

Mentorship • DEU • Next Gen Leaders

# microscope

January 2020

CHIhealth.com

The  
**Nursing  
Issue**

Shared Governance  
is Shared Leadership

**GROWING OUR  
OWN NURSES**

Solving the  
Looming  
Nursing  
Shortage

Easing  
Nurse  
Fatigue

CHI Health  
Nursing Journal

 CHI Health

ENHANCING COLLABORATION

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*microscope* is a journal published by CHI Health Marketing and Communications. Content from the journal may be found at [CHIhealth.com/microscope](http://CHIhealth.com/microscope).

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### About CHI Health

CHI Health is a regional health network headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska. The combined organization consists of 14 hospitals, two stand-alone behavioral health facilities, more than 150 employed physician practice locations and more than 12,000 employees in Nebraska and southwestern Iowa.

In fiscal 2019, CHI Health invested more than \$185 million back into our communities. The majority of those dollars went to caring for the poor and underserved.

CHI Health is part of CommonSpirit Health, a nonprofit, Catholic health system dedicated to advancing health for all people. It was created in February 2019 through the alignment of Catholic Health Initiatives and Dignity Health. CommonSpirit Health is committed to creating healthier communities, delivering exceptional patient care, and ensuring every person has access to quality health care. With its national office in Chicago and a team of approximately 150,000 employees and 25,000 physicians and advanced practice clinicians, CommonSpirit Health operates 142 hospitals and more than 700 care sites across 21 states. In FY 2019, Catholic Health Initiatives and Dignity Health had combined revenues of nearly \$29 billion and provided \$4.45 billion in charity care, community benefit, and unreimbursed government programs. For more information, please visit [CHIhealth.com](http://CHIhealth.com).

# Under the Microscope



Dear Friend,

There is something truly remarkable about a strong physician-nurse relationship that is built on trust, communication and collaboration. It is a must-have for any organization focused on delivering high quality care. As health care evolves, the role of the nurse is growing. It is no longer just about bedside care. It is about leadership, teaching, and caring in new, often high-tech ways.

At CHI Health, the opportunities for nurses are limitless. At a time when the nation is struggling with a nursing shortage that is growing more concerning each year, we have listened to our nurses who get understandably weary from care fatigue that comes with long hours, hard work and emotionally draining days. We put systems in place to help. We created a mentoring program to set new nurses up for success and we are strengthening our partnership with Creighton University's College of Nursing on a program with a framework that brings the academic and the practice worlds together. These initiatives are not based on flashy new technology, they are based on relationships, respect and reverence – the very cornerstones of health care.

This issue of *microscope* in part pays homage to the CHI Health nurses whose voices are heard, whose ideas are welcomed and whose suggestions are woven into the fabric of the organization. To our nurses, and nurses everywhere, you are deeply and sincerely appreciated by this organization and by me personally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cliff Robertson MD". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cliff Robertson, MD  
Chief Executive Officer  
CHI Health

## Letter to the Nursing Team

Dear Colleagues,

We know nursing isn't for the faint of heart. This infinitely challenging and rewarding career can expend muscles, expand the intellect and send emotions soaring – sometimes all in the same moment. So, when I say we are 4,300 nurses strong, I'm referring to the inherent strength of our colleagues. We care with compassion, conviction and courage.

As a profession, we face daunting challenges – and I prefer to see them as opportunities. When I came into the organization two years ago, we developed a nursing strategic plan and established four priority areas: clinical excellence, model of care, workforce pipeline and leader development. Cascading out of these four areas are tactics and desired outcomes which, working together and at every level, will advance nursing at CHI Health into a brighter future.

I'm excited to share the great things happening throughout our nursing enterprise. Take the Shared Governance model we've developed. It gives frontline nurses a voice and improves engagement. Our team nursing model actually stretches our resources while allowing nurses to work at the top of their license. Preemptive hiring is a creative approach to staffing which drives quality and engagement and reduces resource gaps by anticipating turnover.

It's important to recognize the vibrant work happening throughout our organization, and we scratch the surface within these pages. Thank you for being our strength and our hope for a bright future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Chase". The signature is cursive and elegant.

Linda Chase, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN  
Divisional Chief Nursing Officer



# Shared Governance: New Way Nurses are being Heard



When the nurses shared that they were struggling to find opportunities to take PTO, leadership listened.

And acted.

“Within days, actions were going into place to address this concern,” said Pam Kayl, DNP, APRN-NP, CHI Health division director – Center for Clinical Practice. “Nurses also pointed out workflows that didn’t work or that created inefficiencies. We have made changes to the process based on their feedback.”

This kind of input – and resulting action – is the goal of CHI Health’s Nursing Practice Shared Governance Council.

Almost a year ago, nurses from throughout the CHI Health system began to meet regularly to give their peers a voice.

“The nurses tell us, as nursing leaders, what’s really happening, what they really need and about all the amazing ideas they have,” Kayl said. “But the VPPCS (vice president of patient care services), CHI Health senior vice president - chief nursing officer, Linda Chase, and all of nursing leadership listen and make changes and improvements based on what we learn from these nurses. Hence, they have a voice and it’s heard and acted upon.”

Some call it “reverse mentoring” or “shared leadership.”

Kayl called the model “beautiful.” It was designed by direct care nurses

themselves and, “It’s horizontal,” she said. “The executive leadership nursing team is horizontal with the Shared Governance teams.”

She also called the monthly meetings “energizing.”

“I love the energy and passion of our nurses,” she said. “I love to meet with them every month and see how they live our mission, and passionately care for our patients.”

At the same time, she added, they’re serving as advocates for the nursing profession while emphasizing collaboration and a system approach.

## Structure of Shared Governance: Subcouncils & Councils

The CHI Health model has three subcouncils: Evidence-Based Practice, Professional Practice and Recognition, Recruitment, Retention. They meet virtually every month (with WebEx, Skype, etc.) and once a quarter, in person in Lincoln.

An overarching Coordinating Council is made up of the chair, co-chair subcouncil nurses, executive sponsors and Senior Vice President – Chief Nursing Officer Linda Chase, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN.

The Coordinating Council also meets in person once a quarter and has been meeting virtually during remaining months. 🔄

## Faces of Shared Governance: Speaking for You



**Sue Matthews,**  
BSN, RN-C, CRNI,  
*Professional Practice  
Council chair*

Sue wanted to push beyond her “comfort zone” and to continue to grow as a nurse. Being on the Shared Governance Council gives her a chance to do both.

As a co-chair, Sue advocates for coworkers. For example, nurses in her unit had to walk some distance to access medications. Not anymore. A simple change by leadership saves nurses countless steps a day.

“The culture created by shared governance is that of open and honest communication,” Matthews said. “No judging. Listen to coworkers – allow them their opinions and always be respectful.”

Even better, the council helps patients too. “We are also the voice of the patient,” she said. “If we don’t speak up, who will?”



**Charlene Pickering, RN, Professional Practice Council co-chair**

Charlene said the council was “just an idea” when she was asked to join. Now it’s in a growth stage: “It will take approximately two years before we are up and running at 100 percent,” she explained. “This is all new to us.”

But shared governance is already getting results. Charlene said her team travels to all campuses in the Omaha metro except one, and there were questions about hourly rounding.

Using input from nurses across the system, the protocol was changed. “They decided to not utilize that (original) tool and use something within Epic.” She said shared governance “absolutely” gives nurses a true voice.



**Andrea Bakenhus, RN, Evidence-Based Practice Council chair**

Andrea agreed with Charlene that hourly rounding wasn’t working. “The nurses across the region all had the same issues with the technology and workflow of this,” she said. “We had other ideas how we could chart our hourly rounding.”

One of the “other” ideas suggested by nurses was adopted. “This was a positive change for the direct nursing staff,” she said. “Our voice was heard and our practice around charting hourly rounding was changed.”

Coming up with solutions to problems is part of the process. “A general rule we have is not to bring an issue unless we have three ideas of how to solve it,” she said.



**Katelyn Nutting, RN, Evidence-Based Practice Council co-chair**

Katelyn said it’s only a year old, but she can already see the impact the council and direct care nurses have on patient care. “There is a strong team of nurses representing nurses across the division to support and promote best nursing practice.”

Typical of issues that are brought up, she said, is the protocol for patients experiencing alcohol withdrawal. Nurses’ lack of information to fully understand the “why” for the protocol led to disparities in nursing care. That’s why her subcouncil is creating a toolkit to help nurses better understand the protocol and create standard education across the system.



**Renae Olson, BSN, RN-BC, CRNI, VA-BC, Retention, Recruitment & Recognition Council chair**

Renae has already seen the importance of nursing shared governance because, “nurses have great ideas for improving patient care and increasing nurse satisfaction,” she said.

A “really hot topic” right now, she said, is recruitment and retention. So, her group is working on a Professional Nurse Achievement Pathway to promote professional development as well as ways to cultivate the next generation of nurses.

“I want nurses at CHI Health to understand that they are a powerful force. The representatives from each campus do speak up for them at the system nursing shared governance and our leaders are listening. We can work together to make positive changes.”

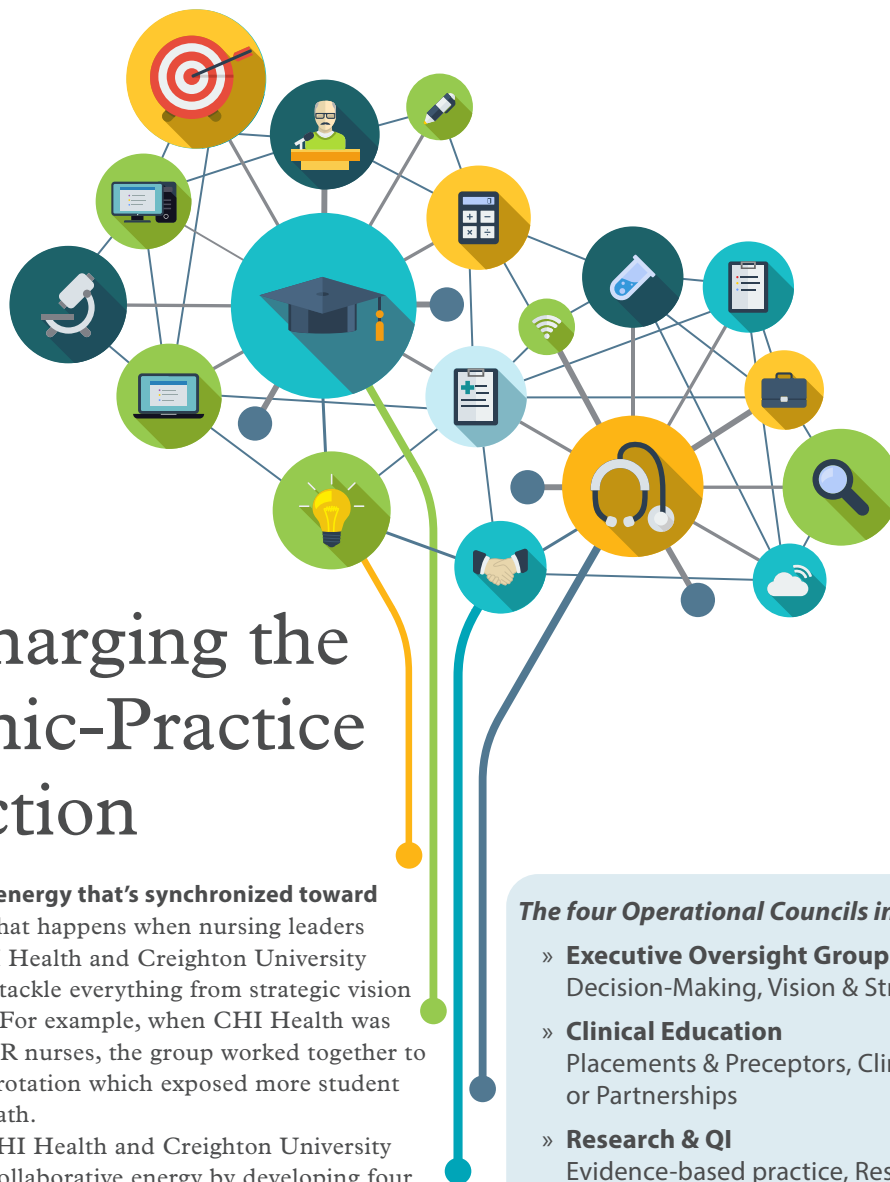


**Meghann Kowalski, RN, Retention, Recruitment & Recognition Council co-chair**

To Meghann, shared governance paves the way for “nurses’ voices to be heard as one throughout the CHI Health system.”

Although still in the “infant” stage, the council is growing every month, she said. And a new communication tool will give nurses an opportunity to bring up concerns more easily.

“Shared governance has brought all entities together in a way that has never been done before,” she said. “It has opened my eyes to see the nurses within our organization as one amazing group of individuals who all have our patients’ best interest at heart – no matter our location.” 🌟



# Supercharging the Academic-Practice Connection

**Think of synergy as energy that's synchronized toward a common goal.** It's what happens when nursing leaders get together from CHI Health and Creighton University College of Nursing to tackle everything from strategic vision to student placement. For example, when CHI Health was struggling to recruit OR nurses, the group worked together to create a perioperative rotation which exposed more student nurses to this career path.

Now leaders from CHI Health and Creighton University are building on their collaborative energy by developing four operational councils.

"The councils will serve as a framework to bring together the academic and practice worlds in a proactive and purposeful way," said Linda Chase, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, CHI Health senior vice president - chief nursing officer. "This allows those who are most involved in the different areas to leverage their knowledge and, in the process, create synergies, so we are working hand in glove on topics like student placement, which is huge."

"When you have a large partnership with a lot of people on both sides, you end up with a lot of informal connections to different individuals," said Catherine Todero, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean and professor at the Creighton University College of Nursing. "Formalizing the structure will make our lives easier and help us plan for the future."

### The four Operational Councils include:

- » **Executive Oversight Group**  
Decision-Making, Vision & Strategy
- » **Clinical Education**  
Placements & Preceptors, Clinical Initiatives or Partnerships
- » **Research & QI**  
Evidence-based practice, Research Initiatives, Quality Projects
- » **Simulation & Technology**  
EHR, Badging, Onboarding, Telehealth, VCI

That structure will bring together College of Nursing researchers and CHI Health's Nursing Research Council, for example, to work together in a proactive fashion. The councils are currently in the development stage. Work will begin in earnest in 2020.

The remarkable thing about synergy is that it has no limit. "Designing health care for the future is a collaborative effort between education and practice," said Chase. "Together, we can continue to enrich the process."✈

# Priceless Experience: The DEU Difference

**The tremendous multitasking is what struck Kara Harvey, BSN, RN, during her DEU experience.** “There’s no other way to experience it,” Harvey said. “I don’t think you really know what nurses really do until you go through it.”

The DEU or Dedicated Education Unit experience is a collaborative partnership involving intentional faculty presence, engagement and frequent communication with the staff nurse instructor (SNIs) and students.

**It’s different from a typical clinical because nursing students spend a full day, a full week – even five weeks – with the same SNI.**

Consistency is what Harvey appreciated most. “I had the same SNI every day and it was amazing,” she said.

Depth of learning is another benefit of this approach. “Instead of passing medications with your instructor, I love that you are with an SNI and you get to know her thought processes – the critical thinking behind it,” she said.

Chelsea Waltz, DNP-RN, agreed. Now a supervisor on the oncology floor at Creighton University Medical Center - Bergan Mercy, she participated as a DEU instructor at CUMC. She’s been a nurse for nearly five years and became an SNI two years ago.

“The instructors get to know your strengths and weaknesses as you progress. They get to see your growth from week to week,” she said.

Each day builds on the previous day’s experience. Students also get a feel for the rhythm of the shift and the camaraderie of the staff.

“They get to interact with experienced nurses. They get to experience the culture of the unit,” said Waltz.



*From left to right: Chelsea Waltz (nurse at CUMC - Bergan Mercy on 6East), Sabrina Austin (ANC graduate Fall 2018), and Trisha Beiermann (assistant professor, Creighton University College of Nursing).*

Harvey enjoyed her experience so much, she now works on the same floor where she completed her DEU – and she’s also now an SNI. “I was on the Med/Surg/Oncology floor at CUMC - Bergan Mercy and that is the floor I’m on as a nurse. That’s why I applied. I knew the floor. I knew the wonderful staff.” ✨

## Nursing Accomplishment Highlights



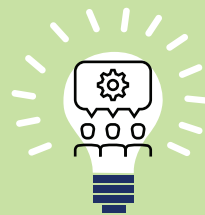
### NURSING STRATEGY

Identified and created a 2-year nursing strategic plan with measurable goals for direction and future focus.



### SHARED GOVERNANCE

Planned and executed structures and processes for a well-designed system of shared governance and held inaugural meeting.



### TEAM NURSING MODEL

Implemented team approach to nursing to increase positive patient experience and safety.



### NURSING SCORECARD

Created first nursing dashboard for the division to include nurse-sensitive metrics.

# Step Up: Four Nurses Selected for Leader Development Program



**Kathy Bressler, RN, MN**  
Chief Operating Officer

**Twelve high performers with potential for growth were selected for organization-wide leadership coaching program – four are RNs being prepared as next generation leaders.**

Nurses are on the frontlines of patient care day in and day out. The national nursing shortage has made the job more difficult and the need for strong leaders even greater.

“It’s vital we create strong leaders to be able to create a workplace where our new nurses want to stay, work, grow and develop,” said Kathy Bressler, RN, MN, chief operating officer for CHI Health.

In order to achieve that, Bressler and Chief Executive Officer, Cliff Robertson, MD, decided to invest in the future of CHI Health

by selecting 12 leaders within the organization who oversee different areas like patient care, finance and medical operations. Together, they make up the first group to go through CHI Health’s Leader Development Program (LDP).

**“What they all have in common is that they are extremely high performers with potential for growth,” Bressler said.**

“These people were not picked because they weren’t doing well, but because they’ve proved themselves to be strong leaders.”



## Leadership Development Program Members

**Kelli Saucerman-Howard**  
VP Patient Care Services,  
CHI Health CUMC - Bergan Mercy

**Janel Myers**  
Director, Perioperative Services,  
CHI Health CUMC - Bergan Mercy

**Kimber Bonner**  
VP Patient Care Services,  
CHI Health Good Samaritan

**Pam Kayl**  
Division Director, Center for Clinical Practice, Clinical Education and Enterprise Staffing Pool

Dan DeFreece  
President, CHI Health St. Mary's

Julie Gernetzke  
Division VP, Medical Group Enterprise Operations

Nick O'Tool  
VP of Operational Finance

Mikey Brewer  
Director of Virtual Resource Center

Cathy Jesus  
Division VP, Quality and Care Management

Kelly Nielsen  
Division Director, Strategy and Healthier Communities

Chris Elliott  
VP of Medical Operations, Chief Medical Officer,  
CHI Health Mercy Council Bluffs

Kimberly Perrin  
Division Director, Clinic Operations



*Kelli Saucerman-Howard*



*Janel Myers*



*Kimber Bonner*



*Pam Kayl*

Four RNs make up a third of those selected for the program. Kimber Bonner, MSN, RN, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at CHI Health Good Samaritan, remembers the moment she got the call from Bressler, asking her to take part.

“I was sponsoring my church youth group at a national gathering in Minneapolis when Kathy Bressler called me,” Bonner said. “I was so excited, emotionally overwhelmed and just remember feeling so fortunate for this amazing leadership development opportunity.”

The program will add an estimated 20 percent to each person’s workload for eight to nine months as they hone in on their individual leadership skills and collectively take on a challenge assigned to the group by CHI Health’s Executive Leadership Team.

“We chose to give them the challenge of employee engagement and creating the best place to work. They will spend a whole year working on that challenge and really digging in,” said Bressler, who serves as one of three executive sponsors of the LDP program.

In addition to one-on-one executive coaching, LDP members will navigate how to approach and tackle their group assignment with help from Caliper, a company that helps other organizations manage, develop and retain top talent. The group will spend a number of three-day residencies together along the way where they will work collectively on the challenge at hand.

With just one residency under her belt, Janel Myers, MSN, RN, CNOR, director of perioperative services at CHI Health CUMC - Bergan Mercy, said she’s already become a stronger leader.

“I’ve learned being a leader in a meeting does not mean I am facilitating it well,” Myers said. “I have also learned to trust others to use their knowledge and talents for the good of the group, even if I have not seen their results.”

By next summer, Kelli Saucerman-Howard, MSN, RN, vice president of patient care services at CHI Health CUMC - Bergan Mercy, hopes to share her experience with others – not only within her hospital, but CHI Health overall.

“I hope to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities, challenges

and barriers of driving operational change at a system level,” Saucerman-Howard said. “Additionally, the interprofessional networking and team building will be invaluable in developing future best practices within the organization and sharing those learnings across the system.”

As nurses, these four women will take their experiences and share them with other RNs, who together make up the largest segment of CHI Health’s labor force. Pam Kayl, DNP, APRN-NP, division director of the Center of Clinical Practice, Clinical Education and Enterprise Staffing Pool, believes that when nurses use their voices, they have the power to impact the direction the health care industry is heading.

“I don’t believe nurses give ourselves enough credit in our ability to step up and lead,” said Kayl. “I’m very passionate about needing strong nursing leaders to identify, mentor and role model our next generation of nurse leaders and nurses.”

The LDP program will wrap up in summer 2020. Bressler is eager to see the outcome. “They’re learning skills that all of us need in order to be the best leaders we can be,” she said. 🌱



**Gregory Williams,**  
**MSN, RN, CCRN**

Division Manager of  
Nursing, CHI Health

## Worn Out but Still Working: Easing Nursing Fatigue

**A career in nursing can be exciting and fulfilling, with the unique opportunity to care for patients and give back to the community.**

But with those rewarding qualities come difficult ones. The job can be physically challenging and emotionally taxing, leading nurses down an unhealthy path of fatigue.

“Fatigue is about more than just sleep, but psychosocial stressors that can plague nurses,” said Williams, MSN, RN, CCRN, division manager of nursing for CHI Health.

The national nursing shortage is also contributing to fatigue. Many nurses volunteer or feel obligated to work more hours than they’re scheduled in order to meet patient demands.

“That is noble, but what we want to say is, ‘While we appreciate that, we want you to stay healthy, stay in the workforce, stay with CHI Health and be happy and healthy while you’re doing it.’”

So how do we give our nurses a healthy work environment and keep them happy, safe and capable of providing the very best care to patients? That’s the question Williams is working to answer alongside nurses in CHI Health’s Nursing Practice Shared Governance program. Together, nurses and leaders within the organization are developing new, robust policies to prevent nursing fatigue and the consequences that often follow.

“We want to create healthy work environments where nurses feel empowered and well prepared to take care of our patients,” Williams said.

The policy will provide evidence-based guidelines and operating processes for the amount of hours a nurse should work in a shift, how many shifts they should work consecutively and how they should go about performing their duties. In developing these guidelines, CHI Health nurses will bring shared problems and ideas to the table and use American Nurses Association (ANA) recommendations as a resource.

Williams said CHI Health already has some policies in place to prevent fatigue.

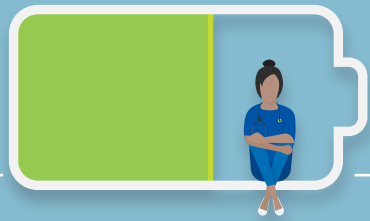
“If there’s a nurse that’s feeling fatigued, that nurse should call their chain of command to report how they’re feeling,” he said. “We have an employee assistance program available to all nurses who maybe aren’t feeling their best mentally. They can always reach out to human resources as well.”

Williams said a healthy staff helps ensure healthy patients, which is a culture CHI Health cultivates.

“A healthy staff is going to be more engaged, provide a higher quality of care and bring a consistent, retained team to our workforce,” Williams said.

CHI Health’s new policy is expected to be finished by early 2020. 🚀





## Tips for Easing Fatigue

Source: American Nurses Association

### FOR NURSES

- Get regular and restful sleep: 7-9 hours
- Use related benefits and services offered by employers (wellness programs, education, training)
- Take scheduled meals and breaks during work shift
- Follow established policies and use existing reporting system (provide information about accidents, errors and near misses)

### FOR EMPLOYERS

- Allow nurses to accept or reject a work assignment (based on preventing risks from fatigue)
- Institute an anonymous accidents, errors and near-misses reporting system
- Institute policies that address the design of work schedules (limits on overtime, actions to take when a worker is too fatigued, etc.)
- Design schedules according to evidence-based recommendations (use regular and predictable schedules, examine work demands with respect to shift length, limit shifts to 12 hours or less, establish at least 10 consecutive hours per day of protected time off, etc.)

# Nursing Shortage Looms: Now the Good News

**Bad and getting worse.** That's the best way to describe today's nursing shortage.

In Nebraska alone, 2018 data demonstrates a shortage of 2,417 registered nurses; that's increasing to a shortage of 3,238 RNs by 2025.

Some of the contributing factors:

- Low unemployment rates. Nebraska and Iowa have some of the lowest jobless numbers in the country.
- An aging population. "All of our baby boomers are at an age where they have more demand for care," said Pam Kayl, DNP, APRN-NP, CHI Health division director – Center for Clinical Practice.
- Medicine is dealing with many more chronic conditions, including obesity and diabetes, so there's more demand for health care.
- An accelerating rate of RN retirements across the country.
- Many nursing programs can't accept higher numbers of students because of a shortage in nursing faculty. There's no one to teach the nurses of the future. Fortunately, said Kayl, "Creighton University has been dramatically increasing its enrollment over the past several semesters. We still have many potential students interested in nursing but our struggles are compounded by shortages in nursing faculty."

If there's any good news, it's that the shortages in the heartland aren't as bad as they are elsewhere.

"We have had success in recruiting new grads to our facilities," said Angie Sander, CommonSpirit Health system vice president for Talent Acquisition.

"This is in part due to the number of nursing programs we have within

our region and our partnerships with the schools."

Sander said nursing is so rewarding, more young people need to consider it.

"The nursing profession has endless opportunities for growth and development, including various options for location, service lines, direct patient care, case management and leadership," she said. "And the list goes on! It will challenge you and you'll get the opportunity to be bold in offering insights and ideas that will lead us into the future of health care."

Nursing is never boring, Kayl said. "First, it opens the door to so many opportunities and paths. You can work bedside in a hospital, in a clinic, in home health. There is a specialty area for every personality: ambulatory, OR, ICU, med-surg, etc." The list of places you can work is also "endless."

According to Sander, nursing is one of the most selfless careers a person can pursue. "On a daily basis, nurses are impacting lives. It is truly a calling to serve others. And you get the opportunity to work alongside others with that same passion and drive. This work is truly inspiring."

Who should pursue nursing? "Those who are very customer service driven and who live our core values of Reverence, Integrity, Compassion, Excellence," said Sander. "Our patients and their experiences are at the center of why we do what do each and every day and therefore our nurses need to be focused on our mission and connected to our patients."

"It is such meaningful work," Kayl agreed. "We impact lives every day. As one of my nurse colleagues says, 'We do God's work every day.'" 🌱

*Know a nurse who's interested in an incredible career? Refer them to [CHIhealth.com/Careers](https://CHIhealth.com/Careers)*

# Corn, Soybeans, Wheat and...Nurses? Nebraska Grows Its Own

**Nebraska has a tradition of self-reliance, and so does CHI Health.** Instead of corn, the state's largest health care employer is growing its own employees.

"Unfortunately, Nebraska isn't immune to the national nursing shortage. With our 65 and older population nearly doubling by 2030, combined with the boomer population of nurses reaching retirement age, it's very important that we plant that seed now," said Linda Chase, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, senior vice president - chief nursing officer, CHI Health. "My career in health care has given me a lifetime of rewards and I'm excited to share that purpose with the next generation."

The Grand Island Senior High Academy of Medical Sciences at CHI Health St. Francis is one of the innovative ways CHI Health is exposing Grand Island Senior High School students to the real-life benefits of working in a hospital. The \$4.2 million project to convert unused hospital space into a 17,000-square-foot learning experience is in the early stages. When complete, each school day, 150 juniors or 150 seniors will be immersed in hands-on learning simulations with health care professionals.

"Some students might spend the morning simulating bedside care using a high-tech mannequin. Others will work through emergency care protocols in the back of an ambulance simulator or learn how physical therapists assess a sports injury. Along the way, they'll discover what it's really like to work in health care and what careers they're most interested in pursuing," said Beth Bartlett, MSN, RN, CENP, vice president for Patient Care Services at St. Francis. "You can't strive to be a medical dosimetrist if you didn't know such a career existed," said Bartlett. "Health care offers a wide variety of opportunities for anyone with a passion to make a difference."

Similarly, the Health Sciences Career Academy at Omaha's Roncalli Catholic High School – a partnership with CHI Health Immanuel – is an opportunity to introduce high school students, who have received their CNA certification, to the world of health care and provide them with an opportunity to gain real-life work experience at the beginning stages of their careers.

**"We are teaching and mentoring future health care professionals who are already being welcomed into the CHI Health family."**

Hearing how the students want to continue their careers at Immanuel after graduation is reassurance that we are doing great things," said Nichole Eggers, manager, CHI Health Immanuel Volunteers and Guest Services.

Of course, new nurse graduates don't just hit the ground running after being hired on at CHI Health facilities. It takes some outside-of-the-box thinking, like the hands-on PeriOp 101 cohort program.

"In the past, nurses new to the operating room would orient through online models only. Now, across the CHI Health system, this group meets regularly at different hospitals, working together to put their learnings into practice," said Renae N. Battié, MN, RN, CNOR, division vice president, Perioperative Services.

By the end of the six-month fellowship, these novice nurses-turned-veterans know the ins and outs of perioperative services, increasing career satisfaction and retention. From scrubbing-in, sterile processing and anesthesia to experts walking through products and procedures, a better understanding also relates to better patient care.

"We are now in our third group and our nurses have more confidence. One Kearney nurse told us orientation put it in slow motion, giving her the opportunity to learn by asking questions," says Battié. "The program's success has us working on programs for gastroenterology and pre- and post-anesthesia."

CHI Health is also leading the way through predictive hiring – incorporating turnover data, open positions and statistics of employees nearing retirement to determine future needs. Equally exciting is the development of an internal traveling pool of operating room nurses and surgical techs to be deployed similarly to external travelers. "The pool will have the added benefit of being our own employees already familiar with our facilities and they'll help us keep cost of health care low," said Battié.

Even at an early age, trust can lay the initial groundwork for a future career in medicine. That's one of the ideas behind a Nebraska first: CHI Health Pediatric Place at St. Elizabeth in Lincoln. This exclusive and specialized hospital unit, modeled to provide children's emergency and inpatient care in one place, is expected to leave a memorable first impression. Everything from the brightly colored murals to the comfortable atmosphere is specifically designed to ease children's fear of health care.

"It's interesting to me how many nurses choose the profession because of an early childhood experience related



1, 4: PeriOp 101  
 2, 3: Grand Island Senior High Academy of Medical Sciences  
 5: Pediatric Place patient room

to health care. That's one of the reasons why providing a positive first hospital experience is so important," said Tim Plante, RN, MSN, MHA, vice president of Patient Care Services, St. Elizabeth. "Our Pediatric Place nurses have an amazing talent for relating to and caring for our pediatric patients. More importantly, their highly-specialized training will allow patients in need of a higher level of treatment to remain in Lincoln, close to their family and support system."

Nancy Laughlin-Wagner, MHA, BSN, BSFS, RN, vice president of Patient Care Services, CHI Health Immanuel, couldn't agree more. "We care for others as one of our own,

providing welcoming, encouraging and trusting environments, and our patients, students and volunteers have positive experiences. That goodwill, the sense of making a difference, can extend into a desire to work for us as well," she said. "Health care is an extremely rewarding career because it is a calling and not a job. People come to us in their time of need and being able to offer them comfort and hope is a deeply moving human experience. For people considering a career in health care, there are countless opportunities to learn, grow and advance. The work is meaningful and the opportunities are endless." ✨



# Buddy Up: Nurse Mentors Boost Retention and Engagement

It's a startling national statistic: 20.5 percent\* of nurses leaving positions in 2018 had fewer than two years of service. With nursing shortages top of mind, that data point exposes a problem and an opportunity.

"We aren't immune to the national nursing shortage and have several plans in place to recruit nurses, but retention is equally important," said Pam Kayl, DNP, APRN-NP, division director of the Center of Clinical Practice, Clinical Education and Enterprise Staffing Pool. "We asked nurses, some working with us 45 days – others 45 years, what can we do to ensure success for our nurses who are just starting out? Mentoring was the resounding answer."

The CHI Health Nurse Mentor Program is considered a win-win for both the mentor and mentee. Connecting an experienced nurse with a new hire for the first year of employment builds relationships that increase personal and professional satisfaction, strengthen commitments to our values and vision and improve care for patients and their families. Through trust, respect and effective communication, the one-on-one support helps new graduates smoothly transition beyond their residency.

"Nurse mentoring isn't new, we're just shining a light on all its rewarding benefits, including retention," said Kayl. "We're making it easier for our nurses to find 'their person' – that one peer they can rely on for career and life guidance. Just knowing someone has been in your shoes and is now in your corner, can make all the difference; not just for

reaching that five-year mark when turnover declines and commitment solidifies, but for life."

CHI Health nurses across the region share how being mentored and becoming a mentor shaped their careers:

**Garnelle (Gigi) Call, BSN, RN**  
**29 years of nursing experience**  
*CHI Health Richard Young Behavioral Health*

"The experience that solidified my becoming a nurse was a car accident that my son was killed in. My daughter was in one hospital, my husband in one hospital and I in another as he was in the military. The nurses that were taking care of me in Palm Springs kept me informed of everything that was going on at Loma Linda with my daughter and at Camp Pendleton where my husband was. Nursing is so much more than health and diagnosis."

**Debra Cohen BSN, RN-C**  
**37 years of nursing experience**  
*CHI Health Missouri Valley*

"Working as a nursing assistant while attending nursing school, several wonderful nurses took me under their wing, gently leading me from novice to experienced. Now it's my turn to be the mentor. I feel it's vital for nurses to encourage, support and take care of each other to ensure the future of our profession."

\*According to the Nursing Solutions, Inc. 2019 National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report

**Cathy Schreier Ferguson, BSN, RN, CHPN, CCRN - 27 years of nursing experience** *CHI Health St. Francis*

"Every day brings new challenges, especially for a new nurse. After 20 years away from acute care, I returned to the bedside. During my orientation in CICU, I called on my charge nurse to assist me with a procedure. I could see she was very busy, but she put aside her duties and patiently walked me through the process. She made me feel like helping me was more important than anything else. I felt so valued at that moment!"

**Julia Pauley, RN, CEN - 36 years of nursing experience** *CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center - Bergan Mercy*

"I think the best thing I learned from my early nursing mentors was to just be kind and spend some time with each patient just learning something unique about them. I like to mentor the new nurses and encourage them to see the value of bedside nursing. I have discovered some fascinating people and amazing stories. We can teach anyone skills and they are important, but active listening and genuine communication is key to becoming a great nurse with happy patients and families."

**Barb Warner, RN, BSN - 25 years of nursing experience** *CHI Health Mercy Council Bluffs*

"When someone takes you under their wing, you feel comfortable to ask questions and learning is at its peak. My mentor was a former combat zone nurse in Vietnam. She was patient and taught me how to prioritize and to think on my feet. The skills I try to pass down to new nurses are treat others as you would treat yourself or your family and critical thinking! Critical thinking can get you through the toughest of times."

**John Blum, BSN-BC - 30 years of nursing experience** *Lasting Hope Recovery Center*

"In today's world, everything seems very rushed and I think many times we forget that we need to slow down and just see people as people and not as an illness. I think as older nurses we can mentor the newer nurses on how to do this and also to take care of themselves. This, in turn, will not only make the job easier, but less stressful and will lead to greater retention and resiliency."

**Theresa Kosmicki, RN, CPAN - 39 years of nursing experience** *CHI Health Lakeside*

"My mentors were very nurturing and helpful. I always felt I could ask questions. They never made me feel inferior. That's why I tell our next generation to never fear asking questions. We also talk about resiliency. It's important to provide nurses with the tools to cope with the demands of the job and the wisdom of knowing that things will get better. Everything always changes."

**Candi Johnson, LPN - 17 years of nursing experience** *CHI Health Plainview*

"I worked with wonderful people who trained me and I feel like they mentored me along the first few years I was hired. They would explain things to me and I felt that I continually was learning as they would share their experiences with me. This was reassuring. I feel like we all need someone as a go-to person who will understand and not judge us when we are newer and may not know very many people we work with. We all invest a lot when a person is hired and it is important that we make them feel welcome and important to our facility."

**Marlys Kossman, RN - 36 years of nursing experience** *CHI Health Good Samaritan*

"A wise mentor once told me years ago to know your limits, always ask questions and respect your resources. We have but a limited time before we pass their care to others, and our patients should always feel they are first with our time. Remember, there is change every day, you can and will learn something new each day, for without these you will not grow. Stop each day first and pray to God to use your hands, your heart and your mind to protect those in your care. These thoughts have always guided me, and as a mentor, I pass this on to others as they begin their journey."

**Danielle Burr, MSN, RN - 18 years of nursing experience** *CHI Health Midlands*

"I had the BEST mentor! We are actually still friends today. She would take me to coffee just to decompress and talk about how things were going. I remember her telling me to focus on the impact I was making. 'Even bad days are worth it because you actually did something amazing for someone, even if you don't realize it.' She made me realize just how important I was and that bad days really aren't that bad!"

## We Value Your Feedback!

Please share your thoughts about this issue of *microscope* and your ideas for future stories at [CHIhealth.com/MicroIdeas](http://CHIhealth.com/MicroIdeas)

*If you have questions about the content of *microscope* or would like to stop receiving it, please email us at [OPTOUTCHIHEALTH@catholichealth.net](mailto:OPTOUTCHIHEALTH@catholichealth.net)*

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I love the **ENERGY AND PASSION** of our nurses. Every day brings new challenges, especially for a new nurse.

# microscope

I DON'T BELIEVE NURSES GIVE OURSELVES ENOUGH CREDIT IN OUR ABILITY TO **STEP UP AND LEAD.**

**We do God's work every day.**

My mentor was a former combat zone nurse in Vietnam.

ON A DAILY BASIS, NURSES ARE IMPACTING LIVES.

PROJECTED SHORTAGE OF **5,436 NURSES** BY 2025.

## CHI Health Hospital Locations

### NEBRASKA

Grand Island  
*CHI Health St. Francis*  
Kearney  
*CHI Health Good Samaritan*  
Lincoln  
*CHI Health St. Elizabeth*  
*CHI Health Nebraska Heart*  
Nebraska City  
*CHI Health St. Mary's*

### Omaha

*CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center - Bergan Mercy*  
*CHI Health Immanuel*  
*CHI Health Lakeside*  
*CHI Health Midlands*  
Plainview  
*CHI Health Plainview*  
Schuyler  
*CHI Health Schuyler*

### IOWA

Corning  
*CHI Health Mercy Corning*  
Council Bluffs  
*CHI Health Mercy Council Bluffs*  
Missouri Valley  
*CHI Health Missouri Valley*