

# One Sharp Nursing: Everyday Excellence

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**WINTER 2024**

“Nursing integrates the art and science of caring and focuses on the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and human functioning; prevention of illness and injury; facilitation of healing; and alleviation of suffering through compassionate presence. Nursing is the diagnosis and treatment of human responses and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations in recognition of the connection of all humanity.”

American Nurses Association, 2021



## From Laurie Ecoff...

“Celebrate endings – for they precede new beginnings.” Jonathan Huie

The holiday season is a time to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year. Our 7,121 nurses contribute to the success we achieve, and we are proud of the care they provide and their contributions to nursing practice and optimal patient outcomes. Each of our hospitals produce nursing annual reports that highlight their accomplishments. These annual reports can be found on hospital intranet sites and external Magnet pages. This year, 2024, we decided to highlight nursing initiatives and projects across Sharp HealthCare, and we are in the process of writing the first ever nursing enterprise-wide annual report.

Stay tuned for the enterprise-wide nursing report to be published in spring 2025.

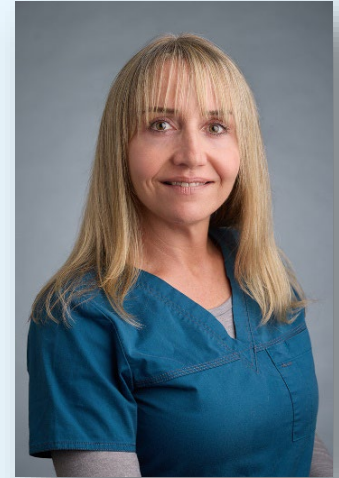
Wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season!

Warm Regards,  
Laurie



## Nurse Residency Program Graduate Profiles

The Sharp HealthCare (SHC) Nurse Residency Program (NRP) was developed to provide a flexible, supportive environment to build confidence in new graduate nurse residents. Newly licensed nurses are hired into Sharp's 12-month, enterprise wide NRP, which recently earned its second Accreditation with Distinction by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Practice Transition Accreditation Program®. Nurses in the program experience curricula promoting the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors necessary to deliver safe, evidence-based care. The NRP offers challenging and inspiring opportunities and clinical experiences in all clinical specialties to cultivate skills that promote lifelong success in nursing. Here is what Jessica Johnson, BSN, RN, had to share about her Sharp journey. We celebrate her ongoing achievements at Sharp!



*Jessica Johnson, BSN, RN, Clinical Nurse, Chemical Dependency Rehabilitation Unit, Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital*

“A passion to care for and be of service to others has always been ingrained in me. Growing up, I had family members who struggled with mental illness, and these foundational personal experiences instilled in me a deep desire to provide the care to others that I only wish my own family could have received. So, becoming a mental health nurse felt like a natural fit. I have also always enjoyed science and psychology, which cemented my pursuit of behavioral health nursing. I began my career working as a licensed vocational nurse prior to becoming a registered nurse (RN) and have worked in mental health for over 20 years in both outpatient and inpatient settings.

Upon obtaining my associate degree and becoming a RN, I was accepted into the Sharp NRP at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital (SMVH) in the Chemical Dependency Rehabilitation Unit. In addition to providing extensive training and support, along with the opportunity for mentorship, the program enabled me to complete a new graduate project in an area that I felt would benefit our unit. I updated our unit's quick tips to ensure safe practice and quality care when nurses would float to the unit.

Sharp has provided several opportunities for professional growth. Their tuition reimbursement enabled me to obtain my Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. I also serve on The Helping Hands Committee, which provides services to meet the needs of our community. This committee of Sharp nurses traveled to Uganda through their Humanitarian Aid Program to provide free services at a public health clinic and meet local needs by providing funding for ongoing services. This effort was recognized by the Guardian Angel Program. Since working as a new graduate resident on the detoxification/rehabilitation unit, I have become extremely passionate about recovery from substance abuse and recognizing it as a co-occurring disorder. My focus has been on implementing effective evidence-based treatment recommendations to ensure the best possible outcomes for our patients. I am currently helping to implement an evidence-based practice project, the Matrix Model, which treats stimulant use at SMVH. Recently, due to my work at Sharp, I was interviewed by [Fox 5 News San Diego](#) about the importance of Naloxone and recognizing the signs of an opiate overdose, which were on the rise as a result of the fentanyl crisis. However, last year there was a significant decrease in overdose deaths, perhaps due to the availability of Naloxone.

In addition to my passion for nursing, I believe that a healthy work-life balance is important. I rest and recharge by enjoying my off time with friends and family, our dog, exercising, traveling, and my newest adventure, learning how to sail.

At Sharp, I envision my future to encompass ongoing education and training, such as the psychiatric board certification I am currently pursuing. These learning opportunities will better my practice as a psychiatric nurse and help me implement new and improved standards that promote the best possible recovery and healing for our patients.”

## 2024 Daniel L. Gross Spirit of Caring Award Recipients

The Daniel L. Gross *Spirit of Caring Award* was established in 1987 by the late James C. Haugh, Chairman Emeritus of Sharp HealthCare, as a memorial tribute to his wife, Sally, to honor the exceptional care she received at Sharp. His gift, along with the memorial gifts of many others, has allowed Sharp to continue to recognize and celebrate exceptional caregivers for the past four decades. In 2020, the Haugh family generously renamed Spirit of Caring for Dan Gross — a registered nurse and former executive vice president/chief operating officer, who retired from Sharp in 2020 after four decades of service — to acknowledge his legacy at Sharp.

Each year, employees across Sharp are invited to nominate team members with patient-centered roles who embody that same “spirit of caring.” Each recipient of this prestigious award receives \$2,000 to further their educational and professional growth. They are honored throughout Sharp for their unfailing commitment to provide outstanding care to patients and their families. Of this year’s exceptional nominees, four winners have been chosen by the *Spirit of Caring* selection committee.

On November 1, the 2024 Daniel L. Gross *Spirit of Caring Award* recipients were presented with their awards and scholarships during a special awards program and luncheon with executive leadership. Congratulations to:

- Douglas Corbin, clinical nurse, Transitions Program at Sharp HospiceCare
- Ester Edejer, nursing assistant, Oncology 1W at Sharp Memorial Hospital
- Ronda Mabrey, community health worker, Population Health at Sharp Rees-Stealy
- Katey Thurmes, dietitian/advanced practitioner, Clinical Nutrition at the James S. Brown Outpatient Pavilion.



For more information about the Spirit of Caring award program, visit [here](#). For more information about the 2024 recipients, visit [here](#).

Left to right: Scott Evans, PharmD, MHA; Susan Stone, PhD, RN; Amy Adome, MD, MPH; Rita Essaian; Bill Littlejohn; **Katey Thurmes**; Dan Gross; **Ester Edejer**; **Douglas Corbin**; **Ronda Mabrey**; Trisha Khaleghi, MSN, RN; Chris Howard; Stacey Hrontas and Michael Byrd.

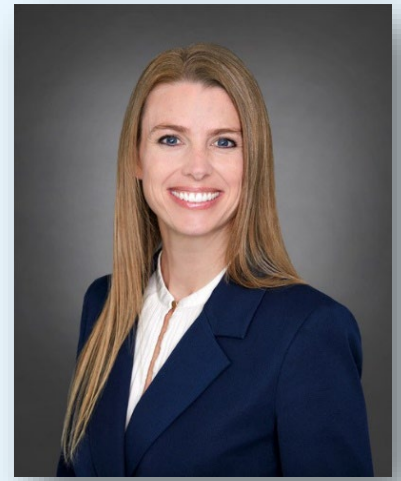
(Adapted from 2024 Daniel L. Gross Spirit of Caring Award Recipients, *Sharp Communications*, November 8, 2024.)



## Ryan is New VP and CNO for Sharp Memorial Hospital

Lindsey Ryan, PhD, RN, ACNS-BC, NEA-BC, FACHE, is the new vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer for Sharp Memorial Hospital. Lindsey has more than two decades of nursing experience in San Diego, including experience within the Sharp HealthCare system. She started her new position on November 4. Lindsey will oversee and manage all major nursing departments and functions to ensure customer satisfaction, staff empowerment, quality improvement, and cost-effectiveness within Sharp's strategic framework.

Lindsey has spent the last three years at Rady Children's Hospital. She began as Director of the Cardiothoracic ICU and was quickly promoted to associate chief nursing officer. During that time, she also held several interim roles, including Interim CNO, NICU director, OR director, and education and professional development director.



Lindsey Ryan, Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer, Sharp Memorial Hospital

Under her leadership, Lindsey had oversight of nursing and patient care service metrics, helping Rady Children's Hospital reach the top ten in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings for the first time. Prior to her position at Rady Children's Hospital, Lindsey served at Sharp Grossmont Hospital (SGH) for eight years. Beginning as a clinical nurse specialist in Observation and Progressive Care, her success at collaborating with colleagues to implement new procedures and improve efficiency, while also serving as a mentor, led to roles as manager of education & professional development and manager of innovation & performance excellence. Her last three years at SGH were in the role of manager of the Medical Intensive Care Unit & Vascular Access.

Lindsey began her career as a clinical nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at the VA San Diego Healthcare System in La Jolla after obtaining her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU). She received a Master of Science degree in nursing education from PLNU and a doctoral degree in nursing research and executive leadership from the University of San Diego.

(Adapted from New Chief Nursing Officer, Sharp Communications, October 4, 2024.)

## Sharp Nurses in the Media

Failla, K.R., Hinson, J., Daniels, M., Brown, L., Harrell, D., & Graham, J. (2025). An electrocardiogram taskforce to lean system competency in rhythm recognition in a high reliability organization. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, 39(1), 46-49. doi:10.1097/NUR.0000000000000874

Graham, J., & Scruth, E. (2024). A conceptual model of sepsis as a dysregulated host response: Depicting directionality of immunologic and metabolic dysregulation: The OO(H)NO! model. *International Journal of Critical Care*, 18(3), 7-21. doi:10.29173/ijcc78

Graham, J.K., Westcott, A., Smith, S., et al. (2025). Metabolic profiles of critical care patients to confirm sepsis and further understand the metabolic phenotype of sepsis. *Critical Care Nursing Quarterly*, 48(1), 8-14. doi:10.1097/CNQ.0000000000000540

Graham, J.K., Quillan, McEwan, M., & Kelley, C. (2025). Acute-on-chronic inflammation and patients' risk for renal support in critically ill patients. *Critical Care Nursing Quarterly*, 48(1), 52-58. doi:10.1097/CNQ.0000000000000536

Kim, H.J., Latham, C., Krom, Z., Failla, K., & Kavar, L.N. (2024). Practical steps supporting professional publications for leadership and teams. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 54(12), 657-663. doi: 10.1097/NNA.0000000000001509

Richardson, L., & Graham, J.K. (2024). Embracing a new evidence-based thought paradigm of sepsis. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, 38(4), 171-174. doi:10.1097/NUR.0000000000000828

Westhoff, K., Balestrieri-Martinez, B., Graham, J., & Kelly, C. (2025). Safeguarding the future: Ethical artificial Intelligence in healthcare documentation. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, 39(1), 3-6. doi:10.1097/NUR.0000000000000866

Wintz, D., Schaffer, K.B., Wright, K., & Nilsen S.L. (2024). Empowering end-of-life conversations: The role of the specialized nursing teams in facilitating code status changes at discharge. *Journal of Palliative Care*. Online first, September 19, 2024. doi:10.1177/08258597241283303

## Sharp Office of Transformation Graduates New RN Green Belts

Green Belts are organizational leaders that spend approximately 20 percent of their time on leading Lean Six Sigma projects and facilitating Change Acceleration Process (CAP) and Work-Out™ sessions. In October 2024, the following four nurses across Sharp received their Green Belt after reporting out the status of their improvement projects.

Kari Bernet, RN, director of women's and infant services at SGH (in collaboration with Justin Durow, director of human resources), completed a project titled SGH for Women's & Newborns Bed Capacity Management, with a goal to increase bed utilization by creating capacity within the Women's Hospital for a women's acute care population by improving the bed utilization on the labor and delivery room (LDR) from 30 percent to 80 percent. The three-phase project included 1) optimizing bed management in LDR to create usable capacity in the obstetrics (OB) unit; 2) optimizing bed management in the OB unit to provide care for "best-choice" acute care patients; and 3) developing a comprehensive workflow integrating an additional specialty for a women's acute care unit (WACU). Critical success factors included buy-in and engagement from the frontline staff, adoption of the LDR postpartum model, and interdisciplinary leadership support. The future state required a significant cultural transformation to cross-train two subspecialties of LDR and postpartum nurses to work on one unit and float to a new WACU. Phase 3 resulted in a 49 percent increase in patient days and a 66 percent increase in net revenue. The goal was met by adding 24 additional telemetry beds and a daily average capacity of 12 additional beds for acute care patients. Results yielded \$1.1M in financial growth revenue.

Ben Chavez, MBA, BSN, RN, LSSBB, a senior specialist/performance improvement and safety at SGH, completed a project titled Reduce Patient Safety Indicator (PSI) 4B – Pneumonia Utilizing a Multidisciplinary Approach Focusing on Prevention Before and After Surgery for General Surgery & Gastrointestinal (GI) Service Lines, with a goal to reduce PSI 4B among general surgery and GI service lines to zero. The intervention included oral care (mouthwash) with hydrogen peroxide prior to intubation for surgery. Critical success factors included buy-in from stakeholders, staff training, and a supportive culture. The goal was met for FY2024 with zero pneumonia-related deaths among 264 planned open abdominal and open chest procedures. The control plan includes monitoring compliance of pre-intubation mouthwash. The team is looking to spread this innovation within SGH and throughout the enterprise.

Vivien Lim, MSN, RN, manager of surgery and perioperative services at SCVMC, completed a project titled Develop PAR level and Streamline Processes to Decrease Procurement Cost of Surgical Supplies, Eliminate Waste, Overstock and Optimize Storage Space, with a goal of decreasing procurement cost of surgical supplies by 10 percent. Improvements included: streamlined ordering process to enhance efficiency and reduce errors, established PAR levels for operating room (OR) supplies to ensure consistent availability, created labels for OR supplies with barcodes to facilitate tracking and ordering, implemented bar code scanners for ordering to automate and speed up the procurement process, and converted supply racks to Pegasus Cart systems to improve organization and accessibility of supplies. The goal was met with a savings of \$244,500 post-implementation (decrease of 49 percent of procurement costs). The control plan includes tracking procurement costs of supplies, bar code scanner usage, and PAR level adherence.

Elissa Berthiaume, MSN, RN, CPPS, manager of quality and patient safety at SMMC, completed a project titled Strengthen Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Key Action Plans and Improve the Spread and Adoption of Key Actions Across SHC Eliminating Similar Patient Safety Events from Occurring. The goal of the project was to increase the spread and adoption of RCA key actions across department entities to 65 percent and increase the number of strong action plans to 45 percent (these targets have yet to be reached). Creating a culture for spread included determining which actions met spread criteria, involving subject matter experts from other sites for action planning feedback, and discussing measurement strategies. Major accomplishments included the creation of a structure for spread and adoption, and a process to discuss strength of action plans. The control plan includes reviewing action plan items meeting spread criteria, System Safety Steering Committee members to review and approve of actions items, and sharing implementation success.

The Office of Transformation, led by Amy Adome, MD, MPH, chief clinical and transformation officer and Kathy Summers, MS, vice-president of transformation, drive systemwide improvements in patient care, operations, finance, and growth. The diverse Sharp team partners, supports, and accelerates transformation projects; Lean Six Sigma projects; and coordination, monitoring, mentoring, training, and facilitation. The Office of Transformation capabilities include program governance, change management, project management, benefit/value realization, training, and mentoring. The Office maintains a repository of improvement projects in their Process Improvement Library.

## 2024 Pillar Awards Recipients

The Sharp Experience Pillars of Excellence Awards were created to recognize action and work teams, individuals and departments that have made significant contributions to The Sharp Experience and to making Sharp HealthCare the best place to work, the best place to practice medicine, and the best place to receive care.

C.O.R.E. Award winners were brought forward to the systemwide committee as nominees for the Sharp Pillars of Excellence Awards. Categories for nomination include individual, action/work team and department under the Quality, Service, People, Finance, Growth, and Community pillars. Sharp honored these nurse recipients during an All-Staff Assembly in November 2024.

### Quality

Stacy Nilsen NICU Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia Reduction Case Management/Social Work	Individual Team Department	SMH SMBHWN SGH
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### Safety

Victoria Yutko Avade Workplace Violence Prevention Training Emergency Department	Individual Team Department	SRS Multi-Entity SGH
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### Service

Sharp LGBTQ+ Advisory Council/ Clinical Equity Council/Sharp Quality Alliance Brown Simulation Center	Team Department	Multi-Entity System Services
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### People

Peri-Op 101 Surgical Procedure Area – Advanced Clinicians	Team Department	System Services SMH
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### Finance

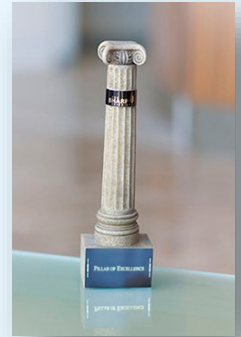
RN Recruitment and Traveler Reduction	Team	Multi-Entity
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### Growth

ECPR and ECMO Program Development Team Sharp Cancer Genetics Program	Team Department	SMH System Services
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### Community

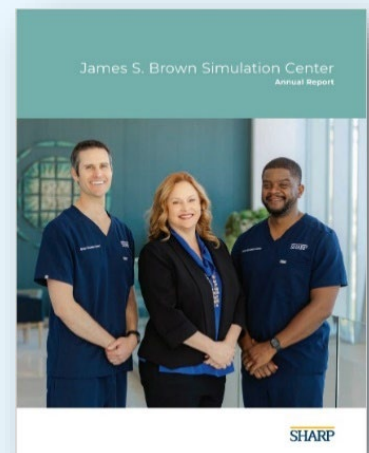
Out of the Fog – A Continuum of Care Intensive Care Unit	Team Department	SGH SCVMC
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## Brown Simulation Center Update

Over the past quarter, the James S. Brown Simulation Center staff has accomplished the following:

- Recognized with a Pillar Award for People in the Team category for support of the Perioperative Transition in Practice Training Program (Peri-Op 101).
- Recognized with a Pillar Award for Service in the Department category for the newly developed Brown Simulation Center.



*Ctrl + Click on the graphic to access the BSC Annual Report*

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Research & Innovations Conference Celebrates Collaboration

This year's theme, *Next Generation Healthcare: Bridging Research, Practice, and Technology*, for the 10th Annual Research & Innovations (R & I) Conference on September 27, 2024, at the Sharp Prebys Innovation and Education Center, explored the latest advancements in interprofessional research and technology.

With a welcome from Chris Howard, President and CEO of Sharp HealthCare, Dr. Brian Lichtenstein delivered an engaging presentation on Next Generation Technology, featuring a live demonstration followed by a Q&A session on artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare. Attendees participated in breakout sessions tailored to different interests:

- *Patient Care and Management*. Innovative strategies for patient mobilization and managing critically ill patients.
- *Healthcare Delivery Innovations*. Presenters shared methods to increase intensive care unit capacity and optimize oncology care.
- *Technological Advancements*. Talks on virtual reality in nursing and new algorithms for pain management highlighted healthcare transformation.

The poster presentations showcased research studies and innovative projects and attendees engaged with authors through live discussions, fostering collaboration, and voted using QR codes for their favorite posters. Participants explored their artistic side during breaks, with an art gallery showcasing pieces that encouraged reflection on innovation and healthcare themes. Key takeaways from the conference include:

1. AI in healthcare is revolutionizing nursing by improving patient care and efficiency, though ethical considerations like data privacy remain crucial.
2. Virtual Nursing technology can reduce administrative burdens on nurses, allowing more time for patient care.
3. Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocols are improving surgical outcomes by minimizing stress during recovery.

The conference concluded with special announcements for the named Research, Evidence-Based Practice, and Innovation Awards that will be provided during the 2025 R & I Conference. The event celebrated the spirit of innovation that drives Sharp and demonstrated the power of collaboration in advancing health care.

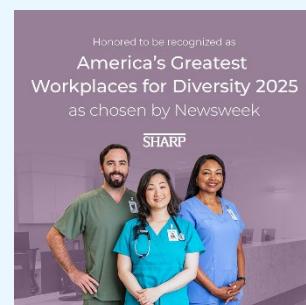
## Sharp Recognized as One of America's Greatest Places to Work

*Newsweek*, once again, has recognized Sharp HealthCare as one of America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity 2025. This ranking honors companies that respect and value diversity, as reflected in the feedback from their employees and their rigorous research, which included interviews with human resources professionals and an anonymous online survey.

*Newsweek* finds that as companies in the United States continue to navigate the evolving dynamics of the workplace, diversity remains a cornerstone of organizational success and social responsibility. Many employers, like Sharp, are fostering environments that include people from a wide spectrum of backgrounds, age groups, races, genders, and sexual orientations. This commitment to diversity is good for business and also plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining talent as people, particularly younger generations, look to join and stay at companies where they feel seen and valued.

Sharp recognizes that differences, unique talents, and varied backgrounds come together to create a stronger whole. By living Sharp's values each day, employees can continue to deliver The Sharp Experience in every interaction with each other, patients and their families.

(Adapted from *Newsweek Recognized Sharp as One of America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity*, *Sharp Communications*, December 16, 2024.)





## EBPI Graduates 2024 Sharp Fellows

Sharp partners with the Evidence-Based Practice Institute (EBPI), offered by the San Diego Consortium for Excellence in Nursing and Allied Health, to provide professional development opportunities that prepare nurse fellows and mentors to change and improve clinical practice and patient care by incorporating new knowledge into practice. EBPI fellows and mentors partner with one another through a variety of learning strategies. Mentors facilitate and support fellows as they navigate the health care system and implement the processes of evidence-based practice change. Mentors also assist fellows in working collaboratively with key project stakeholders.

The EBPI consortium is a nonprofit organization with formal board member roles, including team members from Sharp who serve as chairperson (Laurie Ecoff), president/chief executive officer (Christina Kelley), chief information officer (Tanna Thomason), chief financial officer (Jennifer Turney), director of awards and scholarships (Molly Quillin-McEwan), director of continuing education (Melodie Daniels), and finance director (Chaunon Bond). In addition to board leadership, Sharp provides faculty and mentors to support the EBPI's mission.

At the November 2024 EBPI virtual conference and graduation ceremony, forty-two project teams, composed of mentors and fellows, graduated from the program. Sharp hospitals teams and project titles are presented next as evidence of a wide variety of innovation developed at Sharp.

### Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center

*Latino Representation in the ICU*

Krystle Guzman, BSN, RN

Julie Kathryn Graham, PhD, APRN, ACCNS-AG

*Help Us Support Healing*

Charlene Del Rosario, BSN, RN

Melanie Sumner, BSN, RN

Cynthia Paraguya, MSN, RN, PCCN

*Educate Before You Medicate: Improving Patient Satisfaction Through Medication Communication*

Aimee Flores, BSN, RN

Angela Hermanns, BSN, RN

Cynthia Paraguya, MSN, RN, PCCN

*No Strain Campaign*

Karissa Ghitelman, BSN, RN, OCN

Kim Robinson, BSN, RN

Marcus Willingham, BSN, RN

Jennise Tolentino, DNP, RN, OCN, PCCN

*Sweet Savvy: Navigating Diabetic Transitional Care*

Jillian Benton, MSN, RN

EJ Kolnik, MSN, RN

*Bed to Baseline*

Adrianna Flajnik, BSN, RN, PCCN

Christine Bagamano, BSN, RN

*Person-Centered Mechanical Ventilator Management with Esophageal Pressure Monitoring to Improved Oxygenation in the Obese Population*

Anova Westcott, BS, RCP, RRT-NPS

Ray Daniels, BS, RCP, RRT-NPS

Julie-Kathryn Graham, PhD, APRN, ACCNS-AG

*Bye-Bye HAI's: Implementing Daily CHG Bathing and Line-Rounding*

Megan Lavelle, MSN, RN

Sandra Gonzelez, BSN, RN, PCCN

Paige Taylor, BSN, RN, PCCN

### Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center

*Human Trafficking: Empowering the Nurse Response to a Vulnerable Population*

Charlene Robbins, BSN, RN

Bridget Henderson, MSW

Ana Duran, MSN, RN, CCRN

### Sharp Memorial Hospital

*Caring with Confidence*

Laura Maldoon, BSN, RN

Tania Marquez, MDiv

Stacey Nilsen, PhD, RN, ACNS-BC

### Sharp Grossmont Hospital

*Clostridioides Difficile: A Focus on Environmental Hygiene Interventions*

Annie D. John, BSN, RN, PCCN

Marisa Kim, BSN, RN, CIC

*From Stress to Success: Enhancing a Healthy Work*

Environment in the SICU Setting

Kennedy Champayne, BSN, RN

Tanna Thomason, PhD, RN, NPJ-BC

*Move Safely: Nurse-Patient Collaboration to Prevent Falls*

Amanda Doud, BSN, RN

Samantha Manis, BSN, RN

Heather Johnson, MS, RN, ACCNS-AG



## Sharp Nurses Move Steadily Toward Professional Governance

The Caster Nursing Institute hosted Tim Porter O'Grady in May 2024 for a Professional Governance summit. Since then, CNI staff and entity representatives have planned for and conducted a World Café in December to further explore Sharp's transition to a professional governance model.

In the professional governance model, clinical and management accountabilities are different. Clinical accountability includes practice, quality/value, competence, and knowledge. Management accountability includes human, fiscal, material, support, and system resources.

The questions posed at the World Café included:

1. What is the desired structure of Sharp HealthCare's professional governance model?
2. How do we promote professional accountability and engagement for nurses at all levels in our community of practice?
3. How does the governance model guide decision-making in our community of practice?
4. How will communication support effective professional governance in our community of practice?
5. How do we effectively transition from shared governance to a professional governance model for our community of practice?

Data from the all-day meeting are being analyzed as are measurement strategies to evaluate the new model's effectiveness once it has been implemented. See future issues of eNews for more information.

## Sharp Hospitals Received Top Leapfrog Hospital Grades for Fall 2024



Sharp hospitals have once again scored high in the national safety grades announced by The Leapfrog Group, an organization that tracks and promotes progress in the quality and safety of American health care. All Sharp hospitals scored an "A" grade, which is a great achievement, as fewer than 45% of hospitals in California received "A" grades. Furthermore, Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center and Sharp Grossmont Hospital were awarded the elite "straight 'A'" designation, which recognizes hospitals that have earned an "A" in at least five consecutive cycles of the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades.

The Leapfrog assessment includes up to 30 evidence-based measures, including patient satisfaction scores. These standards are currently in use by national measurement and reporting programs and rate how well hospitals protect patients from errors, injuries, and infections. The rating then results in hospitals being assigned a letter grade from "A" to "F." Performance indicators related to nursing include nurse and doctor communication, staff responsiveness, and communication about medicine and discharge information.

These latest national recognitions demonstrate the continued dedication and commitment of all Sharp staff and caregivers. Sharp leadership acknowledges staff's vigilance and dedication to making Sharp the best place to work, the best place to practice medicine, and the best place to receive care.

(Adapted from Sharp Hospitals Receive Top Grades in Fall 2024 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Ratings, *Sharp Communications*, November 15, 2024.)

## Nurses' Epic Roles

Nurses were at the forefront of Sharp's transformative shift to the new Epic electronic medical record system. Playing critical roles in the design, testing, and implementation of Epic, these nurses were instrumental in ensuring the system met the needs of both clinical and operational teams while enhancing patient care and efficiency. Two key nursing roles emerged as cornerstones of success: nurse readiness leads and nurse informaticists.

**Nurse Readiness Leads.** These nurses were recruited from operational areas to serve as the vital

*Continued on next page*

## Nurses' Epic Roles (Cont'd)

connection between frontline staff and the Epic implementation team. These nursing representatives actively participated in Decision Groups and monthly Readiness Lead meetings, where they validated the system design and workflow. Their contributions included:

- Collaborating with staff to refine and validate the Epic system design.
- Socializing new workflows, such as specimen label processes, downtime documentation protocols, and mobile device integration.
- Supporting the Epic Road Show, offering hands-on demonstrations to staff before go-live, including pump and label scanning workflows.
- Facilitating hospital operation requests and needs with information systems.
- Developing Tip Sheets for Sharp custom content or to clarify new Epic workflows.
- Migrating patient data from Cerner into Epic in the final days before implementation.

"These nurses ensured that the system changes were not only operationally sound but also intuitive for end users," said John Lussier, MSN, RN, NI-BC, FHIMSS. "They provided invaluable insight into the practical needs of their departments, which was critical to our success."

**Nurse Informaticists.** These board-certified nurses (NI-BC) played an equally vital role in ensuring the new system's functionality matched the clinical needs of the organization. Nurse informaticists are uniquely positioned to interpret clinical needs and translate them into technical solutions.

John shares, "With a goal to implement Epic with 80 percent of the core functionality, the last 20 percent was really where staff had the opportunity to address documentation elements, care coordination, patient education, and other workflows in a cohesive way that was not possible with Cerner."

Collaborating with Epic representatives, clinical and other operational staff in various application committees and information systems teams, nurse informaticists contributed by:

- Refining the needs including reviewing content and giving input on options.
- Documenting changes into a specification document for information system analysts to build into Epic.
- Conducting rigorous testing and validation that the system met the demands of each clinical area before go-live.

Janet Hanley, MBA, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, chief nursing information officer and vice president of patient technology, innovation, and efficiencies emphasizes, "The collaboration of these two nursing roles with the Epic transformation underscores the importance of nursing in technology adoption at Sharp. Their expertise ensures that technology improves clinical practice, patient safety, and operational efficiency."

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