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Protected: Memorial Hermann Salutes Nurses in More Ways than One

By [StoryStudio](#) on April 17, 2023 10:02 AM

Health care systems can't survive without nurses. Nurses put the personal touch on lifesaving care. By bedsides, in ERs and ORs, or among diagnostic suites, nurses are there making discernable differences in the lives of patients. Their secret, as any health care professional will tell you, is that nurses prioritize the care and safety of their patients above all. Between their patients and their fellow clinicians, often the last person nurses care for is themselves.



Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital Magnet designation celebration

We need to protect, care for and honor our nurses, who are among health care's most critical resources. At [Memorial Hermann](#), this mission is taken

seriously. Balancing the needs of the community they've served for over 100 years with the needs of their nursing staff has earned many of Memorial Hermann's 14 hospitals Magnet designation, the highest possible organizational credential granted by the [American Nurses Credentialing Center](#) (ANCC) for nursing excellence. This prestigious designation is awarded to less than 7% of US hospitals, making Memorial Hermann a national leader in nursing.

"Receiving the ANCC magnet designation is a high honor from the largest and most prominent nursing credentialing organization in the United States," says Caitlin McVey, assistant vice president of Memorial Hermann's Institute for Nursing Excellence, a new initiative focused on reimagining care at the bedside and enhancing the professional practice. "The award showcases that not only are nurses providing evidence-based and high-quality care, but they're doing so in a supportive and healthy work environment. At Memorial Hermann, nurses have opportunities to grow in their profession, to use their voices to drive change and to make things better for not only each other, but the patients as well."

McVey knows the important intangibles nurses bring to the patient experience. She began her nursing career in neonatal intensive care where she discovered a passion for nursing, not only the patient care side, but the lasting impact nursing has on families, each other and the health care community. Says McVey, "One of the reasons I came to Memorial Hermann is because of the mission, the vision and the values that the health system has and how it truly walks that every day."

Memorial Hermann's ANCC Magnet designation is the result of collaborative efforts between nursing staff and the focus of each hospital's Chief Nursing Officer on continuous improvement. Memorial Hermann's prioritization of their nursing staff, epitomized by the Institute for Nursing Excellence, amplifies the voice of nurses in health care innovation and supports those innovations with

wraparound services for nurse well-being. Dovetailing with Houston Chronicle's Salute to Nurses – the publication's annual recognition of over 200 of the most dedicated local nurses – the launch of the Institute for Nursing Excellence couldn't be timelier.

“Nurses are motivated by relationships,” says Bryan Sisk, system chief nurse executive at Memorial Hermann about the Institute's origins. “The Institute for Nursing Excellence is how we can foster our relationship with our 12,000 nurses. Through our congress model, we can really get at the heart of what nurses care about, and make sure they understand we're working on strengthening the workforce and innovating at the bedside.”



Texas Nurses' Day at the Capitol

Because nurses are often patient-facing members of health care, holding the hands of patients at the bedside and guiding them through their health care journey, Memorial Hermann recognized the need for a system that could listen to those voices and design initiatives and practice changes based on nurses' recommendations. Simultaneously, this system would offer care and support to

nurses while they care for us. The Institute for Nursing Excellence is that system.

“Many great ideas come from the bedside,” says McVey. “Because health care is such a fast-paced environment, having a structure driven by the bedside staff will help Memorial Hermann accelerate new ideas and innovation. The Institute for Nursing Excellence allows us to take the time to create an infrastructure so our nurses can be the drivers of that change.”

According to McVey and Sisk, the pandemic accelerated worrying trends of burnout and fatigue across frontline health care members. Even as health care pivoted to new innovations like advances in telehealth and the de-siloing of health care through the digitalization of patient care records, health care largely missed the mark in addressing the needs of the human side of health care, what Sisk calls healthcare’s “healing touch.” McVey and Sisk see the Institute as a way of reversing these trends.

“The Institute for Nursing Excellence allows us to preserve those moments that matter,” explains Sisk, “then lock those in and wrap services around the healing touch aspect of health care.”

As they gathered feedback from nurses about how to improve nursing at one of the nation’s leading health systems, three words came up repeatedly: grow, excel, and reimagine. The big takeaway for Sisk became: Nurses want to grow and become specialists in their field while excelling as part of an innovative health system dedicated to reimagining health care in a way that’s effective and sustainable for both providers and patients.



Innovations prioritizing the health and well-being of nurses and their patients are already happening at Memorial Hermann. The not-for-profit health system is the only one in the Greater Houston area chosen to participate in the [Health Management Academy Nursing Catalyst](#) program, a nine month national program for high-performing nurse managers that explores creative ways to help reduce nurse workload at the point of care. The Nursing Catalyst program aims to increase nurse retention rates at hospitals, thereby improving health outcomes for patients.

Memorial Hermann has five program participants who are focusing on different innovations in telenursing. For example, two nurse managers are studying the viability of state-of-the-art robotic telepresence technology, where a robot equipped with two-way digital and audio functionality allows a virtual nurse to assist with caseload, admission and discharge. If such an innovation proves viable, the Institute for Nursing Excellence will then source wraparound services to support the innovation, thereby seamlessly incorporating it into a nurse's everyday workflow without decreasing well-being.



Nurse celebrations at Memorial Hermann

“One of the things that we have come to realize through countless hours of getting feedback from our employees, is that wellness is defined much more broadly than what health care has traditionally defined it,” says Sisk.

Broadening the definition of well-being has real-world applications. Sisk shares a scenario where a nurse who is also furthering their education not only has their education paid for but has the barriers to access that funding removed. Improving nurse well-being also means broadening access to mental health services. Says Sisk, “Historically, health care hasn’t said to their clinicians, ‘Hey, it’s ok to not be ok.’ We’ve created pathways to access support services 24/7.”

Along with providing nurses a voice in the direction of healthcare, innovations to help reduce fatigue and access to services designed to increase well-being, the Institute for Nursing Excellence is exploring enhanced services designed for nurses, like childcare and eldercare assistance and financial planning.

Memorial Hermann has already implemented programs like Code Lilac – which allows nurses to take a coordinated time-out to help reduce stress – and peer-to-peer counseling relationships where nurses are encouraged to talk to a mentor when they're feeling overwhelmed. Creating a multipronged approach to nurse well-being reflects the larger trend in health care of approaching patient health holistically.

Memorial Hermann is known as a place where nurses matter. With Magnet designation of multiple Memorial Hermann hospitals and the launch of its Institute for Nursing Excellence, the health system is attracting top talent from both Greater South Texas and the nation at large. Here, health care innovation comes paired with wraparound services that support nurses, not bury them in unnecessary casework that takes them away from the bedside. As a nurse at Memorial Hermann, your voice is heard, your well-being is of paramount importance and you can make a difference in patients' lives every single day.



As we salute our nurses during Nurses' Week, Memorial Hermann is committed to saluting nurses year-round. Learn more about available nursing positions and our nursing team at jobs.memorialhermann.org/nursesweek.

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