



MedStar Health



# Champions of care.

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital



**2019  
Nursing  
Annual  
Report**





# The business side of nursing.

Nurses have many roles beyond direct care. Here are a few ways they're making a difference for patients—and operations—at MedStar St. Mary's.


## A letter from our chief nursing officer:

**Patients need a champion. Seeing so many individuals at their most vulnerable, these patients need a hero.** And for those entrusted to our care, these champions exist throughout our organization. Our nurses are there not only to deliver skillful care, but to do so with compassion. Sometimes that means sitting with a patient to hear what isn't being said. Other times it's escalating a concern, mourning with them, or navigating complex family relationships. Each shift—and every patient—is different, but the need for champions at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital remains the same. From those spearheading quality initiatives such as reducing falls to nurses who serve as the eyes and ears of their patients, I see exceptional work happening every day at our hospital and in our community.

In the 2019 *Nursing Annual Report*, we're taking a closer look at the priorities so many of you have taken to heart: championing programs that are making an impact on the safety of care delivered to patients. This was also the year many of our nurses became involved in our transition to MedConnect, MedStar Health's electronic health record, lending their expertise to this vital project in addition to their regular duties. We are grateful for their knowledge and commitment to helping us all move forward.

Beyond the bedside, there are many dedicated nurses who tend to the "business" side of our profession: documentation, follow-up, and technical support impacting care along with those at the bedside. Guided by our SPIRIT values, we rely upon one another to succeed. We're pleased to feature some of these hardworking associates in this report.

**Much is asked of our nurses: that we be advocates as well as caregivers, leaders and professionals, team players and independent thinkers. You are all capable—and you answer that call.** Thank you for your commitment to our profession. I'm grateful to practice alongside you, and hope you enjoy this look back through our 2019 accomplishments . . . with an ever-present eye toward advancing into the future.

Warmly,  
  
**Dawn Yeitakis, MS, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, CEN**  
Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer



**Reducing observations**  
For our patients' wellbeing and the financial health of our hospital, MedStar St. Mary's focused on reducing the time patients spend in **Observation Status (OBS)** in 2019. Insurance companies typically allow between 24 to 48 hours of coverage for observation patients before these costs defer to the individual and/or our hospital. A team led by **Jennifer Alvey, MS, BSN, RN, VA-BC** began rounding on OBS patients daily in 3 Central to identify any barriers to discharge, including tests to complete. Efforts are ongoing, but OBS denials have already been decreasing from the previous fiscal year.



**Making our way to MedConnect**  
Throughout 2019, more than 100 associates devoted their time and expertise as Subject Matter Experts during our hospital's transition to MedConnect, MedStar Health's electronic health record (EHR), during the system's build. **Lindsey Green, RN**, Behavioral Health, was among those lending her knowledge and perspective to this work. After the build was complete, approximately 70 nurses agreed to serve as superusers as go-live was planned for early 2020. Though the transition was postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis, their assistance laid the groundwork for this important transition.



**Problem-solving leads to EHR changes**  
As a nurse in Information Services (IS), **Steven Alvey, BSN, RN-BC**, is quite familiar with our electronic health record (EHR). For nearly a decade, his duties have included designing, building, and modifying its various aspects: orders, clinical rules, alerts, and more. Tools must be clinically accurate and technically sound—and Steve enjoys problem-solving challenges brought on by new regulatory requirements or system errors. "By optimizing the EHR for nursing and medical staff, I assist in removing potential barriers to the provision of care," said Steve. "Helping to facilitate another clinician's path to the patient is how I realize my own."



**Care in the community**  
**Outpatient case management** begins before the patient leaves our doors. **Holly Adams, BSN, RN**, and **Linda Davis, BSN, RN**, Population & Community Health, participate in rounding to monitor those being prepared for discharge. If the individual needs help to stay well, they huddle to discuss appropriate resources. Holly and Linda follow up with providers, arrange transportation, and much more. Assistance also includes listening for social determinants to health—issues such as a diabetic patient's electricity bill going unpaid, so their insulin cannot be kept cold—and connecting them with help.

**Keeping the record straight in clinical documentation**  
With their extensive experience in healthcare, **Michael Wilson, CCDS, CCS**, and **Lori Amonett-Wilson, BA, RN, CCDS**, utilize their skills in **both medical and nursing clinical documentation**. "We look at patients concurrently to ensure their record aligns with the physician's record," said Lori, who spent 30 years as a nurse in emergency and critical care. "Our goal is always to make sure we have a codable chart—that, based on the documentation, we can be properly reimbursed for the care we've provided." Mike and Lori build relationships with providers while reviewing and verifying information. They also work on quality metrics with a focus on ICD-10 codes and Maryland hospital-acquired conditions (MHACs). "It's satisfying to blend my coding knowledge with my nursing background," said Mike, a former U.S. Army medic and critical care nurse.





# Nurses are champions of care.

By focusing on the details of safe patient care, nurses are champions for patient safety and resources for colleagues.

## NICHE champions give extra attention to seniors.

The Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) program expanded beyond Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics (MSP) in 2019, now with nurses from Telemetry, 3 Central and ICC—including **Brooke Graham, RN**, Telemetry, pictured above—devoting additional focus to patients age 65 and older.

“NICHE champions pay special attention to ensuring our older patients are ambulating and having their meals while seated in a chair—activities to keep them mobile,” said **Anita Wetzel, RN**. “We also check medications and doses against the Beers list of potentially inappropriate medications for elderly patients,” as this population may be adversely affected due to comorbid conditions and other factors.



## An alarming way to prevent falls.

Focused on patient safety, the Fall Champion Committee wants to ensure associates are well-educated on fall precautions. Nurses and providers work together to ensure patients deemed at risk of falls are appropriately monitored. Committee members also conduct monthly audits to review fall data and drill down on causes.

From yellow socks to fall lights, bed alarms and chair alarms, we want to make sure our teams are familiar with these preventive measures,” said **Victoria Fitzgerald, RN**, Telemetry. “It’s great to have nurses in the champion role and be able to bring this knowledge back to our units.” If a patient does become imbalanced, new mats—introduced across all inpatient units in 2019—are designed to reduce the force of impact by up to 85 percent.



## Primary nurses are building relationships.

Beginning in 2019, patients at MedStar St. Mary’s are assigned a primary nurse to coordinate their plan of care—even if they return to the hospital during shifts when their nurse is not present. Closely tied to patient satisfaction and safety, Contemporary Primary Nursing (CPN) is focused on continuity of care and building relationships to improve patient outcomes.

“Nurses are advocates, and we can be their voice,” said **Patty Hall, BSN, RN**, Intensive Care Center. “As a primary nurse, we work with patients and their families to really build trust and communicate their needs, desires, and goals to our peers. Families feel heard and supported, and we positively impact their experience. I am especially connected to ‘my’ patients and feel honored to care for them.”

## Collaborating to manage pain.

Pain champions are here for patients and colleagues. At monthly meetings, members of the Pain Champion Committee review charts, discuss responses regarding pain via the Patient Satisfaction Survey, and look through patient records to identify where additional work with the healthcare team may be necessary, among other tasks.

“We look at how we can collaborate to better handle patients’ pain by evaluating data from units across MedStar St. Mary’s,” said **Valerie McKay, BSN, RN**, Periooperative Services. “When reviewing charts, we remind our colleagues about things like putting in a pain scale. If we find issues with charting, we can bring that back to the unit.”

In 2019, the committee introduced another option: the use of lavender for patients unable to take more pain medication. “Many patients find this soothing,” Valerie said.



## Skin savers prevent pressure injuries.

Increasing awareness of hospital-acquired pressure injuries (HAPIs) to ultimately decrease this impact on our patients is being taken on by our Skin Champion Committee. **Ally Ridgell, BSN, RN**, Emergency Department and **Kristie Dutrow, BSN, RN**, 3 Central, are among those working to decrease these injuries on areas that often include the heels, buttocks, and behind the ears.

“We work with colleagues to help identify skin break down and increase awareness of HAPIs. This has included adopting and implementing the Dermis Deputy program to other units,” said Kristie. Skin champions also help colleagues know when to engage wound nurse **Lea Ann Carranza, MSN, RN, CWOCN, PCCN** for assistance.

Formed in 2019, skin champions participate in an annual MedStar Health skin forum to collaborate on protective innovations. New practices have been implemented: two RN skin assessments, Wound Wednesdays, preventative dressings, and removing draw sheets/briefs. The committee meets monthly to review HAPIs and visit patients to identify aspects of care that could interfere with skin integrity (such as nutrition or medications).



## Lifts now move patients for their safety—and ours.

To better protect patients and associates, 73 ceiling lifts were installed throughout MedStar St. Mary’s in 2019—a major initiative that required construction and collaboration throughout the hospital.

With training on the new equipment complete, associates no longer rely upon finding a portable Golvo lift or other measure to move those in their care.

Our safety patient handling champions—including **Kayla Brumback, CNA**, Telemetry, and **Anita Wetzel, RN**—provide guidance and practical help to colleagues.



# Nursing numbers at a glance.

A look at 2019: growth, professional development, and accomplishments at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.



## Nursing degrees at MedStar St. Mary's

Bachelor's degree **235**  
Master's degree **30**








**404**  
Registered Nurses

Nursing residents **48**  
Nursing resident projects **9**

 **\$96,000**  
Support in scholarships from the Philanthropy Committee

 **\$223,864**  
Tuition support for continuing education

## MedStar St. Mary's Hospital facts

-  Inpatient admissions **7,916**
-  Ambulatory surgery cases **6,283**
-  Outpatient visits **162,222**
-  Emergency Department visits **48,968**
-  Annual births **1,116**
-  Number of associates **1,231**
-  Medical Staff **457**

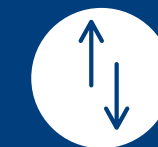
**48**  
Orientees

**20**  
Preceptors

**1**  
Advanced practice

**183**  
Nurse Techs

## Nurse turnover rate



Direct **23.4%**  
Indirect **24%**

## Nurse sensitive indicators

Colors reflect hospital performance against national quarterly benchmarks for top quartile performance for CY19.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Overall ED Nursing Care – Nurses Listened Carefully to You	Q1: 76.2%	Q2: 80.3%	Q3: 74.5%	Q4: 79.1%
Overall ED Nursing Care – Treated with Courtesy & Respect by Nurses	Q1: 80.5%	Q2: 86.0%	Q3: 83.4%	Q4: 84.9%
Overall ED Nursing Care – Nurses Explained Things Understandably	Q1: 72.3%	Q2: 77.4%	Q3: 76.2%	Q4: 76.7%
Overall Inpatient Nursing Care – Treated with Courtesy & Respect by Nurses	Q1: 92.2%	Q2: 92.3%	Q3: 90.3%	Q4: 90.4%
Overall Inpatient Nursing Care – Nurses Explained Things Understandably	Q1: 79.7%	Q2: 79.1%	Q3: 82.1%	Q4: 79.3%
Overall Inpatient Nursing Care – Nurses Listened Carefully to You	Q1: 84.6%	Q2: 82.3%	Q3: 80.0%	Q4: 82.6%
Hospice – Family member treated with dignity & respect	Q1: 100	Q2: 97.4%	Q3: 95.7%	Q4: 94.21%
Inpatient Falls with Injury Rate	Q1: 0.00	Q2: 0.00	Q3: 0.00	Q4: 0.00
Physical Restraint Events - Acute Care	Q1: 0.45	Q2: 0.35	Q3: 0.20	Q4: 0.37
Hospital-wide Hand Hygiene Compliance	Q1: 96%	Q2: 93%	Q3: 95%	Q4: 96%
CAUTI Rate ICC	Q1: 0.00	Q2: 0.00	Q3: 0.00	Q4: 0.00
CLABSI Rate ICC	Q1: 0.00	Q2: 0.00	Q3: 0.00	Q4: 0.00
Pressure Ulcers	Q1: 0.00	Q2: 0.00	Q3: 0.00	Q4: 1.37
Stroke - Dysphagia Screening - Overall	Q1: 100%	Q2: 96.3%	Q3: 77.8%	Q4: 75.7
Stroke - Education - Overall	Q1: 95.5%	Q2: 94.7%	Q3: 100%	Q4: 85.7%
Sepsis: Antibiotics Administered <3 hours	Q1: 100%	Q2: 89.0%	Q3: 86.0%	Q4: 96.7%

"To do what nobody else will do, a way that nobody else can do, in spite of all we go through; that is to be a nurse." –Rawsy Williams, BSN, RN, attorney



**275**  
ADN and BSN nursing students supported

**88**  
Nurses are board certified

**310**  
Clinical placements for nursing students

**93**  
Nurses on career ladders

# Nurse to Nurse: What growth can look like at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

So many opportunities exist in nursing—from bedside care to data analytics and everything in between. We believe in professional development and work to support our nurses in advancing along their career paths, whether they are just starting out or nearing a lifelong goal.



**Loren Stauffer, BSN, RN**  
Performance Measurement, Quality, and Health Information Management

**Career path:** Began as a student intern. After obtaining her BSN, Loren returned to work as an Emergency Department nurse in 2014, then clinical coordinator in the Intensive Care Center in 2015. She moved to Organizational Learning & Research as a nurse residency coordinator in 2016 and, in 2019, became the performance management coordinator.

"I've always wanted to work in health care. I was on track for medical school but, after completing my degree in biology, I took a gap year and worked in the radiology department at St. Mary's. I was inspired by the compassionate care delivered by our interventional radiology nurses and I knew I wanted to be a nurse.

I would not have been able to pursue my master's in Nursing Management and Leadership without the huge support from my family, friends, peers, and department leaders. Financial support from the hospital through grants, scholarships, and tuition support have lessened the financial burden of school.

Education is an investment in ourselves and our community. If you're thinking of continuing your education, just start! The first step is the hardest. Once you're in the program, you build your routine and learn to study at any free moment or opportunity."



**Emily Arnold, BSN, RNFA**  
Perioperative Services

**Career path:** Began as a student intern in 2008, then worked as a CNA and RN in the Emergency Department. Emily joined Perioperative Services in 2015.

"My family's dinner table conversations inspired me to pursue nursing. My grandma and dad were members of the local rescue squad, and my mom always worked in doctors' offices. I loved hearing their stories—and how they helped people.

In my time at MedStar St. Mary's, I've advanced from a CNA to earning my associate's degree in nursing. I went on to obtain my BSN online, and completed my Registered Nurse First Assisting program most recently. I have been supported emotionally by family, peers, and leadership throughout my educational journey.

Take every opportunity to advance your career. Many scholarships and grants are available—if you want to further your education, use your resources. Grants are posted frequently. Tuition support from our hospital made it possible to get a valuable education I can use."



**Brittany Szaks, MS, BSN, RN**  
Nursing Resources

**Career path:** Began in Nutrition Services in 2001, then became a central supply tech in Perioperative Services. Next a nurse tech in Nursing Resources and the Women's Health & Family Birthing Center, then an RN on Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics and in the Emergency Department. She is now clinical coordinator for Nursing Resources.

"My mom had four kids and a full-time job while in nursing school. Her perseverance was extremely inspiring. Once she became a nurse, her love for the profession was evident. I knew I wanted to spend my life doing something that made me feel the same way. Being a nurse is one of the toughest, yet most rewarding professions!

In 2004, I obtained my associate's through our hospital's scholarship program. Tuition support allowed me to obtain my BSN in 2010. I received another associate scholarship for my master's in 2018. Family and friends have supported me throughout that journey. Dawn Yeitakis encouraged me to return to school for my master's—she believed in my leadership potential and supported me as I left her department to become a clinical coordinator.

There are so many resources to help financially with expanding education, and it opens so many doors. It also provides internal satisfaction. The more we know, the better we can care for our community."



**Zachary Teston, RN**  
Emergency Department

**Career path:** Began as a patient transporter at MedStar St. Mary's in 2017, then a CNA in the Emergency Department (ED) during nursing school. Now an ED nurse.

"Being a nurse embodies being determined, trustworthy, loyal. I was destined to be a healer, and that's why I chose nursing. You never work a day in your life if you love your job.

I'm currently working toward my bachelor's degree, completing courses online while working full-time with the goal of becoming a nurse practitioner. Along the journey, my family provides daily motivation and insight. My peers have been supportive and patient in sharing their knowledge. Department leaders have an open-door policy, making any issue manageable. The only way I could ever repay the support I've received so far is to pay it forward to new-to-practice nurses.

There is no better time than now to further your education. My mantra is 'why not me?' You can do anything you put your mind to with enough blood, sweat, tears, and determination."



**Jessie Goldsmith, BSN, RN**  
Cancer Care & Infusion Services (CCIS)

**Career path:** Began as a CCIS intern in 2012, then worked on Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics while in nursing school. Jessie moved to Telemetry before briefly departing to work at a hematology oncology office, then returned as a nurse in CCIS.

"As a child, my grandfather was often in and out of the hospital. I remember being so intrigued by his caring nurses, and knew I'd pursue a career in a healthcare-related field. I was accepted into the Allied Health program at our local tech center, then began interning in CCIS as a high school junior. My internship helped me realize my love for oncology, and I'm currently working on my OCN certification.

Between scholarships from MedStar St. Mary's and other sources, tuition reimbursement, and the amazing support of my family, the stress of financial worry was off me during nursing school. It was a huge blessing, and I'm so thankful for that.

When it comes to furthering your education, take advantage of the help provided by the hospital. Keep pushing through! It opens so many opportunities for the growth of your career."



# Nursing 2019 successes & initiatives.

## New sitter position keeps techs on units

The utilization of nurse technicians as companions and observers for high-needs patients was noted as an area for improvement in our 2017 Associate Engagement Survey and 2018 Pulse Check. Thanks to this feedback, an official sitter position was created in 2019 to replace these two roles commonly filled by nurse technicians.



In January 2019, 10 official sitters were hired by Nursing Resources to stay with patients who may be confused, suicidal, at risk of falling, or other concerns requiring supervision. Having sitters—such as **James Young**, pictured above—available allows nurse technicians to continue providing valuable patient care, while still ensuring the safety of our patients. We have now grown to 20 sitter positions at MedStar St. Mary's.



## New Open Access Hospice program brings services to patients sooner

In 2019, a new program—Open Access Hospice—was born of the desire to bring hospice services to patients sooner. “In the past, hospice has always been a choice: receive the best in palliative care but sacrifice all attempts at a cure,” said **Kathy Franzen, BSN, RN**, interim director of Hospice & Palliative Care. “Families say they feel like they are giving up on their loved one. Now we have another option.”

In partnership with CareFirst, community-based palliative care brings the same hospice interdisciplinary team care to patients earlier during a serious illness—and can be provided alongside curative treatments they may still be receiving from their medical team. Several insurers have already operationalized this concept to their members. CareFirst offers palliative care to their seriously ill patients with no six-month life expectancy rules, improving their quality of life. Ten individuals have already benefited from the new program in 2019.

Pictured above are hospice nurses **Nancy Sperbeck, RN, CHPN**; **Ann Byrne, BSN, RN, CHPN**; **Cathy Caulder, BSN, RN, CEN**; and **Jeanette Wolter, BSN, RN**.



## Baby-friendly care to benefit growing families

Led by nurse champions, new best practices were instituted in the Women's Health & Family Birthing Center (WH&FBC) in 2019: baby-friendly breastfeeding initiatives and lactation support, delayed cord clamping, delay of newborn bath, and an hour of skin-to-skin snuggling right after birth.

“As nurses, we advocate for all patients—especially our littlest patients,” said **Summer Seastrand, BSN, RN, IBCLC**, WH&FBC. “Evidence-based practices show these initiatives help give our babies the best start in life, and it's a positive step to have these in place at our hospital.”

## Collaborating to reduce CLABSIs

At MedStar St. Mary's, new initiatives are making a difference to help keep patients safe and meet central line associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) quality standards. Because central lines carry such a high risk of complications for patients, the charge nurse on each unit now reports out on these individuals to nursing and hospital leadership each morning to share data and rationale for keeping the central line in place.

**Teresa Brannigan, MSN, RN, CIC**, Infection Prevention, and **Joan Popielski, BSN, RN, CRNI**, Cancer Care & Infusion Services, round on patients with a central line or Foley catheter to review their care and documentation every weekday. During this process, real-time feedback is shared with bedside nurses to help reduce the potential for dangerous complications. Curoport protectors have also been implemented. The goal is to bring our CLABSI rate down to zero in FY20—a drop from one last year.



## Nurses lead podium presentation at conference

**Loren Stauffer, BSN, RN**, and **Kristen Evans, MSN, RN, NPD-BC**, Human Resources & Education, represented MedStar St. Mary's at the 2019 Vizient Nurse Residency Conference in Orlando, Florida. The national annual conference brings together Nurse Residency Program (NRP) coordinators, facilitators, and key stakeholders from across the country to share best practices, highlight successful models, and build a community of practice.

Loren and Kristen presented their innovative curriculum teaching activities for the topics of ethical decision-making, conflict resolution, stress management, and self-care. After their informative podium presentation, other NRPs across the country have implemented these activities based on the hands-on, visual topics used at our hospital. Approximately 35 nurses graduated from our program in 2019.



## Diabetes Boot Camp is helping patients take control

Chronic disease educators in Population & Community Health make a difference for many local patients. The MedStar Diabetes Institute's Diabetes Boot Camp expanded to our hospital in 2019, providing patients with a supportive course in managing their condition.

“Over a 12-week period, adults with type 2 diabetes and an A1C of 9 or higher can take part in a combination of in-person and virtual clinic sessions to learn about their disease,” said **Emily Whitsett, BSN, RN, CHES, CHWC**, clinical health educator specializing in diabetes.

After two office visits, participants get virtual support from nurse practitioners for 10 weeks. They also receive a blood sugar meter that transmits their readings to a private dashboard monitored by the MedStar Diabetes Pathway Team, which calls if their numbers climb too high or fall too low. By the time they graduate, the average participant has lowered their A1C by three points.



Nurses are taking the lead on units across MedStar St. Mary's—providing innovative, quality care to our patients and community.

# 2019 award winners:

## Clinical Preceptor of the Year

**Yhamira Aud, RN**, Telemetry

## DAISY Award

**Linda Bazemore, BSN, RN, CEN**, Emergency Department (ED)

## Health Quality Innovators of the Year Award

"Data-Driven Care for the Dermis Deputy"

**Courtney-Sue Santora, BSN, RN, RN-BC**

**Colleen Corliss, BSN, RN-BC**

## MedStar HeRO Award

**Teresa Gould, RN**, Cancer Care & Infusion Services

## Team Watson Award

**Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics Nursing Team**

## Patient Safety Heroes

**Dawn Drury, MSN, RN-BC**, Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics (MSP)

## Peabody Award of Excellence

**Justine Reimer, BSN, RNFA, CNOR**, Perioperative Services

## SPIRIT Awards

**Valerie Adriani, RN**, ED

**Susan Bricker, BSN, RN**, Intensive Care Center (ICC)

**Hailey Caldwell, RN**, ED

**Alicia Dean, RN**, MSP

**Jennifer Harding, RN**, Women's Health & Family Birthing Center (WH&FBC)

**Anne Lengfield, BSN, RNC-OB**, WH&FBC

**Aubre Martin, RN**, Telemetry

**Jennifer Sams, BSN, RN**, ICC

**Kristen Sasscer, RN**, ICC

**Katie Shea, BSN, RNC-OB**, WH&FBC

**Lindsay Stauffer, RN**, WH&FBC

**Molly Stevens, BSN, RN**, Perioperative Services

**Dayna Whitehouse, RN**, ICC

## On the cover: Champions in nursing

From left, top row: **Meghan Williams, RN**, WH&FBC;  
**Lorraine Peel, CNA**, Nursing Resources.

Second row: **Liz Kaspar, BSN, RN**, Nursing Resources;  
**Amanda Dyson, MSN, RN, PCCN, CNML**, Nursing Administration;  
**Ryan Norris, BSN, RN**, ICC.

Third row: **Amy Lasher, MSN, RN**, ED; **Renee Grubbs, BSN, RN**, ICC;  
**Nancy Sperbeck, RN, CHPN**, Hospice.

Fourth row: **Sheila Ayres, RN**, MSP; **Yhamira Aud, RN**, Perioperative Services.



MedStar Health

**MedStar St. Mary's Hospital**

25500 Point Lookout Road  
Leonardtown, MD 20650

P 301-475-6008

**MedStarStMarys.org**