Like branches in a tree, we all grow in different directions, rooted in fertile ground.
This year the nurses at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center adopted a new symbol to represent our framework for providing care to patients. Unlike the decentralized statement made by its predecessor, the sea star, this generous and flourishing tree best represents who we have become through our 13 years as a Magnet designated organization.

As a lover of metaphors I believe that our nurses represent both the tree and the forest. As individuals our nurses stand strong and willing to deliver compassionate care to the tens of thousands of lives that present to the combination of our emergency department, our diagnostic and procedural areas and to our patient care units each year. Our nurses are firmly rooted in the essence of nursing knowledge, standards and ethics that support and guide their care. They steadfastly support their patients, whether it is to help them celebrate successes or shoulder difficult times.

Our nursing staff are members of a mighty forest consisting of more than 700 caregivers who literally and symbolically breathe life into people and situations. They are committed to care excellence and improvement while being mindful of the independent thought and collaborative relationships required to make a difference. They are grounded in promoting health, meaningful work, and satisfied patients and families in a value-based environment.

Nurses, like trees, are noble. Year after year, in fact for 18 years in a row, nurses heralded for their virtue by results reported in Gallup’s annual “Most Trusted Professions” poll. In 2019 nurses outpaced all other compared professions by a minimum margin of 20%, with 85% of responders rating them “very high” for their honesty and ethical standards.

Nurses continue to be the most trusted professionals for many reasons and especially, one can imagine, for the important roles they play throughout the continuum of people’s lives. Night and day. 365 days a year.

2019 has been another great year for us. To the staff I have the honor and pleasure to work beside, I say — thank you!

Cheryl Gagne DNP, RN, NEA-BC
Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer
Patient Care Services
Transformational leaders encourage, inspire and motivate themselves and others to innovate in ways that help grow and shape success. They promote high reliability and a culture of safety where individuals are not merely encouraged to work toward change; they create that change.

Transformation using daily huddles

In 2019, Chief Nursing Officer, Dr. Cheryl Gagne implemented “daily safety huddles” to facilitate communication between departments. Huddles are a vehicle for review of safety concerns that may impact patient care or staff satisfaction. The huddle is a stand up meeting where department leaders meet for 15 minutes each weekday morning. Sidebar conversations are prohibited at the huddle but encouraged at its conclusion with two goals in mind – quick discussion of current situations and follow up meeting avoidance.

At the huddle, participants report actual or potential safety concerns related to bed capacity, staffing, equipment or the environment. A capacity management dashboard serves as a visual portrayal of bed vacancies, staffing and information affecting ancillary departments and support services. Team members lead the huddle on a rotating basis. Areas represented include inpatient care units, outpatient care areas, engineering, environmental services, information technology, dietary and kitchen, laboratory, radiology, surgical services, pharmacy, hospitalists, pastoral care, education, quality and house supervision.

Huddles promote collaborative problem solving, facilitate quick resolution of safety concerns and lead to fewer formal meetings. Meeting with multi-departmental peers in a collegial environment that supports and promotes interdepartmental problem-solving has been a transformational experience.

The number of safety concerns identified and resolved within two days increased from 39% in the first huddle month to an average of 91% in the last six months of the year.

Transformation through clinical integration.

Since the creation of Solution Health in 2017, work groups have been active in meaningful collaboration to advance best practices at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center and Elliot Hospital. Service line work groups have been established for trauma, psychiatric, surgical and neonatal and adult intensive care service lines. In one best practice example, the Neonatal ICU clinical integration work group introduced new technology to prevent lung collapse in neonates during resuscitation, training for respiratory therapists in neonatal resuscitation and guidelines for transfer and retro-transfer of critically ill neonates.
Collaboration is essential for successful healthcare delivery. It requires the creation of positive, productive relationships. When relationships are working, everyone is happier, and innovation and creativity are given space to bloom.

**Workplace civility and worker resilience**

Relationship building was the focus of this Clinical Development program started in 2018 and continued into 2019. Over 400 staff and leadership participated in a two-part interactive educational program targeted to enhance communication and relationships between nurses, nurses and providers, nurses and leaders, nurses and patients, and nurses and other healthcare workers.

Professional Development Educators, Stacey Carroll MSN and Anna Grasso MSN shared their program at several venues including the April 2019 National Conference of the Association of Nursing Professional Development in Phoenix AZ, the September 2019 Northeast Organization of Nurse Educator conference in Woburn MA and in December 2019 at a Southern Vermont Medical Center staff event in Bennington VT. The Director of Education in Bennington shared these words “I anticipated your visit would be great, but you certainly exceeded all expectations! Thank you … for your time, effort, and contagious energy. Your passion for what you do speaks volumes and I am more than excited to say that the team is excited and moving forward [with your suggestions].”

**Southern New Hampshire Medical Center**

**Nurse Olympics**

When relationships at work are both collaborative and fun, relationships only get better. Nothing promotes teamwork and positive relationships like sports events and not surprisingly, the competition was fun but fierce at the first Southern New Hampshire Medical Center Nurse Olympics during Nurses’ Week in May 2019. The opening ceremony started with a parade through the venue, the torch was lit, the flag hung and the games began. There was laughter and team encouragement as teams bowled with urinals substituting for pins, untangled a dangling web of IV tubing, stacked med cups and ran a perilous obstacle course among other games. It was a memorable event that was talked about for months after the Olympic torch was extinguished!

Medal winners:
- Gold Medal — Team 3 West
- Silver Medal — Team 4 West
- Bronze Medal — Team Endoscopy

**Community relationships**

Patient Care Services also promotes relationships with schools and community organizations. Nashua is a great place to set down roots. Our staff represents our organization as a great place to work and our city of Nashua as a great place to live. Nurses volunteered at career fairs held by the New Hampshire Nurses Association, Rivier University Career Fair and the University of New Hampshire. One 3 West nurse, Mollie Murphy RN was a contributor on a new graduate panel where she shared her experience as a new graduate nurse at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center.
Care Delivery

Care delivery is a continually evolving branch of health care where new knowledge provides a foundation for practice, and quality improvement reinforces and realigns processes while pruning waste. Enhancements to practice through the introduction of new knowledge, innovation and improvements serve to nourish critical reasoning.

Quality Symposium

The Quality Symposium is a forum that engages staff in quality improvement projects across Southern New Hampshire Medical Center. Fifteen quality projects were submitted by Patient Care Services teams in 2019 for the annual symposium. In a contest that boasts only 7 awards, 5 of the winning entries involved Patient Care Services teams or team members.

- The People Pillar Award recognizes employee driven practices to improve patient care.
- The Service Pillar Award recognizes care delivery and patient experience improvement.
- The Quality Pillar Award recognizes contributions to care quality, efficiency, outcomes and safety.
- The Growth/Strategy Pillar Award recognizes the use of analytics to respond to emerging needs of patients and/or caregivers.
- The Grand Prize is awarded to the team that best represents the objectives of all 5 strategic pillars – people, service, quality, finance and growth.

Tell your story ...

Patient Care Services Staff contributed to the latest newsletter series by sharing the story of how they began their careers, who supported them in their choices, what kind of experiences they’ve had that remind them of how they make a difference, little known stories about themselves and a glimpse into their personal or professional goals. It has been a great column for sharing with and learning about peers.

Tell My Story

The best feeling is when my co-workers personally thank me. Knowing they feel supported and valued is what matters to me the most.

Caitlin Roberge, BSN RN
Clinical Manager 4 East

If you don’t see the book you want on the shelf, write it.

- Beverly Cleary

Community Service

Many of our staff volunteer their time at specialty events. In one example, several Emergency Services staff, among other departments, attended the 2019 Bridges Annual Gala in support of individuals affected by domestic violence. In another example, staff from 3 West Oncology/Surgery and the deNicola Breast Health Center organized a bake sale raising over $1600 for Breast Cancer Awareness.

Emergency Services staff attend the Bridges Annual Gala

If you don’t see the book you want on the shelf, write it.

- Beverly Cleary
Evidence Based Practice

High flow oxygen use
Pediatric nurses, upon request of the pediatric hospitalists, used existing evidence and benchmarking to develop a high flow nasal cannula oxygen guideline for children with bronchiectasis to improve outcomes.

Unit Based Practice committees use evidence in validating current practices. In 2019, eight new projects were initiated and five projects were completed on topics such as patient engagement, end of life order sets, patient mobility, patient education materials, patient weights and telemetry utilization.

People Pillar Award
*Don’t be silly Toto scarecrows don’t talk
This 4 East team project led staff to improved communication with patients and with each other. Team contributors included Ashley Clement MSN, Chelsea Lowe BSN, Savannah Neuwirt BSN and Jennifer Gould RN (MS Nursing Student).

Service Pillar Award
*There’s no place like home, sooner
This Maternal Child Health team project led to earlier discharge of babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome. Team contributors to the Eat, Sleep and Console program included Carol McIntyre BSN, Susan Diggins BSN, Lyndsey Dupuis MSN, Lourdes Hambrecht MSN, Amy Hollenberg BSN, Kathy Lizotte LCSW and Patricia Roncone BSN.

Quality Pillar Award
*I’ll get you my pretty, and your little spine too!
This Trauma/ED team project led to fewer complications related to spine immobilization. Team contributors included Jess Wyman MSN, Nicole Spence, Rebecca Buckmire LNA and Mary Scott BSN.

Growth/Strategy Pillar Award
*Twisting up the Transition to Practice
The Clinical Development team project led to the redesign of the new graduate nurse training process and improved staff retention. Team members included Anna Grasso MSN, Nicole Young BSN and Karen Tollick MSN.

Grand Prize Award
*Orientation to OZ
This multi-departmental team project led to improvement in the employee hiring process. Team members from Patient Care Services included our 3 East Unit Director Ann Marie Trowbridge MBA, BSN and our 4 East Unit Director Ashley Clement MSN.

Additional Patient Care Services Project Teams standardized handoffs, improved patient mobility, decreased anxiety, reduced anxiolytic use for pediatric patients, tested a nurse driven potassium replacement protocol, decreased procedure cancellations, managed skin tears during mammograms, improved cardiac rehab orientation and provided patients with Medicare information.

New Knowledge
An evidence based nurse driven algorithm for treating hypoglycemia of at-risk newborns was designed and implemented to decrease Special Care Nursery admissions and the need for intravenous glucose. Prior to the nurse driven algorithm, 26 newborns per 1,000 live births required Special Care Nursery admission. Five months after implementation of the practice change, the mean monthly rate of NICU admissions for hypoglycemia dropped to 15 newborns per 1,000 live births. Patty Roncone RN NICU presented the outcomes of the algorithm at the American Nurses Association Magnet Conference in October, 2019 in Orlando. Earlier intervention with oral glucose gel supports a mother-baby friendly environment and a cost effective alternative to NICU admission.

The Emergency Services Annex was a year long project that established a designated location for providing care to psychiatric patients presenting to Emergency Services. This project was multidepartment in scope while having significant input by our Emergency Services leader Mary Scott along with staff from the department.

Both the Special Care Nursery and Emergency Services projects were shared with our affiliate nurses at Massachusetts General Hospital. They were accepted for presentation and delivered by Mary Scott BSN and Patty Roncone BSN in May, 2019. Both the Special Care Nursery and Emergency Services projects were shared with our affiliate nurses at Massachusetts General Hospital. They were accepted for presentation and delivered by Mary Scott BSN and Patty Roncone BSN in May, 2019. Both the Special Care Nursery and Emergency Services projects were shared with our affiliate nurses at Massachusetts General Hospital. They were accepted for presentation and delivered by Mary Scott BSN and Patty Roncone BSN in May, 2019 at the Annual Yvonne L. Munn Nursing Research Conference.

At Southern New Hampshire Medical Center recognition is personal and it is shared both internally and publicly. Recognition takes many forms and may involve several sponsors from individuals to organizations. Examples of recognition types listed below follow.

- Patient and peer “shout outs”
- Certifications and graduations
- DAISY Team and Individual Awards
- High 5 Shine Awards
- Nurse of the Year
- Nurse Leader of the Year
- Magnet Component Awards
- Teamwork Awards
- Employee of the Month
- New Hampshire Magazine Nurse Excellence
- New Hampshire Nurse’s Association Rising Star

The Daisy Award
Patrick Barnes died at an early age as a result of a Disease that Attacked his Immune System. He lived a generous life toward others and never turned his back away from those in need. The DAISY award is a nationwide program funded by the family of Patrick Barnes. Presented monthly, this award recognizes nurses who provide extraordinary care to patients in hospitals across the world. DAISY nominees receive a certificate proclaiming them an “Extraordinary Nurse”, a pin, a unique hand-carved serpentine stone sculpture and a Spotlight page on the DAISY website. Our twelve DAISY nurses in 2019 represent the best of the best at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center.

In May, 2019 a very special DAISY recognition was awarded to the ICU Team for care provided to a patient with end stage pulmonary disease. A letter of nomination from the patient’s wife thanked staff who “made his last weekend just the way he wanted it to be remembered.” That award was made extra special when the founders of the DAISY award, Bonnie and Mark Barnes, came to the Medical Center to present the award. The ICU was the first SNHMC group to be honored with the DAISY Team Award. They also became one out of over a million nominees to have their story included in the first ever DAISY Foundation publication Shining the Light on All That’s Right.

Shining the Light On All the Right

11

12
Shout outs
Much is written about the power of saying a person’s name out loud. Our names are personal. Their importance is communicated every time you see or feel the nod in yourself in response to somebody saying your name out loud. Patient generated notes of appreciation provide examples of the things that are said about our nursing staff personally. These words can fill a caregiver with pride in what they do and pride in who they are.

About Danielle Hatch RN, Emergency Services
“An aura of confidence combined with a genuine personal, helpful nature.”

About Sharon Greenhalgh RN 3 West, Oncology
“I want you to know I think you are doing a wonderful job. You listened to me and cared for me.”

About John Moren RN and Amy Hollenberg RN, Pediatrics
“They showed they cared beyond providing the medicinal care that made our stay extraordinary in my eyes for my 5 month old baby.”

About the preoperative and post anesthesia care staff
“The whole team from check-in to discharge was so patient and helpful.”

Certifications and Graduations
The Institute of Medicine 2011 report on the Future of Nursing cited research indicated that a more highly educated workforce achieves better outcomes. In 2019, 8 nurses graduated with a BSN, 13 nurses graduated with a Master’s degree and 16 nurses achieved specialty certification. By December, Southern New Hampshire Medical Center reached a level of 74.3% of nurses holding a BSN or higher and a certified nurse rate of 49.2% of nurses.

Patient Care Services Recognition Day
Each year, several awards are given recognizing staff achievements. Thirteen awards are given — Nurse of the Year, Nurse Leader of the Year and Team Member of the Year, 5 Magnet component awards, and 5 teamwork awards.

2019 Top Tier Awards went to:

**Nurse of the Year** — Stephanie Stickney RN BSN (3 West—Oncology) was recognized for her contributions to shared governance as Nurse Practice Council chair, mentorship of nursing students and providing great care.

**Nurse Leader of the Year** — Patti Roncone, RN BSN (Special Care Nursery) was recognized for promoting unit based best practices, quality improvement initiatives and mentorship.

**Team Member of the Year** — Jennifer Hitzeman, Case Manager (Patient and Family Services) was recognized for her communication and coordination skills as well as relationship building.

Magnet Component Awards went to
- Transformational Leadership: Denis Demirovic RN, ED
- Structural Empowerment: Gabriella Gaudette RN, 4W
- Exemplary Professional Practice: Kerriann Crowley RN, 3E
- New Knowledge: Bethany St. Onge RN, Endoscopy
- Empirical Outcomes: Susan Diggins RN, Quality

Teamwork Awards went to
- Diana Morel CA, West 3
- Michelle (Ellie) Dion CA, West 4
- Kami Wojtaszek LNA, ED
- Michael Cleary LNA East 4
- Jamie Lynn Costello Case Manager, PFS

Certified Nurses Day Celebration

Nurse of the Year
Stephanie Stickney, BSN RN, 3 West

Nurse Leader of the Year
Patti Roncone, BSN RN, NICU

Team Member of the Year
Jennifer Hitzeman, Case Manager, PFS
Employee of the Month

The Medical Center Employee of the Month Award recognizes those who go above and beyond, exceeding expectations and exemplifying our core values. In July, Jennifer O’Neil RN MSN, House Supervisor was recognized for her positive attitude, coworker support and commitment to providing quality patient care.

The HIGH-5 SHINE

This award was created by nurses to recognize support staff they rely on every day to assist in care delivery. SHINE is an acronym that best describes its recipients as Supportive, Helpful, Involved, Nurturing persons who Strive for Excellence. This year’s SHINE awardees have contributed to exemplary professional practice by providing much appreciated assistance in the form of patient care that included interpreting, recognition of clinical emergencies by non-clinical staff, retrieval of life saving equipment from other facilities on a day off (just because) and compassionate support for vulnerable patients.

Recognition from outside our four walls

When recognition arises outside the organization it signals excellence to a greater community and shines a light on the organization. Two awards in 2019 focused attention on the nursing care provided at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center.

In May, New Hampshire Magazine chose Lisa McCarthy RN from our Behavioral Health unit for excellence in psychiatric and mental health nursing. This Excellence in Nursing Award is sponsored by the magazine. Honorees are selected from dozens of nominations submitted by health care organizations (inpatient and outpatient) across the state are reviewed.

During her NH Magazine interview Lisa noted: “Nursing is about the ability to communicate with people in their most vulnerable and frightened moments. What is always in the back of my mind is to treat patients the way I would want them treated if they were my family member.”

In October, the New Hampshire Nurses Association recognizes exceptional contributions to the nursing profession along with budding leadership skills early in a nurse’s career through the “Rising Star” Award. The 2019 Rising Star was staff nurse Stephanie Stickney RN, BSN of 3 West who was recognized in her award nomination for her exceptional bedside care, preceptor skills, her leadership position as Chair of the Nurse Practice Council and her participation in Breast Cancer Research fundraising.
Strong and healthy trees are grounded in nutrient-rich soil that enables their growth upward and outward. An organization’s core values are an essential source of nutrition. Its successes reflect the relationship between the values driving its culture and its outcomes.

In 2019, several nurse driven initiatives successfully met the challenge presented by the organization’s updated core value acronym—

**T R U S T.**

**Patient Focused**  
**Respect**  
**Accountability**  
**Compassion**  
**Commitment**

### Accountability for trauma care

In March, the Emergency Services Trauma Designation visit was conducted. Trauma Performance Improvement Committee cases were scrutinized by ED leadership and by the State Trauma Designation Reviewers. Following the review, SNHMC was re-designated by the state as a Level III Trauma Center.

### Patient focus

In October 2019, a tool for patients “Questions to Ask My Provider” was implemented on all units. The idea started with the Nurse Practice Committee after reviewing patient experiences of communication with nurses and providers. The tool was piloted on 4 West and patient satisfaction with communication improved significantly.

### Commitment to safety

In January 2019, the Nurse Practice Council and the Patient and Family Advisory Council collaborated on a fall prevention project. Several meetings, one script and several on-location pictures and videos later resulted in a popcorn-worthy flic that was written, acted and produced at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center. The video was a learning event that delivered its message in a creative way.

### Compassion

From a family member: My beautiful mother was a patient in your Radiology Department and had weekly treatments that were very painful but mom’s “angels on earth” cared for her, loved her and helped me to cope. Crystal, Jeanna, Andrea and Faith welcomed her like royalty every week and my mom knew that she was in the hands of the best skilled nurses. When she was in hospice, these nurse sent messages and checked in on her which made her smile and feel special during her last weeks. After she passed, these precious four nurses sent me a personal, heartfelt sympathy care, which I will keep and cherish forever.

### Respecting what matters

The Chief Nursing Officer held several Town Hall meetings throughout 2019 with nursing staff who were invited to share their thoughts about what is important to them in the workplace. The top two responses garnering over 50% of the answers were teamwork and work environment.

### Tell My Story

After exploring other nursing avenues, I found myself missing SNHMC’s community feel.

Melissa Frechette, BSN, RN

PACU

Pediatric Trauma Supplies