nurses are advocating for patients and helping to lower the cost of their medications by coordinating with their prior authorization specialist and pharmaceutical companies! The team also completes urodynamics which helps determine if the patient is a candidate for surgery.



Word is out and patients are traveling from different states to receive this care. The practice has grown exponentially, and the clinic practice is extending to Gundersen Winona Clinic. Success is attributed to the amazing collaboration among the MAs, RNs, and providers!

Pictured from left to right:
Maggie Ebert APNP, Mae Polnaszek, RN,
Dr. Lauren Scott, Angela La Fleur, RN,
Jacie Skifton, MA, and Hannah Flores, MA

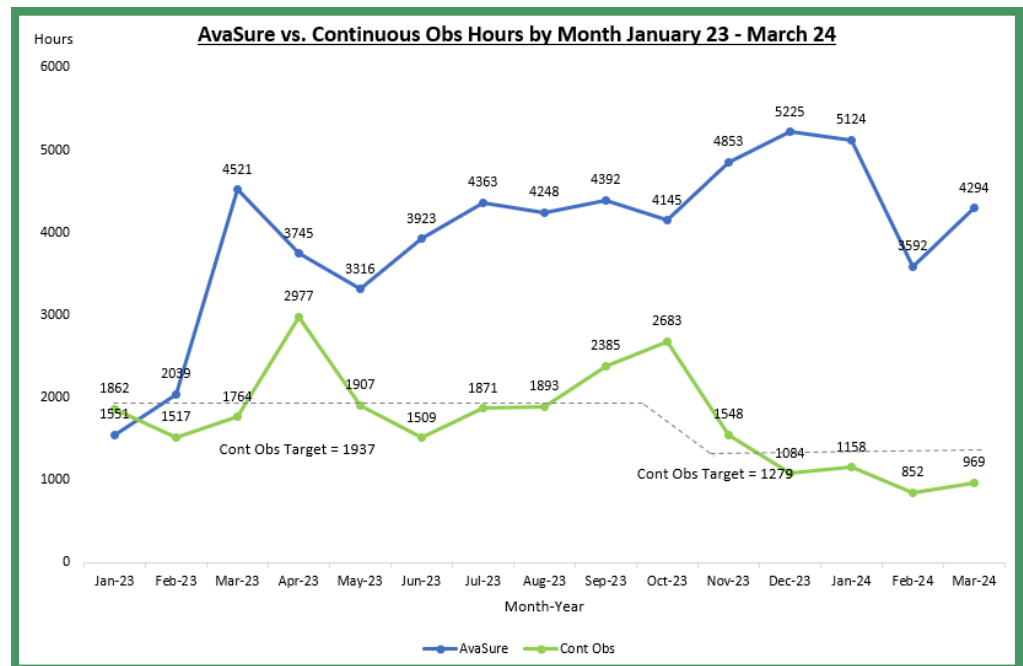


Virtual monitoring for safety

Virtual monitoring has reached its one-year milestone! Prior to its Go-Live in January 2023, GHS embarked on a journey to leverage innovative technology and workflows with the goal of improving safety for patients and reducing in-person continuous observation hours. After one year, we are celebrating virtual monitoring success in becoming an integrated piece of nursing practice.

“Avasure has allowed me to work at the top of my scope in my nursing practice because it allows me to focus on more nursing responsibilities.”

Since implementation, steady increases in virtual monitoring have led to a decline in continuous observation hours. This change in practice has made a positive impact by easing burdens associated with use of continuous observers. Staff have been allocated back to the unit, providing more support to floor staff and enhancing safety on units.



Additionally, we celebrate virtual monitoring's continued growth in its recent expansion to IBH units. Virtual monitoring not only offers support to IBH units, but also provides monitoring services for patients at risk for suicide on medical surgical floors. As we reflect on the growth in the past year, we celebrate the successes and continue to embrace future opportunities that virtual monitoring can hold in serving our patients and the organization. The future is bright! Here's to one year of virtual monitoring!

NICU Transport Update

The NICU Transport Team has had a total of 16 transports year to date and they were all completed using the RN/RT team model. Nice work!





Gundersen Decorah Clinic keeps care close to home for pregnant women 📢 📍 💡 ☑️

The Obstetrics team at Gundersen Decorah Clinic innovated their process to make care more convenient for pregnant women requiring weekly testing.

Prior to implementing a new process, patients requiring weekly antenatal testing had to come to La Crosse regardless of where they lived. OB nurses in Decorah and La Crosse collaborated to develop a process so patients can now be scheduled closer to home. Patients who live closer to Decorah can now go to their local clinic for necessary testing and not have to travel every week!

One Decorah nurse said, "It is an honor to be a part of a collaborative team of Obstetrics. By working together, we're making care as convenient and close to home as possible for a patient who is already dealing with a stressful situation."



Pictured above Jessica Mitchell, RN, Alyssa Mracek, MA, Jenny Larue, RN, Emily Numedahl, RN, Jeannie Frana, RN, Annie Dee-Hudecek, RN



Pictured above Jessica Mitchell, RN

A homegrown, streamlined process in GI ensures more patients are completing recommended colonoscopy ☑️



Stephanie McNamer, RN in Gastroenterology has been instrumental in helping implement a system to better manage colonoscopy orders. In August 2023, 200 patients were identified who hadn't completed the recommended colonoscopy to rule out colon cancer after they had a positive FIT test.

The colon cancer screening nurse role was developed, and this nurse contacted each one of these patients! She provided education on the importance of the colonoscopy and gave them an opportunity to share their fears and barriers to completing the test to help them alleviate their concerns. Those who wished to proceed were able to be scheduled at the time of the call to set the patient up for success. Since the implementation of this process, nearly half of those 200 patients have either completed or scheduled a colonoscopy!





Teamwork and collaboration helped Pre/op and PACU discharge more than 70 patients in one day

Collaboration and teamwork helped Pre/op and PACU maintain a high patient satisfaction score while also implementing a same-day discharge initiative.

In 2023, Pre/op and PACU saw record-breaking volumes, increasing more than 15%. This includes surgery, IR and cath lab patients. The department hit a new record, discharging more than 70 patients in one day. To help maintain great patient flow, dedicated nurses were assigned to facilitate same-day total joint discharges in the outpatient setting.

Even though dedicated nurses worked on this initiative, all Pre/op and PACU nursing staff played a key role in the success of this discharge initiative. That team effort has paid off. The unit has maintained a patient experience score of 91%.



Pictured above Hannah Pederson, RN, Samantha Penkalski, RN, Jenna Schmig, RN, Mary Anderson, RN, Emily Schueller, RN, Julianna Meyer, CNA, and Jessica Nolte, CNA

Future of Nursing at Gundersen

Partnerships and possibilities: Nurses paving the path as leaders in Project Fusion

In the spirit of highlighting how “Nurses Make the Difference”, we recognize major nursing contributions on the horizon through Project Fusion. There are many nurses representing a variety of teams through the work to unify our Electronic Health Record (Epic) across our new enterprise system with Bellin. This project will be the first line of sight into understanding nursing practices in each region, creating alignment, and leveraging Epic to support a future state together. Undoubtedly, the nursing voice will be engaged and leading decision points that bring us to consistent best practices and tools across Gundersen and Bellin. We will make a difference for our colleagues and the patients we care for, growing in leadership and partnership along the journey.



Virtual Nursing - An innovative nursing care model enhancing the patient experience with technology



Virtual nursing is an innovative nursing care model transforming care for staff, patients, and families. This model leans into technology by having our very own experienced RNs assisting with admission, discharge, and patient education. Virtual Nursing workflows support bedside RNs by giving time back for hands-on nursing care and to support all nurses to work at top of scope. Additional benefits of the care model include creating efficiency in patient care and flow, elevating patient and staff experience, and mitigating the complexity-experience gap by offering a quickly accessible nursing expert.

Frontline core team RNs – Diane Roth, Emily Schueller, Taylor Knutson, Jessie Hegy, and Renee Holzer, along with clinical manager Kate Wiese and Department of Nursing CNLs- Brittany Clements, Shelly Hass, and Melissa Sawyer, partnered in creating the workflows and processes implemented on the pilot units of Cardiopulmonary and Heritage. Much positive feedback has been shared by bedside and virtual RNs along with patients and families surrounding the benefits gained from this care model. A month in this new care model we have seen an impact on nursing care. Our virtual nurses have touched 400 patients and have given back 137 hours and 40 minutes to the bedside staff.



"I was able to accommodate a 45-minute complex discharge into my day that involved partnership with an interpreter. This patient was new to all things cardiac, including new medications. The bedside RN was very grateful for time spent on this discharge by a Virtual RN" – Emily Schueller vRN



Pictured above Xiaozan Anderson, RN

"Bedside staff have nothing but great things to say. They feel like they have time to spend with their patients, focus on hands-on care, and develop relationships with their patients!"



➤ Closing with Gratitude

I appreciate the simplicity of this year's National Nurses Week theme, "Nurses Make the Difference" and taking the time to reflect on the endless examples that occur daily across our organization. Upon first impression, our nurses provide a listening ear, a welcoming smile, or words of encouragement. What sets nursing apart is our ability to catch a clinical change of critical significance, create a personalized care plan, ensure understanding of important patient education, lead through a project, and design a new care model. The list of nurses' impact could go on and on. The stories in this edition beautifully showcase the innovative spirit, incredible teamwork and exceptional expertise that are Gundersen nurses making a difference. Please take time to celebrate your outstanding contributions; we have amazing nurses!



With gratitude,

Dani Rathke, DNP, RN, CNL
Director of Nursing

Nominate a nurse for a 2025 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.

**Thank you Corporate Communications and Photography for your support
with the creation of the May 2024 Nursing Impact!**

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