May/June 2023

ADDRESS HIGHLIGHTS WORK OF NURSES

In her 2023 State of Nursing Address, Executive Chief Nursing Officer Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC, looked back on another extraordinary year as nearly 9,000 Vanderbilt nurses cared for patients and families and the health system continued to grow.

Dubree’s May 23 address to nurses throughout the enterprise in person and online was part of VUMC’s ongoing recognition of National Nurses Month, which honors the 200th birthday of Florence Nightingale, considered the founder of modern nursing. C. Wright Pinson, MBA, MD, Deputy CEO and Chief Health System Officer, offered introductory remarks.

“Celebrate and reflect on the incredible work that you do,” Pinson said. “In the face of the ever-evolving health care landscape, nurses have consistently been at the forefront, providing the vital care, support and comfort to those in need. From the patient side to the community, nurses serve as the heart and soul of the health care system.”

In her address, Dubree was frank about the challenges facing nursing and health care today, but said nurses have always met them.

“This year has been a testament to the qualities which make a Vanderbilt nurse — compassion, competency, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to excellence,” she said.

I hope each of you took a moment to celebrate yourselves during Nurses Month in May!

In this May/June issue, we share highlights of the Nursing Honors award recipients and feature an article about the State of Nursing Address. These nurses represent the very best of Vanderbilt nursing throughout our hospitals and clinics.

In nurse wellness news, we extend a warm welcome to our new director of Nurse Safety & Well-being, Sarrah Spohnholtz, MSN, RN and kudos to Mamie Williams, PhD, MPH, RN, FNP-BC, senior director of nursing diversity for her appointment as co-chair of the American Nurses Association’s Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation advisory committee.

Enjoy this issue,

Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC, FAAN

Recognized Excellence—Designated Magnet

MAY/JUNE 2023 NURSING AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
Since the onset of COVID-19 three years ago, nurses have faced patient care challenges as well as personal impacts of the pandemic. They’ve done this despite a national shortage of nurses and other team members. They’ve adapted to new tools and new technologies to care for the patients we serve.

In the meantime, Nashville and Middle Tennessee continue significant growth, and Vanderbilt continues to expand its physical footprint to care for those patients.

To meet these challenges for nurses, Vanderbilt has partnered with community organizations, academic institutions, and is reaching out to high schools to cultivate interest in health care and nursing. Scholarships, tuition reimbursement programs, targeted recruitment incentives and a nursing tuition reimbursement program are in place to reduce the burdens of student debt for nurses.

“We’ve evolved our comprehensive orientation programs, preceptor initiatives and our mentorship opportunities that will provide guidance, support and a nurturing environment for growth,” she said.

Dubree said VUMC is at the forefront of designing new care delivery models, collaborative teams and advancing shared governance models that empower nurses.

“Each team member plays a vital role in providing comprehensive and patient-centered care,” she said. “Every individual brings their unique skills and their expertise to our work, and they must be able to work to the top of their license and education to bring the best of that to our patients.”

Another important initiative is enhancing the safety and well-being of nurses.

“We must work diligently every day to make sure that we make this environment as safe as possible for those who are called to do this work,” she said. “We recognize that nurses are at the front line of care, often facing physical and emotional demands that can and do impact their overall well-being. We are committed to creating a culture of safety, providing the necessary resources, support and systems that ensure our nurses feel protected.”

Dubree acknowledged one of Vanderbilt Nursing’s major accomplishments in the last year, attaining the fourth Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Magnet is the highest honor an organization can receive for the provision of nursing care and interprofessional collaboration.

The address included a recorded tribute from Pete Weber, sportscaster for the Nashville Predators, saluting nurses who cared for him. Weber credits his nurses for doing the diagnostic tests that pinpointed his condition, leading to two surgeries, the most recent one to place a shunt into his brain, restoring his balance and ability to walk.

“The nurses were there when I had difficulty, and I could lean on them. They gave an extra hand when I needed it. They were very vigilant watching me so very carefully, and I’m so grateful,” Weber said.

“We’re so grateful to Pete for sharing his story and his experience,” Dubree said. “His affirmation of Vanderbilt Nursing resonates for me for so many reasons.

“I’m so grateful to you and have confidence in the work that you will do in the future; thank you so much for joining us today.”
2023 NURSING HONORS

Rosamond Gabrielson Staff Nurse of the Year

Vanderbilt University Hospital
Jasmine Harrell, BSN, RN, Staff RN, Emergency Department C-Pod

Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt
Kathleen Gobbell, BSN, RN, Holding Room(HR)/Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

Vanderbilt Behavioral Health
Melanie McAfee, RN, Child & Adolescent (C/A) Unit

Vanderbilt Adult Ambulatory Clinics
Joanna Hearington, RN, Vanderbilt Orthopaedics, Hand and Upper Extremity Care

Vanderbilt Bedford County Hospital
Kayla Young, RN, Critical Care Unit

Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton Hospital
Michael McAnly, RN, Interventional Radiology Nurse, Radiology

Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital
Dorothy Griffin, RN, Behavioral Health
2023 NURSING HONORS

Rebecca Clark Culpepper Education & Mentorship
Mary Ann Jessie, PhD, RN, Associate Professor; Assistant Dean for Academics, Generalist Nursing Practice, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing

Nancy Wells Research and Evidence-Based Practice
Melissa Hill, RN, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt

Adrienne Ames Transformational Nursing Leader
Jeanne Yeatman, BSN, MBA, RN, MOM, CMTE, EMT, Chief Nursing Officer, Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital

Jerita Payne Advanced Practice Nurse of the Year
Kaitlyn Chapin, MSN, RN, CCTC, AGPCNP-BC, APN Team Lead, Transplant Clinical Services, Vanderbilt Transplant Center

Nursing Professional Development
Meghan Luebbert, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, Nursing Education Specialist, Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt

Friend of Nursing
Molly Knostman, PharmD, MHA, Executive Director, Inpatient Pharmacy Operations, Vanderbilt University Hospital

Licensed Practical Nurse of the Year
Rita Raines, LPN, Medical Specialties Clinic, Vanderbilt Adult Ambulatory Clinics

Team Award
Autism diagnosis quality improvement program team:
Holly Miller, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC
Laleh Bahrami, MD
Tori Foster, PhD
Cara (Theoret) Miller, MD
Abhi Ganesh, DO
Jeffrey Hine, PhD
DIRECTOR OF NURSE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING NAMED

Sarrah Spohnholtz, MSN, RN, has been named director of Nurse Safety and Well-being at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

In the newly-created role, Spohnholtz will collaborate with VUMC nurses, the health care workforce, Occupational Health & Wellness, and leadership teams to cultivate an environment in which VUMC is a leader in workplace wellness for nursing. She will focus on addressing mental health, physical well-being, and occupational safety to facilitate a setting where nurses thrive and provide the highest quality care.

Spohnholtz joined VUMC in 2020 as a night shift nurse in the C Pod of the Emergency Department. She progressively assumed a charge nurse role and then an assistant nurse manager role, demonstrating her dedication to providing exceptional patient care while fostering a culture of empathy and collaboration among her peers.

Prior to joining VUMC, Spohnholtz worked as a registered nurse at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago on its COVID unit, which was previously the Neurology step-down unit.

“Increasing mental health support, addressing workplace violence, and creating a positive community for us as nurses and a health care system has been my passion throughout each stage of my career,” Spohnholtz said. “I am excited and blessed to be in a position that will have a direct effect on these initiatives.”

Spohnholtz holds a Master of Nursing Science degree from DePaul University and a bachelor’s degree in Community Health with a focus in Community Administration from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

“Sarrah's commitment to nurse safety and well-being is evident in her work to improve retention, enhance morale and elevate occupational standards,” said Executive Chief Nursing Officer Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC, FAAN. “I am confident that Sarrah's expertise, compassion and commitment will positively impact the well-being of our nursing staff.”

WILLIAMS NAMED TO LEAD ANA WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Mamie Williams, PhD, MPH, MSN, APRN, senior director of Nursing Diversity and Inclusion at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, has been named co-chair of the American Nurses Association’s Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation (HNHN) Advisory Committee.

According to the ANA, the HNHN committee’s goal is to broadly connect and engage individual nurses and partner organizations to take action within six domains: physical activity, rest, nutrition, quality of life, safety, and mental health.

In addition, the committee aims to provide a web platform to inspire action, cultivate friendly competition, provide content and resources to nurses, gather data, and connect nurses with each other, with employers, and with organizations.

While serving on the VUMC Nurse Wellness committee, Williams established a partnership with the HNHN initiative, which led to the organization inviting her to co-chair the advisory committee.

Williams has more than 25 years of nursing experience and is a strong advocate for nurses' well-being. She believes that investing in nurses' well-being is essential to providing high-quality care and improving patient outcomes.
Kim Alfeldt, RN3 in the Holding Room/PACU at Vanderbilt University Hospital, has a plan to get nurses moving for wellness. She invites the whole unit, including nurses, care partners, medical receptionists and unit-based transporters, to participate in a step challenge. People with the most steps at the end of the month get a $10 gift card to places like Panera and Starbucks, which are accessible on the VUMC campus.

It’s a way to bring people together, she said.

“We’re such a large unit, and we all work different schedules,” she said. “I feel it’s hard for us to get together as a whole unit, so I started doing a step challenge so that everybody could be involved and participate.”

Alfeldt said the initiative has had a positive impact on staff.

“I think steps are good physically, mentally and even holistically,” she said. “It doesn’t matter if you walk 500 steps or if you run marathons. It’s all about just what you can do and being healthy for yourself. It’s a journey, and everyone has their own personal journey for wellness.”

To learn more about VUMC nurse wellness resources, visit https://www.vumc.org/nurse-wellness.

WILLIAMS NAMED TO LEAD ANA WELLNESS COMMITTEE continued from page 5

and has held progressive nursing roles at VUMC for more than 10 years. In 2021, she was named senior director of Nursing Diversity and Inclusion, in which she builds on efforts to create a sustainable system for diversity, equity and inclusion in nursing at VUMC, working within VUMC and engaging the wider community.

Williams formerly served as the founding co-chair of the VUMC African American Employee Resource Group, which aims to foster a feeling of inclusion, promote professional development, raise awareness of relevant issues and is open to all employees. She credits her work as the co-chair of the VUMC Racial Equity Task Force as instrumental to her abilities to lead a disparate group of leaders to an innovative goal.

“By leveraging my experience and knowledge gained from working with the VUMC Nurse Wellness Committee, I can make a meaningful impact on a national level,” Williams said. “I am honored to be asked to concentrate on improving the work environment for nurses across the country.”

Williams holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing from the University of Kansas, a Master of Science in Nursing from Tennessee State University and a Master of Public Health from the University of Illinois.

“Congratulations to Mamie on this important new role,” said Executive Chief Nursing Officer Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC, FAAN. “Mamie is truly a national leader in nursing, and I am so proud of her efforts to promote nurse well-being in this nationwide forum.”
PUN, ELY RECEIVE AACN PIONEERING SPIRIT AWARD

The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) presented the research team of Brenda Pun, DNP, RN, FCCM, and E. Wesley Ely, MD, MPH, with its AACN Pioneering Spirit Award.

The award recognizes significant contributions that influence progressive and critical care nursing and relate to the AACN’s mission, vision and values.

For about 20 years, Ely and Pun have worked together at Vanderbilt’s Critical Illness, Brain Dysfunction, and Survivorship (CIBS) Center. The center’s team members work with patients who are, or have been, critically ill and who have suffered from delirium and are at risk for long-term cognitive, functional and neuropsychological impairments. More information is available at the center’s website, ICUdelirium.org.

Ely is an internist, pulmonologist and critical care physician who founded the center and now serves as co-director. Pun is an advanced practice nurse who serves as the center’s director of data quality.