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Northwestern Medicine  
Kishwaukee Hospital and  
Valley West Hospital

2023

Nursing  
Annual Report



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# A Message From the Chief Nurse Executive

It is a true honor to share the Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital and Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital 2023 Nursing Annual Report. This report includes powerful examples of nursing excellence and achievements in nursing. Our nursing team is built on our Northwestern Medicine attributes of a nurse, which you will see come alive in our report. These attributes describe our nurses as compassionate, collaborative, knowledgeable, professional and advocates for our patients and community.

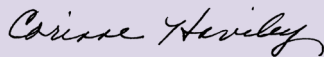
Kishwaukee and Valley West hospitals have achieved remarkable empirical outcomes not seen in the past. Our nursing outcome performance measures are amazing; when you compare our outcomes to the national database, you will truly be impressed. Our commitment to nursing is to provide the structure to advance nursing practice in multiple ways.

We have created an environment and space for our nurses to advance their professional development with an eligible nurse certification rate of 31%, and 71% of nurses having a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree or higher. These results are stellar!

Our teams are contributing to new knowledge and innovation at a pace never seen before at Kishwaukee and Valley West. The remote tele-consult project shared between both hospitals brings critical care support to our Sandwich community using new technology funded through the Northwestern Medicine Mansueto Innovation Institute.

I am so proud and grateful to introduce our annual report representing our two Magnet®-recognized organizations. You will see how our nurses are leading the way to a better tomorrow. Congratulations to our Kishwaukee and Valley West nurses for everything that you have accomplished!

Sincerely,



Corinne Haviley, PhD, MS, RN  
Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive



# Structural Empowerment

## Training a New Kind of Shift Leader

Kishwaukee Hospital and Valley West Hospital launched the Clinical Shift Coordinator (CSC) Development Program in March 2023, and 38 new CSCs participated. This robust program is a four-part workshop that equips CSCs with the knowledge, skills and behaviors to increase success in their role.

Understanding the role of the CSC is vital to the daily operations of the nursing units. Content was developed by Northwestern Medicine subject matter experts and focuses on leadership concepts related to:

- Financial and strategic management
- Human resource management
- Effective communication
- Coaching
- Team building
- Patient engagement
- Creating a culture of safety
- Healthcare quality

The delivery of supplemental curriculum empowers CSCs to grow professionally and support daily operations in their areas of oversight. These management tasks include facilitating patient flow, adjusting staffing, meeting patient needs and escalating concerns, all in the service of patient safety and quality outcomes.

Relative to the workshops, the CSCs completed pre- and post-surveys about their perception of confidence surrounding nursing leadership and health care. Participants rated their confidence level from one to five, with one indicating not at all confident and five, extremely confident. The confidence rating was 3.49 on the pre-survey but the score was 3.95 at the program's completion, a 13.18% increase. In addition, the CSCs indicated a greater than 25% knowledge gain and a greater than 50% intent to change practice.

# Transformational Leadership

## Surgical Smoke Removal Plan Earns the AORN Go Clear Award

“Transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity.” (Bass and Riggio, 2006)

Surgical smoke from devices such as lasers, electrocautery and powered instruments represents a danger in the operating room (OR) work environment. Perioperative nurses are more likely to experience respiratory problems compared with the general population. The Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN) Center of Excellence in Surgical Safety started a Smoke Evacuation Program to help hospitals pursue a smoke-free environment and protect the safety of both patients and OR teams.

Kishwaukee Hospital OR clinical nurse Hanna Weber, BSN, RN, and Kishwaukee Hospital PACU clinical nurse Colleen Walberg, BSN, RN, led a Unit-Based Council (UBC) project to increase patient and workforce safety. Their focus was to remove surgical smoke from all operating and procedure rooms.



They worked with the OR, Obstetrics (OB) and Cardiovascular Interventional Services (CVIS) nursing teams to implement the AORN Smoke Evacuation Program. Components of the program include testing, interprofessional education, gap analysis and compliance monitoring. Kishwaukee Hospital received national recognition, earning the AORN Go Clear Award.

# Transformational Leadership

## 2023 DAISY Leader Award



IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES



Ashley Brown, BSN, RN, CMSRN, is a transformational leader who is dedicated to serving the rural community at Valley West Hospital in activities to improve patient access to care. As the manager of Medical Surgical (Med-Surg)/ICU, she oversees the

Homeward Healing Program. The program is unique to critical access hospitals, providing short-term care for patients as they transition from hospital to home.

Brown developed a structure that involves clinical nurses in reviewing referrals and making decisions about accepting patients into the program. The nurses work collaboratively with an interprofessional team of leaders, physicians, rehabilitation, pharmacy, clinical nutrition and care coordination.

Additionally, Brown created an opportunity for support staff to coordinate activity therapies for patients in the Homeward Healing Program. The team has achieved top-decile performance in quality, safety and engagement through shared governance, providing staff opportunities for professional growth, and innovation. Adopting best practices that align with improving key quality initiatives has resulted in Valley West achieving:

Three years without a catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI)

Six years without a central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI)

Two years without a patient fall with injury

More than 150 days without a hospital-acquired pressure injury (HAPI)

Brown's influence in achieving excellent patient outcomes has contributed to Valley West being recognized as a leading critical access hospital.



# Exemplary Professional Practice

## 2023 Nurses of the Year

### Inpatient Nurses of the Year

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**Tracy Dambrauskas, BSN, RN, Med-Surg clinical nurse, Valley West Hospital,**

is a shining example of a Northwestern Medicine nurse. She models lifelong learning and emphasizes the importance of being on

the forefront of evidence-based practices. As a member of her unit's UBC, she demonstrates professionalism and promotes innovation to improve patient care delivery.



**Elizabeth Reaves, BSN, RN, CCRN, ICU clinical shift coordinator, Kishwaukee Hospital,**

is an exceptional nurse and leader with 26 years of experience. Reaves demonstrates a strong commitment to excellence,

inspiring her co-workers in their professional development. As chair of the Kishwaukee Hospital ICU/IMCU UBC, she promotes and facilitates the advancement of the nursing profession.



## Outpatient Nurses of the Year

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**Emalyn Anderson, BSN, RN, clinical nurse, Valley West Hospital Emergency Department**, demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to providing high-quality patient care. Working in the fast-paced environment

of the Emergency Department, Anderson brings a sense of calm, promoting teamwork and collaboration with a focus on improving patient outcomes.



**John Cox, RN, OCN, clinical nurse, Kishwaukee Hospital Cancer Center**, is a strong patient advocate who maintains a focus on patient safety and improved patient outcomes. Nurse colleagues recognize Cox for his

commitment to excellence and being a valuable member of the team. Cox has worked at Northwestern Medicine for 26 years and has 31 years of nursing experience.

# Exemplary Professional Practice

## Advancements Happen When You LEAD

Fiscal year 2023, saw several Kishwaukee Hospital and Valley West Hospital nurses launching their own efforts to Lead, Excel and Develop (LEAD), Northwestern Medicine's contemporary clinical advancement program. LEAD was designed for clinicians who want to advance clinical practice and care through innovation, research, evidence-based practice and quality improvement. LEAD candidates must complete a project, professional activity points and level-specific coursework.

Amy Taylor, BSN, RNC-OB; Elizabeth Fogarty, MSN, RNC-OB; and Emily Miner, BSN, RN, developed a safe sleep policy that improved Kishwaukee Hospital OB safe sleep compliance through nurse education. Their project received a \$10,000 Northwestern Medicine grant to purchase take-home sleep

sacks for newborns and resulted in the hospital earning the Bronze Certification through the Cribs for Kids' National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification program.

Kelly Densberger, BSN, RN, RNC-CBC, CLC, and Stephanie Stouffer, BSN, RN, IBCLC, exemplified collaborative practice by incorporating the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) evidence-based clinical practice guideline to support lactation for those parents who choose to provide human milk to their newborns. Now an established milk depot, the Kishwaukee Hospital OB department has implemented the human donor milk program to increase rates of breast feeding.



Cameron Kielb, BSN, RN, CVRNII, and Bailey Wood, BSN, RN, CAPA, partnered with the professional development team to address the specific learning needs identified within the Kishwaukee Hospital CVIS. The education plan improved staff knowledge and promoted decreased radial site complications (hematoma, bleeding and oozing).

Sara Bernhard, BSN, RN, CMSRN; Samantha Lanning, BSN, RN, CMSRN; and Jamie Murphy, BSN, RN, CMSRN, sought to standardize the resource/discharge nurse role, which improved discharge times and completion of discharge calls.

# New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements

## Merging the Power of Nurses From Two Locations via Remote Tele Consult



In April 2023 clinical nurses and leaders from Kishwaukee Hospital and Valley West Hospital participated in a one-day rapid improvement event (RIE) to design an innovative nursing consultation process. Using the DMAIC quality improvement methodology (define, measure, analyze, improve and control), the group identified the unique challenges of providing bedside care in a critical access hospital when patient volume is inconsistent.



Participants in the event developed a structure for nursing support by leveraging the special relationship between Valley West Hospital and Kishwaukee Hospital. To help implement the structure, Northwestern Medicine Mansueto Innovation Institute funded the telemedicine technology. Now, Valley West nurses can request a nursing consultation with a clinical shift coordinator (CSC) at the Kishwaukee ICU to confirm best practices and ask questions. The CSC can visualize the patient from Kishwaukee, providing nursing expertise remotely.

This resource has given Valley West nurses the confidence to care for patients with more complex cases, knowing they have support. Kishwaukee nurses get the opportunity to demonstrate their *Patients First* mission from 30 miles away! Nurses from both hospitals look forward to other opportunities to advance this nursing innovation in FY24.

# New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements

## Quicker Access to Homeward Healing

The Homeward Healing Swing Bed Program at Valley West Hospital is exclusive to critical access hospitals. The program provides post-acute skilled nursing and therapy care as an alternative to short-term skilled nursing facility placements. The Swing Bed interprofessional team consists of nurse leaders, physicians, dietitians, rehabilitation services and pharmacies with an important recent addition. Now, clinical shift coordinators (CSCs) review clinical information before a patient's acceptance into the program to determine whether they meet the criteria.

The traditional model was for the unit manager to review all potential candidates. Nursing leadership noticed a decrease in admissions that were attributed to a lengthy referral process. Delays in acceptance led many patients to be accepted into other facilities and transferred out of the Northwestern Medicine system. To improve review efficiencies and increase patient acceptance rates, nursing leaders created a Microsoft Teams-based referral tracking system that allows all reviewing disciplines to quickly review and accept referrals within one live document. This process reduced email threads and communication gaps, allowing for more timely approvals.

Recognized as key decision makers, clinical nurses were added to the interprofessional team. Valley West Hospital Medical-Surgical CSCs now review all potential candidates and evaluate patient suitability, which allows for rapid acceptance and increased admissions. The enhanced review process for the Valley West Hospital Homeward Healing Swing Bed Program has doubled admissions over the prior year.





# Empirical Outcomes

Kishwaukee Hospital and Valley West Hospital nurses apply evidence-based practice, which means they have outperformed national benchmarks for the last eight quarters.

Inpatient units at both hospitals outperformed these national benchmarks:\*



**67%** for falls with injury



**100%** for hospital-acquired pressure injury (HAPI) stage 2 and above



**100%** for central line-associated blood stream infection (CLABSI)



**100%** for catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI)

Ambulatory units at both hospitals outperformed the national benchmark\*



**100%** for falls

Patients responded with the HCAHPS top box to "Nurses treated me with courtesy and respect":\*\*



**86.5%** of Kishwaukee Hospital patients

**91.5%** of Valley West Hospital patients

\*Data from the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators. \*\*Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems.



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