the thread

Nursing Services Newsletter for Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

FY26 Annual Report



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Celebrating Progress, Shaping the Future

A letter from our Chief Nursing Officer



PHOTO BY DONN JONES

As FY26 closes and FY27 begins, I am grateful to pause and reflect on what our nursing community accomplished together. The stories in this annual edition of *The Thread* represent much more than a collection of achievements. They reflect the expertise, compassion, curiosity, and leadership our nurses brought to caring for children and families each day.

Throughout FY26, we strengthened the ways nurses influenced care and led change. We expanded senior leader rounding to further connect with teams across shifts, locations, and settings. We advanced our Nursing Professional Governance structure, creating new opportunities for nurses to bring their voices and expertise to decisions that shape practice. Our nurses also extended their influence beyond our walls through advocacy, scholarship, professional recognition, and the dissemination of work that contributed to pediatric nursing practice.

Quality and safety remained fundamental to what we accomplished. Teams achieved and sustained exceptional patient safety outcomes, advanced quality improvement initiatives, and developed innovative approaches through interprofessional collaboration. These efforts demonstrated what was possible when clinical expertise, evidence, and a shared commitment to improvement came together.

I was equally proud of how our nurses recognized needs and created solutions. They improved transitions from hospital to home, developed educational resources to better prepare families, helped design environments around the needs of patients and caregivers, and collaborated across disciplines to address complex challenges. These accomplishments reminded us that nursing innovation often begins by listening closely to patients, families, and colleagues and then having the courage to ask, "How can we make this better?"

This issue also provides an opportunity to celebrate our people. The awards, recognitions, presentations, publications, and professional accomplishments celebrated individual achievements while reflecting our broader nursing culture. During FY26, our nurses demonstrated what it meant to learn, lead, question, innovate, and generously share their knowledge with others.

As we move forward into FY27, our opportunity is to build on that momentum. We will continue strengthening nursing voice, developing current and future leaders, advancing quality and safety, supporting inquiry and innovation, and ensuring nurses at every level recognize the difference they can make.

Thank you to every nurse and team member whose work contributed to the progress reflected in this annual report, including the many accomplishments that could not be captured in these pages. Most importantly, thank you for the expertise, compassion, and commitment you bring to our patients, families, and one another.

I am incredibly proud of what we accomplished together in FY26 and excited about what we will make possible together in FY27.

Warmest regards,



Gretchen K. D. McCullough, MSN, RN, NEA-BC



Thank you to every nurse and team member whose work contributed to the progress reflected in this annual report, including the many accomplishments that could not be captured in these pages.

Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

NURSING BY THE NUMBERS

Nurses at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt touch 2,490 patient lives daily (average), leading teams that advance community health and well-being.

1,660
TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED NURSES

312
TOTAL NUMBER OF ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES

PERCENTAGES

91.74%
BSN OR HIGHER

12.32%
RN TURNOVER RATE

50.12%
ELIGIBLE CERTIFIED NURSES

30.70%
ELIGIBLE RNS ADVANCED VIA VPARE

529
NURSES NOMINATED FOR DAISY AWARDS

NURSE AS SCIENTIST



8 RNS AUTHORED/CO-AUTHORED 6 JOURNAL ARTICLES

9 RNS GAVE ORAL PRESENTATIONS AT 4 CONFERENCES

10 RNS GAVE POSTER PRESENTATIONS AT 5 CONFERENCES

2 COMPLETED NURSING RESEARCH STUDIES

20
YEARS MAGNET DESIGNATED

MAGNET RECOGNIZED AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

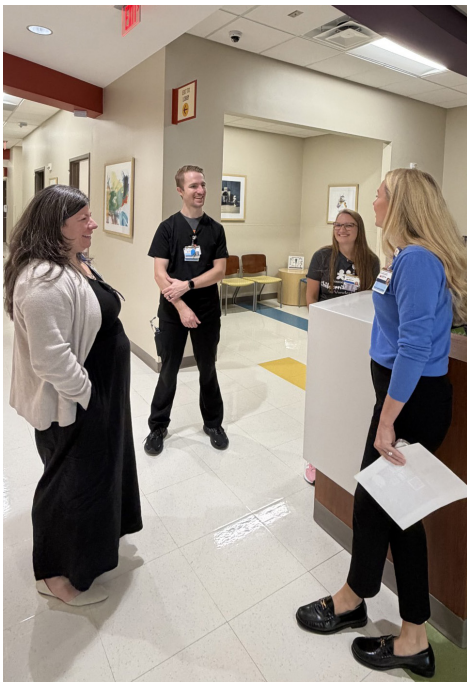
71
RNS JOINED NURSE RESIDENCY

PHOTO BY PATTI RUNYAN



Jeremy Crawford (left), Nursing Operations, listens as frontline staff member Sayeh Damirian (right), Pediatric Surgery, Trauma, & Adolescent Medicine (PSTAM), shares her perspective during night-shift Senior Leader Rounds on September 11, 2026.

PHOTO BY BETH LOATS



Gretchen McCullough (far left) and Jill Kinch (far right) listen and connect with Taylor Leach (left) and Kayla Preston (right) during Senior Leader Rounds at the Vanderbilt Allergy Clinic in Murfreesboro.

Connecting Across Shifts and Sites

The Expansion of Senior Leader Rounds

Senior leader rounds are a key strategy for strengthening relationships with frontline staff, identifying operational challenges, and ensuring staff feel heard and supported. What began as daily rounds on campus at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt now includes offsite clinics, night shifts, and weekends, extending leadership presence across more care settings.

"Our intention and hope was always to expand," said Ashley Ried, MMHC, BSN, RN, Magnet Program Director. The expansion ensured all team members had access to senior nursing and operational leaders, regardless of location or shift. After establishing a consistent process on campus, leaders developed a structured approach to visit offsite locations and conduct overnight and weekend rounds. These efforts created meaningful opportunities to engage with staff who may have limited interaction with senior leadership during traditional business hours.

Rounding helps identify recurring concerns and translate feedback into action. Leaders consistently document issues raised during rounds and monitor trends over time. Supply availability was one of the earliest and most common concerns. Feedback from staff enabled leaders to partner with the supply chain team to address barriers and improve access to the materials needed. More recent rounds have reflected significant progress, with many staff reporting they have the supplies needed for patient care.

Expanded rounds have also supported professional development efforts. Caroline Epps, MSN, RN, Senior Director Nursing, Pediatric Primary Care, After-Hours, and Urgent Care, noted that staff in one of the VIP clinics raised questions about opportunities to advance through the VPARE and medical assistant ladders. Through rounding, leaders connected staff with information, shared updates as opportunities became available, and returned with answers to close the loop.

"I learn new things every time," said Jeremy Crawford, MMHC, BSN, RN, Associate Nursing Officer, Clinical and Nursing Operations. Leaders describe gaining a deeper appreciation for the work complexity performed in specialty clinics and remote locations, as well as the pride and dedication staff bring to their roles.

As the organization enters its second year of expanded rounding, leaders continue evaluating and refining the process. The initiative highlights the value of visible leadership, active listening, and responsive follow-up, while reinforcing a shared commitment to supporting frontline teams and advancing patient care across every location and shift. - *by Leslie Speer*

Celebrating Two Years of *The Thread*

Connecting, Informing, and Inspiring Excellence

Our Editorial Board is proud to reflect on the successful completion of a second year publishing *The Thread*, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt's quarterly nursing and support services newsletter. What began as a vision to strengthen communication and showcase evolving practice turned into a valuable platform for connection, recognition, and innovation across our organization.

Over the past two years, *The Thread* has highlighted the remarkable contributions of our nurses and clinical support services, shared evidence-based practices, celebrated achievements, and amplified stories that exemplify our commitment to patient- and family-centered care. Each quarterly edition has provided an opportunity to recognize innovative care, foster engagement, and strengthen alignment with our organizational goals and nursing strategic plan.

The Thread's success reflects the dedication of editorial board members and guest authors, who have generously used their time and talent to showcase the exceptional work of our clinical teams. Through collaboration and storytelling, we have created a publication that not only informs, but inspires.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring *The Thread* continues to serve as a trusted source of information and a reflection of the excellence, compassion, and professionalism that defines Monroe Carell. – *by Shelly Bledsoe*



PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH

The Thread **Editorial Board Members: (From top left) Brittany Brown, Shelly Bledsoe, Marissa Lemley-Brown, Danelle Bradley; (From bottom left) Casie Smith, Vanessa Rivera, Deb Poloway, Ashley Ried, Leslie Speer; (Not Pictured) Jessika Boles, Ellis Bigner, Meagan Davis, Christina Echegaray, Lia Herrera, Margaret Kababik, Amanda Mock, Magaret Rabatin, Lauran Sevier, and Kim MacKeil-White**

Champ's Cupboard

Pediatric Nurses Help Shape Food Insecurity Program

Four years ago, the Pediatric Medicine Acute Care (PMAC) unit recognized an unmet need among families of hospitalized children: some parents were struggling to access food both at home and during their child's hospital stay. Those conversations sparked a partnership with physician Cristin Fritz, MD, MPH, to shape Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt's program to address food insecurity, Champ's Cupboard.

"It was important for the group that all families had the opportunity to receive services and resources when needed," said Jessica Binkley, MSN, RN, Manager of PMAC.

PMAC Admissions, Discharge, and Transfer (ADT) nurses began conducting food insecurity screenings alongside Hospital Medicine teams. Early screenings were completed on paper, and families who identified challenges were connected with support through social work. As the need became clearer, PMAC nursing leaders worked with information technology teams to build screenings into eStar as a required part of the nursing admission history.

What started as conversations between nurses and families evolved into a collaborative program helping meet families' nutritional needs. "PMAC is proud to have partnered in this work from its earliest stages and to have helped shape a process that continues to support children and families throughout our organization and community," Jessica said.

Today, that screening process expands across Monroe Carell, helping connect families to Champ's Cupboard, which served 235 families in its first year. The Junior League Family Resource Center, led by Director Sara Hanai, is the hub of the program, providing holistic support and resources that help families stay healthy beyond hospitalization.

– *by Christina Echegaray*



On September 9, Angel Carter joined La Guardo Elementary School's emergency response team and EMS for a simulated emergency drill, teaching patient transport, AED use, and use of the LUCAS mechanical chest compression device before presenting the school with its Heart Safe School designation.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



50 States, One Map

Angel Carter Builds Project ADAM's Interactive Legislative Resource

In 2017, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt joined the National Project ADAM Program, founded in memory of teen Adam Lemel, who died from sudden cardiac arrest while playing basketball. Angel Carter, BSN, RN, Project ADAM Middle Tennessee Coordinator, works with schools, youth sports teams, and communities throughout Middle Tennessee to develop cardiac emergency response plans, conduct drills, and help organizations earn the Heart Safe School designation which recognizes schools prepared to respond to sudden cardiac emergencies.

On a national level, there are 53 Project ADAM affiliates in 34 states. State requirements for AED placement, CPR, and staff training vary significantly. In 2021, Project ADAM Advocacy Committee co-chairs Angel Carter and English Flack, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Pediatric Cardiology, Monroe Carell, recognized a national need to summarize this information.

They created an interactive map that shows each state's Project ADAM coverage, as well as resources for affiliate coordinators, school nurses, and school administrators. Angel noted that these groups "may not have an easy time keeping up with the legislative changes in their state or even be aware of what the legislation says."

She worked with Law Center Home to research and summarize state legislation related to AED placement, CPR training, and Good Samaritan laws—not only for Tennessee, but for all states with a Project ADAM affiliate program. The goal, Angel explained, is not to provide verbatim copies of state code, but rather to create a summary resource for a coach or school administrator who may feel overwhelmed by the requirements in their state.

Angel added, "I'm always so thankful to the hospital for not only the wisdom in getting this program off the ground, but also so thankful to be a part of this big national movement."

– by Lauran Sevier

The National Project ADAM Program was founded in memory of teen Adam Lemel, who died from sudden cardiac arrest.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



Jeremy Crawford (left, Facilitator), Nursing Operations, and Ashley Jones (right, Chair), Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, lead the Nursing Clinical Practice Council members through a training exercise at the Nursing Professional Governance Launch Day on January 12, 2026.

PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH



PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH



Top: Starlette Cole, participates in the NPG Launch Day as the Emergency Department clinical nurse representative. Bottom: Gretchen McCullough shares insight with the new NPG members.

Nursing Professional Governance

How Nurses are Owning Their Practice

Over the last few months you may have heard of Nursing Professional Governance (NPG)—but what does it actually mean? NPG is about nurses owning their practice and placing decision making in the hands of the experts.

Gretchen McCullough's staff rounding during her first 100 days, along with findings from the GOVRN research study, identified an opportunity to strengthen nursing governance. After reviewing evidence-based practices, the NPG structure was created. NPG is more than a new name for shared governance. Rooted in collaboration, NPG aims to make decision-making more accessible, relying on nurses' expertise to drive meaningful change.

This new structure includes five nursing Core Councils—Clinical Practice, Leadership, Operations, Professional Development, and Workforce Belonging & Wellbeing in addition to the Nursing Coordinating Council. Direct care nurses, administrative leaders, and interdisciplinary partners work together to align council efforts with organizational and nursing strategic goals. Department representatives share updates from these meetings with their areas and gather feedback to take forward.

Since launching in January 2026, each council has established SMART goals, including improving interdepartmental handover, standardizing rooming-in processes, and streamlining access to resources and contacts.

NPG has brought together nurses who otherwise may never have met. Where we once worked in silos, nurses now come together from all areas and specialties of Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt to share work, lessons learned, and collaborate on future projects. The variety of backgrounds represented helps ensure that nurses with the appropriate expertise are at the table to make decisions impacting their nursing practice.

During the August NPG day, members were asked to anonymously share the biggest lesson NPG has taught them. The most common theme was that NPG had empowered everyone, regardless of position, to feel like a leader, strengthening their sense of ownership. One statement resonated with the entire room: "Nurses need to make decisions for nurses. If they don't, then someone else will."

Nurses can become more engaged by participating in their Unit Practice Council, sharing input with NPG representatives, or talking with their leaders about opportunities to represent their area. As NPG becomes ingrained in Monroe Carell's culture, every nurse will be empowered to own their practice and advance the nursing profession.

– by Vanessa Rivera

Setting the Gold Standard in Pediatric Sedation

National distinction for safe, high-quality pediatric sedation

Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt has been awarded the Center of Excellence (COE) in Pediatric Sedation designation by the Society for Pediatric Sedation (SPS), recognizing the hospital's commitment to delivering safe, high-quality, patient-centered sedation care for children.

The COE designation honors organizations demonstrating exemplary practices aligned with the highest standards in pediatric procedural sedation. Developed by the SPS Quality and Safety Committee, the COE designation reflects expert consensus on ideal structures, processes, and programs that support safe and effective sedation services for children.

"Earning the prestigious COE in Pediatric Sedation designation from SPS demonstrates our team's commitment to providing safe, high-quality pediatric procedural sedation," said Kim Isenberg, MSN, APRN, Director of Advanced Practice, Pediatric Perioperative, Acute Care, and Ambulatory Services.

To earn the designation, hospitals go through a rigorous application and evaluation process, for which only about 50% of applicants are successful. In this latest cycle of applicants, Monroe Carell was one of only 10 hospitals awarded the distinction.

Monroe Carell's achievement results from the collaborative effort of pediatric sedation, pediatric anesthesia, advanced practice providers, and nursing staff. The team includes Kim; Jill Kinch, MMHC, MSN, APRN; Jason Willis, MSN, APRN; Jenni Logsdon; Jessica Williams, DHA, MPA; and Autumne Harding, MSN, APRN; with support from Gretchen McCullough, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer, and hospital leadership.

"Designation of Monroe Carell Pediatric Sedation Services as a Center of Excellence in Pediatric Sedation is a testament to the exceptional patient care our teams provide," said McCullough. "This recognition is an important milestone in our ongoing mission to provide the highest quality care." *– by Christina Echegaray*

PHOTO BY BRITTANY BROWN



The Monroe Carell Pediatric Sedation Team celebrate the hospital's designation as a Society for Pediatric Sedation Center of Excellence, recognizing the team's high-quality sedation care and unwavering dedication to their patients.

CERTIFICATION SPOTLIGHT

The Journey to 100% Team Certification

Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt officially has a team whose nurses are all certified: Nursing Education and Professional Development (NEPD). If you've interacted with your Nursing Education Specialist or a Clinical Education Facilitator, this probably comes as no surprise.

Director Marissa Lemley Brown, PhD, RN, shared that certification validates nurses' professional approach, demonstrates dedication to their craft, and creates opportunities for continued growth. More than passing a test, certification is a career-long commitment to professional development and providing the best care for patients.

NEPD nurses are expected to obtain certification within six months of hire. Mentors partner with new staff to provide resources and encouragement. For those needing extra support, Marissa creates individual study plans, sets soft deadlines, and pairs colleagues as accountability buddies.

Marissa encourages nursing leaders to support staff on their certification journey and for all nurses to take time to invest in themselves. Seeing the team reach 100% certification is one of her proudest highlights. *– by Vanessa Rivera*

PHOTO BY DONN JONES



The Nursing Education and Professional Development Department celebrates achieving 100% professional certification as a team.

PHOTO BY LESLIE SPEER

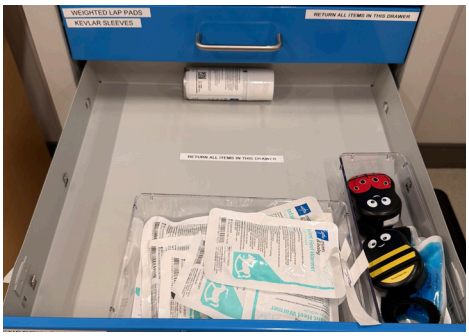


From left: Lexie Chastanger, Jenn Stewart, Katie Gibson, Makenna Hibdon, and Geraldine Rosero pose with a new sensory cart created to support children with varied behavioral and developmental needs at the Vanderbilt Children's Primary Care One Hundred Oaks clinic.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



SUBMITTED PHOTO



Thoughtfully stocked sensory cart drawers offer comforting tools to reduce anxiety, promote comfort, and support children through needle-based procedures and other health care experiences.

Building Bridges in Pediatric Care

Nursing, Psychology, and Behavioral Analyst Collaboration

Every child experiences health care differently. When teams understand each child's communication needs and preferences, they can create more positive medical experiences for patients and families. At Vanderbilt Children's Primary Care One Hundred Oaks (GP3OHO), nurses and medical assistants (MAs) partner with child psychologists and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) to understand differences, promote safety, and support children with varied behavioral and developmental needs.

After assessments identified a gap in care, nurses and MAs requested tools to better support children with varied behavioral and developmental needs, particularly during needle-based procedures. In response, BCBA Katie Gibson developed the Creating Access to Lifesaving Medicine: Safe Needle-Based Procedures (CALM) program, equipping staff with practical behavioral strategies to care for children during these procedures. The collaboration established nursing champions who receive training in behavioral strategies and serve as peer resources for clinic staff. In addition, sensory carts were created with tools to reduce anxiety, promote comfort, and enhance children's clinic experiences.

Jenn Stewart, PhD, licensed psychologist and Program Director of Integrated Behavioral Health in Pediatric Primary Care, emphasized a whole-health approach, recognizing that a child's emotional and behavioral needs can significantly influence their health care experience. "Small interventions can have a big impact," Jenn said.

BCBAs partner with nurses and MAs to identify challenges and develop communication and behavioral strategies that create safer health care experiences for patients with autism and other developmental differences. "If a behavior interferes with a child's medical needs, we want nurses to know we're here to help," Katie said.

These interventions create more supportive health care experiences for children and families, sometimes for the first time. One clinician described a child whose first visit required more than 90 minutes to safely administer a vaccine. By the third appointment, the vaccine was administered in less than 20 minutes, highlighting the importance of trust and individualized care. Families gain strategies to advocate for their children, while staff gain confidence supporting patients. As this work grows across Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, GP3OHO demonstrates how interdisciplinary collaboration creates safer, more supportive experiences for our patients. – *by Lia Herrera*

Quality Academy: Building Skills, Improving Care

Most of us can point to a process or outcome at work that could be better — an inefficiency that creates daily frustration, or a step that, if not done to standard, could put a patient at risk. Those are exactly the kinds of opportunities Quality Academy participants learn to tackle as they build foundational quality improvement (QI) skills in this year-long course.

Launched in 2015 by Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt's Performance Management and Improvement (PM&I) department, Quality Academy has trained 175 Vanderbilt Health staff, providers, and leaders using curriculum based on The Model for Improvement and modeled after a similar program at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. In 2021, PM&I also introduced a monthly, four-hour virtual bootcamp to preview key concepts that has been attended by more than 400 participants.

Claire Wells, BSN, RN, registered nurse 3 in the Pediatric Emergency Department (PED), completed Quality Academy in 2026. Her project, "Dirty Draws: Cleaning Up Contaminated Blood Cultures," focused on reducing blood culture contamination in the PED. Fewer contaminated cultures mean fewer repeat tests for patients and families, along with better stewardship of time, supplies, and other clinical resources.

Claire serves as a Quality Improvement Analyst (QIA) in the PED, splitting her time between bedside shifts and QI work. In this role, she tracks and champions unit measures, participates in committees, and leads improvement projects. She describes herself as a "translator to bedside staff for quality and safety." While she brought experience to the role, Quality Academy helped her connect the dots by providing a clear, practical roadmap—from understanding the current process and building the right team, to setting aims, testing changes using a structured framework, and sharing progress and wins.

Claire and her team exceeded their initial goal, reducing contaminated blood cultures from 4.02% to 1.75%. They continue to implement additional interventions to sustain and build on this improvement—work that directly benefits patients and families. She also valued being paired with a mentor outside her work area for a fresh perspective and found that regular presentations strengthened her confidence.

The 11th cohort of Quality Academy kicked off in early August, with past graduates serving as mentors for new participants. Quality Academy doesn't end at graduation—alumni remain engaged in sustainment efforts and continue applying their skills across the system. Claire's project is one example of how Quality Academy helps Vanderbilt Health team members turn frontline insights into measurable, lasting improvements in patient care and safety. – *by Caroline Epps*

PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH



Claire Wells presents her Quality Academy project which reduced contaminated blood cultures in the Pediatric Emergency Department by more than half at the graduation ceremony on June 10, 2026.



PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH

Meagan Davis, 2026 Quality Academy graduate, shares the results of her quality improvement project to improve IV-line labeling during the poster presentation portion of the June 10, 2026 Quality Academy graduation event.

PHOTO BY SUSAN URMY



The Pediatric Critical Care Outreach Team serves as the bridge between the ICU and acute care for our at-risk patients. From top left: Cat Milwee, Herchel Portella, Michelle Terrell, Dani Ogg. From bottom left: Jaimie Torres, Cynthia Woodward, and Sydney Sloan. Not pictured: Melissa Lashock.

Bridging Care, Building Safety

How the Pediatric Critical Care Outreach Team Supports Our Sickest Kids

Monroe Carell Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt embarked on a clinical deterioration (CD) journey in 2021 due to a higher-than-expected number of emergency transfers requiring intubation, vasoactive medications, or at least three fluid boluses within the 60-minute window surrounding transfer. CD is often associated with delays in recognition and escalation; therefore, the team started working to address areas of weakness with tools including the Sepsis Best Practice Advisory (BPA), Watcher Huddle process, Active Watcher list, and the CD dashboard in eStar.

Use of the CD tools resulted in a 28% reduction in emergency transfers. However, they did not completely prevent them. The Pediatric Critical Care Outreach Team (PCCOT) was formed to take the CD work a step further. Herchel Portella, DNP, APRN, Lead Advanced Practice Provider (APP), Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), began the start-up team in July 2025 by recruiting additional APPs with critical care experience to serve as the bridge between the intensive care and acute care units.

Rather than serving in a reactionary role like the Rapid Response or STAT teams, the PCCOT actively looks for patients at risk for clinical deterioration. Herchel explained that "PCCOT uses the CD dashboard to establish a proactive presence on the acute care floor by working in collaboration with primary teams and bedside nurses to identify and plan for our most at-risk patients."

To understand the true impact of the PCCOT, it helps to step into the room with them. One patient's experience illustrates how quickly their work can change a trajectory. Assessed by PCCOT for a Sepsis BPA, the post-op patient's mom mentioned that "Tyler" was not at his baseline mental status. Because he was also slurring his speech, the PCCOT reached out to the primary team who attributed his symptoms to post-op delirium and use of a scopolamine patch. After learning that "Tyler" had no neuro concerns during the immediate post-op period, a PCCOT team member again reached out to the primary team with further concern that his recent large surgery put "Tyler" at substantial risk of stroke. During a huddle, with encouragement from the PCCOT member, the primary team called a Code Stroke, and his subsequent imaging revealed bilateral subdural hemorrhages and a small cerebellar intraparenchymal hemorrhage.

In the end, this team's work is simple but profound: early recognition, timely intervention, and truly collaborative care. And for patients like "Tyler," they make all the difference.

– by Lauran Sevier

CLABSI Free Since ‘23

Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt is celebrating an outstanding patient safety achievement: both the Pediatric Acute Care (PAC) and Pediatric Medical Acute Care (PMAC) units have remained central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI)-free for three consecutive years!

While different in size and patient populations, both units share an unwavering commitment to safe central line care. As PAC’s cardiac population has continued to grow, so has the number of central lines. In response, the team strengthened education around line care, dressing changes, and maintenance practices, even incorporating PICC line changes into their FY26 annual competency.

Both PAC and PMAC partnered closely with Infection Prevention Specialist Alexis Brinsko, BSN, RN, whose data-driven insights and proactive strategies helped identify opportunities for improvement and prevent CLABSIs before they occurred.

On PMAC, Chelsea McMillen, BSN, RN, registered nurse 3 and quality improvement analyst, and Jessica Binkley, MSN, RN, Nurse Manager, worked alongside the team to drive innovation through a PDSA cycle focused on documentation compliance. By simplifying door signage and encouraging staff to document line care directly in eStar, the unit achieved meaningful gains in compliance and accountability.

This milestone is a testament to the dedication of every nurse, care partner, and interdisciplinary team member, representing three years of vigilance, teamwork, and an unwavering commitment to keeping our patients safe. – *by Meagan Davis*



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

PMAC (left) and PAC (right) teams celebrate their collective achievement of zero CLABSIs for three consecutive years.

Improving NICU Safety Through Proactive Risk Awareness

Quality Spotlight

Unplanned extubations in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) pose a serious safety risk for our patients. Recognizing the need for a proactive approach, the multidisciplinary NICU Mechanical Ventilation Safety Team developed the NeoAIR Score (Neonatal Airway Incident Risk Score), a data-driven tool designed to identify and guide interventions or patients at highest risk for unplanned extubations.

By analyzing historical data, the team identified 12 key risk factors and created a scoring system that categorizes patients from general to highest risk. During development, the NeoAIR Score was carefully tested, allowing the team to evaluate accuracy and make improvements in real time. In this developmental phase, the highest-scoring infants, often older, chronically ventilated babies, emerged as a priority population. One early success has been the introduction of multidisciplinary huddles for the highest scoring patients. These discussions bring together respiratory therapy, nursing, therapy services, pharmacy, providers, and families to align care plans and anticipate risks.

With its recent integration into eStar, the NeoAIR Score will soon provide real-time risk visibility, supporting timely and consistent decision making for the prevention of unplanned extubation. This framework is intended to strengthen communication and awareness across care teams and reflects a unit-wide commitment to innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement for patient safety.

– *by Casie Smith*



PHOTO BY CASIE SMITH

Respiratory Therapists Reagan Miller and Becky Gursky prepare to re-secure an airway for an intubated patient on 12A.

Turning Questions into Confidence

Digital Tonsillectomy Education

As technology advances, education must adapt to the digital tools families use every day. Pediatric surgical days can be overwhelming for parents, who encounter many unfamiliar faces and receive a large amount of information in a short time. Frankie Gallian, BSN, RN, registered nurse 4 and quality improvement analyst at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital Vanderbilt Surgery and Clinics Murfreesboro, identified an education gap for patients and families undergoing tonsillectomy. Recognizing that visual and auditory education is often well received—and drawing on her perspective as a mother—Frankie understood the challenges families face throughout all stages of surgery.

Frankie partnered with Amanda Mock, MSN, RN, Nursing Quality Manager, Niyme Griffin, Patient Education Editor, ENT leadership, and Rachael Anderson, MSN, RN, Nurse Manager, to create a video explaining what families can expect during tonsillectomy surgery. This universal resource supports multiple learning styles and gives families information they can revisit at home after discharge.

A QR code added to the After Visit Summary gives families convenient, on-demand access to the video. The video features engaging graphics, easy-to-understand information, and the ENT phone number. To further improve accessibility, it is available in Spanish and Arabic and includes subtitles.

While developing the video, Frankie participated in the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Plunge, where she synthesized evidence supporting the use of digital educational materials. This strengthened the project's foundation and reinforced the value of providing families with accessible education they can revisit as needed. *– by Danelle Bradley*

PHOTO BY AMANDA MOCK



Oakley Hatcher, age 7, awaits his surgery with pre-operative nurse Frankie Gallian at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital Vanderbilt Surgery and Clinics Murfreesboro.

Pediatric Nursing Grand Rounds

Advancing Knowledge, Inspiring Innovation

The Pediatric Nursing Grand Rounds (PNGR) series is a cornerstone of professional development for nurses and interprofessional team members. Monthly presentations led by clinical experts, researchers, and frontline innovators share evidence-based practice, quality and safety initiatives, research, and emerging innovations that strengthen pediatric care. By connecting colleagues with work occurring across the organization, PNGR helps participants translate new knowledge into practice, discover resources, and learn how teams address complex clinical challenges.

Participant feedback reflects the program's value: "Hearing about our (nurses') work helps me connect the work to the new hires I support in orientation." Looking to fiscal year 2027, PNGR will continue advancing lifelong learning by highlighting virtual reality applications, expanded use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in clinical practice, and other innovations. The series prepares nurses to lead future advancements while creating opportunities to learn from one another and advance pediatric nursing together. *- by Patti Runyan*



Flyer advertising the June 2026 PNGR focused on development of the NICU Bridge to Home Program.

PHOTO BY SUSAN URMY



2026 Nurses Week Poster Gallery winners (from left to right): Rachel Griffith, Maria Morrissey, and Amanda Eads (1st place); Herchel Portella (2nd place); Gretchen McCullough; Ashley Ried and Legacy Delgado (3rd place); and Amanda Mock and Amy Potts (Best Interdisciplinary Team).

PHOTO BY SUSAN URMY



PHOTO BY SUSAN URMY



Top: Julie McLamb shares findings from her nursing research study with Laura Parks.

Bottom: (From left) Becky Caldwell, Erin Tucker, and Ryan Hamman listen to poster presenter Chloe Caylor.

Nurses Week Poster Gallery Brings Nursing Excellence to Main Street

As part of this year's Nurses Week celebration, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt's annual poster gallery transformed Main Street into a vibrant showcase of research, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and operational initiatives. The event provided nurses and multidisciplinary teams an opportunity to share their project work while engaging colleagues, patients, families, and visitors in meaningful conversations about nursing excellence.

Just a few years ago, the poster gallery was held in Light Hall, making it difficult for many bedside nurses to attend, resulting in little to no participation from patients and families. The switch to Main Street created a highly visible and accessible space that encouraged participation far beyond the nursing community. Throughout the weeklong display, patients, family members, physicians, staff, and visitors stopped by to view the posters, ask questions, and learn about the important work being done by nurses and multidisciplinary team members.

The friendly location helped foster a culture of transparency and collaboration. Patients and families gained insight into the many ways nurses contribute to improving patient outcomes, advancing clinical practice, enhancing safety, and driving innovation. For many, the gallery offered a unique opportunity to see the depth and breadth of nursing work that often takes place behind the scenes. - *by Lauran Sevier*

1st Place: Maria Morrissey, Rachel Griffith, & Amanda Eads
Multidisciplinary Approach for Reducing CLABSIs in the Pediatric Cardiac ICU

2nd Place: Herchel Portella
Development of a Critical Care Outreach Team

3rd Place: Legacy Delgado & Ashley Ried
The GOVRN Study: Real Talk on Nursing Decision Making Power

Best Interdisciplinary Team: Amanda Mock & Amy Potts
Adherence in Action: Optimizing Titratable Medications

PHOTO BY SUSAN URMY



Brittany Saunders and her son, Bennett, connect with Julia Peredo during a Bridge to Home telehealth appointment, receiving specialized care and support in the comfort of their home.

PHOTO BY SUSAN URMY



Julia Peredo leads the NICU Bridge to Home program, helping families confidently transition their infants from hospital care to home.

From the NICU to Home: Redefining Neonatal Care Beyond the Hospital

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit's (NICU) Bridge to Home program was designed to help transition our smallest patients from the hospital to home. This was created out of a need to safely reduce our inpatient hospital stay for NICU patients while maintaining high-quality care standards and ensuring that families are well-supported at home.

There are two primary patient populations that historically spent extra days to weeks in the hospital working towards achieving the final goals for going home. The largest group is comprised of patients who are continuing to work towards full oral feeding with ongoing feeding supplementation through the use of a nasogastric (NG) feeding tube, and the other subset of patients are those who require prolonged medication weaning for opioids and/or sedatives due to exposure in the hospital, such as from complex surgeries.

Families of eligible patients are offered the option of Bridge to Home and can opt into the program if they feel it is a good fit for their family and are comfortable going home. Upon enrollment, families receive specialized training to ensure that they are well equipped and confident in caring for their baby at home. They are monitored daily using a remote monitoring application. The NICU Bridge to Home team meets with families weekly via formal telehealth visits in the comfort of their own home.

The program officially started in October of 2024 with the first home NG patient, and more formally launched with a dedicated, full-time advanced practice provider in January of 2025. Since then, the patient population has expanded to include more complex patients, including infants who are discharged home with oxygen and other ongoing care needs. Through multidisciplinary and multispecialty collaborations, the program has seen meaningful growth and high family satisfaction. The NICU Bridge to Home program partners with nursing, Homeward Bound, inpatient and community primary care providers, Pediatric Pulmonology, Pediatric Surgery, Social Work, Speech Language Pathologists, NICU pharmacists, Case Management, durable medical equipment (DME) supply companies, the remote monitoring platform that we utilize for home monitoring, and more. Additionally, there is collaboration with Cardiology's Single Ventricle home monitoring program to learn from their experience doing similar work. As of July 2026, more than 170 patients have been enrolled since the program's launch, reflecting its continued growth and commitment to delivering high-quality care to patients and their families.

– by Julia Peredo

Designed for Comfort and Care

Nursing voices shape a transformative and healing space

The newly renovated Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Clinic and Infusion Center on the 6th floor of the Doctors Office Tower (DOT 6) at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt represents more than a beautiful new space. It reflects a shared commitment to creating an environment where children, families, and care teams can feel supported, comfortable, and connected throughout the care journey.

From the earliest planning meetings, nursing voices helped shape the redesign. Ashley Frost, MSN, RN, Nurse Manager, and Candy Stefansic, MSN, RN, Senior Director of Nursing, Pediatric Ambulatory Specialty Care, participated in every design meeting, ensuring frontline perspectives remained central to the project. Staff nurses also contributed ideas through a QR code feedback process, and their input directly influenced many features incorporated into the new space.

The result is an area designed around both healing and efficiency. "Large private exam rooms and infusion bays enhance comfort, privacy, and dignity for patients and families, while also giving care teams the space needed to deliver high-quality, efficient care," says Ashley. Additional nurse-driven enhancements, including heated massaging recliners with attached side tables, bedside supply carts, centralized nursing stations, and improved proximity between the various clinical areas, have resulted in streamlined workflows, strengthened communication, and reduced barriers to care.

For children spending long hours receiving treatment, the new environment offers comfort and moments of joy. An interactive light wall in the waiting room, a dedicated playroom, entertainment tablets with kid-friendly content, and butterfly-etched glass throughout the area help create a welcoming and whimsical atmosphere that sparks curiosity and imagination, making the treatment experience more enjoyable.

By bringing nursing expertise to the forefront of the design process, the team helped create a space that advances exceptional care while fostering comfort, hope, and healing for the children and families who walk through its doors every day. – *by Shelly Bledsoe*

PHOTO BY DONN JONES



Twenty-five new infusion rooms in the Pediatric Infusion Clinic, located on the sixth floor of the Doctors Office Tower, offer a calm, private environment. Several rooms include movable partitions that can be opened to allow patients to socialize and interact with one another.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Celebrating our team members



Ann Berwager, NICU, was named the Monroe Carell Care Partner of the Year. From her nomination, "Ann shines in making those she serves her highest priority – patients, nurses, and other members of the health care team."



LeRonda Campbell, DOT 5 Pediatric Heart Institute Clinic, was named the Monroe Carell Medical Assistant of the Year. From her nomination, "She consistently works exceptionally well with others, demonstrating strong communication, collaboration, and respect in every interaction."



Spencer Shreeve, BSN, RN, DOT 5 Pediatric Heart Institute Clinic, received the 2nd place poster presentation award at the American Nurse Enterprise Research Symposium on October 7, 2025, in Atlanta, GA.

daisy awardees

Honoring Skillful, Compassionate Nursing Care



July 2025
Jasmine Burton, PMAC

From her nomination by her patient, "Jasmine wasn't just a nurse assigned to my care. She made me feel seen. She made me feel heard. And most importantly, she made me feel safe."



August 2025
Kassidy Trant, PSTAM

From her nomination, "Kassidy made the time to wash and condition my daughter's hair and brush it out with the utmost care. It sounds simple but it made a big difference to my little girl."



September 2025
Alaina Curry, PICU

From her nomination, "We are so grateful for her sweet heart and love she had for our daughter. She absolutely deserves to be recognized for all the love and support she gives to her patients and their families."



Inaugural DAISY Leader Awardee
Amanda Mock, PM&I

From her nomination, "Amanda exemplifies the essence of extraordinary leadership, consistently fostering an environment built on trust, compassion, mutual respect, and professional growth."



Inaugural DAISY Educator Awardee
Amanda N. Smith, Nursing Education

From her nomination, "Amanda deeply cares and connects with her peers and staff. Amanda's impact inspires those she serves and will influence pediatric nursing for years to come."

PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH



The **Neonatal Outreach Team** was named the inaugural DAISY Team Awardee. From their nomination, "The Neonatal Outreach Team's advocacy, innovation, and collaboration have transformed emergency neonatal care systems in Tennessee, improving survival rates for newborns and reducing long-term health complications."

Pictured left to right:

- **Mary Lee Lemley**
- **Meghan Arms**
- **Katie Judd**
- **Jillian Brown**

daisy awardees

Honoring Skillful, Compassionate Nursing Care



October 2025
Emily Dunn, PMAC

From her nomination by her patient, "If I can make an impact on one person the way Emily impacted me, it'd all be worth it."



November 2025
Patdy Leong, PHO

From her nomination, "What makes Patdy extraordinary is the way she treated my daughter, not just as a patient, but as a whole person."



December 2025
Elise Norton, HR/PACU

From her nomination, "She provided this patient with compassionate, patient-centered care that was not only beneficial to him, but the entire team taking care of him."



January 2026
Jill Young, PSTAM

From her nomination, "She recognized that this patient didn't just need medical care, she needed someone to advocate for her emotional needs."



February 2026
Michelle Gontko, PCICU

From her nomination, "She answered repeated questions without hesitation or annoyance, validated our fears, and treated us with the same dignity and compassion she gave our daughter."



March 2026
Brandi Deason, NICU

From her nomination, "In the middle of a terrifying and uncertain NICU journey, she gave us something priceless: trust, comfort, and the feeling that our baby was deeply loved."



PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH

The **nurses of PMAC and Case Management** were named the Spring 2026 DAISY Team Awardee. From their nomination, "Their persistence and collaboration ultimately made what once seemed unachievable a reality. After nearly a year of preparation, the patient and her family were joyfully reunited in Nashville."

daisy awardees

Honoring Skillful, Compassionate Nursing Care



April 2026
Evan McKay, DOT 6 Infusion Clinic

From her nomination, "Evan did more than perform clinical duties—she restored order, safety, and trust during a crisis. Her care made all the difference for our son and for us."



May 2026
McKenzie Herbert, PCICU

From her nomination, "McKenzie is the type of nurse every family dreams of because she not only provides amazing care, but she truly cares about her patients and their families."



Spring 2026 Leader Award
Chloe Kight, PCICU

From her nomination, "[She] also helps experienced nurses advance their careers by helping them get involved with teaching classes and creating new projects when needs arise."

nursing honors awardees

Nurses Week 2026



Beth Bass, MSN, APRN, Preoperative Assessment and Teaching for Children's Hospital (PATCH) Team, was awarded the Vanderbilt Health Advanced Practice Nurse of the Year.



Paul Clotier, RN, Pediatric ED, was named the Rosamond Gabrielson Staff Nurse of the Year for Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.



Delana Vallery, MA, Patient Safety Team, was honored with the Vanderbilt Health Friend of Nursing Award.

The Inaugural WISE Preceptor Awards

Recently, four nurses were recognized at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt with a WISE Preceptor Award. These awards, which recognize extraordinary preceptors, are awarded in four categories, including:

- Evaluator: Establish achievable goals for preceptee's development
- Facilitator: Identify skill gaps and provide targeted instruction while acting as a role model for self-development and professional behavior
- Teacher: Provide a safe and supportive environment that meets learning needs while fostering open communication
- Protector: Actively advocate for the preceptee's learning needs while prioritizing safe patient care

Kaleigh Harris, BSN, RN, shared that Kara FitzMaurice, BSN, RN, Pediatric Surgery, Trauma, and Adolescent Medicine Unit (PSTAM), always "set clear goals" while helping her achieve them. Kara's confidence in Kaleigh helped her gain trust in herself and her skills. She truly embodies the Evaluator category.

Josee Hodges, BSN, RN, Pediatric Hematology Oncology Unit (PHO), exemplifies the strengths of the Facilitator such as providing a supportive environment and listening attentively. Taylor Clark, BSN, RN, in her nomination, stated that she will "forever be grateful" for Josee's kind words and guidance following a tough conversation.

Identified as an exemplary Teacher, Kyra Alstott, BSN, RN, Pediatric Medicine Acute Care Unit (PMAC), was recognized for not only fostering a safe learning environment but also enhancing learning through open communication. Megan Baccash, BSN, RN, shared that Kyra never made her feel "less than or like [she] wasn't smart enough" for asking questions.

Addysen Lamb, BSN, RN, Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (PCICU), was selected for the Protector category. In her nomination, Chloe Kight, BSN, RN, stated that Addy "possesses a remarkable ability to create a sense of comfort and confidence," especially in tough moments.

Clinical preceptors foster safe learning environments and with their careful guidance, new employees can feel confident in their clinical skills at the conclusion of orientation. We are thankful to have these preceptors carry on Monroe Carell's legacy of exceptional patient care.

– by Ellis Bigner



Kyra Alstott

WISE Preceptor Teacher Award
Pediatric Medicine Acute Care



Kara FitzMaurice

WISE Preceptor Evaluator Award
Pediatric Surgery, Trauma, & Adolescent Medicine



Josee Hodges

WISE Preceptor Facilitator Award
Pediatric Hematology Oncology



Addysen Lamb

WISE Preceptor Protector Award
Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Unit

advancements

Advanced APP
Caelan Elliott
Kim Ezell
Catherine Hayes

VPARE RN4
Megan Abatto
Kenna Bakle
Haleigh Barrett
Rachel Battles
Allison Bigham
Taylor Black
Allison Brackey
Korena Campbell
Chelsea Chapman
Starlette Cole
Abby Collier
Shanaya Cross
Hannah Damron
Travis Daugherty
Legacy Delgado
Allison Donahue
Nicholas Engstrom
Dixie Errico
Kara FitzMaurice
Danielle Gorman
Tate Harrop
Macey Haynes
Daphne Herrick
Erica Holland
Hope Johnson
Alyssa Libler
Leigha Lobkovich
Antonia Lubrano
Chandler Lundy
Pegah Marbury
Hannah Meador
Maria Moseley
Lisa Salmon
Michael Shackleford
Camden Uhl

VPARE RN3
Kelsea Albright
McKenzie Allen
Taylor Anderson
Ashlynn Armour
Molleigh Arrowood
Elizabeth Aschinger
Megan Balaguer
Savannah Bauer
Anna Bell
Kalley Bernhardt
Margarete Berrospe
Elizabeth Bien
Robbie Boswell
Hayden Boucher
Hannah Bowling
Rachel Bram
Paige Buhl
Madelynn Calder
Tania Calvillo
Emily Cambra
Jessica Choyce
Jillian Ciferno
Emily Coley
Gretchen Connors
Jayla Cote
Alaina Curry
Sayeh Damirian
Karsen Daniel
Demi Dawson
Jessica DiChiro
Alexandra Dickinson
Morgan Dorso
Jazlyn Douglas
Madeline Fichtner
Andrea Finical
Margaret Fitzpatrick
Erin Flores
Mallory Frerk
Jessica Gates
Elizabeth Gibson
Alyssa Gilman
Emma Guthrie
Allison Guzay
Natalie Handshy
Kaleigh Harris
Kate Haynes
Lia Herrera
Makenna Hibdon
Roseli Hinds
Madeline Hinkle
Barklee Hodge
Megan Holley
Alexis Horowitz
Alexandria Hudson
Mackenzy Jaques
Lindsey Johnston
Abigael Jolley
Katie Jordan
Katherine Joyce
Aubrie King
Nicole Kirby
Tori Law
Madison Liebau
Sarah Longwell
Anna Kate Lowry
Karlee Lyons
Sarah Manning
Audrey Massow
Paige McClure
Kaylee McGuire
Grace McRae
Jennifer Meiser
Heidi Middeke
Melissa Miracle
Erin Montgomery
Sarah Monty
Briana Morris
Abigail Morrison
Addison Moulton
Mary Claire Mullins
Mariah Muncy
Meredith Neeley
Haley Nolan
Chelsea Ovalle
Hadleigh Pate
Sherry Pittman
McKinsey Pruitt
Elizabeth Queen
Alexis Reid
Brianne Renguso
Savanna Rhoten
Feliciti Richards
Katherine Ridings
Eleanor Robertson
Kelsey Rockwood
Brea Rollins
Grace Rowe
Elise Roy
Kailee Ruzicka
Allyson Schneider
Sydney Schuda
Hayley Schum
Reagan Seay
Christopher Shaver
Melissa Shepherd
Keaton Shingleton
Keeli Sims
Margaret Smtih
Leah Southan
Cassidy Spacek
Juliana Stamps
Elizabeth Stanga
Lydia Summerall
Courtney Tennyson
Josh Thomas
Shelby Thode
Sarah Townsend
Caitlin Turner
Hannah Underwood
Brooke Vienneau
Kaitlyn Vottiero
Jordan Waschenko
Kaitlyn Weeden
Jillian Weber Gardner
Samantha Weidner
Katie Weyer
Jane Wickett
Brianna Winkle
Anna Winfrey
Jillian Wolf
Stephanie Yeargin
Hailey Yendunian
Cinthia Zarate Jimenez

VPARE LPN4
Kimberlyn Fender

VPARE LPN3
Hannah Brant
Tiffany Dotson
Alesia Payne
Kayla Preston
Joni Riley
Lacey Stavely
Nikki Taylor
Carmelba Washington
Tiffany Wood

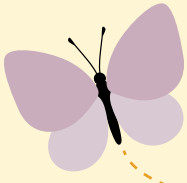
Care Partner 2
Elena Bahan
Angela Sanderson

Medical Assistant 3
Laura Burch
Sophia Carter
Daisha Douglas
Manal Gorgy
Jasmine Harris
Estefany Lopez
Morgan Manns
Lora Mitchell
Shalesha Payne
Deniese Sherrill
Shahrazad Taha

Medical Assistant 2
Maranda Allen
Lakie Bates
Carolina Briones
Whitney Caldwell
LeRonda Campbell
Kendra Chaney
Justine Colon
Rochelle De La Cruz
Kira Dienburg
Christie Jeter
Kayla Johnston
Tabitha Lanier
Teanna Lee
Ashley Ligon
Melanie Maldonado
Italia Nance
Brittany Newman
Emma Reischman
Adias Rivera Ibanez
Danely Rodriguez
Chloe Serafin
Stephanie Shaffer
Untereia Warner-Benford

Respiratory Therapist 4
Christy Frakes
Betsy Licciardello
Reagan Miller
Morgan Newton
Priscilla Ringer
Ashley Ruiz
Emal Sharif
Summer Wallis
April White

Respiratory Therapist 3
Heather Albrecht
Nicholas Barnhill
Teresa Bondi
Lauren Rice
Priscilla Ringer
Lexi Smith



disseminations

Bennett, Katherine (2026, June 10). NICU Bereavement Coordination: Improving Workflow [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Bledsoe, Shelly; Herrera, Lia; Brown, Brittany (2026, May 6). Empowering Clinical Practice, Connection, and Recognition [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Boston, Lauren; MacKeil-White, Kimberly (2025, October 8–10). The Amazing Race to Resuscitate [Conference session]. ANCC National Magnet Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Boston, Lauren; MacKeil-White, Kimberly (2026, April 27–30). The Amazing Race to Resuscitate [Poster presentation]. ASPAN National Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Boston, Lauren; MacKeil-White, Kimberly (2026, May 6). The Amazing Race to Resuscitate [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Boston, Lauren; Stafford, Raven (2026, April 27–30). Advancing Pediatric Perioperative Care: A Journal Club [Poster presentation]. ASPAN National Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Brown, Chet; Smeltzer, Cory; Bryant, Deanna (2026, May 6). From Tiny to Tall, Clean Hands Help All! [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Bullock, Minden; Walker, Melanie; Mock, Amanda (2026, May 6). PICU Unplanned Extubation Prevention [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Cason, Maddy; Mock, Amanda (2026, May 6). Quality at the Core: Eliminating Infections Through Nurse-Driven QI in the Pediatric ICU [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Davis, Meagan (2026, June 10). PAC Line Labeling Compliance Initiative [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Delgado, Legacy; Ried, Ashley (2026, May 6). The GOVRN Study: Real Talk on Nursing Decision-Making Power [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Greeno, Amber; Dietrich, M. S. (2026). Alcohol Misuse Screening: Enhancing Rates by Integrating Information Technology Solutions in a Quality Improvement Project. Journal of Trauma Nursing, 33(3), 189–196.

Guerrero, Amy (2026, June 10). Bridging the Gap: Improving the Transition to Adult Primary Care for Medically Complex and Neurodiverse Patients [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Hardison, Daphne; West, Michael (2026, May 6). Quality Improvement: Cannula Stabilization Bundle [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Heldzinger, Rosemarie; Greeno, Amber (2026, April 11–15). Scanned Twice: The Unseen Toll of Cyberattacks on Children [Poster presentation]. American Academy of Emergency Medicine Annual Scientific Assembly, Seattle, WA.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

From left: Lauren Boston and Kimberly MacKeil-White present *The Amazing Race to Resuscitate* via podium at the 2025 ANCC Magnet & Pathway Conference.

disseminations

Irwin, E.; Keller, B.; **Hughie, Andrea; Runyan, Patti; Boles, Jessika** (2025). Individualizing Pediatric Boarding Care: Child Perspectives. BMC Pediatrics, 25(499).

Kelley, Stephanie (2026, June 10). Pediatric ICU Bronchiolitis HFNC Weaning Protocol [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Kuehn, Kayla (2026, June 10). Increasing Inpatient First Case On Time Starts to the OR [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Matthews, Melissa; Milovancev, Monica; Townsend, Kelsie; Lopez, Monica; Huang, Eunice; Zabaleta, Tatiana; Robinson, Jamie (2025, July 17–20). Same Day Discharge After Surgical Gastrostomy Tube Placement in Children [Conference session]. American College of Surgeons Quality and Safety Conference, San Diego, CA.

McLamb, Julie (2026, May 6). Evaluating a Virtual Chaperone Program to Enhance Safety in Pediatric Acute Care [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Milovancev, Monica; Lopez, Monica; Zabaleta, Tatiana; Evans, Parker; Qwaider, Yasmeen (2025). Implementation of a Clinical Pathway for Shortened Antibiotic Therapy in Children With Complicated Appendicitis. Journal of Pediatric Surgery. Advance online publication.

Milovancev, Monica; Lopez, Monica; Zabaleta, Tatiana; Evans, Parker; Qwaider, Yasmeen (2025, July 17–20). Implementation of a Clinical Pathway for Shortened Antibiotic Therapy in Children With Complicated Appendicitis [Conference session]. American College of Surgeons Quality and Safety Conference, San Diego, CA.

Morrissey, Maria; Eades, Amanda; Griffith, Rachel (2026, May 6). Complex Skin Interventions in the PCICU [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Morrissey, Maria; Eads, Amanda; Griffith, Rachel (2026, May 6). Multidisciplinary Approach for Reducing CLABSIs in the Pediatric Cardiac ICU [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Mueller, A.; Bridges, B.; Danko, M.; **Hardison, Daphne**; Hedden, K.; Betters, K. A. (2026). Feasibility of Early Mobility During Pediatric Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation: Single-Center Retrospective Cohort Study, 2018–2024. Pediatric Critical Care Medicine.

Nicar, Laura (2026, June 10). Clean and Cozy: Improving Linen Care Reliability for NICU Central Line Patients [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Peredo, Julia (2026, June 10). Increasing Enrollment Rate in NICU Bridge to Home Program [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Peredo, Julia; Casey, Megan; Hatch, Dupree (2026, May 6). Increasing Enrollment Rate in NICU Bridge to Home Program [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Portella, Herchel (2026, May 6). Development of a Critical Care Outreach Team [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Potts, Amy; **Mock, Amanda** (2026, May 6). Adherence in Action: Optimizing Titratable Medications [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Ried, Ashley; Jones, Vicki (2025, October 8–10). Brushing Away Mucosal Barrier Bloodstream Infections [Poster presentation]. ANCC National Magnet Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Ried, Ashley; Kreth, Heather (2025, November 3–5). Streamlining Mental Health Boarding Via Data and Leadership [Conference session]. Children's Hospital Association Annual Leadership Conference, San Diego, CA.

Risley, Maddie (2026, June 10). Right Feed, Right Patient: Improving Accuracy in Enteral Feeding Documentation in the Pediatric Heart Institute Inpatient Population [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

disseminations

Rothenberg, E.; Wiebe, M.; **Caylor, Chloe; Boles, Jessika** (2025). "In a Constant State of Upheaval:" Experiences Caring for Hospitalized Children in State Custody. Journal of Pediatric Health Care.

Rothenberg, E.; Wiebe, M.; **Caylor, Chloe** (2026, May 6). "In a Constant State of Upheaval:" Experiences Caring for Hospitalized Children in State Custody [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Selleh, Whitney (2026, May 6). Code ECMO: Collaborative Quality Improvement in ECPR Activation [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Shreeve, Spencer (2025, October 7). Facility Dog's Pawsitive Impact on Pediatric Anxiety [Poster presentation]. American Nurses Enterprise 2025 Research Symposium, Atlanta, GA.

Sigler, Kelly; Hardison, Daphne (2026, May 6). Hemolysis Happens: Launching Plasma Free Hemoglobin Surveillance in Pediatric ECMO Patients [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Skoglund, Stefani; Wiggins, Haley; Lynch, Shannon; Boles, Jessika (2025). Preventing Pressure Injuries: Nurse-Led Innovations Improve Cervical Collar Care in Pediatric Trauma Patients. Pediatric Nursing, 51(5).

Smeltzer, Cory (2026, April 27–30). Ringing in Success: Preoperative Nurse Calls, a Multidisciplinary Approach to Reduce Same-Day Surgery Cancellation [Poster presentation]. ASPAN National Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Smith, Casie (2026, May 6). Developmental Care Huddles for Prevention of NICU Unplanned Extubations [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Nurses Week Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Stoppelbein, Merrill (2026, June 10). Keeping Kids on Track: Strengthening Continuity in Pediatric ADHD Medication Management [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Strong, Erika (2025, October 11–14). Empowering Families Through Online Support Communities: Influence on Pediatric Tracheostomy Decisions [Conference session]. American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery (AAO) Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN.

Strong, Erika (2025, October 11–14). The Cost of Care: Financial and Emotional Impacts on Families of Children With Tracheostomies [Conference session]. American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery (AAO) Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN.

Vanover, Tonya (2026, June 10). Enhancing Adherence to Intensive Physical Therapy Through Patient and Family Centered Care Strategies: A Quality Improvement Initiative [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

Wells, Claire (2026, June 10). Dirty Draws: Cleaning Up Contaminated Blood Cultures [Poster presentation]. Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Quality Academy Graduate Poster Session, Nashville, TN.

PHOTO BY SUSAN URMY



Merrill Stoppelbein presents her quality improvement project *Keeping Kids on Track: Strengthening Continuity in Pediatric ADHD Medication Management* at the June 2026 Quality Academy graduation.

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Caroline Epps, MSN, RN,
Jill Kinch, DNP, MMHC, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC, NE-BC
Taylor Leach, BSN, RN, CPN
Gretchen McCullough, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Kayla Preston, LPN
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LeaAnn Bowden, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC
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Autumne Harding, MSN, APRN, PCNS-BC, CPPS
Kim Isenberg, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC/AC, NE-BC
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Sally Watson, MD
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Lauren Janowski, BSN, RN, CCRN
Natalie Johnson, MSN, RN, CPHON
Amanda Lampley, BSN, RN, CCRN
Jennifer Leigh, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, RNC-NIC
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Kimberly MacKeil-White, DNP, RN, CPEN, NPD-BC
Carmen Mauldin, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CCRN-K
Amy McNeal, MSN, RN, NPD-BC
Brandi Meacham, MSN, RN, CPN
Liz Mockmore, BSN, RN, CCRN
Megan Montejano, MSN, RN, CPN
Lacey Noffsinger, MSN, RN, CPN, CPEN
Laura Parks, MSN, RN, NI-BC, NPD-BC
Erin Shook, BSN, RN, CPN
Amanda Smith, MSN, RN, CPHON
Katie Stapleton, MSN, RN, CCRN
Zeydi Zambrano, BSN, RN, CCRN

Building Bridges in Pediatric Care
Lexie Chastanger, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC
Katie Gibson, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA
Makenna Hibdon, BSN, RN
Geraldine Rosero, CCMA, CPT
Jenn Stewart, PhD



Beth Bass celebrates receiving the 2026 Vanderbilt Health Advanced Practice Nurse of the Year Award alongside her husband.



Former patient Annie and her mother, Molly, join Michelle Gontko as she receives the DAISY Award, recognizing the care that inspired Molly's nomination.



Surrounded by her parents, Delana Vallery celebrates being honored with the 2026 Vanderbilt Health Friend of Nursing Award.

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PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH

Nursing Professional Governance inaugural members gathered for Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt's NPG Launch Day on January 12, 2026. This group of NPG innovators will pave the way for the future of nursing professional practice and decision making.

Nursing Professional Governance

Anna Ahrens, MA, CCLS
Donna Albright, BSN, RN, CDCES
Rachael Anderson, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Ashlynn Armour, BSN, RN, CPN
Randi Baumgardner, BSN, RN
Shelly Bledsoe, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Tiffany Bledsoe, MSN, RN, CPEN
Beth Bass, MSN, APRN, FNP
Victoria Berry, RRT
Kristina Bowlen, BSN, RN, CCRN
Allison Brackey, BSN, RN, CPN
Brittany Brown
Chet Brown, BSN, RN
Marissa Brown, PhD, RN, NE-BC, NPDA-BC, CPN
LeighAnn Chadwell, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Sarah Cloud, RN, CPN
Starlette Cole, BSN, RN, CPEN
Allison Condra, BSN, RN, CPN
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Kelli Copenhaver, MSN, RN, CCRN, NPD-BC
Jeremy Crawford, MMHC, BBA, RN, NE-BC
Shanaya Cross, BSN, RN, CCRN
Hannah Damron, BSN, RN, CPHON
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Legacy Delgado, BSN, RN, CCRN
Staci Eagleton, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC, CCRN
Caroline Epps, MSN, RN, CPPS
Adrienne Foster, BSN, RN, CPN
Michelle Garcia, MSN, RN, NE-BC
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Sarah Beth Harmon, BSN, RN
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Lauren Harville, BSN, RN, CCM
Macey Haynes, BSN, RN
Anna Holt, MSN, RN, CCRN
John David Hughes, MMHC, BSN, RN, NE-BC
Victoria Jackson, MHA, BSN, NE-BC
Tammy Johnson, MBA, BSN, RN, CCRN
Ashley Jones, RN, CCRN
Vicki Jones, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Karen Kiernon, BSN, RN, CNOR
Jill Kinch, DNP, MMHC, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC, NE-BC
Paige Knecht, BSN, RN, CPHON
Jon Kraft, BSN, RN, CNOR
Kayla Kuehn, BSN, RN
Cristina Loaiza, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Meghan Luebbert, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC
Beth Loats, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Toni Lubrano, BSN, RN, CPN
Gretchen McCullough, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Kaylee McGuire, BSN, RN, CPN
Meredith Miles, BSN, RN
Monica Milovancev, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC
Amanda Mock, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC, CPPS, EBP (CH)
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Emily Neely, BSN, RN, CCRN
Nicole Neisinger, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Laura Parks, MSN, RN, NI-BC, NPD-BC
Hadleigh Pate, BSN, RN
Shannan Ramsey, MSN, RN
Ashley Ried, MMHC, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, CPPS
Vanessa Rivera, BSN, RN, CCRN
Patti Runyan, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC
Monica Shriver, BSN, RN
Caitlin Slayden, BSN, RN, CNOR
Elizabeth Stanga, BSN, RN, CCRN
Candy Stefansic, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Holly Tyler, BSN, RN, CPHON
Quintana Vince, BSN, RN, CCRN
Sarah Walker, BSN, RN, RNC-NIC
Sarah Watson, BSN, RN, VA-BC
Jessica Williams, DHA, MPA
Megan Yuchnitz, BSN, RN

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Quality Academy
Claire Wells, BSN, RN
Meagan Davis, MHA, BSN, RN, NE-BC

Bridging Care, Building Safety
Melissa Lashock, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC
Cat Milwee, MPAS, PA-C
Dani Ogg, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC
Herchel Portella, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC
Sydney Sloan, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC
Michelle Terrell, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC
Jaimie Torres, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC
Cynthia Woodward, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC

CLABSI Free Since '23
Jasmine Adams
Jessica Binkley, MSN, RN, CPN
Alexis Brinsko, BSN, RN, CPN, CIC
Mariama Ceesay
Lisa Damme, CNA
Erin Flores, BSN, RN, CPN
Mackenzy Jaques, BSN, RN, CPN
Audrey Massow, BSN, RN
Chelsea McMillen, BSN, RN, CPN
Bailey Shank, BSN, RN
Ajeen Tahir
Lindsey Thomson, BSN, RN
Emily Zawistowski, BSN, RN

Improving NICU Safety
Becky Gursky, CRT
Regan Miller, RRT

Turning Questions into Confidence
Rachael Anderson, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Frankie Gallian, BSN, RN, CPN
Amanda Mock, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC, CPPS, EBP (CH)

Nurses Week Poster Gallery
Chloe Caylor, M.Ed., CCLS
Becky Caldwell, BSN, RN, CCM
Legacy Delgado, BSN, RN, CCRN
Amanda Eads, BSN, RN, CCRN
Rachel Griffith, BSN, RN, CCRN
Ryan Hamman, MBA, BSN, RN, NE-BC, CMGT-BC
Gretchen McCullough, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Julie McLamb, MSN, APRN, PNP-AC
Amanda Mock, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC, CPPS, EBP (CH)
Maria Morrissey, MSN, RN, CPN
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Herchel Portella, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC
Amy Potts, PharmD, MMHC, BCPPS, FPPA, FASHP
Ashley Ried, MMHC, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, CPPS
Erin Tucker, BSN, RN, CCRN

From the NICU to Home
Julia Peredo, DNP, APRN, NNP

Designed for Comfort and Care
Ashley Frost, MSN, RN, CPN
Candy Stefansic, MSN, RN, NE-BC

Awards & Recognitions
Ann Berwager
LeRonda Campbell, CCMA
Spencer Shreeve, BSN, RN

DAISY Awardees
Meghan Arms, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC
Jillian Brown, MHA
Jasmine Burton, BSN, RN
Alaina Curry, BSN, RN
Brandi Deason, BSN, RN, RNC-NIC
Emily Dunn, BSN, RN, CPN
Michelle Gontko, BSN, RN, CCRN
McKenzie Herbert, BSN, RN
Katie Judd, MSN, RN, CCRN
Mary Lee Lemley, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC
Patdy Leong, BSN, RN
Chloe Kight, BSN, RN, CCRN
Evan McKay, BSN, RN
Amanda Mock, MSN, RN, RNC-NIC, CPPS, EBP (CH)
Elise Norton, BSN, RN
Amanda N. Smith, MSN, RN, CPHON
Kassidy Trant, BSN, RN
Jill Young, BSN, RN, CPN



Nursing Award Honorees
Beth Bass, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC
Paul Clotier, RN, CFRN
Delana Vallery, MA

Inaugural WISE Preceptor Awards
Kyra Alstott, BSN, RN
Megan Baccash, BSN, RN
Taylor Clark, BSN, RN
Kara FitzMaurice, BSN, RN, CPN
Kaleigh Harris, BSN, RN, CPN
Josee Hodges, BSN, RN, CPHON
Chloe Kight, BSN, RN, CCRN
Addysen Lamb, BSN, RN

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PHOTO BY DONN JONES

The Thread Editorial Board members Brittany Brown, Shelly Bledsoe, and Lia Herrera present a poster highlighting the launch of the Monroe Carell nursing services newsletter.

Disseminations

Kathernie Bennett, MA, CCLS
Shelly Bledsoe, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Deanna Bryant, RN
Brittany Brown
Chet Brown, BSN, RN
Jessika Boles, PhD, CCLS
Lauren Boston, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, NPD-BC
Minden Bullock, BSN, RN, CNML
Megan Casey, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC
Maddy Cason, BSN, RN, CCRN
Chloe Caylor, CCLS
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Amanda Eads, BSN, RN, CCRN
Amber Greeno, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC, CPN, NE-BC, TCRN
Rachel Griffith, BSN, RN, CCRN
Amy Guerrero, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC
Daphne Hardison, MSN, RN, CNML, CES-P
Lia Herrera, BSN, RN, CPN
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Maddie Risley, BSN, RN
Patti Runyan, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, EBP-C
Whitney Selleh, MSN, RN, CES-P, CCRN
Spencer Shreeve, BSN, RN
Kelly Sigler, BSN, RN, CES-P
Stefani Skoglund, BSN, RN
Cory Smeltzer, MMHC, BSN, RN, CCRN
Casie Smith, BS, RRT-NPS
Raven Stafford, BSN, RN, CPN
Merrill Stoppelbein, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC
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PHOTO BY ERIN O. SMITH



Surrounded by leaders, colleagues, and family, Evan McKay receives the April 2026 DAISY Award from Gretchen McCullough.