

# NURSING

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER

Transforming patient care through professional practice

January 2018



A newsletter  
from the office  
of the Executive  
Chief Nursing  
Officer

Marilyn Dubree,  
MSN, RN,  
NE-BC

## APIC HONORS INFECTION PREVENTION

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) is the first hospital system in the nation to receive the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) Program of Distinction designation, an acknowledgement of excellence for infection prevention and control programs that meet stringent standards established by the association.

The designation is the culmination of an intensive review process that began last summer when an APIC survey team visited VUMC to evaluate infection prevention practices at Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital and Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt as well as numerous off-site locations.

APIC is the leading professional association for infection preventionists (IPs) in the United States, with more than 15,000 members. APIC's Program of Distinction designation measures excellence in infection prevention policies and procedures and ongoing quality improvement efforts, as well as compliance with federal regulations.

"We are happy to award the first APIC Program of Distinction designation to Vanderbilt University Medical Center," said APIC CEO Katrina Crist, MBA, CAE. "Their program embodies the standards of excellence

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**H**appy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and are rested and refreshed for another year of nursing excellence at Vanderbilt.

Last year, we achieved our third Magnet recognition. This was quite an accomplishment, and it required every one of you. However, I am reminded that our Magnet journey is never truly complete.

This year, we will launch our fourth Magnet journey, with an aim to achieve our fourth designation over the course of the next four years.

By now, we are all very familiar with the Magnet process, and I am very confident we will again achieve this recognition.

In this issue, you will read about a prestigious honor Vanderbilt has won in infection prevention. We also wish Nancy Wells, our longtime head of nursing research, a very happy retirement. My wish is that 2018 is the best year yet for you and your families.

Enjoy this issue,

that we envisioned when we created this program. We congratulate them on their superior efforts to protect patients and prevent infection.”

“We’re honored to be the first institution in the country to receive this designation,” said Thomas Talbot, MD, MPH, professor of Medicine and Chief Hospital Epidemiologist at VUMC. “One of the big things the surveyors cited was that it is not just the Infection Prevention team that contributed to the effectiveness of our infection prevention programs.

“They saw that the commitment to infection prevention permeates the institution, throughout all levels, from leadership to the front line. This achievement validates our institution-wide dedication to patient safety, our collaboration and teamwork and every individual’s effort in implementing and consistently following best practices to prevent the spread of healthcare-associated infections.”

“This award represents many years of focused effort in infection prevention, and it is a distinction of our great VUMC team,” said Gerald Hickson, MD, Senior Vice President for Quality, Safety and Risk Prevention. “To achieve this level of recognition, our pro-

grams were examined closely by national leaders in infection control. We were found to have exemplary programs, beginning with every team member’s commitment to washing their hands.”

During the review process, the Infection Prevention team provided data on VUMC’s healthcare-associated infection

#### **Infection Prevention team**

Vicki Brinsko, MSN, RN, CIC, FAPIC

Tanya Boswell MSN, RN, CIC

Mary DeVault MSN, RN, CIC

Danett Guy MSN, RN

Dana Johnson MSN, RN

Jackie Smith MSN, RN, CIC

Jan Szychowski BSN, RN, CIC

Kathie Wilkerson BSN, RN, CIC

(HAI) rates, and across the board the numbers were positive, Talbot said. For example, from 2009 to 2017 (estimated with six months of data in 2017), central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) in the intensive care units (ICU) were reduced by 79 percent, and non-ICU CLABSIs were reduced by 71 percent. From 2010 until 2017, there was an estimated 61 percent increase in the healthcare worker influenza vaccination rate. From 2009 until 2017, there was an estimated 81 percent increase in hand-hygiene compliance.

“The entire VUMC organization demonstrated commitment to actively integrating infection prevention into routine patient care practices,” said Terrie Lee, RN, MS, MPH, strategy and clinical lead for the APIC Program of Distinction. “We noted that Infection Prevention and Quality have been working collaboratively to address issues in a highly successful manner. There were also obvious forward-thinking, ‘wow’ moments identified when we reviewed their methods of instrument reprocessing (high-level disinfection and sterilization), as well as the surveillance and data management system, antibiotic stewardship program, and their unit for care of patients with highly infectious diseases.”

APIC surveyors visited VUMC in 2016 to observe specific infection control and epidemiology initiatives. They focused on many areas, including disinfection/sterilization, emergency preparedness, occupational health and antibiotic stewardship. The APIC team observed and spoke with front-line clinicians, as well as Infection Prevention team members and visited clinical, procedural and support services areas, said Director of Infection Prevention Vicki Brinsko, MSN, RN, CIC, FAPIC.

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## WELLS RETIRES AS HEAD OF NURSING RESEARCH

When Nancy Wells started her nursing career, she didn't stay in one place for long, going from Canada to the West and East coasts of the United States. She didn't, that is, until she came to Vanderbilt University Medical Center 25 years ago to take a position as director of Nursing Research.

Wells, DNSc, RN, FAAN, retired from that position in December after a quarter-century of mentoring countless staff nurses, managers, leaders and colleagues in evidence-based practice while becoming a nationally-known nurse researcher specializing in the study of pain management.

"I've enjoyed every single minute of it and every opportunity. It has been fabulous," she said. "The thing that I love the most about working with people here is that they are so dedicated. And they're really interested in promoting better patient care. That's what it's all about."

Wells will continue to serve in her role as a research professor at the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

"Please join me in wishing Nancy well in her next phase of life adventures," said Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC, Executive Chief Nursing Officer. "We have been blessed

by her leadership with the Vanderbilt Nursing community, and her legacy will serve as a living foundation for our work going forward."

Wells, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, grew up around health-care; her father was a doctor and her mother, a nurse. But she initially didn't want to follow in her family's footsteps. She changed her mind and enrolled in



Nancy Wells, DSNc, RN, FAAN

nursing school at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada, thinking that the busy nursing profession would be a good fit for her restless mind.

"When I was in my undergraduate program, I had to take a research course and I had to do a research project and that grabbed me," she said. "That's when I knew that's where I was going to go."

She looked for a master's program that would have a thesis requirement, because she wanted to steep herself in research, landing at the University of Washington in Seattle. She earned her doctorate at Boston University, and

held a succession of nursing positions, most recently in Rochester, New York, before coming to Vanderbilt in 1992.

As director of nursing research at Vanderbilt, her responsibilities included mentoring PhD students and post-doctoral fellows, facilitating evidence-based practice among nursing staff in the Medical Center and collaborating with investigators to conduct funded research.

She established a yearlong Evidence-Based Practice Fellowship program for staff nurses. "They learn about evidence-based practice, how to search the literature, how to develop a project implementation plan and implement the project," she said. "That's been fabulous. I've met so many really, really great nurses who are so dedicated to their profession and to making patient care better. That's probably the highlight of my career."

For nearly four decades, Wells has specialized in the research of pain. She was inspired by the patients she saw at the bedside who struggled with pain, but weren't getting proper relief. Her research led

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her to promote patient-controlled analgesia to give patients more control over their pain.

Wells said she has learned to take the long view – crucial in a research career – because her mind doesn't demand quick closure.

"I've been working in the field of pain since 1979, and I've not

gotten bored with it yet," she said. "It's changing all the time. Our knowledge, our understanding of it is changing all the time."

A national search for the Director of Nursing Research will be initiated in January. The search committee will be chaired by Jennifer Barut, MSN,

PhD(c), RN-BC, Chief Nursing Officer for Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital and Behavioral Health. During the search process, administrative oversight for Nursing Research will be led by Sabrina Downs, MSN, RN, NE-BC, director of Professional Practice and Magnet.

"This review process has been important, not only for our team to confirm that they're doing really great work, but also within the institution, to reaffirm strong, collaborative relationships with other teams like environmental services, facilities management and environmental health and safety," said Brinsko. "We work closely together every day, and this is an outside agency coming in, looking at how we do things and saying, 'thumbs up.'"

In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC) released results from its Healthcare-associated Infection (HAI) Prevalence Survey. On any given day, one in 25 hospital patients has at least one HAI. In 2011, there were an estimated 722,000 HAIs in U.S. acute care hospitals each year, and about 75,000 hospital patients with HAIs died during their hospitalizations.

The APIC Program of Distinction designation has been awarded to VUMC for a three-year period. At the end of that time, the Medical Center can repeat the review process.

At VUMC, the Department of Infection Prevention includes six epidemiologists, eight infection preventionists and a data analytics team. The VUMC Infection Prevention Regulatory Subcommittee and the Infection Prevention Executive Committee, which include representatives from throughout the Medical Center, meet bimonthly to evaluate policies, review current infection prevention programs and HAI-prevention performance, and discuss current infection prevention concerns.

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR NURSES WEEK AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Vanderbilt nurses are invited to nominate an outstanding colleague for recognition during the 2018 Nurses Week Awards and Recognitions, to be held in May.

Nominations may be made in nine categories: Rosamund Gabrielson Staff Nurse of the Year, Rebecca Clark Culpepper, APRN, LPN, staff/unit/department/nurse educator, nursing research & evidence-based practice, team, Adrienne Ames Transformational Leader, and Friend of Nursing.

A group or an individual may make nominations.

Individuals may also nominate themselves. The nominator does not have to be a nurse; anyone can nominate.

The nominator will be asked to describe and demonstrate the excellence of the person being nominated using key criteria. The more examples provided, the stronger the nomination.

The deadline for nominations is 11:59 p.m. on Feb. 16. Award criteria and nomination forms can be found at <https://ww2.mc.vanderbilt.edu/vanderbilt-nursing/52182>.