

# 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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## VPARE PROMOTES ADVANCEMENT

The Vanderbilt Professional Nursing Practice Program (VPNPP) has transitioned to a new name – Vanderbilt Professional Advancement and Recognition of Excellence (VPARE).

VPARE is a professional advancement program designed to recognize excellence among clinical staff members at Vanderbilt Health involved in patient care. Built on the Magnet framework and grounded in evidence-based practice, VPARE emphasizes the pivotal role of the nurse in achieving and maintaining a high standard of patient care through the nurse's continuous improvement.

"Vanderbilt Health nurses do great work and should be recognized for it," said Cathy Ivory, PhD, NI-BC, NEA-BC, FAAN, associate nurse executive in the Office of Nursing Excellence.

VPARE has the same goals and a similar structure as VPNPP had before, but the application process has been made simpler and nurses will now be assigned a mentor to help them with the application, said Katherine Reeves, MPH, RN, senior nursing projects manager in the Office of Nursing Excellence. For example, instead of a previous requirement for nurses to write their professional story, they now have options to create a video, a voiceover in a PowerPoint presentation

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Happy New Year! I hope 2024 is off to a great start for everybody. We certainly have much good news to share in this issue.

In the story above, you will read about the transition to a new Vanderbilt Professional Advancement and Recognition of Excellence (VPARE) program. Taking the place of our Vanderbilt Professional Nursing Practice Program, VPARE is designed to be simpler and offers more creativity to the nurse who aspires to advance.

I encourage you to read more details

about the program and to consider applying. It might make a great New Year's Resolution!

Also in this issue, you will read about our latest group of recipients of The DAISY Award. I never fail to be inspired by this very special group of nurses. Thank you for all the important work you do for our patients and families.

Enjoy this issue,

tation or other creative approaches.

“We really want to recognize the work that nurses are doing,” Reeves said.

The goals of VPARE are to:

- Retain clinical nurses in direct patient care.
- Recognize and reward nursing performance in accordance with indicators of clinical expertise and contribution to the team, department and organization.
- Foster an environment that promotes high-quality patient care and contributes to positive patient outcomes.
- Establish nursing performance standards across the clinical enterprise.

VPARE exists to promote, support, recognize, and reward growth within the role of the professional nurse as defined by internal and external practice standards, the context of the organization’s culture, and external environmental influences.

The VPARE program includes progressive levels of nursing expertise, from RN2 to RN4, in which nurses can advance and be compensated. Nurse residents start at



the RN1 level, and when they complete their residency, they advance to RN2. Then, opportunities to advance are available yearly.

For example, after one year and by meeting program requirements, RN2s may advance to RN3. After an additional year and meeting requirements, RN3s may advance to RN4.

The transition from VPNPP to VPARE began about a year ago, Reeves said, following the formation of a steering committee and a review of the literature, which resulted in evidence-informed recommendations. Recommendations were brought to the Nursing Enterprise Cabinet for endorsement and additional

suggestions.

“Combining those together, we changed the process to hopefully increase satisfaction for nurses, so that it honors their high level of work,” Reeves said.

Mentors, those who are RN3 or RN4, are needed and highly encouraged to apply at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4ec441933e794571a8158dcc222b315b>.

For more information, visit <https://www.vumc.org/vpnpp/welcome-vpare>.

If you have questions, or if you would be interested in having someone from the VPARE team give a presentation at a staff meeting to discuss the changes, please email [vpare@vumc.org](mailto:vpare@vumc.org).

# SPOTLIGHT ON DAISY AWARD RECIPIENTS



**Annaliza Zurcher, LPN**  
**Unit: Spring Hill Primary Care**  
**Entity: Vanderbilt Adult Ambulatory Clinics**

**From the nomination:** "I've seen nurse Zurcher now probably about five or six times. She always makes me feel a lot better about my visit considering I dread doctor appointments. She is always extremely friendly and easy to talk to. Today I was sitting in the patient room and wondering how I could let her know that I appreciate her and what she does and then I saw this survey and thought instantly to recognize her on this platform. Hats off to you, nurse Zurcher. You're amazing at what you do, and my family and I would like to say thank you!"



**Marla Houston, RN**  
**Unit: Radiation Oncology Franklin**  
**Entity: Vanderbilt Adult Ambulatory Clinics**

**From the nomination:** "First officially met Marla Houston, RN, on 5/8/23 (then weekly until 6/9/23), but saw her most days of treatment (at least in passing). She always greeted me and asked how I was doing. On our weekly nursing visits (before I met with the doctor), she was always very helpful and concerned. She not only listened to my related concerns, passing information to the doctor to follow up with me about, but would discuss my concerns about other health problems ... I am glad she was there and will always remember her. I can't imagine a more compassionate individual, always helpful and concerned about me — but with a smile that just made me feel confident with everything going on."

# SPOTLIGHT ON DAISY AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Jeff Benton, CRNA**

**Unit: Anesthesiology**

**Entity: Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital**

**From the nomination:** "I work in Labor & Delivery. Jeff was our CRNA from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. After 3, he passed the baton to another CRNA. Around 3:15 or so one of our patients required the service of Anesthesia. We called the person we were supposed to. They said okay, someone will be there shortly. A few minutes later Jeff shows up in street clothes. We asked, 'What are you doing back?' He responded, 'I was on my way home when I got the text a patient needed help. Everyone else is stuck in a case in the OR, so I turned around. Patients shouldn't be in pain if we can help it.' ...Jeff is one of the most kind, caring and compassionate CRNAs I have ever worked with."



**Brandy Dawkins, RN**

**Unit: Float Pool**

**Entity: Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital**

**From the nomination:** "The particular nurse, Brandy, went above and beyond her call of duty when I sought her out after having a panic attack due to flashbacks. The sympathy/empathy shown means so much to me, and I imagine always will be ingrained in my mind. Not only did she provide me with a positive distraction, but she stayed with me until I felt comfortable."

**Sara Elliott, BSN, RN**

**Unit: Emergency Department**

**Entity: Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton Hospital**

**From the nomination:** "Impressed, grateful, overwhelmed by her kindness; these are the very strong emotions that come to my mind when I think of what ED Nurse Sara Elliott did for my family recently. My 37-year-old son had ALS. He was on hospice care at home. On Sunday afternoon while watching a movie, his time came, and he slumped over in his wheelchair. My daughter-in-law was terrified and very upset. Despite knowing he had a fatal disease she began resuscitation efforts. She called 911 and he was taken by ambulance to the VTHH ED. There he was provided care by the most amazing group of folks. (The staff was nothing short of amazing at every turn, but that is a different story). Sara was the ED charge nurse that day, and ensured my son received exceptional care, individualized to him."



# SPOTLIGHT ON DAISY AWARD RECIPIENTS



**Shannon Lynch, BSN, RN**

**Unit: Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)**

**Entity: Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt**

**From the nomination:** "Shannon is an incredible asset to the hospital, especially the PICU. Not only does she round on all of our high-risk patients, but she always comes by on the even hours because she knows our patients get turned then, and she is able to help us with this task. And she doesn't just check their skin and leave; she is always game to tackle a bath, a diaper change, a full linen change, or whatever else the patient needs. She is SO flexible with nursing when she comes by for skin checks and she sticks around to help with all the things that need to be done. She also checks in with us on an emotional level when we have difficult assignments. She takes on so many roles."

**Kristen Patterson, LPN**

**Unit: Emergency Department**

**Entity: Vanderbilt Bedford Hospital**

**From the nomination:** "Kristen was immediately so kind and reassuring that she was going to take the best care of my daughter. My daughter, age 6, had been sick for a few days with a terrible cough and was experiencing chest pains. When we got to our room Kristen immediately included my daughter in all conversations. She promised that she would always talk to her and let her know if anything was going to be done that would be painful or hurt, that she would always talk to her and make sure they made a plan. She was the kindest and sweetest with her."



**WANT TO NOMINATE A NURSE?**

Scan the QR code or go to [www.VUMCDAISY.com](http://www.VUMCDAISY.com).

