



Nurse of Excellence

2019 AWARD CEREMONY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019



REPRESENTING THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND PUBLIC HOSPITALS
SERVING THE RESIDENTS OF LONG ISLAND



The Legend of the Teapot

The teapot tradition began in the 1980s with the New York State Legislature's Nurse of Distinction Program. The first recipient of the Long Island Nurse of Distinction nomination spoke of the challenges that nurses and all of health care face, and will face, in the decades to come.

In keeping with the message that day, it was recollected her comments included, "most of us nurses are like teabags, we don't know our own strength until we get into hot water." The allegory resonated among those involved in the program and it eventually became a custom for a prior recipient of the Nurse of Excellence award to bestow a teapot upon the current honoree.

The teapots remind our honored colleagues of their achievement and of their strengths. Like each of us, the teapots are seldom exactly alike. They celebrate the unique value that each Nurse of Excellence brings to those they serve. And, the teapot symbolizes and reminds us that "hot water" often brings out the best in us and in our profession.

A Message from the Council President



MAY 2019

In 1989, the New York State Legislature created a Nurse of Distinction Program. The program, coordinated at the time by Senator Tarky Lombardi Jr., recognized individual excellence in the nursing profession. Hundreds of nurses were nominated from across the state, eight regional designees were selected by peer review and one nurse from that group was awarded. The program was highly regarded by those within the healthcare industry and continued until 1995.

Since then, it has been the honor of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council to continue this tradition on a regional level through our annual *Nurse of Excellence* program. The Hospital Council opted to maintain this recognition program because the registered nurse is truly the core of any hospital. Each member hospital and nursing school selects a nominee based on specific selection criteria. The nomination in and of itself is an honor. Then a Council peer review committee selects “the best of the best.” More important than those individuals named and honored, is the celebration of the entire nursing profession that pervades this program. We are proud of the nominees and congratulate this year’s top nurse. We are just as proud of all of the nurses who care for thousands of Long Islanders, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

On behalf of our board of directors, the council staff and the leadership staff at all of our hospitals, we express our sincere appreciation to all nurses and salute their commitment to compassionate quality patient care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin W. Dahill".

KEVIN W. DAHILL
PRESIDENT/CEO

**THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK
HOSPITAL COUNCIL
2019 NURSE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD
Order of Program**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

KEVIN W. DAHILL

President and Chief Executive Officer
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council

GREETINGS FROM THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK
HOSPITAL COUNCIL

JOHN F. COLLINS

Chairman of the Board
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council
President and Chief Executive Officer
NYU Winthrop Hospital

INTRODUCTION OF NURSE EXECUTIVES
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MARIE MULLIGAN, PHD, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC

Chairperson, Nurse Executives Committee
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President
Mather Hospital

VALERIE TERZANO, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Chief Nursing Officer, Senior Vice President
NYU Winthrop Hospital

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ALL NURSE OF
EXCELLENCE NOMINEES

MARIE MULLIGAN, PHD, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC

Chairperson, Nurse Executive Committee
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President
Mather Hospital

REMARKS BY THE HONOREE

**JUSTIN M. WARYOLD, DNP, RN, ANP-C, ACNP-BC,
CCRN, CNE**

Stony Brook University School of Nursing

PRESENTATION OF THE TEAPOT

LILA V. HAGEMAN-SHEEHAN, RN, BSN, CEN
2018 Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Nurse of Excellence

CLOSING REMARKS

MARIE MULLIGAN, PHD, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC

Chairperson, Nurse Executive Committee
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President
Mather Hospital



Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council 2019 Award for Nursing Excellence

is presented to

**JUSTIN M. WARYOLD, DNP, RN, ANP-C,
ACNP-BC, CCRN, CNE**

For achieving significant accomplishments in an area of practice, serving as a mentor and inspiration for staff, providing assistance to patients and families, and fostering a positive image of nursing.

NURSE EXECUTIVES SELECTION CRITERIA

Outstanding contributions to the nursing profession and to the field of healthcare must be demonstrated based on the following criteria:

- Significant achievement within a particular area of nursing, including clinical practice, education, research or administration. The provision of direct nursing services to assist patients and their families in functioning at optimum levels of health is one example within clinical practice.
- Demonstrated leadership that provides a role model for the quality of their performance and assists other nurses in their development.
- Participation in activities that foster a positive public image of nursing as a profession.

Note: All registered professional nurses employed at a Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council membership organization, or affiliated school of nursing, at any employment level or scope of responsibility, are eligible to be nominated for the award. Prior nominees are not eligible. Each hospital or nursing school member of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's Nurse Executives Committee is eligible to nominate one individual for the award. Each nominating entity has an internal selection process to facilitate making an appropriate nomination.

2019 Nurse Executives Committee

Ann Cella, MA, MEd, RN, NEA-BC
Sr. VP Patient Care Services & CNO
St. Francis Hospital – The Heart Center

Kathleen Cino, PhD, RN, CNE
Associate Professor & Chairperson
Farmingdale State College

R. J. Civello, RN, BS-HCA, MSN
Associate Executive Director,
Patient Care Services
Long Island Jewish Valley Stream
Northwell Health
Associate Executive Director and
Chief Nursing Officer
Southside Hospital Northwell Health

Stacey A. Conklin, MSN, RN-BC, MHCDS,
NE-BC
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing
Officer
South Nassau Communities Hospital

Susan Dewey-Hammer, MN, APRN
Professor of Nursing & Academic Chair
Suffolk County Community College

Gara Edelstein, RN, MSN
Sr. VP of Patient Care Services &
CNO
Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center
CNO
Catholic Health Services of Long Island

Mary Jane Finnegan, MS, RN
CNO
St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center

Marie Fletcher, RN, PhD, CNE
Director, Department of Nursing
St. Joseph's College

Marcia R. Gardner, PhD, RN, CPNP, CPN
Dean, Barbara H. Hagan School of Nursing
Molloy College

Barbara Gibbons, RN, MS, FNP
VP Patient Care Services & CNO
St. Joseph Hospital/Mercy Medical Center

Dr. Dale Gradel, EdD MS, RN
Acting Associate Director Patient Care
Services
Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Debra Grimm, DNP, MS, RN
VP and CNO
Long Island Community Hospital

Lori Knapp, MD
Dean, School of Health Professions and
Nursing
C. W. Post Campus/LIU

Susan Knoepffler, RN, MPA, NE-BC
VP Nursing & CNO
Huntington Hospital Northwell Health

Susan Kwiatek, MBA, BSN, RN, NE-BC
Associate Executive Director
Glen Cove Hospital Northwell Health

Amy Loeb, MBA, RN-BC, NE-BC
VP & CNO
Peconic Bay Medical Center

Althea Mills, RN, MSN
Interim CNO & VP Patient Services
Stony Brook Southampton Hospital

Julie Mirkin, DNP, MA, RN
Chief Nursing Officer
Stony Brook University Hospital

Marie Mulligan, PhD, MSN, RN, CNOR,
NEA-BC
Vice President for Nursing & CNO
Mather Hospital Northwell Health

Susan Neville, PhD, RN
Chairperson & Associate Professor
Dept. of Nursing
New York Institute of Technology

Patricia Pispisa
VP of Patient Care Services
Eastern Long Island Hospital

Thomas Rich, D.Min., MS, RN, NP
Professor & Chairperson
Dept. of Nursing
Nassau Community College

Kathy Skarka-Heinz, MSN, RN, CNA
Executive VP & CNO
Nassau University Medical Center

Elaine L. Smith, EdD, MBA, RN, NEA-BC,
ANEF
Acting Dean
Adelphi University

2019 Nurse Executives Committee continued

Valerie T. Terzano, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
CNO & Sr. VP for Nursing
NYU Winthrop Hospital

Lee Anne Xippolitos, PhD, RN
Dean, School of Nursing
Stony Brook University School of Nursing

Marianna Vazquez, RN, MS, NE-BC
Associate Executive Director, PCS
Plainview Hospital Northwell Health and
Syosset Hospitals

Maureen T. White, RN, MBA, NEA-BC,
FAAN
SVP & Chief Nurse Executive
Northwell Health

2019 Nurse Of Excellence Sub-Committee

Marie Mulligan, Chair
Chief Nursing Officer and Vice
President for Nursing
Mather Hospital

Lisa A. Koshansky
Nurse Manager
St. Catherine of Siena Medical
Center

DeLinda DeSuze
Nurse Manager
NYU Winthrop Hospital

Valerie Terzano
Chief Nursing Officer and Senior
Vice President
NYU Winthrop Hospital

Gara Edelstein
Sr. VP of Patient Care Services
&
CNO
Good Samaritan Hospital
Medical Center & Catholic
Health Services of Long Island

Nicolette Fiore-Lopez
Chief Nursing Officer
St. Charles Hospital

Marcia R. Gardner
Dean
The Barbara H. Hagan School of
Nursing
Molloy College

Debra Grimm
Vice President & Chief Nursing
Officer
Long Island Community Hospital

Lila Hageman-Sheehan
Nurse Manager
NYU Winthrop Hospital



2019

Nurse of Excellence Honoree

JUSTIN M. WARYOLD, DNP, RN, ANP-C, ACNP-BC, CCRN, CNE
CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE
ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING PROGRAM IN ADULT HEALTH,
STONY BROOK SCHOOL OF NURSING

Justin has demonstrated his commitment to education, both personally and professionally. Having entered the field of healthcare as a licensed practical nurse, he continued his pursuit of education, becoming an RN, a nurse practitioner, and then a doctorate of nursing practice. He has also obtained a post-master's certificate in nursing education as well as a post-doctoral fellowship in Leaders in Medical Education.

For the past ten years, Justin has been nurturing the next generation of nursing professionals as an educator. He has received three HRSA Advanced Education for Nurse Traineeship Awards and serves as a volunteer mentor for nurse practitioner students. Additionally, he volunteers at the RotaCare clinic in Nassau County.

In clinical practice, Justin has focused on improving access to care for vulnerable adults, in particular the LGBT and homebound patient populations. He has established a clinical practice to address the unmet needs of LGBT individuals and educates students using pedagogical strategies such as transformative learning theory. For example, he utilizes healthcare scenarios that challenge students' preconceived ideas about the LGBT community, and educates students on sensitive topics such as sexual health to encourage self-examination of biases and prompt reflection. His teaching methodology has been published and adopted nationally by schools of medicine, nursing and allied health.

Justin also has developed a house call program to address the needs of patients who cannot access care in a traditional office setting or who need palliative care. He takes students that he is precepting into the field with him so they can experience interprofessional collaboration with other service providers involved in making the patient safe and comfortable at home. This approach also helps students better understand the challenges of aging in place.

In its nomination, the School of Nursing notes that Justin brings so much more to the profession than what is on his resume. "What you won't be able to see on his CV," the nomination states, "is his passion for teaching. You will not find a more dedicated educator, one who truly cares about his students, sets the bar high and leads by example."

2019 Nurse Of Excellence Nominees

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NURSING & PUBLIC HEALTH

ANTHONY EGAN, MSN, RN

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE CLINICAL EDUCATION & SIMULATION LAB

Working as an EMT to help pay for college led Anthony to the profession of nursing. His career has spanned more than 25 years of nursing, nurse education and emergency management, while also serving as an active member of the Fire Department of New York's (FDNY) hazmat team. Throughout, he continued his own pursuit of education. He has served as a staff nurse in med-surg, PACU, critical care and the emergency department, eventually moving up to the position of assistant director of nursing. After September 11, he found his calling in the study of emergency management, and shifted to an education role in emergency management for a large healthcare network, where he was able to integrate first-responder protocols into acute care. He has served as a gold-level instructor for the Center for Domestic Preparedness, as a subject matter expert in emergency management for the federal and state governments and the American Nurses Association, and has developed two FEMA-certified classes that are used nationwide. An educational video he created during the Ebola crisis has been translated into 50 languages.

After serving on the Adelphi faculty, he was offered the position as assistant director of the simulation lab. Under his leadership, the simulation lab has expanded its operations to seven days a week to provide 1600 undergraduates with this invaluable experience. His innovations in this role include incorporating his expertise as a hazmat technician into nursing education and, recognizing the rise in pediatric obesity, incorporated that into the center's simulation scenarios. He also organized Adelphi's SimWars competition, which attracted students from across the region, and led a group of students in the Society for Simulation in Healthcare international video competition to a third place finish.

Anthony says you can never become an expert in nursing. "Nursing is always changing. When you feel that you have arrived at the expert level then you aren't looking in the right place. There is always more knowledge out there."

EASTERN LONG ISLAND HOSPITAL

STACY PODLASEK, RN

NURSE MANAGER

Stacy's career took several turns before moving into her current position as nurse manager at Eastern Long Island. She began her nursing practice on a telemetry unit at a hospital in Illinois, then became a travel nurse in Northern California. After moving to New York, she worked in quality management as a stroke coordinator. Stacy says that these varied experiences have prepared her for the challenges of leadership in small hospitals and for the ever-evolving environment of healthcare overall.

Taking on the role of nurse manager was a decision she made thoughtfully and methodically, the same way Stacy has approached clinical practice. She shadowed the incumbent nurse manager before even deciding to take the position. After accepting the job, she examined the unit's strengths and weaknesses and began making plans. She engaged staff through meetings, huddles and one-on-one discussions, spent time educating staff on her expectations, and generally opened a dialogue where their feedback was encouraged and accepted. Stacy has taken on significant initiatives — like developing new guidelines and training staff on bedside rounding and making the business case for the acquisition of new specialty beds — and always is the first to pitch in when there's a problem, without being asked or looking at the clock.

In her nomination, Stacy is credited with maintaining her cool during stressful events without losing sight of regulatory and policy standards. To her, these are new challenges to be faced. "Even the same challenges require different solutions from one day to the next," Stacy says, but "my goal never changes: to provide quality care to all of our patients."

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

GLEN COVE HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

ALEXA A. DAMONE, BSN, RN-BC

STAFF NURSE

Alexa is described in her nomination as never accepting the status quo, for herself or for her patients. She continually works to improve her own skills, including joining the hospital's research committee, participating in Six Sigma initiatives, helping to develop the clinical practice model for Magnet status, and achieving certification in diabetes and dementia care. She makes a point of sharing the information she gains at conferences with her unit. She also works to assist with the orientation of new hires and mentors nursing students.

Alexa has a true passion for improving the patient experience. Seeing how the lack of proper sleep can affect a patient's well-being on her geriatric unit, she developed a proposal to use non-pharmacological interventions to enhance rest and promote sleep. She has implemented the use of lavender oil to improve patient outcomes, a project that is not being implemented in other health system facilities. Alexa continually receives compliments from patients and their families and is often praised on HCAHPS surveys. Her patients say she genuinely cares, goes out of her to ensure their needs are met, and is kind and patient. She has even been known to deliver a terminally ill patient her favorite ice cream when the patient hadn't been eating well.

"Being a nurse is part of who I am," Alexa says. "It's an honor to be the one at the bedside being accepted into someone's life and helping to support patients and their families during challenging times."

GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

SHAWN CLAYTON, MSN, RN, NE-BC

NURSE MANAGER

After beginning his career as a nursing assistant on a medical-surgical unit, Shawn has demonstrated his commitment to the profession through both educational and professional achievements. After obtaining his RN degree, he worked as a staff nurse in the medical ICU for 10 years. He moved up to an assistant nurse manager position after obtaining his BSN degree, and has held nurse manager, assistant director and director positions in addition to pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing and then a leadership certification as a nurse executive.

Shawn's career has been marked by innovation. After returning to Good Samaritan from positions at a sister hospital, he worked to combine the two step-down units under his direction into one unit. Although this changed the workflow and staffing patterns, it improved staff satisfaction, increased flexibility in staffing and helped the units form a cohesive team. He developed a nurse-driven protocol that empowered his nurses to utilize evidence-based criteria to determine the appropriateness of cardiac monitoring. It was ultimately adopted throughout the hospital. He has worked with the medical electronics department to pilot new beds and with the safe patient handling team to pilot a new turning system that improves safety for patients and staff. Shawn also advocated for and implemented a critical care step-down unit for patients too acute for standard medical surgical units. To ensure staff readiness, he organized AACN Progressive Care Certification classes.

Shawn says that he believes in leading by example, and providing staff the opportunity for input into unit changes, to increase acceptance and engagement. Under his leadership, the unit's employee engagement level is among the highest in the hospital. In his nomination, Good Samaritan reports that "his dedication, commitment and enthusiasm for the nursing profession and patient safety encourages the same from those around him."

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

HUNTINGTON HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH
JEANNE GARGIULO, DNP, ANP-BC, RNFA
SUPERVISOR OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Jeanne's career has been marked by significant achievements in cardiac care. After beginning practice on a med-surg unit and then two critical care units, she accepted a position as a patient care coordinator, with the responsibility for providing follow-up care, monitoring and education to ultra-high risk cardiac patients. From there she earned her Master of Science in Nursing and became an adult nurse practitioner, focusing her practice in cardiology primary care. As Jeanne continued to achieve additional professional certifications, she expanded to rounding on hospitalized patients, supervising stress tests and managing patients with implantable cardiac devices and on anticoagulation therapy. She joined the Huntington staff as a nurse practitioner in 2009, has since achieved her Doctorate of Nursing and currently serves as an NP supervisor in electrophysiology services.

As an active participant and leader in professional societies and hospital committees, Jeanne has demonstrated her commitment to improving her care not just for her patients but for all cardiac patients. She published her first article on sudden cardiac death in 2000, frequently presents at the hospital's Journal Club and nursing grand rounds, and has developed the hospital's MRI policy for cardiac devices. She has conducted research on the impact of ICMs in driving clinical decision-making, as well as the effectiveness of remote monitoring for heart failure patients.

Jeanne is credited in her nomination as being compassionate, approachable and an outstanding leader. For her, collaboration is the key. "It is only through collaborating with the team and the patients that we can ensure that our patients receive the best possible outcomes, which is what they deserve," she said.

LONG ISLAND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
MARY MALISZEWSKI, MS, BSN, RN
DIRECTOR OF NURSING FOR CRITICAL CARE AND CARDIOVASCULAR SERVICES

Mary's experience at the very beginning of her career, as a new graduate in a critical care internship, laid the foundation for her future successes. She credits the experienced and driven critical care nurses with whom she worked as providing her not only with the knowledge she needed but with inspiration. Her critical care experience led her to a cardiac catheterization lab position, and she began rising up the ladder as a charge nurse, assistant manager and then nurse manager. Of her career trajectory, Mary says, "When you are a part of a supportive environment where everyone's goal is to ensure excellent patient care and outcomes, it's easy to want to excel and grow within your field."

As director of cardiovascular services at Long Island Community Hospital, Mary was instrumental in the design, construction and implementation of the Knapp Cardiac Center, working to design the procedure rooms, pre- and post-procedure areas and the overall flow of the department from the nurse's perspective. She worked closely with the cath lab team, and has won the trust and respect of the service's physicians, who value her clinical expertise and leadership skills. Mary says that building a successful program isn't just about selecting the right equipment and supplies, it's about selecting, training and educating the team."

More recently, Mary has added leadership of critical care to her portfolio. She created and chairs a Heart Failure Committee, to ensure that patients with heart failure receive the best evidence-based care, and has created a multidisciplinary team to address both the physical and psychological needs of the heart failure patient. As a result of her efforts, the hospital's readmission rate for heart failure has declined significantly and is now below the national average.

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

LONG ISLAND JEWISH VALLEY STREAM NORTHWELL HEALTH
SAVITA AMIN, MSN, BSN, CCRN, ACLS
NURSE EDUCATOR

Savita has more than 20 years of experience in nursing, most of which has been dedicated to critical care. She takes her passion for the profession into the community, volunteering for career programs at local schools, educating seniors about the importance of hand washing, vaccinations and preventative care, and teaching ACLS. She also serves as an adjunct professor.

Her volunteerism within the hospital is abundant as well. As a designated “super user” Savita has been instrumental in the integration of the EMR into clinical practice and a resource for other units in the hospital. In an effort to improve care at the bedside, she joined a workgroup to implement telemedicine in critical care (eICU) and has facilitated policy development to implement eICU in other system hospitals. She has chaired the unit’s collaborative care council, where she led the charge for restructuring the CCU’s supply room and initiating improved security processes for the unit. She also sits on the sepsis, pharmacy and therapeutics, preceptor and research committees, in addition to serving as an ACLS instructor, and a master trainer for both Team STEPPS and Humanism.

Savita frequently spearheads performance improvement projects and has had poster and research presentations accepted nationally and internationally. Among her initiatives are the development of a unit brochure to educate family members of patients on ventilators and implementation of a white dove symbol for dying patients to provide heightened awareness — as well as a respectful and caring environment — for both patient and family. She also created video tutorials using QR readers to educate staff nurses on how to use certain low volume, high risk equipment. When the QR is scanned, the nurse is connected to an instructional YouTube video. With the help of her contributions and dedication, the unit was awarded the Bronze Beacon Award by AACN. Savita says that educating makes her a better nurse. “I feel compelled to do my best in order to gently help mold new nurses entering this sometimes tough profession.”

MATHER HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH
MARIE O’BRIEN, MSN, ANP-C, RN-BC, CCRN
INTEGRATIVE PAIN MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

The nationwide opioid epidemic has created significant challenges for the practice of pain management, as clinicians seek to balance the legitimate needs of patients in severe and chronic pain against the need to address the opioid crisis. Marie has demonstrated strong leadership at this critical moment. She worked for many years in critical care, but shifted to pain management and was offered a coordinator position at Mather in 2014. An early adopter of holistic nursing, Marie became a certified clinical hypnotist and received advanced training in pain coping skills, which are holistic interventions aimed at improving quality of life for patients with chronic pain. She has deployed these skills to forge new pathways for patient care at Mather.

In the coordinator position, Marie has taken ownership of her department’s response to the opioid epidemic. She led an interdisciplinary team that transformed the former Chronic Pain Management Department into an innovative Integrative Pain Management Service, where she incorporated aromatherapy and the ‘M’ Technique into patient care. As new Joint Commission standards increased the department’s orders for consults, Marie worked with leadership to develop a protocol for authorized clinical nurses to initiate orders for aromatherapy consults. Under her leadership, her team has embraced integrative and holistic nursing practices, and has utilized evidence-based research to demonstrate the effectiveness and appropriateness of autonomous holistic nursing practice.

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

Marie is herself an accomplished researcher, and has been the principal investigator on numerous IRB-approved studies. She is currently enrolled in a Doctorate of Nursing Practice program, serves as treasurer for the Long Island chapter of the American Society of Pain Management Nurses and is active in numerous professional organizations. In addition to her clinical achievements, she has been recognized for her work in the community, including the Heart Saver Hero Award from the American Heart Association and the Women of the Year Award for Healthcare from the Town of Brookhaven. She also is an adjunct instructor at Suffolk Community College and Stony Brook School of Nursing and volunteers for an arts therapy program.

MERCY MEDICAL CENTER

RICHARDSON PETITBRUN, RN, MSN
ASSISTANT NURSE MANAGER

Richardson was motivated to enter the healthcare profession by a desire to help and serve others. His career path began as a licensed professional nurse, but he continued his pursuit of education, eventually earning a Master's of Science in Nursing with a concentration in Nursing Administration. Richardson takes pride in his ability to support his community, volunteering for the Response Team through the ServNY program to provide care to victims of disasters and other emergencies. He's also an active member of the Sigma Theta Tau honor society and, with his wife, is active in his church.

As an assistant nurse manager, Richardson feels his critical role is to intervene on behalf of his nursing colleagues as they advocate for their patients. He is committed to fostering employee engagement to support a culture of safety and adopts creative ways to lead. In his nomination, he is recognized first and foremost for his leadership skills — serving as a mentor and a role model, encouraging his colleagues and helping them succeed. He is known for always going the extra mile for his staff and their patients.

Richardson says that he's learned that “nursing is not just about the letters that come after your name, but the unique ability to bring joy and satisfaction to others and the community you serve.”

NASSAU UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

MARY A. HEUSER, BSN, RN
NURSE EDUCATOR

Mary has had a variety of experiences in 35 years of nursing, starting in cardiac care, later moving to the breast imaging center, and from there moving to the blood donor department. In 2016 she transferred to the outpatient oncology unit, at the same time that the patient infusion center was integrating into that department. Because of Mary's experience in blood donation, she was a great asset during the transition. After finding that bone marrow aspirations were being done with minimal monitoring, she instituted timed vital sign and pulse oximetry monitoring throughout the recovery period. She also advocated for better lighting for the chemotherapy infusion room for the comfort and convenience of patients. But Mary's most important contribution to the unit was the way she connected with patients — greeting them personally, often with hugs, asking about their families, making sure interpretation needs were met, and once even helping a patient explain her illness to her young daughter. Her attitude toward patient care was infectious.

Mary's warmth and approachability have helped make her a success in her current role of nurse educator. She makes every moment a teaching opportunity, and staff feel comfortable asking her questions. She consistently evaluates and re-evaluates the educational needs of staff and engages leadership in finding solutions to improve patient care. One recent initiative addressed the need for inpatient oncology nurses to gain additional education in oncology care. Mary arranged for inpatient unit nurses to rotate through the outpatient oncology unit to sharpen their skills and ensure their competencies.

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

She is known for bringing an enthusiasm and spirit to the role that are contagious. For Mary, it is her way of achieving the goal she set many years ago, inspired by Mother Theresa: to change the world, one day at a time, by making one patient's day better every day. Mary says, "I listened, I thought, I observed, I identified, I held back tears and I concentrated on the little details. I understood it didn't take much to make someone's day better. What I did was small and easy and quick."

NORTH SHORE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
BARBARA ANNUNZIATA, BSN, RN-BC
MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSE

Barbara's interest in nursing began with a candy striper position in high school, but her career took another path at first. After twenty years in the corporate world, she finally found her way into the profession through a two-year community college program. She has since gone on to receive her bachelor's degree in nursing, as well as med-surg certification. In addition to continuously improving her own skills, she also is continuously contributing to the success of her 43-bed med-surg oncology unit. She helps to orient new employees and has been a preceptor for the summer nurse extern program. Barbara also is the unit's skin champion, working closely with the wound care team.

As co-chair of her unit's shared governance council, Barbara has demonstrated significant leadership. She engages the team through raffles, encourages open participation and arranges for guest speakers to enrich her unit's educational experience. She has developed a unit newsletter to share events on the unit and celebrate the team's successes. Council co-chairs across the hospital view her as a mentor in this role. Barbara also has led her unit to give back to the community. Initiatives she has spearheaded include organizing a team for a women's health charity walk, organizing an informational table and fundraiser for colon cancer awareness, collecting prom dresses for disadvantaged teens, collecting worn or damaged American flags for proper disposal by the Boy Scouts, and providing handwritten responses from Santa Claus to her colleagues' children.

Barbara is recognized as a role model by her staff and among her peers in the hospital. She is known as her unit's cheerleader. Her nomination says, "Her drive to make a positive impact — whether on a single patient and family or her community at large — inspires each of us to do more."

NYU WINTHROP HOSPITAL
CATHY JO CATALANO, MSN, RNC-EFM, OB
NURSE MANAGER

C.J. has 35 years of clinical experience, with responsibility for more than 120 nurses, scrub techs and ancillary staff in the labor and delivery unit she leads as nurse manager. She also serves as an adjunct professor at a local school of nursing, where she has been honored with the Nightingale Shining Light Award in recognition of her professionalism, caring and dedication to the art of nursing.

In her nomination, NYU Winthrop notes that C.J.'s greatest gift is recognizing the hidden strengths in others and, through mentoring and coaching, helping them to capitalize on these strengths in the clinical setting. She excels at identifying members of the staff who are ready to assume a leadership role, and has created an environment for staff to influence their practice, implement changes and try something outside of their comfort zone. Under her guidance, a team of clinical nurses has implemented the Maternal Fetal Triage Index (MFTI) pilot, which included staff and physician education, developing processes for implementation, and designing content for inclusion in the EMR. She also was integral to developing the nursing role for Winthrop's fetal surgery program.

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

She has been so successful as a mentor for Sigma Theta Tau's Maternal Child Health Leadership Academy that she has been invited to be a faculty member for the class of 2018-19. C.J. also serves as a facilitator for the regional AWHONN chapter and as chair of the Hospital Council's Nurse Managers Committee. She says that when she sees how students respond to her education and experiences, it helps her realize that she has a wonderful career.

PECONIC BAY MEDICAL CENTER NORTHWELL HEALTH
DONNA L. POST, RN, BSN, CHPN
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PALLIATIVE CARE

Donna has practiced nursing for more than 35 years in various clinical and administrative positions. Having had the experience of also being a caregiver for her parents and husband, she has found her calling in palliative care. Donna led a multidisciplinary team in building the hospital's palliative care program from the ground up. She has educated staff on the unit, and provided hospital-wide education on end-of-life care that has been very successful. As a result, 82 percent of patients who passed in the hospital last year had received a palliative care consult and subsequent bereavement services. The unit achieved Joint Commission Advanced Certification in Palliative Care in 2018, and she has personally achieved certification in palliative care nursing.

Her clinical knowledge, attention to detail and compassion for patients and families have set the standard for the provision of care in her unit. Donna forges a personal connection with her patients, engaging them and their families on what is most important to them. She helped a terminal patient fulfill his dying wish to marry his girlfriend, and has managed to draw out elderly and dementia patients by connecting over their past professions or military service. She is also known for supporting colleagues who experience secondary trauma. After an especially traumatic loss for the OB team, a colleague recalled that "to work alongside her that day has been one of my greatest privileges as a professional. Without words she knew where she was needed and who needed her presence."

Although family challenges deferred her education for some years, she is in the process of fulfilling her lifelong goal of completing her education; next year she will complete a Doctorate in Nursing Practice. Her academic pursuits, coupled with her palliative care leadership experience, have brought a new focus to her work — assimilating evidence-based, cutting-edge research into a culture of compassionate, high quality care. Donna says this has been the most challenging but most satisfying period of her career.

PLAINVIEW HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH
MARY SEMELRATH, RN, OCN
STAFF NURSE

Mary has been an oncology nurse at Plainview since 2009, providing chemotherapy services in the hospital's outpatient infusion suite. She says that she loves her work as a bedside nurse, at the heart of nursing, where she can educate and bond with patients at their most vulnerable. Mary is known for keeping track of her patients' food preferences, favorite treatment chairs and blankets, exhibiting "genuine care toward her patients with a hug, holding a hand when needed or just a simple smile."

When a patient at the end of his life was unable to attend his daughter's wedding, Mary arranged for a re-creation of the wedding at the hospital, coordinating all of the necessary leadership within the hospital to make it happen. This is only one example of how she makes a strong connection with her patients and ensures that their social and emotional needs are met along with the physical. She has also developed a Survivor's Day Celebration for patients and families to come together with the hospital and community to share their joy and strength as cancer survivors.

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

Although she doesn't hold a formal leadership position, Mary is a leader among her peers. She brings new ideas to her unit, including spearheading an aromatherapy project at Plainview to help patients with pain, nausea and anxiety. She stepped up to represent nursing in the transition to electronic medical records, making sure she never missed a meeting of the transition workgroup even if she was scheduled to have the day off. She even assisted in the onboarding of other nurses from the unit. Mary has inspired five nurses from the unit to complete training to care for oncology patients, and then actively mentored the nurses into their new roles. She is known to help less experienced nurses gain the confidence they need in a supportive setting and inspires those around her. Her enthusiasm for the job hasn't waned, reporting "I love to let people see that after 24 years, my passion and joy remain intact. The fact that I can make a difference in patients' lives inspires me still, making every challenge worth it."

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA MEDICAL CENTER

LAURIE M. YUDITSKY, MBA, BSN, CPHQ

DIRECTOR OF QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

A chance event in high school shifted Laurie's career focus toward nursing and away from accounting, her original plan. In 14 years at St. Catherine's, Laurie has served as a staff nurse, nurse manager, and currently as the director of quality improvement, where she still gets to put those mathematic and analytics skills to use.

In her nomination, St. Catherine's stresses that Laurie is always diligent and organized in her workflow, but she takes the time to teach the tenets of quality improvement to staff and providers. She has taken these qualities to a new level since assuming the role of the hospital's sepsis champion. As a result of her efforts, the facility now ranks in the highest tier for sepsis care in the state and has sustained compliance for more than five years. Under her leadership, St. Catherine's also has changed the way it looks at and uses data. For example, Laurie established a checks and balances process between PI, HIM, CDI and infection prevention for the review of hospital-acquired condition cases to determine which cases actually meet the reporting criteria, which has significant financial implications. This process drives staff and provider education. Her next project is to bring the same enthusiasm and discipline to the adoption and execution of a new colon bundle.

Laurie brings her expertise in sepsis care to the community as well, presenting to local EMS corps, local and regional conferences and for the IHI Patient Safety Congress. She also wears many hats with the hospital, chairing patient care committees, serving as the NDNQI coordinator, evaluating compliance with National Patient Safety Goals, and leading Joint Commission survey preparation. She is a nurse leader who demonstrates commitment in all facets of nursing. She said in her nomination essay, "Whether at the bedside, behind a desk, volunteering or completing community services, I strive to give 100 percent of my heart, intellect and passion to advocating and making a difference in people's lives."

ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL

KARLA ALEXANDER, MSN, BSN, CNOR

NURSING CARE COORDINATOR FOR PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES

Karla's journey to nursing excellence began with an aide position in a skilled nursing facility in high school. She attended nursing school — while simultaneously achieving USFSA Gold Medal status as an ice dancer — and has continued on to earn her Master of Science in Nursing Administration degree.

As the nursing care coordinator for perioperative services, Karla has put her outstanding critical thinking and motivational skills to use. When the hospital began its journey to high reliability and zero patient harm, she embraced the challenge of pulling staff off the floor during the busiest times for training and implemented morning huddles that inspire and encourage the staff. Her interactive huddles immediately achieve understanding and alignment about the day's priorities and get her staff back to work as soon as possible. She is known as a patient safety cheerleader who has created an environment that encourages

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

other staff to suggest changes to facilitate patient care and reduce risk of patient harm. She also has implemented an innovative and creative use of a centrally located whiteboard that has been modeled across the institution.

Karla's commitment to the highest standards of patient safety are also commended. She has championed the evidence-based universal protocol of time outs prior to surgery, successfully scripting the process for staff and physicians to the degree that a Joint Commission consultant referred to their processes as "textbook perfect." She also has reduced operating room turnaround time by five minutes after designing and implementing a new cleaning formation on which she spent many hours educating and training the housekeeping staff. Karla's nomination states that the culture she has instituted is fully engrained due to her interactions and relationship with the staff, making her "respected, admired and liked by all."

ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL , THE HEART CENTER
ELIZABETH ROSE GRAHN, MSN, NP-C, CWOCN
WOUND OSTOMY CONTINENCE NURSE PRACTITIONER

Elizabeth has held many positions in her more than two decades of nursing, but it is said that she found her calling as a certified wound ostomy continence nurse (CWOCN). She was first exposed to an ostomy at the age of 13, while helping to care for a close family member. When approached early in her career about joining the wound care team, she jumped at the opportunity because of this early experience. After obtaining her master's degree, she went on to obtain WOCC and assumed the role of clinical nurse specialist.

Elizabeth promotes quality care by integrating evidence-based practices with a patient-centered approach. After identifying with leadership the need to strengthen pressure injury prevention measures, she determined that the quality of bed surfaces was an opportunity for improvement. She successfully advocated for the purchase of specialty surface beds, educated the nursing staff on proper utilization, and partnered with the units' management teams to develop a process to maintain the beds for the critically ill population. Elizabeth also partnered with nurses in the PACU to address the high risk for pressure injuries among the acute cardiac patient population, suggesting the utilization of specialty bed surfaces in the pre- and post-operative periods. She worked with nurse leaders, staff nurses and environmental services staff to create an efficient workflow for specialty bed availability, and has developed a tool to assist nurses in selecting the appropriate bed for their patients.

Highly regarded by the nursing staff as a valuable internal expert, Elizabeth makes herself readily available to answer questions, provide education, conduct assessments and engage patients. She also has partnered with the hospital's surgeons to jointly treat certain patients during their office visits, addressing the difficulty that many ostomates have in funding a CWOCN to support them at home. Elizabeth is described as always going above and beyond for her patients.

ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL
FARAH J. BERRIOS, MSN, MPH, BSN, CCM
DIRECTOR OF CARE COORDINATION

Farah says that she never considered another profession besides nursing, and she has demonstrated that commitment to the field over a 28-year career. As a new Associate's Degree nurse, she started as a med-surg nurse at Lenox Hill Hospital, then moved to the ICU while obtaining her BSN and ultimately MSN, MPH. She was hired first at St. Joseph as a per diem case manager, then an assistant director and ultimately promoted to her current position.

Nurses working in care management are often overlooked in the realm of nurse leadership, but they play an integral role in progressing patients through the continuum of care. Farah took over the care

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

coordination department after an unexpected leadership departure, at a time that the hospital was undergoing a significant transition. Farah accepted the challenge and ended up spearheading the implementation of a major throughput initiative for the entire hospital. Under her leadership, the hospital has consistently met or exceeded its length of stay benchmarks. Farah's team was recognized by the Catholic Health System for its outstanding engagement and collaboration, the first time a care management department had received the accolade.

As leader, Farah is known for being supportive of staff. She pays attention to their strengths so she can highlight them, and to their weakness so she can help them overcome challenges. She keeps her staff motivated and always shows her appreciation for their hard work. Her staff says that "she's a great model of how to be trustworthy, understanding and kind."

SOUTH NASSAU COMMUNITIES HOSPITAL
LUCILLE HUGHES, DNP, RN, ADE, BC-ADM
DIRECTOR OF DIABETES EDUCATION

Nearly all of Lucille's career of more than three decades has been devoted to diabetes prevention, management and education. After beginning practice in cardiology and oncology, where she experienced firsthand the challenges that diabetes creates for patients with serious illnesses, she became a certified diabetes educator. In addition to furthering care education with dual master's degrees in nursing and nursing education and a Doctorate of Nursing Practice, she has been board certified in advanced diabetes management.

In her role as a director of diabetes education, Lucille has touched the lives of countless patients, community members and colleagues. In just two years, she designed and implemented five outpatient diabetes education centers, all recognized as exceeding national standards for self-management set by the American Association of Diabetes Educators and the American Diabetes Association. She has embedded diabetes educators in primary care practices to improve the delivery of diabetes education, and launched multiple pre-diabetes programs modeled after the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program. Lucille also developed and implemented a Diabetes Champion Program to positively impact the recruitment, growth and mentoring of future CDEs. In addition to training more than 130 staff at South Nassau, her curriculum has been implemented at six additional hospitals and shared with various health systems nationwide.

The theme that carries across Lucille's professional and scholarly accomplishments is the empowerment of her patients. She says that the most satisfying aspect of her work is, "seeing patients make positive behavior changes that impact their diabetes. Seeing their faces and words of gratitude when accomplishing self-care tasks, such as self-injections or using an insulin pump for the first time is why I became a nurse and why I come to work each day."

STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON HOSPITAL
JEAN M. MACALPINE, MSN/ED, RN, CCM
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CASE MANAGER

Jean has practiced in nearly all areas of clinical nursing in her 27-year career. Since joining Stony Brook Southampton in 2005, she has worked in the ICU and PACU before moving up to nursing administration. As the night nursing supervisor, Jean created a cohesive atmosphere committed to patient safety and quality care. After receiving her master's degree, she joined the hospital's case management team and went on to achieve a certificate in case management. She advocated for and implemented the role of emergency department case manager, where she has focused on providing education to clinicians on admission criteria, patient status and the importance of clear documentation. Thanks to her leadership, observation stays declined 10 percent in 2018 and are continuing to trend downward. She has been a force in the ED for aligning communication and collaboration between the patient, caregivers, health professionals and payers.

2019 Nurse of Excellence Nominees Continued

Dedication to education is a constant through Jean's career. She has encouraged colleagues to achieve case management certification and serves as a case management nursing preceptor, which allows her to share her experiences with peers, build confidence and establish competency. In addition, she mentors MSN candidates in her free time. Jean also considers education and monitoring compliance with education to be the core of her work — in order to sustain improvement, sharing information and encouraging input are vital.

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

LISA RENDINA, RN, MS

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST, STONY BROOK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Long regarded as a “go-to” nurse at Children's Hospital, Lisa has been a leader among her peers first as a staff nurse, then as an educator, and now as a nurse specialist. She supports the pediatric acute care, intensive care and hematology/oncology units, as well as the pediatric special procedures unit, with more than 160 nurses under her wing in total.

Her achievements include spearheading key quality initiatives, championing participation in national patient safety efforts, such as the Children's Hospital Solutions for Patient Safety Network, developing an annual nursing quality indicator report, advocating for safe and effective products for pediatric patient use, and standardizing policies and procedures throughout the hospital. Her dedication to the highest standards of care and patient safety have resulted in a decline in patient harm, an all-time high rate of compliance with clinical bundle workflow, and better patient outcomes.

Lisa is a leader outside the hospital as well, serving as both an ambassador and mentor for young girls in her community through the Girl Scouts, and leveraging community resources to support the hospital. For example, her Girl Scout troop organized the installation of a freezer and donations of ice pops in the pediatric hematology/oncology unit, and she secured funding from the Northport Lions' Club and the Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine to supply custom oral care kits for children receiving cancer treatment. Her commitment to community echoes her commitment to her team at the hospital, where she says that 90 percent of her successes are due to the hard work done at the bedside by RNs, physicians and other ancillary staff.

SYOSSET HOSPITAL

NINA NG, MSN, RN

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF NURSING

Nina is driven by a sense of mission that has taken her to some of the most dangerous places in the world. From a very young age, she knew that she wanted to spend her life helping others; nursing provided her with the means to make a difference in the lives of orphans, refugees and others affected by war and poverty.

Nina's dedication, hard work and commitment to education led to her rapid rise from emergency room staff nurse, nurse coordinator, patient care director and nurse administrator at New York-Presbyterian's Allen Hospital. After a time practicing as a travel nurse, she returned to New York and currently serves as an Assistant Director of Nursing. She is recognized for constantly seeking opportunities to improve her clinical skills and an unshakeable quest to make a difference in the lives of every patient, family and staff member with whom she comes into contact.

She continues to fulfill her passion for global health. She has traveled to Mosul and Erbil, Iraq in the heat of war and to post-hurricane Haiti to care for trauma victims. She continues to serve as a volunteer wellness consultant for NYC Medics global disaster relief organization, and has presented at international conferences about her experiences. Nina says of her life's work, “Nursing is powerful. When coupled with humanitarian aid, the possibilities are endless. Our planet is in need of more individuals who are willing to apply their valuable skills to defend those who cannot speak and act for themselves.”

Prior Recipients

OF THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL NURSE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

- 2019 JUSTIN M. WARYOLD, Stony Brook University School of Nursing
- 2018 LILA V. HAGEMAN-SHEEHAN, NYU Winthrop Hospital
- 2017 LISA A. KOSHANSKY, St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center
- 2016 EILEEN DWYER, St. Francis Hospital
- 2015 CHRISTINE GLASER, Farmingdale State College
- 2014 RENEE GILCHRIST, North Shore University Hospital
- 2013 CATHERINE VIDETTO, St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center and
LORI ESCALLIER, Stony Brook University School of Nursing
- 2012 ANULI A. ERIKE, Nassau University Medical Center
- 2011 LISA QUINONES, Suffolk County Community College
- 2010 DEBRA GIUGLIANO, Stony Brook University Medical Center
- 2009 EILEEN M. ROBERTO, Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center
- 2008 AMY B. PAKES, Nassau University Medical Center
- 2007 DONNA A. TANZI, Huntington Hospital
- 2006 MAY-LYNN ANDRESEN, North Shore - LIJ Health System
- 2005 KATHLEEN PERRO, St. Francis Hospital
- 2004 MADELINE COZZI-GOTTLIEB, South Nassau Communities Hospital
- 2003 VIRGINIA REICHERT, North Shore University Hospital
- 2002 DONNA M. JOHNSON, Nassau University Medical Center
- 2001 SUSAN HOVANI, J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital
- 2000 KATHLEEN SOUTHERTON, University Hospital at Stony Brook
- 1999 KATHLEEN MILLER, Long Beach Medical Center
- 1998 ELIZABETH DEVINE, J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital
- 1997 ALICE FRIEDRICH, North Shore University Hospital at Plainview

LONG ISLAND NOMINATIONS TO THE NEW YORK STATE NURSE OF
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RACHEL LIN
Komanoff Center for Geriatric &
Rehab Medicine (NYS recipient)

NANCY MAEHL
Veterans Affairs Medical Center

ELEANOR O'BOYLE
J. T. Mather Memorial

MILDRED O'CONNOR
Lutheran Center for the Aging

DARLENE PADUANO
University Hospital at Stony Brook

DOROTHY PESSOLI
Veterans Affairs Medical Center

CAROLYN VAN HELDEN
St. Charles Hospital and
Rehabilitation Center

SR. RITA VANSON
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