



# Caring

nurses  
making a  
difference

Strong and resilient  
nurses providing safe,  
high-quality patient care



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## In this issue

Leaders elevate quality of care	2
Embracing nursing's challenges	7
Learning from the best	10
Celebrating superior work	17
Valuable input from the front line	20

## Our nurses practice at many AHN facilities and these locations:

Allegheny General Hospital

Allegheny Valley Hospital

Canonsburg Hospital

Forbes Hospital

AHN Grove City

Jefferson Hospital

Saint Vincent Hospital

Westfield Memorial Hospital

West Penn Hospital

Wexford Hospital

Citizens School of Nursing

West Penn School of Nursing

## On the cover

**Marissa Parker, BSN, RN**  
Manager of Hospital Operations,  
Wexford Hospital

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# Message from the interim chief nurse executive

How do you recover from a once-in-a-lifetime crisis?

AHN nurses did it through diligence, courage, remaining open to new ideas — and changing old ones as needed. We celebrate successes and always count on our team members to hold each other up and carry each other through.

This is the story of AHN nurses in 2022, as we dealt with the ripple effects and aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we worked through the crisis in real time, we found what we are truly made of, and it's that tough, resilient, dedicated spirit we continue to demonstrate today.

We found novel ways to use existing technology and we now find ourselves in the first phases of a tech revolution across our network.

We suffered from a severe nursing shortage and are working in multiple channels to attract new nurses and to better support and reward those veterans who have remained.

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We actively opened the doors of two-way communication even wider and continue to reimagine nursing. We did this by learning what works, and what doesn't, straight from those closest to our patients — our nurses at every AHN facility.

Throughout this annual report, you will discover examples of practical, pragmatic progress — improvements made not because they could be, but because they have a direct and immediate positive impact on patient care. We believe in a spirit of shared growth, where expanding the number and quality of our nursing staff works hand in hand with improving our performances.

If 2022 proved anything, it was that our team of professionals is both up to the task — no matter how imposing or challenging that task may be — and completely down to earth in how we treat each other. The last year especially proved how we provide superior care to our patients.

That's how AHN nurses recovered from a once-in-a-lifetime crisis. And, as such, my pride in this team has no bounds. Enjoy our story, and thanks for your support.



In good health,

**Angela Costa,**  
**RN, BSN, MPM,**  
Interim Chief Nurse  
Executive, Allegheny  
Health Network

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# Leaders elevate quality of care

Nurse managers are confident in the support AHN leadership provides. It's demonstrated by leadership's consistent presence, support, and innovation relative to staffing initiatives, provision of professional development, and promotion of workforce diversity. Most important to AHN leadership is the voice of the nurse managers, and when they asked for flexibility for their staff, they were heard.

## Work Your Way adds staffing flexibility

Retaining extraordinary talent requires listening to the changing needs of the workforce. What was coming through loud and clear from the nursing staff was the need for flexibility in their schedules. With the nursing shortage worsening, AHN Nursing created and launched a flexible schedule option – the Work Your Way program.

It provides highly desired flexible schedules for staff nurses, while creating enhanced compensation opportunities. The program is also an excellent attraction and retention strategy, featuring three options to choose from: steady night shift, straight weekends, or joining the newly formed Internal Staffing Team.

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## Steady nights/straight weekends

The hardest shifts to fill are nights and weekends. Rotating staff to those shifts to fill the gaps has proven to be a dissatisfier, in general, and inadequate, overall. AHN Nursing created the steady nights and straight weekends program for nurses who elected to work those shifts on a permanent basis, with no rotation to other shifts, for premium pay. Also, choosing to work one of these programs provides staff nurses the stability of a set schedule.

The collateral benefit of filling those shifts fell to the daylight nurses who no longer had to rotate to the off shifts. All around, this has been a significant satisfier. AHN Nursing set a goal ensuring 50% of those shifts were filled with permanent steady nights or straight weekend nurses. Steady nights quickly hit that goal, with straight weekends coming close to goal.

## Internal Staffing Team (IST)

AHN Nursing understands relying on high-cost contingent labor – agency nurses – is unsustainable for the long haul. One response to the dilemma is the creation of the AHN Nursing Internal Staffing Team (IST). Two ISTs were created: the Perioperative Team and the Inpatient Team. Both teams are comprised of highly skilled individuals who have a desire for “travel-esque” practice.

For example, working in different areas of the organization for premium wages, while having an organizational home, with traditional benefits. With this flexible team, AHN Nursing can place a team member where they're needed most, without the restriction of a restricted contract length. The IST member is assigned to any AHN hospital and, depending on the distance from their home to the hospital, is paid for travel and/or lodging in addition to a premium hourly wage.



**CARLY TOKAREK, RN**  
Allegheny General Hospital

**NATALIE JOOS, BSN, RN**  
Forbes Hospital

**HOPE WALTENBAUGH, MSN, RN, CNOR, NE-BC,**  
Vice President, Surgical Services, Allegheny General Hospital

**EMMA ROUSH, BSN, RN, CNOR**  
Allegheny General Hospital

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The Perioperative Team consists of OR nurses (scrub, circulating), PACU nurses, surgical techs, interventional nurses, and techs. The Inpatient Team consists of nurses with skill sets in the areas of med-surg/telemetry, emergency nursing, ICU, rehab, and labor and delivery. As employees of AHN, these team members enjoy the flexibility and compensation they desire with the seamless integration and feeling of belonging that comes with being employed by the organization.

Currently, there are approximately 200 members of both teams across the network. The value they bring to the organization is their willingness to go where needed, their high-quality practice, and their commitment to the organization. As a result of the implementation of this element of the Work Your Way program, AHN has been able to increase access to care, reduce contingent labor utilization and cost, and minimize the burden of extra shifts for current staff.

IST members have created a micro-culture within the macro-culture that is AHN Nursing, and they are thriving. Their support of each other and from their fellow staff members demonstrates this program is a success. While there are clear benefits relative to access and cost, the model is sustainable into the future and offers the flexibility sought by many.

**“The impact of Work Your Way has been life-changing. I am able to schedule work around my life instead of life around my job.”**

— **Laura Walochik, RN**  
Emergency Department, AHN Grove City

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## Grove City councils encourage productive input

At AHN Grove City, a heightened sense of engagement among the nursing staff takes several productive forms, with the goal of attaining positive results for nurses and patients. The Employee Engagement Council welcomes and encourages input from all nursing team members on everything from improving patient care to enhancing the work environment. Unit-based councils in the Emergency Department, Intensive Care, and Acute Care drive innovation utilizing the patient-centered care model.

The work of the councils is essential, given the rural setting of AHN Grove City where staff are caring for friends, neighbors, and family members daily. This further deepens the appreciation of the councils to ensure the team is providing the best care possible.

## Forbes high school program shows career options

In partnership with the Westmoreland-Fayette Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Forbes Hospital offered a program to introduce high school students to professional opportunities within the health care ecosystem. In 2022, a cohort of 50 students from Franklin Regional High School participated in the Explore Program, attending sessions over seven weekends.

The program included classroom-style instruction and firsthand experience in various departments at Forbes. Students learned how ultrasound equipment, CT scanners, and MRI machines work. They visited the lab, operating rooms, oncology department, and other areas of the hospital, including spending time with direct-care nurses. The goal of the program is to generate interest among these students in health care-related careers.

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## Jefferson Hospital's Operational Excellence creates a winning formula

At Jefferson Hospital, there is a culture that supports and promotes participation and dialogue – driven by the standards and practices of Operational Excellence. This work, at all levels, has proven to be a positive, sustainable advantage for its nursing teams. The foundation of Operational Excellence resulted in Jefferson Hospital nursing scoring in the 97th percentile nationally in the 2022 Gallup survey. The nursing staff is confident in their nurse leaders – always visible, approachable, and focused on problem-solving. The daily huddles use the Operational Excellence framework to enable issues to be addressed frankly and promptly.

Specifically, the Operational Excellence framework is called Just-Do-It, and it allows nurses to autonomously solve problems on the spot, free from limitations. By establishing a blame-free culture, levels of trust are built among team members and leaders, morale remains high, and job satisfaction gets a healthy boost. Nurse leaders attribute Jefferson's success to daily communication across three areas: nurses on the units, nurse managers, and hospital leadership. Through established dialogue, matters are addressed in the same day, as often as possible.

**“The culture at Jefferson is very team-oriented. Our team is our family.”**

— **James Monack Jr.,**  
**DNP, RN, MSN, NE-BC**  
Director of Nursing, Jefferson Hospital



**MARIANNE GABRIEL, BSN, RN**  
Jefferson Hospital

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**JOY PETERS, DNP, RN, MSN, MBA, NEA-BC**  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Jefferson and Canonsburg hospitals

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# Embracing nursing's challenges

**Nursing is a calling where continuous learning and growth is consistently embraced. At AHN, nurses are offered a variety of opportunities to thrive.**

## DEI progress continues across network

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are essential elements of the culture at AHN. Specific to nursing practice, each AHN hospital has formed a Nursing DEI Council made up of members of the nursing care team to address the value of a diverse workforce, the provision of equitable care, and inclusion of all.

Members of individual AHN hospital nursing DEI councils formed a network-wide DEI Nursing Council. In 2022, it was highly active – educating, promoting, and supporting the work across the network. Most recently, Black History Month activities were celebrated with daily education and dissemination of information across the nursing organization. Several DEI Nursing Council chairs participated in a four-day training event called Game Changers.

This event, hosted by the Enterprise Equitable Health Institute, is a train-the-trainer workshop, focusing on strengthening the skill set of the chairs to enable them to provide leadership to their councils. In addition, the AHN DEI Council provided training in DEI through Inclusivity Resets, reaching more than 3,000 employees to date. This effort is now part of standard nursing orientation.

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## Canonsburg embraces clinical wellness activities

While nurses at AHN are caring for others, we ask ourselves, who is taking care of our people? Nurse leaders and staff nurses at Canonsburg Hospital have found a way to answer that question through their newly created Clinical Wellness Activities Program.

For example, Puppies and Popcorn occurs throughout the year and has therapy dogs visit the nursing units and other locations throughout the hospital to offer comfort and joy to team members. Also, the Step Challenge, which encourages employees to walk the outside perimeter or an internal pathway at the hospital, offers small prizes for those accumulating the most steps.

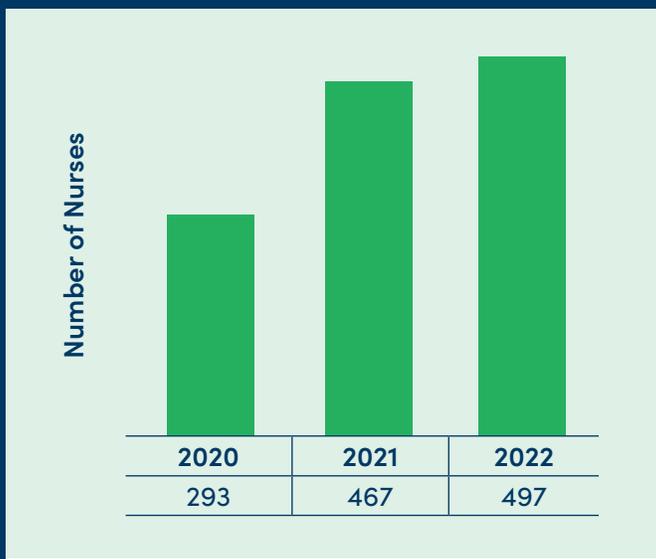
The Clinical Wellness Committee at Canonsburg Hospital executes these activities, which have proven to encourage a healthy, friendly sense of competition and enjoyment, while helping to increase the physical and emotional health of all hospital staff.

**“We must go the extra mile to create these opportunities as we see the payoff of the efforts. The staff at Canonsburg Hospital are so eager to participate.”**

**— Joy Peters, DNP, RN, MSN, MBA, NEA-BC**

Chief Nursing Officer, Jefferson and Canonsburg hospitals

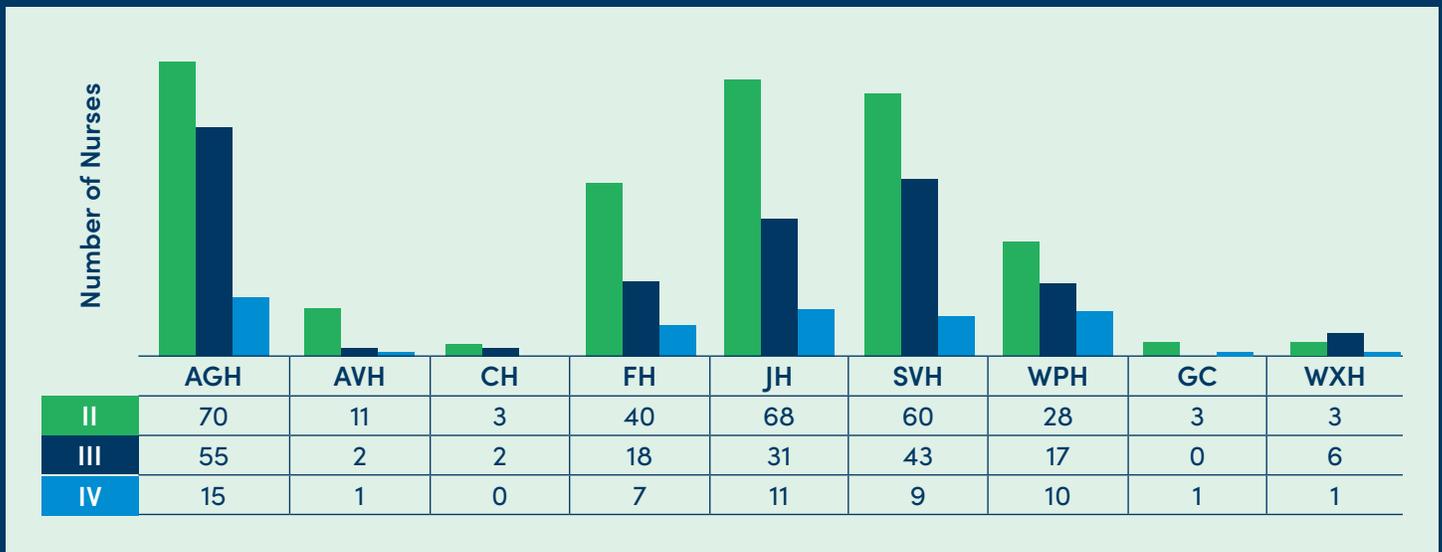
## AHN CLINICAL LADDER ADVANCEMENT GROWTH



## AHN CLINICAL LADDER PARTICIPATION BY LEVEL



## AHN CLINICAL LADDER PARTICIPATION BY LEVEL PER HOSPITAL



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## A promising pipeline: partnerships, grants, and a focus on diversity

Creating a robust pipeline of health care workers is essential to the future. Through strategic partnerships and grant-funded programs, AHN Nursing began laying the groundwork for such a pipeline to address the pressing nursing shortage.

In 2022, AHN Nursing, in collaboration with Pittsburgh Public Schools, developed a framework for the Junior Scholars Program. It's intended to remove barriers to entry-level health care jobs by providing exposure to possibilities for these high school students. Not only does the program help build a pipeline of qualified health care workers, but it also serves as an employment path for students who may not have had that option in the past. Also, it provides AHN the opportunity to engage with students from diverse backgrounds, leading to an environment more reflective of the patients we serve.

In this semester-long program conducted at Allegheny General and West Penn hospitals, the initial cohort of 16 students was provided six weeks of education and exposure to the clinical setting. This program paid students for their time and provided them an opportunity to visualize themselves in a variety of positions in the future. During the program, students work a minimum of 20 hours per month, with the ability to work more hours as desired. Upon completion of the program, students are offered positions as patient care technicians with full benefits. AHN plans to expand the program across the network.

Under a \$1.1 million grant from the Highmark Foundation, AHN Nursing will collaborate with select academic partners to address the critical nursing shortage. This will happen by supporting an immediate pipeline of nurses through accelerated programs, and a near-term pipeline through recruitment from undergraduate programs.

Students participating in the accelerated programs hold a non-nursing undergraduate degree and will obtain a nursing degree within an average of 16 months. Tuition assistance will be provided in the second and/or third semester on the condition they

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make a two-year employment commitment to AHN upon graduation.

Through the newly created AHN Nursing Scholars Program, AHN Nursing will supplement the above pipeline with a focus on variable funding for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in undergraduate nursing programs to generate an early commitment to the organization. With a goal of recruiting 40 students from the Pittsburgh region and 10 from Erie, the program anticipates students to graduate and become available to join AHN Nursing staff between May 2023 and May 2024.

A \$605,000 grant from the West Penn Foundation and the Will Allen Foundation will tackle the shortage in two ways. First, the program will leverage the Pittsburgh region's wealth of vocational-technical schools to provide training and employment opportunities for diverse high school students. Second, AHN will partner with Will Allen Foundation's Quest for Real Life Success program to support the training of students pursuing a Licensed Practical Nurse certification and build a nursing career path for these individuals through employment at AHN following high school graduation. The program aims to recruit and graduate 10 to 12 diverse students.

The Colcom Foundation has awarded AHN Nursing with a \$250,000 grant to collaborate with schools located within close proximity to Allegheny General and West Penn hospitals. The hospitals will identify students with a potential interest in the nursing field, foster such interest through direct contact with nurses in the AHN system, and encourage the students' application to one of the AHN Schools of Nursing. The program focuses on recruiting socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

## Clinical ladder continues to elevate nursing professionals

Now in its fourth year, the Clinical Ladder Advancement Program continues to provide opportunities for nurses across AHN to enhance their professional development. Nurses are able to pursue lifelong learning and advance in the organization by demonstrating clinical excellence, leadership skills, and advanced knowledge.

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# Learning from the best

AHN nurses are an aspirational group, always pursuing a higher goal by seeking, emulating, and implementing best practices across multiple applications.

## Blended team nursing enhances patient care

In the face of health care transformation and bringing the joy back to the nursing practice, traditional nursing care models are being challenged. With the current nursing shortage, coupled with growing volumes, ensuring enough staff to care for patients has become such a significant challenge. In the spirit of creativity and inclusivity, AHN Nursing leveraged the robust pipeline of licensed practical nurses in the region and created the Blended Nursing Care Model.

The AHN Blended Nursing Care Model is a rebirth of sorts of the tried-and-true team nursing model, with many contemporary adjustments. The Blended Nursing team includes the registered nurse as the team leader, with team members being the LPNs and the patient care technicians. Working together to care for a cohort of patients, whose exact number depends on the patient types and acuity, each team member works at the top of their license or skill set to deliver comprehensive, high-quality care. Further, working together as a team allows for members to cover for each other to take a meal and/or bio break when needed.

Welcoming LPNs back to the acute-care setting accelerated at AHN in 2022 with 43% of all

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inpatient-nursing units implementing the AHN Blended Nursing Care Model. In developing the model, AHN Nursing leadership sought to achieve specific outcomes, and to date, these results have been remarkable. Specific to the 43 of 108 total nursing units where the model is in use, they include the following results:

## Patient Experience

### Patient Experience data within the Blended Nursing units reveal improved trends:

- “Rate the Hospital”: Increased from 67.8 in 2021 to 68.8 in 2022
- “Staff Worked Well Together”: Increased from 65.4 in 2021 to 67.6 in 2022
- “Communication with Nurses”: Increased from 75.2 in 2021 to 77.6 in 2022

## Quality

- C diff infection rates: 34% decrease in 2022 compared to 2021
- HAPIs: 24% decrease in 2022 compared to 2021
- CAUTIs: 27% decrease in 2022 compared to 2021
- CLABSIs: 32% decrease in 2022 compared to 2021

## Employee Engagement and Burnout

- Increased employee engagement score from 3.96 in 2021 to 4.96 in 2022
- Staff nurse burnout was reduced from 67% in 2021 to 54% in 2022
- Nurse manager burnout was reduced from 61% in 2021 to 55% in 2022

The AHN Blended Nursing Model will continue to develop as we seek to create initiatives specific to LPNs, including a residency program and a clinical ladder. Each nursing unit where the model has been implemented engages Unit Based Councils to guide the work and continuously improve. This model is one we are committed to and see the value in every day.

**COLLEEN GLOZZER, MSN, RN**  
Canonsburg Hospital



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## First annual AHN Ethics Symposium addresses the essential needs of nurses

Moral distress occurs when someone knows the right thing to do, intends to do it, but because of external constraints, fails to do it. The antidote is to build stronger moral resilience, which is the ability to recover from or cope with the realities of the situation and maintain moral fortitude.

At the first annual AHN Clinical Ethics Symposium, “Aligning Moral Distress and Resilience: An Imperative in Healthcare,” the organizers addressed this increasingly prevalent condition in health care, especially among nurses.

Much of the content of the symposium was driven by the moral challenges that nurses experienced because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Offering a safe place for candid discussion, attendees had the opportunity to explore the foundational creation of an ethical platform to manage morally challenging situations at AHN.

With 150 attendees participating, the evaluation surveys indicated over 95% of participants felt the symposium helped them identify the root cause and sources of moral distress and maintain their moral integrity in ethically challenging situations.

## Allegheny Valley Hospital recognized for Operational Excellence

Allegheny Valley Hospital demonstrated impressive improvements in quality and safety in 2022, including:

- CAUTI reductions: A 40% decrease from 2021 to 2022 was the result of studying resources allocated to manage the processes. With an increase in rates among female COVID-19 patients, the study revealed that by merely repositioning the patient and refocusing on hygiene practices, significant improvements could be achieved.
  - Falls reductions: A decrease from 40 falls in 2021 to 35 falls in 2022 was the result of the installation of a “traffic light” notification system
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SKYLAR YOUNG, PCT  
Allegheny Valley Hospital



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in the inpatient rehabilitation unit. Using the familiar red, yellow, and green signals to alert patients to areas of caution and hazards, these results were realized. Work around falls also resulted in the ICU at Allegheny Valley recording zero falls in 2022.

- Outstanding survey results: The Behavioral Health Unit recorded a seventh straight year of no deficiencies. Surveyed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, this achievement was attributed to the use of consistent communication and documentation and a commitment to cleanliness and risk management on the unit.

### Dedicated hospice care comforts families at Forbes Hospital

Thanks to a special grant from the Forbes Foundation, Forbes Hospital created a dedicated Hospice/Palliative Care Room on the Oncology Unit for patients and their families. It's focused on giving patients and families additional space in a comfortable environment at a challenging time. The peaceful, serene space features a table, couch, computer connections, television, and a private restroom for families.

### Forbes Hospital launches the Nightingale Project

The founder of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), was once quoted as saying, “Of one thing you may be certain, that anything which wakes a patient suddenly out of his sleep will invariably put him into a state of greater excitement, do him more serious, aye, and lasting mischief, than any continuous noise, however loud.”

It was her philosophy on noise in the care setting that Forbes Hospital piloted the Nightingale Project. This initiative was created and executed to intentionally minimize noise near patient rooms, especially during the night.

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Using a dosimeter to establish a baseline of ambient noise, nursing teams were trained to speak more softly and slowly. Like Florence Nightingale, who used a lamp to light her way when checking on patients at night, Forbes nurses used pen lights instead of turning on the overhead lights. A patient could choose to keep the doors to their rooms open or closed to further manage the noise level. Survey results demonstrated significant improvement in patient experience from the 19th percentile pre-program to the 97th percentile after implementation. The goal in 2024 is to expand the program to all units at Forbes.

**“Being with a loved one as they prepare for the final goodbyes is so difficult. Being able to offer patients and families this comfortable space to spend these days is a real gift.”**

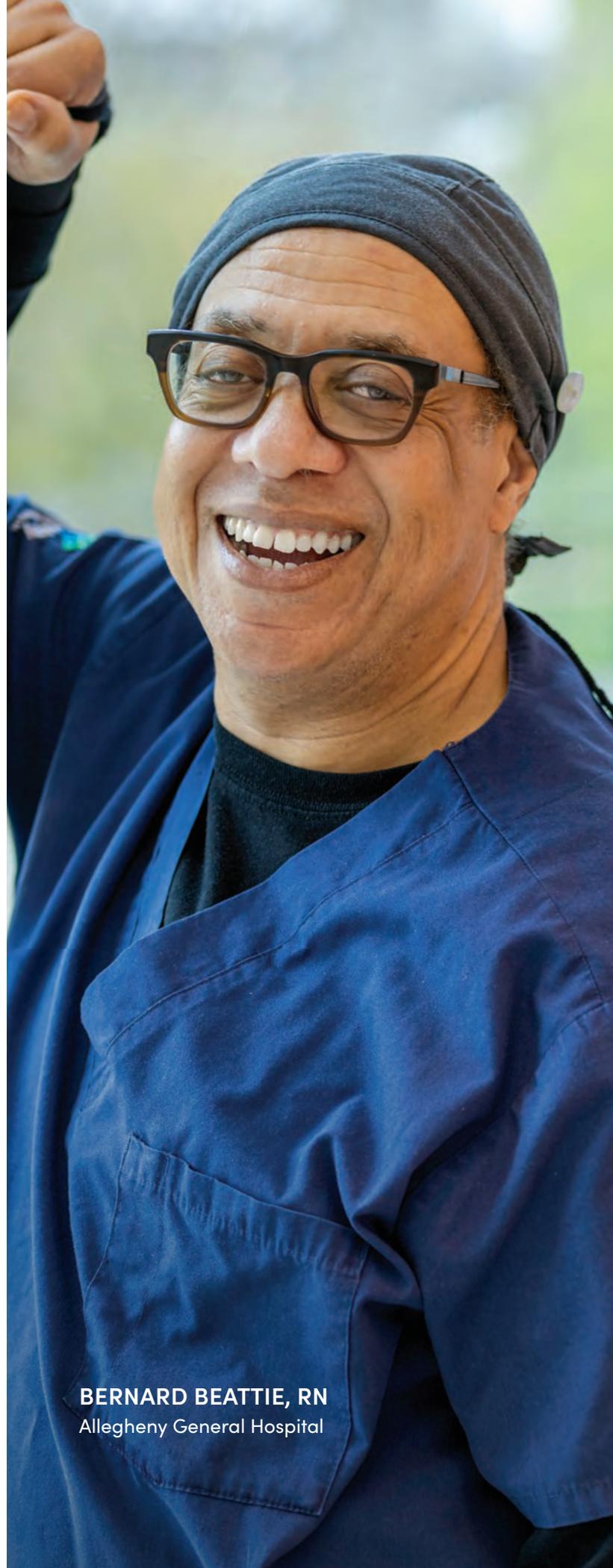
**— Lynn Kosar, MSN, RN, NEA-BC**  
Chief Nursing Officer, Forbes Hospital

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## Allegheny General Hospital demonstrates advancement in patient care quality

Central line placement is essential to the care of many patients at the Academic Medical Center/ Level I Trauma Center at Allegheny General Hospital (AGH). Ensuring the absence of infection from central lines is important work the nursing teams at AGH focus on with every insertion. In every unit at AGH, there is a central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI) “champion” to focus on compliance. This level of commitment stems from a cross-disciplinary program focused on controlling CLABSI rates as a function of patient-centered, evidence-based care. As a result, AGH achieved a 60% reduction in CLABSIs from 2021 to 2022.

The CLABSI and other related programs, including limiting the number of catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI) and hospital-acquired pressure injuries (HAPI), are part of a back-to-basics emphasis at AGH. This includes reviewing and retraining nurses on the foundational aspects of this care, such as following all sterile techniques, changing dressings appropriately, and catheter preparation and use. By doing the simple things right every time, the rate of infections and other issues can be reduced in a meaningful way.



**BERNARD BEATTIE, RN**  
Allegheny General Hospital

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# Celebrating superior work

At AHN, excellence in practice is demonstrated in a variety of settings. It is an honor to turn the spotlight on the individuals and teams who personify nursing excellence.

## Nursing excellence: a first designation, a fourth designation, and a beginning

Saint Vincent Hospital achieved its first Magnet® designation in 2022, demonstrating a commitment to nursing excellence. Led by Chief Nursing Officer Sallie Piazza, MS, RN, BSN, CNML, CNOR, the entire nursing organization dedicated their efforts to achieving this milestone, even in the face of significant challenges of the pandemic and staffing shortages. Saint Vincent is the third hospital at AHN to earn this designation.

West Penn Hospital, led by Chief Nursing Officer and Interim Chief Nurse Executive Angela Costa, RN, BSN, MPM, became the first and only hospital in greater Pittsburgh to achieve a remarkable fourth Magnet designation in 2023. In addition, West Penn was the first hospital in the region to receive the designation in 2006.

Led by Chief Nursing Officer Marge DiCuccio, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, Allegheny General Hospital is on the path to Magnet designation. With the most recent nurse satisfaction survey, the application has been submitted and the process for designation has begun. Demonstrating nursing excellence is engrained in the culture of AGH and the nursing team is ready to share its transformational story.

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## Wexford Hospital: Emergency Department earns Press Ganey Award

The Allegheny Health Network (AHN) Wexford Hospital emergency department and the AHN Outpatient Center – Westmoreland endoscopy center have been recognized by Press Ganey with a 2022 Guardian of Excellence® Award in the patient experience category. This award recognizes these AHN facilities as being in the top 5% for performance in patient experience among the more than 41,000 health care facilities that Press Ganey works with across the country.

Press Ganey is a nationally renowned health care company that measures patient satisfaction through surveys and supports health care organizations in their quality improvement initiatives. The Guardian of Excellence Award is given annually by Press Ganey to health care facilities who rank in the 95th percentile for patient experience.

## Hospital awards

In addition to the awards above, AHN hospitals were also recognized for excellence in the following areas:

- Saint Vincent Hospital: Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN) Center of Excellence
- Jefferson Hospital: American Association of Colleges of Nursing (ACCN) Beacon Award – ICU

## Awards for greatness

AHN celebrates nurses at all levels for their remarkable contributions to patients and communities. Within each hospital, we regularly recognize accomplishments through:

- The DAISY Award® and BEE Award, honoring nurses and patient care technicians
- Departmental awards from AHN, Highmark, and hospital leadership
- Online recognition and stories shared at Nurse Leader Meetings and daily huddles



West Penn Hospital  
Magnet Celebration



**VINCE GERELLO, MBA, BSN, RN**  
AHN Grove City

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## Leading the Way awards

During Nurses Week in May 2022, nurse leaders gathered in person to honor the AHN Nursing Leading the Way Award winners:

- Excellence in Advanced Practice Nursing, Bridget Smith, RN
  - Excellence in Ambulatory Nursing, Dawn Ball, DNP, CRNP, FNP-BC, FNP-C
  - Excellence in Ambulatory Surgery Nursing, Korie Enscoe, MSN, RN
  - Excellence in Care Management, Lori Marshall, RN, CHPCA
  - Excellence in Community Care Nursing, Tiffany Mori, MSW, LCSW, CCM
  - Excellence in Evidence Based Practice Research, Marcia Cook, DNP, MPM, RN
  - Excellence in Nursing Education & Professional Practice, Irma D'Antonio, RN, DNP, NE-BC
  - Excellence in Perioperative Nursing Leadership, Julie Mazur, MHA, BSN, RN
  - Excellence in Nursing Leadership, Assistant Nurse Manager, Amanda Seidling, BSN, RN, CCRN
  - Excellence in Nursing Leadership, Assistant Nurse Manager, Angela Battaglia, MSN, RN, CNL, PCCN
  - Excellence in Nursing Leadership, Laura Lincoln, DNP, RN, CMSRN, NE-BC
  - Excellence in Nursing Leadership, Sharon Undereiner, MBA, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
  - Nightingale Lifetime Achievement Award, Angela Costa, BSN, MPM, RN
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## Accomplishments and recognitions

In addition to awards and recognitions presented within AHN, many of our nurse leaders have been recognized on the local and national level for their remarkable nursing care and leadership.

Each year, Pittsburgh Magazine recognizes nurses across western Pennsylvania for excellence in nursing based on their outstanding contributions to health care. Chiyoko Franko, BSN, CV BC, nurse manager at Jefferson Hospital, was honored in the Emerging Leader category. Lisa Graper, DNP, MSN, RN, NE-BC, chief nursing officer at Wexford Hospital, received an honorable mention for the Leadership/Executive category.

Tinamarie Estes-Washington, DNP, MSN, RN, PCCN, director of Nursing at Forbes Hospital, was named to the Pittsburgh Magazine 40 under 40 list for outstanding achievement and service in the Pittsburgh region.

This year's class featured many honorees who have dedicated considerable time and effort to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in our region.

### Cameos of Caring

The Cameos of Caring® Program, established in 1999, honors remarkable nurses at acute care hospitals for excellence in nursing care within five specialty award categories.

#### General

- Erin Flaus, BSN, RN, Allegheny General Hospital
- Lynne C. Friel, MSN, RN, CCRN, Allegheny Valley Hospital
- Vivian C. Grinder, BSN, RN, Canonsburg Hospital
- Laura Maditz, RN, MSN, CV-BC, Jefferson Hospital
- Hazel Mendoza, BSN, RN, West Penn Hospital

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- Colleen Schnaekel, BSN, RN, CCRN, Saint Vincent Hospital
  - Sarah T. Sombillo, BSN, RN, Forbes Hospital
  - Amie Teyssier, MSN, RNC-OB, Wexford Hospital

#### Advanced Practice

- Bob Calvin, BA, RN, MSN, CCRN, NE-BC, Allegheny General Hospital
- Lori Gubala Laux, MSN, RN-BC, CRNP, Allegheny General Hospital
- Kristen Maguire, MSN, RNC-MNN, CBC, West Penn Hospital

#### Case Manager

- Sara Jordan, RN, BSN, Allegheny General Hospital

#### Donate Life

- Jean Lindenberger, MSN, RN, CCRN, Saint Vincent Hospital
- Diane Pantuso, BSN, RN, Allegheny General Hospital

#### Quality and Safety

- Kim Amon, MSN, MBA, LCCE, CHCQM, CBC, Saint Vincent Hospital
- Susan Baker, BSN, RN, Allegheny General Hospital

#### Nurse Educator

- Sherry Nolf, MSN, RN, Citizens School of Nursing
- Brittany Tomsic, MSN, RN, CNP, West Penn School of Nursing

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# Valuable input from the front line

Nurses know their jobs best. That's why AHN leaders continually communicate with the nursing teams to gather insights and ideas on improving their ability to care for patients in the most effective and efficient ways.

## Reimagine nursing: bringing the joy back to nursing

In recent years, there has been much discussion about bringing the joy back to nursing practice. The current climate makes that difficult yet attainable. AHN Nursing, in collaboration with parent company Highmark Health's Enterprise Effectiveness team, launched an innovative project to identify and remove barriers to practice and reduce non-nursing tasks that rob nurses of the joy of work. And the results have been remarkable.

After 1,150 hours of direct observation by members of the Enterprise Effectiveness team, it was determined that nurses were active for 95% of a 12-hour shift, with only 45 minutes of downtime. Within the active time, 50% of time is spent on non-patient care and administrative tasks. The team launched ideation sessions with more than 200 direct care nurses, resulting in three immediate strategies aimed at reducing the burden of non-nursing tasks.

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The first strategy is creating a Virtual Nurse discharge function. This would enable virtual nurses to take on discharges from the assigned nurse, freeing their time to care for patients. Using technology for the discharge process, the proof of concept resulted in more than 100 patient discharges in the first five weeks of implementation, giving the direct care nurses 33 hours to devote back to patient care.

The second strategy is in flight. The EPIC refuel project, again focused on reducing redundant tasks, specifically those in the electronic medical record, frees up the direct care nurse to deliver care. The third strategy is using those freed hours to deliver on our Living Health strategy – improving the health of the patient population and caregiver experience, and patient outcomes.

## Observation insights

**During an average day, nurses spend nearly 95% of their 12-hour shift active, with only ~45 minutes of downtime/breaks.** The following is a breakdown of where nurses' active time is spent during a 12-hour shift.

- Patient care planning: ~50 minutes
- Admissions and discharges: ~60 minutes
- Medicating patients: ~2 hours
- Documenting patient care: ~2.5 hours
- Learning and development: ~8 minutes

DYLAN MARSH, RN  
Saint Vincent Hospital



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## A virtual solution to patient safety: telesitting

Increasing demands on a direct care nurse's time has become more challenging as the nursing shortage worsens. In response, AHN launched a virtual sitter program in collaboration with AvaSure. Using electronic tablets, a remote team of 12 team members monitors patients to keep them safe. The notification of direct caregivers allows for quick intervention. The pilot concept is being implemented at Forbes Hospital, Wexford Hospital, AHN Grove City, Jefferson Hospital, and Allegheny General Hospital, with the remaining hospitals coming on board later in 2023.

## Ovid® Synthesis boosts information sharing, accountability

Every day across Allegheny Health Network, team members are seeking current information through research and the identification of best practices. All the information can be overwhelming and hard to organize. However, with the introduction of Ovid Synthesis in 2022, team members now have a new method for coordinating, synthesizing, and accessing the information. Ovid Synthesis captures work from across the network, using a web-based template that team members can access from anywhere. The system allows for collaboration among teams, while keeping information stored in a central location.

There are many advantages to using Ovid Synthesis. Some include the reduction of duplicative work, allowing for access to information for team members who are not on laptop computers while at work, and the ability to see new practices and trends as they develop. Nurses who are on the Clinical Ladder program can create and store their professional portfolios electronically.

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## Home for Lunch: a win for patients

Timely discharge of patients from the inpatient setting is an essential element of patient care. Not only is it a benefit to get the patient home to their own environment, but it also allows for patients who need to be admitted for care to an inpatient bed. The Home for Lunch initiative was created and executed to meet both needs, with an aim to discharge patients before 11 a.m. This allows patients and their families a target time to plan for pick-up, including arranging transportation and obtaining prescriptions.

There are several elements to making Home for Lunch successful, including actively engaging patients and families in care, planning for the next day, and communicating progress and discharge plans within and across care teams. Through focused efforts on the initiative in 2022 across the network, early discharges increased by 70% the entire year.

**“Few patients want to be in the hospital, so learning that they will be released a little earlier than expected is favorably received. It helps with throughput and satisfaction.”**

— **Nancy Magee, MSN, ACM-RN**  
Vice President, AHN Care Management

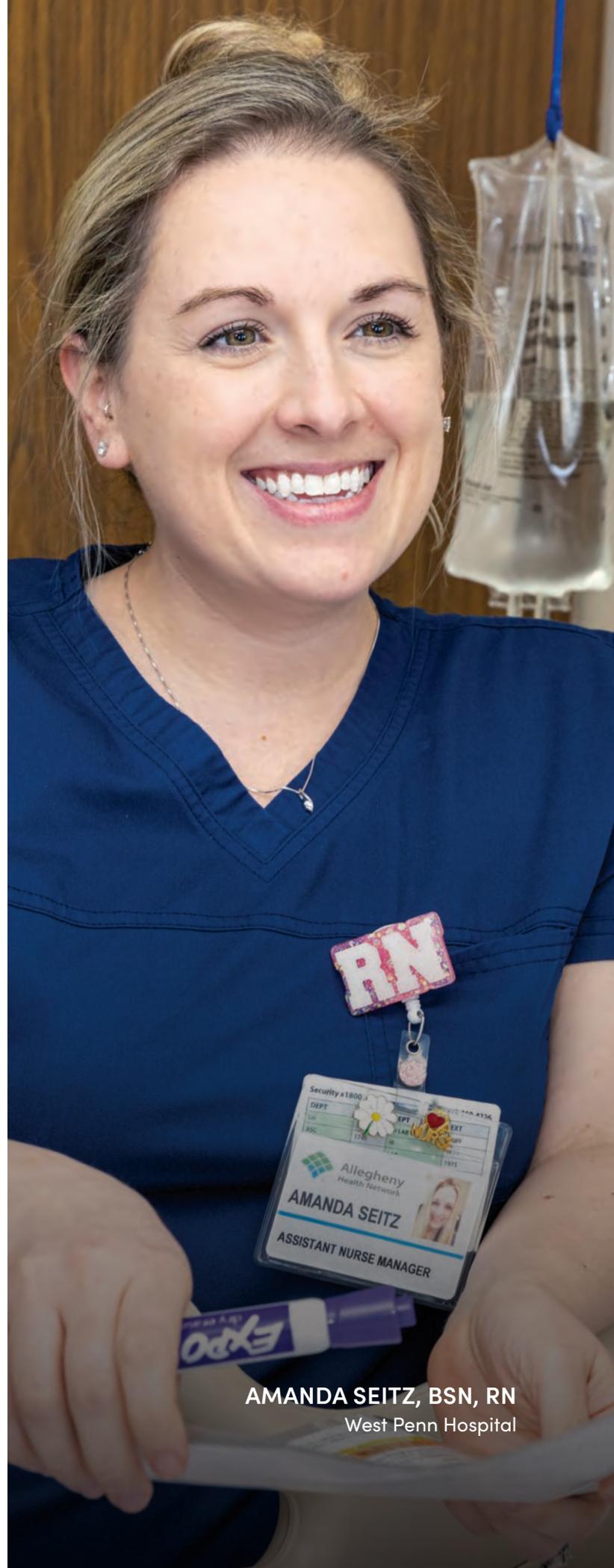
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## West Penn Hospital: reducing falls through relationship-based care

Reducing falls is a critical component of patient safety, and one that West Penn Hospital focused significant efforts on in 2022. With the goal of a 10% reduction in falls with harm, West Penn's interprofessional Fall Prevention Committee analyzed falls data to identify opportunities, subsequently developing multiple interventions to meet the goals.

First, staff were reminded to provide patients with safety education and remain with patients deemed at risk of falling while in the bathroom. This simple step creates accountability and enables real-time fall prevention. Second, the committee developed an innovative Fall Escape Room, which provides new hires an engaging, interactive opportunity to learn fall reduction strategies. Lastly, the Rehabilitation Unit, where fall risk is particularly high, added fall mats and toilet sensor alarms to each room, leading to a 44% reduction in falls on the unit.

As a system, AHN began using the Johns Hopkins Fall Risk Assessment tool in 2022, leading to improved assessment of patients' risk levels. Together, these interventions enabled West Penn Hospital to surpass its goal and end the year with a 17% reduction in falls with harm.



**AMANDA SEITZ, BSN, RN**  
West Penn Hospital

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### Nursing at AHN

Learn more about nursing at AHN and sign up for our quarterly newsletter, Remarkable Nursing, at [ahn.org/nursing](http://ahn.org/nursing).

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