

# NURSING

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER

Transforming patient care through professional practice

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A newsletter  
from the office  
of the Executive  
Chief Nursing  
Officer

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## ADVANCED PRACTICE FOCUS OF EVENT

Advanced practice nurses, physician assistants and Medical Center leaders gathered virtually on Jan. 16 for the kickoff of the 2024 series of Advanced Practice Grand Rounds, a monthly educational series organized by the VUMC Office of Advanced Practice.

The session featured Amita Bey, EdD, MPH, associate director of the VUMC Office of Inclusion and Health Equity, who gave the keynote presentation, “Embracing Diversity in Health Care: Cultivating a Culture of Humility, Quality and Care.”

“Diversity in health care is not just a buzzword or a catch phrase,” Bey said. “It is a fundamental necessity.”

Bey offered personal anecdotes to illustrate the importance of diversity in the workforce to address health disparities. Her family has roots in Union Springs, Alabama, not far from where the Tuskegee Syphilis Study took place. The federal study, conducted between 1932 and 1972, included patients who were not informed of a cure for syphilis, resulting in the death of perhaps 100 men. She learned more about the history of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study as a student at Tuskegee University.

“Learning about such a profound wrong inflicted upon my own people, Black people from Alabama, this highlighted for me the critical need for ethical standards and human rights in medical research, and

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We have much good news to share in this issue. In the above story, you will read about the Advanced Practice Grand Rounds kickoff, always an inspiring start to the year. Our team of nurse practitioners and physician assistants continues to grow and define patient- and family-centered care.

Also in this issue, you will read about the formation of the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the American Association of Men in Nursing (AAMN), which was just recognized as an official chapter by the AAMN. This reflects the hard work of our male nurses, who have

created a chapter that is open to nurses in medical organizations not just at Vanderbilt, but throughout the area.

Lastly, you will read about the new Nurse Scholars Program and how it is offering tuition assistance to nursing school students who will in turn become Vanderbilt nurses. Thanks to all who have made this a reality.

Enjoy this issue,

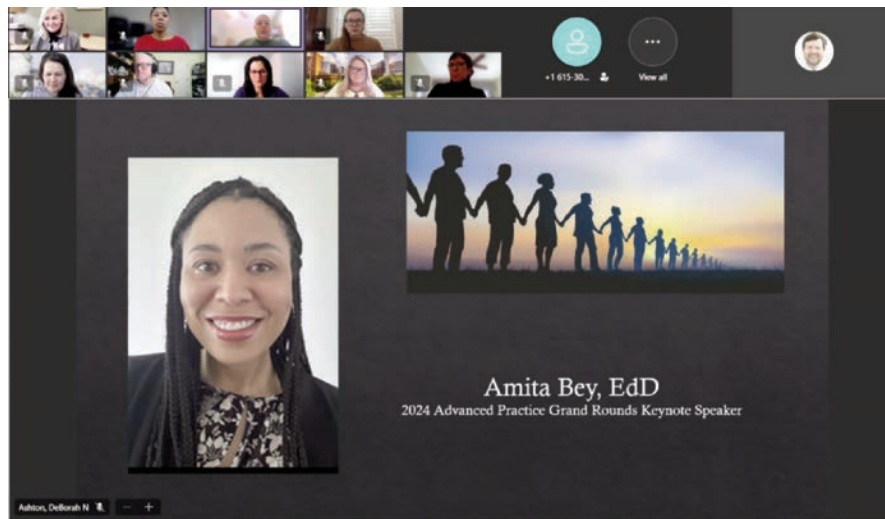
this realization really steered me, or I'd even say rocketed me toward a career in public health and academic medicine," she said. "I was compelled to be an advocate for vulnerable populations and to speak for people who did not have a voice to ensure that these types of injustices would never occur in the future."

Unethical research methods have led minority populations to be skeptical of medical providers, causing hesitancy to seek care and disparities in health outcomes. Increasing diversity in the medical workforce can help turn those perceptions around, Bey said.

Bey cited research from the Commonwealth Fund that "shows that a diverse and representative health care workforce improves patients' access to care, their perceptions of the care they receive and their health outcomes, especially for patients of color.

"Furthermore," she added, citing the Commonwealth Fund research, "when Black patients are treated by Black doctors, they are both more likely to be satisfied with the care they receive and more likely to agree to receiving and actually have received recommended preventive services within the last year."

Bey offered a deeply personal example to underscore the gravity of increasing diver-



The Advanced Practice Grand Rounds featured Amita Bey, EdD, MPH, who gave the keynote presentation.

sity, and with it, trust in health care in minority populations. Her father, Leon, did not believe the COVID-19 vaccine was safe or effective for Black people or other minorities.

Just a few weeks before Christmas in 2021, he contracted COVID, and after the disease progressively worsened, he was rushed to the hospital. He died in early January 2022, just after his 72nd birthday.

"If you take nothing else away from today's talk, please keep in mind that diversity is not merely just a check box of differences, but it is a celebration of unique backgrounds that, when united, began to form a formidable force that is capable of driving positive change in creating more compassionate and diverse workplace environments."

During the kickoff session, the 2024 Advanced Practice

Ambassador Award was presented to Jaci Ryals, BS, associate director of the Office of Advanced Practice. The award honors non-advanced practice providers for their contributions advocating and supporting the role of the Advanced Practice profession.

For more information about Advanced Practice Grand Rounds and the Office of Advanced Practice, visit <https://www.vumc.org/nursing-oap/welcome>.

"The Office of Advanced Practice serves as the professional home for over 1,500 advanced practice practitioners who are committed to delivering our mission at VUMC," said Brent Dunworth, DNP, MBA, APRN, CRNA, NEA-BC, associate nurse executive for Advanced Practice.

## VUMC MEN IN NURSING LAUNCH AAMN CHAPTER

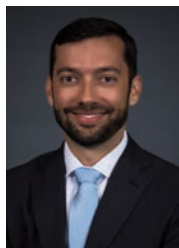
Vanderbilt's male nurses have formed the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the American Association for Men in Nursing (AAMN), which has just been recognized as an official chapter by the AAMN.

The AAMN's mission, according to the organization, is "to shape the practice, education, research and leadership for men in nursing and advance men's health."

The Middle Tennessee chapter includes members from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and Belmont School of Nursing, said Jeremy Crawford, MMHC, BBA, BSN, RN, NE-BC, president of the Middle Tennessee Chapter of AAMN, in addition to an existing AAMN student chapter at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

The group is working to recruit members from Vanderbilt and non-Vanderbilt medical facilities and area schools of nursing throughout Middle Tennessee. Any nurse, care partner or medical assistant in Middle Tennessee can be a member, male or female.

Crawford, senior associate in Nursing at Monroe Carell, said the chapter has a three-fold mission: to improve men's health, to create a community that supports male nurses, and to help create a



Crawford

pipeline of advancement for potential male nurses.

"We want all males to know that nursing is a great option for their careers," he said. "By raising awareness and putting a support structure in place, we are paving the way for the next generation of male nurses."

About 10% of VUMC's nurses are male, and the Medical Center has long been a leader in recruiting and retaining male nurses. Crawford said the idea to create a Middle Tennessee chapter originated when a delegation of Vanderbilt's male nurses attended the 2022 AAMN conference in Orlando, Florida, where VUMC was recognized with a Best Workplace for Men in Nursing award.

VUMC has been recognized four times with the award, the latest in October 2023. Criteria for the award included recruitment materials featuring men in nursing, strategic plans to increase gender diversity, historical evidence demonstrating an increase in the number of men in nursing and evidence of male nurse involvement.

Among Vanderbilt's gen-

der-inclusive policies is the parental leave policy that allows new fathers, in addition to mothers, to receive two weeks of paid parental leave. Nursing recruitment materials are inclusionary of males.

Making Diversity and Inclusion Intentional is one of VUMC's three strategic directions, along with Design for Patients and Families, and Discover, Learn and Share. Increasing diversity in all aspects of the workforce benefits team performance and patient care.

Vanderbilt's male nurses continue to be regularly recognized with institutional awards, including The DAISY Award, Five Pillar Leader Award and Credo Award. Male nurses hold leadership roles throughout the enterprise, including chairing or co-chairing dozens of unit boards.

"The Middle Tennessee chapter of the AAMN is an exciting addition to the local nursing community," said Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC, FAAN, executive chief nursing officer. "I look forward to the opportunities this provides to bring more diverse experiences and perspectives to serve patients and families. As always, I am proud to stand with our men in nursing."



## FIRST GRADUATES OF NURSE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Vanderbilt University Medical Center is welcoming the first graduates of the Nurse Scholars Program, which pays for up to four semesters of nursing school tuition at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN) or Cumberland University in return for a work commitment to VUMC.

The welcoming of the graduates comes as the latest group of nursing scholars recently were accepted into the program, which began accepting scholars in 2023. The program will pay up to \$7,500 in tuition per semester, which is applied after grants and other scholarships.

In turn, scholars agree to work for VUMC one year for each semester of tuition assistance received, up to four years. VUSN and Cumberland University are participating in the program, and other institutions may be added.

“Vanderbilt started this program because we recognize that there are many people in the community who want to become nurses, but the cost of tuition may be a barrier,” said Carmen Mauldin, MSN, RN, director of Clinical Education & Professional Development for the VUMC Central Team. “We are excited about the opportunity to engage with nursing students while they are in school about the benefits of being a VUMC nurse. This gives them the opportunity to



The first graduates of the Nurse Scholars Program (including the area where they are starting) are, from left, Taylor Sams, BSN, RN (MICU), Bailey Wheeler, BSN, RN (Adult ED), Josh Thomas, BSN, RN, (Pediatric Cardiology), and Corbin Lackey, BSN, RN (Pediatric ED).

know and learn about us as a future employer.”

Students can apply to the Nurse Scholars Program after being accepted into nursing school or beginning in their first semester, depending on their program's structure. After graduation, students will be admitted in the VUMC Nurse Residency Program, a one-year program that supports newly licensed RNs as they transition from academic to professional nursing.

“Vanderbilt is a wonderful place to start your nursing career,” said Ashley Corn, DNP, RN, nursing education specialist in the Nurse Scholars Program. “The Nursing Scholars Program engages with the students to help assimilate them to the VUMC culture. We help prepare students for the nurse residency program, which offers training, education, and team building oppor-

tunities. It's not only about becoming more knowledgeable and competent as nurses but also building a team at VUMC. I believe the teamwork at VUMC is one of our greatest strengths and what makes us stand out.”

Vanderbilt nurses are part of a major academic medical center, the only institution in Middle Tennessee that has achieved Magnet recognition from the ANCC, the highest honor an organization can receive for the provision of nursing care and interprofessional collaboration. Nurses have countless opportunities to participate in shared governance, research and evidence-based practice.

For more information of the Vanderbilt Nurse Scholars Program, please visit <https://www.vumc.org/vanderbilt-nursing/vumcnsp>.