

# NURSING

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER

Transforming patient care through professional practice

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## DIVERSE NURSE LEADERS GATHER

Nurse leaders from around the country in either clinical practice or academic medicine came together Nov. 13-17 at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN) for the second annual Academy for Diverse Emerging Nurse Leaders.

The academy, a joint effort of VUSN and Vanderbilt University Medical Center, is a leadership development program for nurses new to health care leadership and academic positions who are from groups historically underrepresented in nursing and/or those who support them. The program is intended to reach nurses who have been in their leadership roles for less than three years, equipping them with the tools to navigate the unique challenges of being leaders with diverse backgrounds.

More than 20 nurse leaders participated in the weeklong program, filled with guest lectures, panels and activities facilitated by leaders from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Each of the participants new to the academy selected a mentor in their home institution and another outside, someone with national presence. A criterion for participation is that the new participant develops and implements a project at his/her home institution.

Last year's inaugural participants shared their projects, which they have either implemented or are in the process of implementing.

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As another year comes to an end, I continue to be in awe of my fellow Vanderbilt nurses.

In the above story, you will read about the second annual gathering of the Academy for Diverse Emerging Nurse Leaders. This partnership of VUMC and the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing brings diverse nurse leaders from around the country to our beautiful campus. Congratulations to all the leaders who are participating in this important work.

Also in this issue, you will read about an inaugural cohort of nurse leaders who participated in the Health Management Academy's Nurse Manager Idea Labs.

Thank you again for all you do. I wish you and your family Happy Holidays and a very Happy New Year.

Enjoy this issue,

Those projects ranged from starting a Women's Health/Labor & Delivery rapid response team to implementing a SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) position, from enhancing diversity and inclusion in the nurse's home institution to creating a toolkit for graduate nurse success.

"This program has been amazing for me," said Jazmin Richardson, MSN, RN, PCCN, CCRN-K, NPD-BC, a returning participant who presented at the academy. She is a clinical education specialist at SONIFI Healthcare Technology and a Doctor of Nursing Practice student at University of South Alabama, whose project was "Ready to Practice: A New Graduate Nurse Toolkit for Success."

Other projects included prewarming patients to prevent intraoperative hypothermia, community building to advance diverse nurse leaders and creating a nurse mentorship program to support diverse nurses.

"I think one of the most beautiful benefits of this is the support that we have for one another as we continue to navigate some challenging times," said returning participant Kelly McGlothen-Bell, PhD, RN, IBCLC, whose project was "Cultivating an Inclusive Learning Environment to Foster Nursing Education."



Naphia Bennett, MBA, BSN, RN, (left) a unit director at Grady Health System in Atlanta, was one of the presenters at the Academy for Diverse Nursing Leaders at the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing. To her right is Mamie Williams, senior director of Nursing Diversity and Inclusion at VUMC and co-director of the Academy.

Academy co-director Mamie Williams, PhD, MPH, APRN, senior director of Nursing Diversity and Inclusion at VUMC, said the projects have had a nationwide impact.

"The projects all reflect where we are in health care right now — the need for diverse leadership, to improve our nurse retention and to mentor people," she said. "It's amazing to think that we had that response and that impact."

The impetus for the program was twofold, Williams said. First, evidence shows that nurses from diverse backgrounds lack support they need to succeed in their roles. Second, the program aims to

increase the number of diverse leaders by encouraging them to bring others on board as leaders.

Rolanda Johnson, PhD, MSN, RN, associate dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at VUSN, co-directed the academy with Williams. "Following this academy, I know this cohort of emerging diverse leaders will be better equipped to change and improve health care as we know it today," Johnson said.

"Each project resulting from this cohort will be impactful in their individual institutions and hopefully will evolve to sustainable long-term gains for all health care stakeholders. I am elated that VUSN and VUMC are collabo-

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rators in this important program.”

Participants said the conference was valuable for offering networking and mentorship opportunities for those underrepresented in health care.

“I realized I was lacking the type of leadership acumen that I needed to take myself to the next level, to be really regarded as more of an expert

in my industry,” said Patrice Little, DNP, FNP-BC, a family nurse practitioner and founder of NP Student, who came from suburban Atlanta. “I could no longer run this race alone.”

Another attendee, Shaquita Bonds, DNP, FNP-C, PMHNP-BC, Bachelor of Science in Nursing program director at Tennessee State University, said one of the

biggest barriers she has faced as a minority is the lack of mentorship. Her biggest takeaway from the academy is, “It’s OK not to be OK, and in order for me to get OK, I need the resources, which is what this is all about, giving me the tools and resources to be successful... and knowing that there are other people out there who are feeling ... the same way that I feel.”

## NURSE MANAGERS PART OF INAUGURAL COHORT



Graham



Ashby



Dinkins



Grubbs



Holman

Five VUMC nurse managers participated in the inaugural cohort of The Health Management Academy’s Nurse Manager Idea Labs, part of the organization’s Nursing Catalyst program.

The Nurse Manager Idea Labs were a nine-month program for high-performing nurse managers from leading health systems nationwide in 2023. Through the program, nurse managers participated in innovative-thinking workshops to collaboratively develop solutions to common front-line operational challenges.

Participants practiced critical- and creative-thinking strategies while developing

action-oriented, nurse-centered solutions to shared challenges and building relationships with a national network of peers.

The five VUMC participants were:

- Jennifer Graham, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, manager, Patient Care Services, Vanderbilt University Hospital (VUH).

- Misty Ashby, MSN, RN, SCRNP, manager, Patient Care Services, VUH.

- Shelly Dinkins, MSN, RN, manager, Patient Care Services, VUH.

- Alicia (Ali) Grubbs, MSN, RN, NE-BC, manager, Patient Care Services, VUH.

- Jessica Holman, BSN, RN, director, ICU, Vanderbilt

Wilson County Hospital (VWCH).

Graham, Ashby, Dinkins and Grubbs – who all work at VUH – collaborated on a nine-month program called “Retention through Recognition: Using Challenge Coins to Recognize Exceptional Service, Valor, and Teamwork.” The project focused on strategic management issues and leadership development through networking with other nurse managers from 10 leading health systems across the country.

Dinkins said the original project came out of a need to build the RN/care partner relationship, build trust among the

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team, give an opportunity for peer recognition, and impact staff retention. The kick-off was during Nurses Week, and staff and leadership awarded over 70 challenge coins. The nurse with the most coins at the end of the week won a prize: “the schedule of your choice during the next scheduling period,” Dinkins said. “I learned that bringing a fun and competitive spirit to work gives an opportunity to focus on the positives.”

Grubbs said the team learned through the experience that VUMC nurses weren’t alone in the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. “As we continue to establish a new health care normal, it was breathtaking to work with such an amazing group of nursing colleagues from other institutions to help brainstorm ideas and share best

practices that will help us lead our teams through this evolving change in our health care landscape.”

“This was an amazing experience,” Ashby said. “It was refreshing to work with nurse leaders from other institutions to develop innovative solutions to some of the biggest challenges we are all facing right now. I would encourage other leaders to take advantage of opportunities like this.”

Holman, from VWCH, worked on two similar but separate projects. The first was a “parking lot survey,” designed to get real-time feedback on whether nurses had “good or bad shifts.”

The survey was sent via email, and flyers with a QR code linked to the survey were placed at all time clocks and exit doors used by staff. Staff were asked if they had what they

needed to complete their shift, including equipment, staff and education. “My goal was to be able to see if there was a way to improve the shifts by providing the things the staff needed based on the responses,” Holman said.

Holman’s second initiative was a recognition survey. “This survey allowed for real time recognition,” she said. “Any employee within the facility could fill out the survey. It would go to me, I would then email the employee, their one up, and the executive leader of the department. This again was for employee engagement and satisfaction.”

Holman added, “I am so grateful for this experience and the friendships I made from it. My plan is to continue to work to improve employee satisfaction and retention.”

## TWO VUMC STAFF HONORED AS FRIENDS OF NURSING

Two VUMC employees were honored with the Friend of Nursing Award from the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN). The two were honored in November during VUSN’s 2023 Alumni Awards.

Cassie Brady, MD, assistant professor of Clinical Pediatrics, and Jenna Smith, LCSW, a licensed clinical social worker at VUMC, received the award.

Brady received the award because, as her nominator wrote, “she promotes the role of

nurses in caring for pediatric patients and families and actively participates in their education.”

Brady, who practices at Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, provides guest lectures at the School of Nursing, where she is one of the most popular speakers with nursing students.

Smith received the award for her commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, patient care and social justice, as well as

her expertise, willingness to share knowledge and dedication to lifelong learning.

Smith serves as leader of the social service and behavioral health integration at the West End Clinic (formerly known as the Clinic at Mercury Courts) and she is a mentor to nursing and allied health students and advocate for vulnerable populations. She also collaborates on creating resiliency hubs with Urban Housing Solutions and the School of Nursing.