



Nassau-Suffolk  
Hospital Council

# Nurse of Excellence

AWARD CEREMONY | Sept. 15, 2022

# 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 other healthcare professionals 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.

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

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It has been the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's great privilege to sponsor the annual Nurse of Excellence award, continuing a tradition that began in 1989 when the New York State Legislature created a Nurse of Distinction program. The award was so highly regarded that when the state program ended six years later, Long Island hospital leaders were unwilling to let it end. The Hospital Council took up the mantle, developing its own program in the region to honor Long Island's outstanding registered nurses.

Member hospitals and Long Island schools of nursing each year nominate one extraordinary candidate from their institutions, in accordance with the criteria established by the Council's Nurse Executives Committee. These individual nominations are in and of themselves a significant honor, which is why we recognize every candidate today. The Nurse of Excellence subcommittee, comprised of chief nursing officers, deans of nursing, nurse managers and previous winners, then selects one winner from among the blinded nominations. This is an unenviable task, as every one of these nominees is a winner.

Our nurses are the backbone of our institutions. Their dedication never wavers no matter the challenges presented nor how daunting the task at hand. We all witnessed the extraordinary efforts and achievements of our nurses during one of the most trying times in patient care – the pandemic. While the pandemic is still with us so is the strength, the resilience, the leadership, the compassion, and most of all, the incredible skill of our nursing professionals. On behalf of our board of directors, the Council staff and the leadership at all of our institutions, we express our sincere appreciation to all nurses and salute their commitment to patients, our communities and the pursuit of excellence.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Darwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**WENDY D. DARWELL**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council



THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL  
2022 NURSE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD  
**ORDER OF PROGRAM**

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**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**WENDY D. DARWELL**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council

**GREETINGS FROM THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL**

**RICHARD T. MARGULIS**

Chairman of the Board  
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Long Island Community Hospital

**INTRODUCTION OF NURSE EXECUTIVES COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ALL NURSE OF EXCELLENCE NOMINEES**

**STACEY CONKLIN, MSN, RN-BC, MHCDS, NE-BC**

Chairperson, Nurse Executives Committee  
Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer  
NYU Langone Hospital Long Island

**DEBRA GRIMM, DNP, MS, RN**

Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer  
Long Island Community Hospital

**REMARKS BY THE HONOREE**

**PATRICIA WOLOSZYN, DNP, RN, PMHCNS-BC, NPP**

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Psychiatry  
Stony Brook University Hospital

**PRESENTATION OF THE TEAPOT**

**CLOSING REMARKS**

**STACEY CONKLIN, MSN, RN-BC, MHCDS, NE-BC**

Chairperson, Nurse Executives Committee  
Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer  
NYU Langone Hospital Long Island



NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL 2022 AWARD FOR  
NURSING EXCELLENCE IS PRESENTED TO

**PATRICIA WOLOSZYN, DNP, RN,  
PMHCNS-BC, NPP**

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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.

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**NURSE OF EXCELLENCE 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.

2022

# Nurse Executive

COMMITTEE

**Ann Cella, MA, MEd, RN, NEA-BC**

Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services  
and Chief Nursing Officer  
St. Francis Hospital & Heart Center

**R. J. Civello, RN, BS-HCA, MSN**

Associate Executive Director  
Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer  
South Shore University Hospital Northwell Health

**Stacey A. Conklin, MSN, RN-BC, MHCDS, NE-BC**

Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer  
Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital

**Gara Edelstein, RN, MSN**

Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services and  
Chief Nursing Officer, Good Samaritan Hospital  
Chief Nursing Officer, Catholic Health

**Mary Jane Finnegan, MS, RN**

Chief Nursing Officer  
St. Catherine of Siena Hospital

**Maria Fletcher, RN, PhD, CNE**

Director of Department of Nursing  
St. Joseph's College

**Marcia R. Gardner, PhD, RN, CPNP, CPN**

Dean of Barbara H. Hagan School of Nursing  
Molloy College

**Barbara Gibbons, RN, MS, FNP**

Vice President of Patient Care Services and  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Mercy Hospital

**Catherine O'Brien, RN, BSN, MBA, NEA-BC**

Vice President of Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer  
St. Joseph Hospital

**Debra Grimm, DNP, MS, RN**

Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer  
Long Island Community Hospital

**Susan Knoepffler, RN, MPA, NE-BC**

Vice President of Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer  
Huntington Hospital Northwell Health

**Doreen O'Grady, RN**

Associate Executive Director of Patient Care  
Services and Chief Nursing Officer  
Glen Cove Hospital Northwell Health

**Christine Kippley, RN, MBA, NE-BC, CCM**

Vice President of Patient Care Services and  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Peconic Bay Medical Center Northwell Health

**Althea Mills, RN, MSN**

Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of  
Patient Services  
Stony Brook Southampton Hospital

**Carolyn Santora, MS, RN**

Chief of Regulatory Affairs and Chief Nursing  
Officer  
Stony Brook University Hospital

**Marie Mulligan, PhD, MSN, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC**

Vice President for Nursing and Chief  
Nursing Officer  
Mather Hospital Northwell Health

**Suzie Marriott**

Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services  
and Chief Nursing Officer  
Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital

**Janice Pateres, MS, MBA, RN, BC**

Chief Nursing Officer and Executive Vice President  
Nassau University Medical Center





**Valerie T. Terzano, MSN, RN, NEA-BC**  
Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President  
for Nursing  
NYU Langone Hospital Long Island

**Marianna Vazquez, RN, MS, NE-BC**  
Associate Executive Director of Patient  
Care Services  
Plainview and Syosset Hospitals Northwell Health

**Maureen T. White, RN, MBA, NEA-BC, FAAN**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive  
Northwell Health

**Brandy Felio**  
Senior Director of Clinical Operations  
Northwell Health

**Denise Walsh**  
Dean, School of Health Professions and Nursing  
LIU Post

**Fran Cherkis**  
Assistant Chair, Department of Nursing  
Farmingdale State College

**Irene Macyk**  
Associate Executive Director of Patient Care  
Services and Chief Nursing Officer  
North Shore University Hospital Northwell Health

**Nicolette Fiore-Lopez**  
Chief Nursing Officer  
St. Charles Hospital

**Patricia Bruckenthal**  
Dean and Professor  
Stony Brook School of Nursing

## 2022 NURSE OF EXCELLENCE SUB-COMMITTEE

**Stacey Conklin, Chair**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer  
South Nassau Communities Hospital

**Debra Grimm, Co-Chair**  
Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer  
Long Island Community Hospital

**Marie Mulligan**  
Vice President for Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer  
Mather Hospital Northwell Health

**Carolyn Santora, MS, RN**  
Chief of Regulatory Affairs and Chief Nursing Officer  
Stony Brook University Hospital

**Gara Edelstein**  
Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services and  
Chief Nursing Officer, Good Samaritan Hospital and  
Chief Nursing Officer, Catholic Health

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

**Lila Hageman-Sheehan**  
Nurse Manager of Emergency Department  
NYU Langone Hospital Long Island

**Faith Lynch, MSN, RN**  
2021 Nurse of Excellence Honoree  
NYU Langone Hospital Long Island

**Marijean Buhse, PhD, RN**  
2021 Nurse of Excellence Honoree  
Stony Brook School of Nursing



## 2022 Nurse of Excellence Honoree

# PATRICIA WOLOSZYN, DNP, RN, PMHCNS-BC, NPP

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Psychiatry  
Stony Brook University Hospital

Patricia Woloszyn's dedication to healthcare is meritorious in the clinical setting — in education and in administration. She is a strong advocate for the population she serves and has been a member of the American Psychiatric Nurse Association (APNA) since 2010. She is involved in different committees, most notably the Fall Prevention Committee. She spearheads many quality improvement initiatives.

Patricia is one of nursing's most prescient, insightful, and influential minds in nursing documentation, restraint and fall prevention. She is instrumental in challenging the nurses to be more assertive in providing evidence-based care. She initiated a fellowship program for three new graduates in their specialty and has served as a mentor to them, as well as many capstone students. Patricia juggles her schedule to meet with employees from three shifts to roll-out and educate employees on new initiatives. She is a thoughtful voice for change and has a discerning ear for ideas that warrant further investigation. She has implemented the use of CCTV as education for staff to review codes, restraints and falls in an effort to reduce these events. Patricia initiated a falls-reduction project. Instead of patients using blankets as they walk around the unit, increasing the chance a patient could fall, patients are given clothing donations that include contributions from her in the form of sweat suits that patients wear to be comfortable and warm. She facilitated the renovation of an interview room that was transformed into a 'quiet room' and encourages its use among staff and patients. She participated in the development of a patient satisfaction survey and educated staff in preparation for a Joint Commission visit that resulted in a successful outcome. She facilitates staff education in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and served as interim nurse manager for nine months and scored a whopping 92 percent on the Press Ganey Staff survey!

Patricia has garnered the support of her family to participate in annual cancer walks and is a member of the Nassau County Medical Reserve Core. She administers vaccines voluntarily. She is a sought-after lecturer and serves as an adjunct instructor at a prestigious university.

She demonstrates a "must get it done" attitude and as a result, physicians, nurses and other allied health professionals seek her advice to problem-solve. She instills in nurses a true passion for quality improvement and more importantly, she creates an environment for them to be successful.

Patricia has truly integrated a myriad of responsibilities daily, in addition to her assigned role. She is hands-on and always ready to help patients and staff. Given the staffing crisis, she facilitates throughput, scheduling, housekeeping, triaging, works with nursing assistants, and ensures that staff has the resources they need.

As a change agent, Patricia leads by example, giving nurses the resources, education, and autonomy they need to complete their responsibilities. She remains accessible to nurses, guides them and answers questions. She serves as a sounding board and resource to handle difficult situations for patients, families and staff.

Patricia is a well-recognized lifelong learner. She has earned degrees for doctor of nurse practitioner and for psychiatric nurse practitioner. She is also a board-certified clinical nurse specialist. She is a consummate professional, gifted educator, dynamic leader and a passionate auditor.

## GLEN COVE HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

### Heather Caramanzana, PhD, RN, NPD-BC, NE-BC, CRRN

Senior Nurse Manager

Heather Caramanzana defines the future of nursing in healthcare and public health, creating organizational structures that facilitate the expedited acquisition of relevant content-expertise to serve flexibly in areas of greatest need. Expanding her scope during the pandemic and opening two additional surge units, she effortlessly managed four COVID units. Understanding staffing and competency development she developed a competency-based model and staffing algorithm for these units. Within one week, she conducted a risk assessment, added equipment needed, organized a reporting structure, and oriented staff to the new environment. Under her leadership, she managed a COVID respiratory/trach unit in which more than 80 percent of these patients were discharged home. She partnered with the Mayo Clinic as the site coordinator for a study, *Expanded Access to Convalescent Plasma for Treatment of Patients with COVID-19*, so patients at our organization would be eligible to receive the plasma. Heather currently works with the Family Medicine Clinic, as Principal Investigator, for a study called *Impact of the Social Determinants of Health Care for Latinos Experiencing COVID-19*. The purpose of the study is to explore and identify the social determinants of health for Latinos diagnosed with COVID-19 between March 2020 and March 2021 in a community setting. She also created a Human Caring Workshop which designated 3.0 ANCC contact hours for nurses to participate in professional development and facilitate knowledge in self-care practices to support emotional well-being.

Heather has a proven track record for performance improvement. Within the brain injury unit (BIU), our neurological rehabilitation patients are highly impulsive and unable to

follow safety instructions due to cognitive deficits. She created a multimodal approach to fall-reduction leading to a 50 percent reduction for three consecutive years. She created a skin care program, as the neurological rehabilitation patients are at high risk for developing pressure injuries due to limited mobility. This collaboration has led to four years of zero acquired pressure injuries on our brain injury unit. BIU has remained CAUTI-, MRSA- and CLABS-free for four years. She led the inception of the straight catheter protocol resulting in a 27 percent decrease in indwelling catheters from 2019-2021. Her workforce engagement team index has been T1-1 for four years in a row. Heather created the Rose Award, which is presented twice a year for outstanding nursing assistants who exemplify outstanding contribution to quality care. She was a key Magnet stakeholder, chairing the New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements in Patient Care leading to the organization's first Magnet designation with nine exemplars, including one for research.

Heather created a rehabilitation orientation platform to connect our patients' families by engaging in a joint collaborative with nursing and therapy to understand the rehabilitation experience. Through this program, the "likelihood of being recommended" scores increased by 40 percent from the previous year. Her units have won the North Star 90 award for achieving in the 90th percentile nationwide. She is heavily involved in the community and the local food pantry within our hospital region, collecting hundreds of pounds of food and recruiting volunteers to distribute the food to our underserved population.

## GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL

### Barbara Timpug, MSN, RN, CCRN

Clinical Nurse Educator for Neuroscience and Surgical Intensive Care

Barbara Timpug is a master's-prepared certified critical care registered nurse who demonstrates commitment, passion and enthusiasm for the field of nursing. As an educator, she is approachable and makes herself consistently available to staff. Her hands-on approach is appreciated by staff and admired by leadership. Barbara is always willing to spend whatever time is necessary to ensure staff is comfortable and patients are receiving optimal and safe care.

Barbara creates a welcoming environment for new employees. New employees starting with her are given a welcome binder that she created, which includes general hospital and nursing information, along with resources specific to the critical care environment, such as the medications commonly used and commonly performed procedures and tests. She is currently working with leadership to help devise a more comprehensive nursing preceptor program to ensure all nurses are given the tools and resources needed to be successful in their patient care. Barbara's dedication is seen when she volunteers to teach classes throughout the facility and covers education responsibilities for other nursing departments. Her knowledge and expertise is highly regarded. She participates in multiple committees and projects, including the building of the medication library for a new hospital-wide infusion pump system. She consistently encourages staff to continue their education and obtain certification in their specialty area.

Barbara's passion for nursing is evident in her practice. She consistently brings forward new evidence-based findings to improve patient care and reviews policies to ensure that they

are current and best practice. She is responsible for streamlining the neuro critical care flowsheets to reduce redundant documentation by nurses. Barbara often collaborates with other areas to ensure nursing staff has the adequate knowledge and resources to promote optimal patient outcomes. She is responsible for teaming with PACU staff to have all the nurses in her critical care areas be competent in procedural recovery. She worked with members of the infection prevention team and critical care nursing leadership to create a formal, semi-annual review of infection prevention policies, as well as the creation of a unit-based infection prevention committee that ensures all staff are following infection prevention policies and procedures. This collaboration has resulted in a notable decrease in the occurrence of CAUTIs and CLABSIs in the Surgical ICU. She also collaborated with the wound care and Surgical ICU nursing teams to create a pressure injury prevention checklist to ensure maximum preventative interventions are in place to prevent pressure injuries in this vulnerable population.

Throughout her diverse nursing career (that has spanned multiple continents), Barbara has promoted a positive image of the nursing profession. She is active in the school community and instills that sense of community pride in her children as well. Barbara's enthusiasm, commitment and passion for the profession has made her an excellent preceptor and mentor as well as an exemplary colleague and role model.

## HUNTINGTON HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

### **Anupama Kuruvilla, MSN, RN, PCCN, CCRN**

Assistant Nurse Manager

Anupama Kuruvilla clearly exemplifies the extent to which one individual's career can equally serve our institution, the community and the profession of nursing. She has been an RN for 14 years. She obtained her bachelor's in nursing degree in India. She worked there for three years and then worked in New Zealand for another three years. After, she moved to New York and worked as a critical care nurse and step-down RN for 6 years, from 2014 until 2020 when she joined our team as an Assistant Nurse Manager.

Anupama has a nursing background demonstrating achievement in all areas of the award criteria. Her professional expertise is validated by the fact that she holds two professional certifications; PCCN, Progressive Care Certified Nurse, and CCRN, Critical Care RN.

She has a thirst for knowledge and obtained her master's in nursing in 2019 from Grand Canyon University and is presently enrolled in a Doctorate program through Chamberlain University studying Doctor of Nursing with an emphasis in educational leadership. She is a part of the mentorship program serving as a mentor to new leaders and has participated in the LEAD program this year. Anupama has accomplished so much in her two short years here with us!

She is actively involved in the EBP/Research council because education and research is her passion. This year we hope to write and publish our research which found success

in reducing falls. She is also currently an adjunct clinical professor, educating our future registered nurses! This past year we have had some turnover at night with RNs moving on to pursue dreams and goals and she has had to train and educate our novice nurses. Honestly, I couldn't hope for anyone better in this role. She has a calm demeanor and has the unique ability to put the novice nurse at ease while guiding them in their journey of becoming an independent staff nurse. Anupama is a natural teacher not only due to her outstanding clinical skills and quality focus, but because of her caring, nurturing, and mentoring abilities — which is just as important.

She demonstrates leadership that provides a role model to inspire other nurses to improve the quality of their performance and assists other nurses in their development. The activities she participates in fosters a positive image of nursing. She is smart, articulate, hands-on, approachable, and compassionate.

Anupama is the essence of a Professional Registered Nurse and truly exemplifies nursing excellence. She approaches everything she does with passion and enthusiasm. She has contributed to the nursing profession immensely.

## LONG ISLAND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

### Doreen Virgil, MSN, BSN

Manager of Infection Prevention

Doreen Virgil has been working in the field of infection prevention and a member of APIC (Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology) for over thirty-seven years. She holds her board certification in Infection Prevention and Control and has received several awards and recognitions throughout the years for initiatives improving the quality of patient care and reducing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

Even though she has been working in Infection Prevention for more than half of her life, she still has the burning passion for improving the delivery of care for patients. Doreen has been a facilitator of change in the delivery of care at the bedside and driven many initiatives to eliminate HAIs. She truly embraces her role and utilizes her outstanding communication skills to positively influence clinical nursing bedside practice. Doreen is extremely tenacious and an outstanding nurse educator as well.

During the COVID-19 pandemic she was a member of the hospital's COVID Task Force, taking the lead in developing policies and procedures, and training staff on appropriate use

of personal protective equipment (PPE), as guidance was continually changing. This nominee was instrumental in keeping us on track with the many changes, almost daily, during the first COVID-19 Surge. I always know I can depend on her to provide us with the appropriate guidance.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the threat that HAIs posed for healthcare organizations and made the role of infection prevention a priority. This nominee is a driver for excellence and she is well respected by her peers. This nominee said "The COVID-19 pandemic cannot be the excuse to not reduce HAIs. We have to find a way back from COVID-19 now. I am passionate about reducing HAIs and keeping patient's safe. Now and moving forward, my goal is to continue to lead and motivate the staff to be excited about infection prevention." She continually strives for our quality scores to remain below the benchmark for HAIs. She exemplifies a true clinical nurse leader in everything interaction and all initiatives that she leads.

## MATHER HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

### Elizabeth Giordano, MA, RN, CCRN-K, CDCES

Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist

Healthcare organizations that establish Healthy Work Environments value a performance standard known as Meaningful Recognition. The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's longstanding tradition of providing the Nurse of Excellence Award to exceptional nurses on Long Island is a perfect example of Meaningful Recognition in action!

Elizabeth Giordano, the Diabetes Care and Education Specialist at our organization for the past six years, is the personification of a registered professional nurse for whom the Nurses of Excellence Award was established. An expert in the field of diabetes prevention and management, she is a professional role model and change agent who inspires others to provide the highest level of evidence-based care to patients with diabetes. More importantly, she empowers people with diabetes to engage in self-care that promotes emotional and physical well-being.

In addition to possessing a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, Elizabeth earned a Master of Arts in Advanced Practice Holistic Nursing from New York University. She is a member of the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists (ADCES) and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). She is board certified in Critical Care Nursing and as a Diabetes Educator and Advanced Holistic Nurse (AHN-BC). Her unique educational preparation and expertise, especially in Holistic Nursing, makes her extremely effective in meeting the needs of others from a mind, body and spirit perspective.

Over 125 million (38%) of Americans have diabetes or pre-diabetes. A growing body of evidence indicates that early, aggressive intervention provided to patients with diabetes significantly reduces morbidity, length of stay and healthcare costs. Nevertheless, less than 20 percent of America's 6,000 hospitals employ a dedicated diabetes nurse expert.

As the Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, Elizabeth consults with patients newly diagnosed with diabetes, and patients with insulin pumps, especially those scheduled for surgery. She visits patients prior to discharge to help safeguard them in the community setting. She is a key member of many committees, such as: Ethics, Integrative Pain Management, Glycemic Control Team, Value Analysis and the Northwell CDCES Group.

A podium presentation given by Elizabeth, titled: "The Evolution of Diabetes Education in the Hospital Setting: How Evidence-Based Care Supports the Patient with Diabetes," at her organization's Annual Nursing Research/EBP Conference, greatly impressed the keynote speaker, James A. Fain PhD, RN, FAAN, editor-in-chief of the Diabetes Nurse Educator Journal. The presentation showcased her significant contributions, one of which improved the quality of care provided to behavioral health patients.

Many behavioral health patients have conditions that elevate blood glucose. Nevertheless, the high prevalence of diabetes among this vulnerable patient population is often overlooked. Elizabeth identified "opportunity for improvement" among adult and adolescent patients who often consumed large quantities of foods high in carbohydrates and calories, with poor nutritional value. Collaborating with patients, staff and members of the Food and Nutrition Department, she significantly improved food choices made by behavioral health patients. As a result, a "Healthy Lifestyle" culture was established for patients and staff within the Psychiatric milieu of her organization.



## MERCY HOSPITAL

### Margaret Glier, MHA, BSN

Director of Nursing for Critical Care, Surgery and Oncology Services

Margaret Glier is the Director of Nursing for Critical Care, Surgery and Oncology Services. Wow! That is quite a list of high-level services to oversee, but she does it with intelligence, strength and grace under pressure. It is not often that you find such a dedicated leader with the spirit, passion and commitment to an organization spanning a career of over 40 years. Margaret began her career as a staff nurse, quickly ascending the career ladder to her present director position, but never forgets her roots and is always willing to put on a pair of scrubs to help when needed. She has worked extensively in advancing the care we deliver to our patients by investing heavily in our staff and their working environment. She has facilitated sustainable change towards improvements regarding patient experience, patient mortality, and employee engagement and retention.

The Cancer Care Center is the heart and soul of our nominee. Being a cancer survivor herself, she has worked tirelessly to build a beautiful free-standing infusion center which addresses the patients' physical, spiritual and at times, economic needs. This state-of-the-art facility rivals any center in the country. Margaret understands the physical, psychological and emotional toll cancer has on the patient, family and the staff caring for these patients. This beautiful center is a place of caring and compassion. She has ensured that the staff are competent in providing not only excellent nursing care, each being certified, but ensures that this is a tranquil place of healing. It is just lovely. The infusion center not only has a state of the art conference room for staff meetings, but also has an area for quiet meditation, reflection, decompression or just time for staff, patients or visitors to take a breath and refocus their energy for the day.

Margaret was promoted from a staff nurse to nurse manager of this unit based on her ability to promote an environment specifically for the cancer patient. She has mentored this staff nurse and supported her through her own journey with cancer to bring experiences to which only a cancer survivor could relate. The love for this unit, its staff and its patients is reflected in its Patient Experience Scores, which are always perfect, or as close to perfect as possible. Music therapy is always a hit on the unit as is the food, snacks, programs and numerous offerings for patients and staff. She organizes an annual Cancer Survivor's Dinner. Cancer survivors and a guest attend the fun event, which includes dinner, dancing, and lots of giveaways. It is an event that brings tears to the eyes and laughter from the heart.

One day I walked over to the Infusion Center and found the staff having a baby shower for their dietary aide who was going to be a first time grandfather. He was thrilled. Margaret truly believes in the entire team.

She directs donations and grant money to improve conditions for our patients, families and staff. She provides on-site educational opportunities for the entire team including on-site review classes, which has resulted in a very knowledgeable, educated and certified nursing team.

Improving community awareness of the wonderful work we provide at our organization is a priority for Margaret. Her generosity and commitment to the facility, her staff and patients are just part of her daily being. Margaret is also active in numerous organizations such as American Cancer Society and Pink Aid. She is a fundraising machine!

This past Thanksgiving she cooked an entire Thanksgiving dinner and delivered it to one of our homes for the physically challenged. There were no cheers or accolades for our nominee. She did this from her heart, to make sure they had a proper Thanksgiving.

Margaret has been a role model as a professional nurse and nurse leader. Throughout the COVID pandemic, she worked side by side with her staff, advocated for their health and safety and ensured that they had the necessary supplies and staff to care for our patients. Her compassion was evident when she organized an honor walk for a staff member who passed due to COVID in our ICU. That day was the most difficult day of our career, escorting our beloved colleague down the hallways to her unit and the morgue. I was so deeply touched by the outpouring of love from the staff lining the hospital corridors. It is a moment we will never want to repeat but a moment so special I will never forget.

I could go on and on about the contributions to the facility and nursing that Margaret has done, but I think you understand why she was chosen to represent our hospital. Through her passion for nursing, she has achieved great things. We are all thankful for her contribution to our profession.

## MOUNT SINAI SOUTH NASSAU

### Gretchen Kretowski-Rieger, MSN, PMHNP-BC, RN, C-EFM

Clinical RN

Gretchen Kretowski-Rieger has devoted over 20 years to providing patients and their families with compassionate care and support during the most exciting and challenging time in a family's life - the birth of a child. She shares knowledge and expertise with members of the perinatal team and serves as the Chair of the Bereavement Council. She is a strong leader and role model, who inspires colleagues to follow her steps in supporting our patients at their most vulnerable times. She has been recognized by the interdisciplinary team as an agent of change and is well respected by peers, patients, and families. Gretchen is also a behavioral health nurse practitioner, who uses therapeutic communication to serve patients in the community. Gretchen is a labor and delivery nurse who has been a force that helps pregnant women at the most important and vulnerable time, the birth of a child. She participates in welcoming new lives into this world and helps parents to navigate the first steps of becoming a family. She receives numerous compliments about her compassion and kindness.

A true leader and a critical thinker, Gretchen realized early on that there is much education and guidance needed for the healthcare team in navigating perinatal bereavement and patient support. She recruited a group of nurse-enthusiasts from labor and delivery and created a bereavement council. She leads the council, and with other members, they actively reach out to families that have experienced a perinatal loss. She ensures families are seen by a bereavement team member while in the hospital, follows up with patients by phone to check on how they are coping, and provides referrals when needed for additional assistance.

Gretchen has led the council in organizing a regional perinatal bereavement conference that was well attended by the hospital's interdisciplinary team and healthcare professionals in the area. She designs education sessions for new labor and delivery staff and perinatal bereavement team members, leading the implementation of best practices for therapeutic communication. She reaches out to nurses to help navigate the care for patients with perinatal loss, responds on days-off or in the middle of the night, if a fellow nurse needs guidance with the bereavement process. Her compassion and willingness to help is astonishing.

While being an extraordinary labor and delivery nurse, Gretchen leads the team in helping patients and families to cope with perinatal loss, extending her compassion and expertise out into the community to support grieving families after fetal or neonatal death. Colleagues recognize her as a "treasure, who takes on this herculean task with such empathy for those experiencing a perinatal loss."

A strong patient advocate, Gretchen is an extraordinary nurse and a leader, who is forward-thinking and community-needs-oriented. She is resourceful and altruistic. She is able to think "outside-the-box" and is an inspiration to the next generation of perinatal nurses. Gretchen embodies Florence Nightingale's pledge in devoting professional skills and personal abilities "to the welfare of those committed to her care."

## NASSAU UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

### Marvin Berg, RN, EMT-CC

Emergency Department, RN

Marvin Berg came to our Level 1 Trauma Emergency Department in 2010. He has demonstrated a level of professionalism and compassion that is exceptional, as well as skills that consistently make him a role model for all nurses coming on board. He has always been a “go-to” nurse for his colleagues needing assistance and information. After several years in this role, he went on to join the Trauma Division to incorporate his trauma and ED knowledge and skills to assist in facilitating the retention of our Level I trauma center designation for the past two surveys. This allowed Marvin to work with the trauma team in an aspect of trauma care he was never able to incorporate in his nursing care as an ED RN — prevention. Identifying our high risk populations and focusing on improving those outcomes, he began to reach out to community groups bringing an injury prevention program to our senior citizen population focusing on fall prevention. Marvin spearheaded a program for teen driver safety, concussion awareness, and a bicycle/pedestrian safety program for schools and community groups. In addition, he was the instructor for the Bleeding Control/ Stop the Bleed Program presented to community groups. He also redesigned this program to target the learning needs of hospital providers and nurses, and provided several essential presentations.

With a passion for the ED, Marvin continues working shifts with dedication to the patients while remaining an excellent role model for both new and existing staff members. He is, always respectful with a kind word for everyone and has infinite patience for even the most challenging patient. He has been, and remains, a champion for the nursing profession.

Marvin is a member of a local Fire Department and has been for 40 years. Prior to his nursing career he was a firefighter. He continues to work as an EMT-CC to serve his community as he continues to serve the hospital. His skills as a nurse, along with his compassion and dedication have made him a very valuable member of their team, whether responding to a minor event or the most intense.

In 2018 Marvin received the Earl Stroughton Award recognizing his many contributions to our patients, our surrounding communities and his colleagues. This year he was awarded “Nurse of the Year” by the Regional EMS Council of Nassau County.

He serves as a member of the Fire Department Good & Welfare Committee. He has been known to find the time in his busy schedule to check up on injured firemen to offer assistance to them and their families. In his capacity as an EMT-CC he also visits schools, presenting programs on fire prevention.

His words define how he has always behaved. “I have always enjoyed my occupation as a Registered Nurse and working with my co-workers, especially in very stressful, critical situations where teamwork is a priority.”

## NORTH SHORE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

### **Elizabeth McCormack, MSN, FNP-BC, CEN**

Senior Manager of Palliative Care and Magnet Program

Elizabeth McCormack has impacted both clinical practice and administration, always striving for excellence. In 2021 she led her team to recognition as the first palliative care unit to achieve AACN Beacon Gold and it's also under consideration for AONELs Young Professional Voices Program!!

She is a role model to the collaborative care council, which focuses on patient-centric safe care, using data (falls, HAPI, device related infections, etc.) to develop plans that enhance the patient experience such as, "tell me more," standardize efficient IDRs that advance care planning, and foster partnerships that proactively manage risk. As a result, the hospital has outperformed for the past six years in the national benchmarks in the National Database for Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI).

As a way to promote a positive public image of nursing, this person is a staunch advocate for inclusivity and psychological safety. She is a master facilitator. I observed how she seeks input from everyone using skillful listening and facilitative feedback to get even the most uncomfortable speaker involved.

She facilitates the organization's efforts to decrease stress/burnout, by educating staff to recognize the signs of stress, act upon those observations and to provide resources to those in need. She does this for her own team and the hospital at large.

Elizabeth's accomplishments are varied and complex. Since March 2020, she volunteered to be redeployed to the ED to care for COVID-19 patients. Shortly after, she pivoted to support another newly created team on a unit that didn't exist the day before. She moved her team four more times to accommodate the ever-changing COVID footprint.

Going beyond her normal daily responsibilities, she volunteered to create the NYS mandated clinical staffing committee. Elizabeth developed and co-facilitated this organization's

clinical staffing committee as a shared decision-making forum. She solicited participation, developed a nomination process and organized the facility-wide vote. The first clinical staffing committee met January 2022 and debated on the guidelines for thirty units and remained poised to evolve meaningful discussions regarding staffing.

As the first to raise her hand, she excites and ignites, conducting weekly "Merry-ment" rounds serving "mocktails" and trivia to keep team members engaged. She has conducted fun "TikTok Sessions" with teams to showcase their specialties. And somehow, she also convinced the CNO to host an annual "peleton-esque" event called "Cycle with the CNO" and choreographed and moderated a Facebook stream of participants for a 45-minute exercise as it journeyed through nursing history. Within two years she increased participation in this event from 30 participants to 325 participants!

As an effective change agent, she oversees 50 unit-based councils that focus on experience, quality, and a healthy work environment. She hosted the "Healthy Work Environment Challenge," which challenged the unit-based councils to implement projects that would enhance healthy work environments. It resulted in 48 projects, one of which created lavender lounges for respite. Another project called "Code Refresh," promoted the coverage of staff who experienced distressing events. Other excellent projects were the "Safe Zone for Medication Administration" and the "Wheel of Fortune," which allowed staff to spin for prizes each time one escalated a safety concern. The "Healthy Work Environment Challenge" helped the organization increase its employee-engagement scores to the 74th percentile during a year in which the nation struggled to promote staff engagement.

## NYU LANGONE HOSPITAL LONG ISLAND

### Tara Hurley, BSN, RN, CPN, CBC

Senior Staff Nurse

Tara is a registered professional nurse with over 20 years of clinical experience in Pediatrics, a Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN), and Certified Breastfeeding Counselor (CBC), PALS provider and APHON Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Provider. As an exemplary clinical nurse, Tara models professionalism, expertise, and commitment to the advancement of nursing and patient care evidenced by her leadership through multidisciplinary initiatives and role as mentor to new staff including resident physicians and nursing students. She demonstrates excellence in clinical practice, critical thinking, teamwork, collaboration, communication and patient and family centered care.

During the pandemic, the pediatric unit was faced with many challenges while caring for adult patients outside of our usual pediatric population. Tara illustrated compassion and resiliency and an astute recognition of the power of nurses' presence in taking care of patients considering visitor limitations. For example, she would often FaceTime with a family member so the patient could see their family and provide an update in care. She possesses extraordinary passion and dedication, making rich connections with children and their families. She is an advocate of equity in care and has a profound understanding of the needs of the pediatric patient population. In a case with a 2-year-old cancer patient, native of the Dominican Republic, Tara developed a special bond with the child who was often alone in the hospital, caring for her like her own. This child was scared to go to sleep, so she would comfort her by holding her,

sitting on her bed with her, reading books, dimming the lights, playing music and staying with her so she wasn't alone. This child would cry if Tara was not working, asking for her every day. Never looking for accolades, this nominee received a special surprise when, after completing treatment one year later, this child and her mother returned to meet the nurse that cared for her child, when she couldn't, during the scariest time of her life.

Tara is a pioneer member of the pediatric unit based council and has collaborated on various scholarly projects, conducting research, communicating and networking with her fellow colleagues. She is currently working on an IRB approved research project titled "The Lived Experiences of Pediatric Nurses during the COVID-19 Pandemic" and is also involved in another research study; "The Superhero IV Cover Research Study". She is a true example of a clinical nurse leading nursing science. Additionally, she has served as a project leader, creating a safety brochure to educate families on evidence-based research initiatives to improve safety in the pediatric population. Tara actively participates in community outreach, serving as a link in the continuum of care for the Teddy Bear Clinic, which was created to provide education to school aged children, ages 5-7, on injury prevention and bike and car/car-seat safety in the community. Tara is steadfast in the provision of pediatric care, humbly exemplifying excellence in nursing practice, research, and quality outcomes.

## PECONIC BAY MEDICAL CENTER NORTHWELL HEALTH

### **Stephanie Russo, MSN, BSN**

Director of Perioperative Services

Stephanie Russo has an innate desire to care for patients compassionately and effectively. She has had an enormous impact in her leadership role, by creating a positive and collaborative working environment that continues to foster streamline processes and policies, leading a reinvigoration of the perioperative teams of the system to deliver the highest quality of care to the patients and communities they serve. She looks to find the best outcome for all involved and truly exemplify the core values of the hospital system throughout her extensive years of nursing.

Stephanie successfully transitioned early in her career, from an OR staff nurse to the role of nurse leader. She is rooted in the goals of improving patient care and safety. She brings a considered and thoughtful approach to leadership but equally a willingness to learn. She has had the opportunity to successfully lead large perioperative teams through many joint commission and disease specific certifications for multiple disease programs, implement several strategic programs such as robotic, bariatric and orthopedic surgery and is the recipient of multiple award recognitions such as Center of Excellence, IHI awards for best practice in SIP/SCIP and has provided consultative services to the British health system.

Stephanie is equipped with the readiness to identify challenges in the current systems and within institutional practices, but also has the wisdom, skills, and expertise to develop and implement creative solutions. By applying evidence-based practices, she fosters improvement strategies leading to systematic change. Not one to be rushed, she takes the time to listen

and make sure everyone is included in the conversation, then returns with a thoughtful and inclusive decision. Yet when it is time to take the initiative, she does it with gusto and determination. Stephanie's honesty, integrity and professional nature are some of the qualities that makes her a natural leader. Through innovation and the implementation of high-tech solutions, her ability to lead has streamlined care and improved effectiveness, quality, safety, sustainability, and affordability throughout the health care system.

Throughout Stephanie's leadership career, she has had clear insight and a guiding vision that has garnered the respect and admiration of staff, physicians, students and senior leaders and the community alike. Students feel more welcomed, involved, and self-assured of their success. Staff at all levels feel more supported, respected, engaged and confident in the future growth of their profession and the community has become more enriched by the diversity and inclusivity of programs which were the result of meaningful consultation with a broader range of stakeholders.

Stephanie leads by example. She always see the good side of people and encourages other staff members to do the same. She has an open-door policy and has time for everyone who comes to her door, and she works tirelessly, well beyond a normal work week. She does not shy away from the tough challenges. Her strategic management, mission, and tireless work to raise the level of knowledge and clinical competence of the team and establish strong physician partnerships.

## PLAINVIEW HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

### Jaya Vathappallil, RN, BSN

Registered Nurse, Emergency Room

Jaya Vathappallil started working as a nurse back in India twenty-eight years ago. Her nursing career began in the cardiac care unit prior to coming to America. For the past 18 years, she has practiced as an Emergency Department nurse. It is evident in her everyday connection with the patients that this is her passion. As someone who has such passion for her job, she has become an informal leader amongst her peers. As a member of the facility for 18 years, she has been able to grow professionally. She has shared her growth experiences with many that have joined the department after her. It is evident that this nurse cares for her patients, as well as for her fellow co-workers.

Being one of the senior nurses in the department, Jaya has been able to guide many individuals because of the love she has for her career. Nurses who come to the department look to her for support and guidance. Many perceive her as an informal leader and she can be described as a transformational leader amongst many. With her positive and influential demeanor, she has been able to initiate many positive departmental changes. Since 2014, Jaya has been the co-chair for the Collaborative Care Council of the Emergency Department. In 2016, she was offered the opportunity to present her initiative: *Emergency Department Start and Stop Times of IV Fluids and Antibiotics for Septic Patients*, in Washington, D.C. at the collaborative care conference. It was an opportunity for her to showcase nationally the

hard work she put into her project. The most recent project that Jaya is working on involves staff making follow-up calls to their own patients after discharged. Being extremely dedicated to her patients, Jaya feels that nurses should connect with their patients shortly after discharge. As a result of this project, the department was able to increase its Press Ganey scores under the survey question, "Nurses Treated Me with Courtesy and Respect." Again, she felt this was important for the patients.

Everything she does is centered on others. Outside of work, she spends her time as a religious educator in her community. This is also where she spreads her kindness for others. As a volunteer for the church groups, she educates youths in many areas. One area that she is a leader in is the church's medical team. This team teaches the youth participants about being healthy.

There is not enough that can be said about this individual as a nurse. The compassion she shows daily to her patients, their families, and her coworkers is more than anyone can explain in words. Seeing her interactions with everyone around her is breath taking. She treats everyone she meets as they are part of her immediate family. These characteristics make her a star in everything she does.

## SOUTH SHORE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

### Sylvana Rivera, BSN, RN

Clinical Nurse

Sylvana Rivera demonstrates exceptional achievement in clinical practice. She takes great pride in her work and exemplifies service excellence and patient advocacy. Many patient satisfaction survey results have recognized our nominee with the following comments:

*"Incredibly caring and compassionate"*

*"She was patient and understanding and guided my mother on the path to recovery, keeping her dignity intact"*

*"Her warmth and efficiency were so appreciated and beyond our expectation of standard nursing practice"*

*"Although there were many other providers that were helpful and great, this nurse ought to receive dedicated praise"*

Sylvana treats her patients as though they are her own family members, going the extra mile to make sure the patients and their families are satisfied and receive high quality care. She and another nurse even chipped in to pay for a patient's medications they had taken care of to make sure the patient would be able to continue taking their medications when they were discharged.

Sylvana is well respected by the leadership team and her peers on the unit. One of her colleagues had a family member in comfort care on the unit and although this patient wasn't her patient, she went out of her way to check in on the family members present during this difficult time. This is typical of our nominee.

Even in one of the most trying times in an individual's life, the loss of a parent, Sylvana put her patients' needs first. Her mother unfortunately died on a different unit in our hospital. Shortly after returning from her bereavement leave, our nominee was floated to the unit where her mom died. The unit leader asked our nominee about returning to her home unit, but she declined to swap out the floating assignment, as she felt she had already bonded with the patients and that she was what they needed right now.

Sylvana can be found at the bedside providing care and connecting with her patients and their families, assisting her team members with their patient assignments, or even wheeling out her patient's family members in wheelchairs because she is worried they cannot walk safely themselves. She is also currently enrolled in an MSN-DNP program to become a Nurse Practitioner so she can better serve the patients to whom she provides care.

She is also active in community outreach. She has completed mission trips, built homes in Maine for Habitat for Humanity, delivered food and clothing to the homeless in New York City during the holidays and volunteered to cheer on our "Wounded Warriors" each year as they participate in a 5K bike race.



## ST. CATHERINE HOSPITAL

### Joanne Clemente, MSN, BSN

Professional Development Coordinator

Joanne Clemente is a natural born leader who has blessed the nursing profession with poise and unrelenting dedication for the past twenty-four years — twelve with which we have had the pleasure of working.

Joanne embodies each of the attributes of a nurse of excellence, including great success at employee engagement, development of interdisciplinary teams, and leadership in clinical and classroom roles, but most importantly the unique capacity to assist others to strive to be their very best.

Joanne knew that an entry level college education was not sufficient for her to develop her inquisitive mind and leadership skills, which resulted in her pursuing her Master of Science degree with a focus as a psychiatric nurse practitioner. With this achieved, she used her newly acquired “change agent skills” to spearhead our Pressure Injury Prevention Program by obtaining her wound care certification and then developed the education program for our hospital wound care champions and successfully implemented this throughout all areas of the hospital to prevent adverse outcomes related to skin integrity. As a result of her leadership through the implementation of this program and working together with all levels of staff, this hospital has realized a reduction in hospital acquired pressure injuries across all clinical areas!

Second only to her family, this dedicated registered nurse holds her professional career very near and dear to her heart. Her enthusiasm and dedication to education for nursing makes her an inspiration. Joanne is a role model who inspires others every day and provides the educational foundation for nurses to provide quality care to their patients.

Student nurses are graduating with less clinical experience than prior years. Joanne is uniquely equipped with the knowledge and clinical expertise to assist the new nurses to develop their clinical skills. Using a variety of teaching methods including lecture, critical thinking skills and simulation lab, our candidate inspires these new nurses to care for patients with confidence. She has the unique talent of identifying the novice’s strengths and maximizes on that to empower the new hire to be successful.

Joanne motivates nurses to join our clinical ladder program which is committed to cultivating nursing excellence in the provision of direct patient care. An aspect of this is to commit to lifelong education to enhance their clinical practice, and to strive towards board certification in their area of clinical expertise. She works with many of the staff in preparing for their board certifications, and has provided support and direction which has resulted in several nurses successfully passing their exams. Certified Nurses Day is an event that she organizes annually, as the day focuses on high standards of patient care and safety allowing nurses to be recognized for competence in their specialty.

## ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL

### **Pamela Barclay, MSN, RN, FNP-C, CWOCN**

Pain Management Nurse Practitioner, Nursing Education

Pamela Barclay started working at St. Charles Hospital in 2017 as a pain management nurse practitioner in the nursing education department. She took on this role with enthusiasm; looking to bring her clinical expertise to the nursing staff and patients. Pamela embodies the mission statement of our system, always putting others before herself. She is a compassionate, empathetic dedicated nurse. She collaborates with the interdisciplinary team, and always advocates for her patients.

This nurse of excellence has had significant professional growth, earning an Associate degree in nursing from SUNY Farmingdale and a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree at St. Joseph's College in Patchogue, NY. She later went on to receive an MS Degree as a family nurse practitioner from SUNY Stony Brook School of Nursing and, most recently, a certification in Wound Ostomy Continence from Rutgers University. Prior to graduating from SUNY Farmingdale, Pamela worked as a nursing assistant. Upon graduation, she accepted an RN position in a Medical Surgical department. Later, after working as an emergency department RN, became an assistant nurse manager, a role that she held for over a decade. Her dedication is further evidenced by her drive to continue her education and achieve her certification in Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing (CWOCN), after achieving her NP certification. She sets an example for all nurses, from novice to expert, to never stop learning and growing. Currently she is studying in preparation for the opening of our new Hyperbaric Center. She is a professional that wears many hats in this organization. She is our Pain Management RN, our Wound Specialist, an Educator and a friend.

Pamela is always willing to help the staff, management team, and patients. Her calm demeanor provides opportunities for all the staff to learn in a supportive environment. Physicians and staff rely on her expertise throughout the house. She works collaboratively with all departments and she is never without a smile and "what can I do to help?" She is always seeking opportunities to expand her already vast knowledge base and generously shares that knowledge. She exemplifies what a leader should be in all aspects. There is tremendous overlap between the pain management and palliative care services and palliative care services often collaborate with Pamela on challenging patient cases. Her skills transcend individualized pain management as she advises providers, educates staff, and communicates with families. She faithfully follows up on her cases to assure effectiveness and tolerability of treatments.

Pamela's focus on helping patients seems endless as she spends time to establish trust and allow each patient to express their thoughts, feelings or concerns. She always embraces patient safety, patient experience, and the goals of the organization. This nurse of excellence is what all nurses should strive to be. She has inspired her own daughter to choose the nursing profession. It is readily apparent that she loves what she does and encourages others to pursue this career, as there are so many opportunities in the field.

## ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL & HEART CENTER

### Danielle Kyrillidis, RN, OCN

Clinical Nurse, Oncology

Danielle Kyrillidis has an uncanny ability to inspire and motivate. She has been a nurse for twenty-eight years and truly exemplifies the mission of our institution. As one patient put it, “She is the most caring oncology nurse I have ever had the pleasure to meet! She has a quality that sets her apart from her peers. She is knowledgeable and professional and comforts patients who are clearly afraid of the journey ahead of them.”

In 2013, Danielle joined our oncology team. In just one year, she was Oncology Certified! Most importantly, her ability to engage her peers was contagious and within two years we had all seventeen clinical nurses oncology certified...100%!

Today, as we come to our 10 year anniversary as a cancer institute, Danielle continues to exceed expectations in patient care while also instilling the need for the staff to care for each other as well. She exudes a refreshing attitude of Every Patient – Every Time!

Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, she spearheaded an initiative that was geared to put our patients’ and their families’ needs first. She collaborated with her peers to create a beautiful garden on the patio, where family members could sit and see their loved ones. The smiles on our patients’ faces were priceless. Family connections during this pandemic were now maintained through a glass divide.

Another initiative by Danielle involved patients and staff in watercolor art therapy. Each piece of art had a personalized message written by the staff and patients. From there, a mosaic

was created and framed in the unit. In addition, she used our watercolor painting and created cards and cleverly had the phrase “Art from our Heart” printed on them. The staff sign and give our patients cards when they celebrate a milestone in their journey. She also started a program that has spread across many of the units in the hospital that highlights the need for all staff to “care for the caregiver.”

Other accolades that she is humbly the recipient of include a recognition which highlights an employee who leads with empathy. She also received an award for a very appreciative letter from a patient recognizing her dedication to the patient experience. In April, she was nominated by a patient as an “Extraordinary Healer” through Cure Magazine, which honors oncology nurses across the country. In the community, she leads our team on many cancer walks.

Danielle also promotes professional development. She recently completed a two-year term serving as the secretary for the Suffolk ONS Chapter and continues to stay active. She successfully submitted a poster presentation at ONS Congress on “Compassion Fatigue.”

Her presence makes our infusion unit a more special place to work and we appreciate her never ending efforts. She builds trusting relationships and advocates for her patients.

## ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL

### Margaret Scire, BSN

Critical Care and Cardiac Catherization Laboratory Registered Nurse

Margaret Scire is an “unsung hero” that is compassionate, empathetic and practices with integrity. These innate qualities have made her the person everyone goes to for support. She is a natural leader and mentor that her co-workers admire and respect. In clinical practice, this nurse has made significant achievements, always advancing her career by moving to more challenging areas of practice. She is not afraid of change and welcomes new, more demanding opportunities.

In each area that Margaret has worked, she has become an expert. As such, she has always been a preceptor for both new employees, as well as for capstone students, cultivating critical thinkers who will be able to provide excellent patient care. She offers support and expects high standards. As an advocate for quality and safe patient care practices, Margaret is an inspiration to the healthcare team that works with her. With enthusiasm and a commitment to excellence, she has been a role model that has fostered a positive image and example for others to follow. Margaret has instilled into these employees and student nurses the values and work ethic that will make them excellent nurses.

As a parent to a child who joined the Army as part of a medical unit who aspires to have a future in healthcare, one can easily see that Margaret not only fosters a positive image of the nursing profession to the public, but also has positively influenced her own family.

Margaret recently was honored as the recipient of the 2022 “Nurse of Excellence” and 2022 “Nurse of Excellence in Nursing Education” at St. Joseph Hospital

In addition to her duties and responsibilities as a nurse in the hospital, Margaret also provides care above and beyond her normal daily responsibilities, as she provides care to a traumatic brain injury patient in the patient’s home. She has been providing dedicated high quality excellent care to this person for over ten years. Her commitment to this patient and the patient’s family is incredible.

In this hospital, that does not have a clinical ladder or committees that staff is able to participate in, this nurse has found ways to make her voice heard. She participates in unit rounding and speaks out for change and improvement. She has brought many ideas forward that have been adapted to increase patient satisfaction and well-being. The greatest achievement of Margaret is evident in the many years of mentoring she has provided. She is a role model and a team player who is always willing to learn, to make suggestions and is open to new ideas. She has always acted as a professional who holds the bar high for herself as well as for all as for her co-workers.

## STONY BROOK EASTERN LONG ISLAND HOSPITAL

### Laura Arreguin, BSN

Critical Care Registered Nurse

Laura Arreguin consistently steps up and takes on a leadership role in times of crisis. This was abundantly evident during each COVID surge, when she took the lead in organizing patient flow; adapting the environment to accommodate more isolation areas; and teaching other specialty nurses such as behavioral health nurses to take care of an influx of med-surg COVID-positive patients.

Laura is an unsung hero who always maintains a calm, kind, and compassionate demeanor and serves as an excellent nursing role model to other nurses and the wider inter-professional team. She is a quick thinker and utilizes excellent judgment in anticipating patients' needs. She can always see the bigger picture and understand when more is needed. For example, when the service is under huge pressure with an influx of patients, she does not hesitate to float as a highly-skilled ICU RN. Laura never complains as she understands that being a professional nurse sometimes necessitates stepping out of one's comfort zone and leading others to adapt and successfully care for the extra patients, often in unfamiliar environments.

Laura meticulously tunes into the smallest details of how patients are being cared for while maintaining a strategic view of patient throughput. She keeps things moving so we can get patients in, assessed, and settled down. Laura has excellent

organizational skills and always maintains order, even when we are over census and under great pressure. She can motivate the team to pull together around the common goal of providing the best care possible as if each patient were a dear loved one. She smiles and exudes kindness in every interaction, which makes her approachable and puts others at ease. Upon interacting with Laura, her patients, families, and staff sigh with relief and instantly feel comfortable asking questions about their care or providing care. She is a natural teacher and others seek them out to review new or existing skills. She is the go-to person when anything new is implemented. This speaks to her ability to learn quickly, master new skills and processes, and her ability to teach and mentor.

Laura is an exceptional nurse who creates a healing environment for patients and their families' hearts, minds, souls, and bodies. She has been a nurse for many years and is genuinely a nurse expert. They consistently demonstrate sound judgment, are incredibly observant, and actively listen and make every effort to understand patients' difficulties and challenges without judgment. Additionally, she assists and inspires others to do the same. She gives great thought to how they can help others to be the best they can be.

## STONY BROOK SCHOOL OF NURSING

### Denise Snow, MSN, JD

Clinical Associate Professor

Denise Snow is a nurse educator and an attorney. Her significant contributions to nursing have been in the areas of education and advocacy. Her knowledge of both the legal and nursing professions, as well as her capacity for mentorship, and devotion to education, have enhanced the experiences of students in our baccalaureate, graduate, and doctoral programs. As an attorney, the focus of her practice is elder care and disability planning, ensuring that these populations receive the services they require.

Denise is passionate about educating nurses. Her unique clinical background provides the experience needed to teach in areas of community health, leadership, and legal issues. She has developed curriculum focusing on special populations, health care policy, social determinants of health, social justice, and patient advocacy. As a community-based clinician, she also serves as a resource in community health courses and has created novel interdisciplinary community opportunities for students. Denise's role as a nurse attorney in local, state, and national committees ensures that her knowledge is current and timely.

Denise is a leader in our institution. While serving as a past presiding officer of our faculty assembly, she initiated several significant policy revisions. She has also served as chair on two other committees within our school and sits on the faculty senate. Faculty seek her guidance when making controversial decisions in these committees. Likewise, her ability to identify those who are experiencing legal difficulties, and her willingness to advocate for both faculty and students, make her an invaluable resource for all members of our community.

Denise's dual role as a nurse and a health law attorney allows her to work toward changing health care policy in Suffolk County. She is an active member of the Suffolk County Bar Association where she served as co-chair of the Health and Hospitals Committee. She is a strong advocate of the elderly and disabled population and works to change laws to ensure fair and equitable benefits for all people. The nominee has served on the Suffolk County Health Department's Cancer Task Force, and provides free legal services to low-income individuals with cancer. She developed a medical legal partnership with the palliative care team and has assisted hundreds of patients with their non-medical needs such as obtaining health insurance, assisting with income maintenance, prevention of eviction, and guardianships of minor children.

Denise has presented locally, nationally, and internationally on both nursing and legal topics. She also has numerous peer-reviewed publications related to her experiences with inter-professional collaborative models of care, particularly with the end-of-life patients. Denise serves as a peer reviewer to two nursing journals and is a columnist for the Journal of Maternal Child Nursing. She participated in the drafting of our institution's Middle States reaccreditation standard of Governance and Leadership. Nationally, she has served on the Executive Board of the National Perinatal Association.

## STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON HOSPITAL

### Joyce von Knoblauch, MSN, RN

Palliative Clinical Care Coordinator

If one can personify the term “a blessing from on high” it will be Joyce von Knoblauch. In 2018, she walked through my door in response to our third posting for a Palliative Care Coordinator. It was at that moment of my darkest hour, when I thought I had to go into my boss to report that we may have to discontinue the service, for lack of appropriate staffing. It was three weeks, following three resignations from that department and it was only the second day as the interim CNO.

The position had been posted for the third time without any captures. The nursing recruiter at the time called me to say that she ran into an applicant who was searching for new meaning in her life and thought she'd find it here. Because I knew of the history of the role, I felt no excitement whatsoever. She then said “trust me, I know this one will work out.” When this candidate walked in my office and was interviewed, I felt like I had a visit by an angel. I was beaming with joy from the moment she walked in and this joy is still lingering four years later.

Joyce brought with her loads of experience. Her palliative care knowledge and background was impeccable. Right away she made an assessment of the department and implemented changes to bring it current and relevant. She reviewed and updated policies, procedures, workflows and competencies. Within a few weeks the hospital began to receive full praises from patients and their families about the Palliative Care Team, led by this nominee. Elements of our monthly audits propelled from less than 40 percent to 100 percent. Then came our first Joint Commission survey, and we excelled! There were no

citations, but only one recommendation. The second survey came around with little time to spare, as we had been battling COVID for two years by then. Again, we achieved outstanding success and highest praises for our many best practices!

One of the acclaims that stands out though, is the unwavering and tireless efforts that Joyce is known to have. She led an initiative that facilitated daily communications between patients and families during our challenging and daunting COVID peaks, when visitation was suspended, resulting in over twelve hundred calls to patients and their families.

The one recommendation that was made by the Joint Commission, was for a dedicated social worker to be placed on the team. It was a long hard ask, but again, this nominee never gave up and we received a full-time dedicated social worker. Advocating for others, is what she does.

Joyce is a valued member of our many committees: Ethics, Safety, Quality Assurance, Code Lavender and Nursing Leadership and Heads of Departments. In addition, this candidate is our liaison between the other two hospitals in our system and this institution. Joyce brings her heart and soul into all she does. Her name is known throughout the hospital for her warm smile, her angelic presence and her willingness to share and teach.

## SYOSSET HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

### Laura Ellen Rubel, RN

Registered Nurse

Laura Ellen Rubel is an amazing ophthalmology operating room nurse with a passion for nursing and health care overall. She is well-known throughout the hospital for her compassion and energy. She is always courteous and helpful to others. She adapts her plan of care to include and meet the age specific and cultural needs of her patients. Our star nurse is seen as a very positive person of the team and exhibits a “win-win” philosophy. She is efficient and thorough in her work and finishes the job in a timely manner. The combination of her high ethical standards and vast experiences enables her to be an excellent mentor to other employees.

Laura is highly respected by those with whom she comes in contact and is an exemplary role model to others on the unit as well as the hospital. She represents the hospital well as she strives for excellence in problem solving and patient care. She always shows a great concern for the welfare of others and is actively involved in finding solutions to difficult challenges. She is one of the first to arrive on her shift to ensure and evaluate proper planning of the day to maintain optimal patient care and facilitate operations. She is consistently communicating with staff, leadership, and physicians to properly prepare the schedule ahead for the success for future procedures. She provides excellent care to her patients, often going the extra step to make sure the patients and family members are comfortable and secure.

After the recent vaccine mandate went into effect, as with many other institutions, we felt the additional nursing shortage pushed further. Laura, as she does every day, took the “charge” leadership role to support her fellow teammates, patients, leadership, and surgeons to ensure the unit was still operational and ran smoothly as there was minimal staff after the vaccine mandate. Patient care is her mission; healthcare access to all is her passion. When there was a safety concern with our utilization of lasers within the unit, Laura stepped up in the role to become the institution’s Laser Safety Officer. She made every effort to maintain and implement the best practice to maintain laser safety for our patients and staff by educating herself and teammates with up-to-date practices. The energy and enthusiasm with which she goes about life is remarkable. Laura emulates warmth, modesty and compassion as she serves others and always expresses appreciation to others for their efforts.





## PRIOR RECIPIENTS OF THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL NURSE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

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### 2021

FAITH LYNCH, NYU Langone Hospital Long Island  
MARIJEAN BUHSE, Stony Brook School of Nursing

### 2020

All Long Island nurses honored

### 2019

JUSTIN M. WARYLORD, Stony Brook 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

MADLINE 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

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## LONG ISLAND NOMINATIONS TO THE NEW YORK STATE NURSE OF DISTINCTION AWARD PROGRAM 1989–1995

### 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

Mercy Medical Center





NURSE OF EXCELLENCE 2022 AWARD CEREMONY

