

NURSING CARE AT MARTHA JEFFERSON

SECOND TO NONE

GREAT NURSING – A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Quality nursing is one of the cornerstones on which Martha Jefferson's reputation has been built. Just as healthcare delivery is increasingly dependent on innovation and technology, our ability to provide quality care is as dependent as ever on the people who deliver the care. We have a strong team at Martha Jefferson including excellent doctors, nurses, and professional and support staff. All members work together to prevent, diagnose, cure, and heal. *But when curing is no longer possible, it is the privilege and the responsibility of the nurse to remain and to continue providing compassionate care.*

A key strategic initiative at Martha Jefferson is to continually build an exemplary nursing service. A primary objective is to develop enhancements in nursing care and clinical capabilities and other support services in order to provide for higher acuity patients while retaining our well deserved *caring tradition*.

It is remarkable what services Martha Jefferson has initiated over the past several years in response to patient needs. From complex vascular surgery, bariatric surgery, developing a stroke care center and neurosurgery, nursing has been there with a willingness to assume greater responsibility to grow through new education, new competencies and a commitment to supporting the medical team and caring for patients in their charge. That was not necessarily the case a decade ago. Already we have experienced significant growth and advancements in nursing thanks to new leadership, shared governance, the establishment of a Department of Nursing Education and Research, advance practice nurse educators on the units and Martha Jefferson's completing the journey to achieve Magnet status (one of 4% of the nation's hospitals) for our nursing commitment are testament to this.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

Nursing excellence is a strategic imperative for Martha Jefferson Hospital for these important reasons:

- Demographics demand it.....nearly 80% of the healthcare dollar are spent on chronic disease, and with the aging of America (in larger percentages in our service area than nationally) means an even greater incidence which effects 60+% of our inpatients daily.

- Shortages drive it.....shortages in professional nurses are everywhere and nursing programs and their pipeline are not producing enough. We must enlist strategies to make the most of the graduates we can, retain the experienced nurses we have and continue to “grow our own” through education and advanced certification.
- Nurses are key to inpatient care.....they are the primary care providers at the bedside and their professional practice cuts across service lines.

WHAT ARE WE DOING TO ADVANCE NURSING

- **Education** – In order to fulfill Martha Jefferson Hospital’s vision of nursing leadership, superior clinical competencies, and model patient care, the Hospital needs to support the academic advancement of its nurses. In addition, the Hospital is undertaking an outreach program to bring untapped labor resources into the nursing field. We work closely with seven schools of nursing through practicum placements and rotations and we are confident in our ability to attract and retain our share of these graduates. We provide resources to some of these schools through faculty support to increase the flow of applicants and graduates.

Advanced degrees for nurses improve patient care. Through philanthropy, we provide limited scholarships for RNs who want to study for their Bachelors in Nursing (BSN) or BSNs who want to achieve their Masters degree. We likewise have established a relationship with Old Dominion University to provide an on-site, interactive online teaching opportunity for up to 25 nurses per semester to receive their BSN through a weekly evening session at the Hospital.

These opportunities are not only good for the Hospital and for our patients, they also provide life enhancing and fulfilling experiences for nurses, who entered this career with a passion for caring for people and who have grown and developed their professional standing through educational opportunities.

- **Research** -- Research is an essential component in the professional nursing practice. The role of nursing research is beginning to shift from the academic environment to community hospitals. Martha Jefferson has made a commitment to create an environment (and infrastructure) for using and conducting nursing research and to encourage evidence-based practice (EBP) to become part of the organization’s culture.

Our utilization of research began by promoting evidence-based practice within the nursing units. We have the belief that that health care providers working closely with the patients are in the best position to make decision related to clinical practice. Nurses at Martha Jefferson are trained to understand the principles of scholarly research, how to organize a study, collect and process data and present their findings. These can be fairly simple clinical questions that result in a unit-based poster presentation and procedure change, or an article, in-service or more elaborate study.

This year and with gift funding, we awarded our first Nursing Research Fellowship which is allowing one nurse the time and resources to explore a significant question that is both strategically aligned with the Hospital and represents a significant opportunity to modify healthcare practice.

- **Clinical Simulation and Learning Center** -- Today's nurses are expected to provide care in an increasingly complex technological environment and to an increasingly acute patient population. In response, Martha Jefferson has established an interactive learning laboratory for nurses. This Center is one of the few in country in a community hospital setting which includes a simulated hospital patient care area; models and mannequins for hands-on practice; mocked up patient rooms and surgical suite; training videos and a computer resource area.

The Clinical Simulation and Learning Center is also a safe environment for nurses to learn and practice their area specific competencies. When a new program is envisioned, like neurosurgery or a stroke care center, new nursing skills and protocols are developed with the physician champion of the service and prepared as teaching modules for nurses to learn and practice in the lab. There the nurses are supported and encouraged and have hours of practice before they meet their first new patient. It is also the home for new nurse orientation before they are placed on a unit.

The Clinical Simulation and Learning Center is a truly successful model which was established through philanthropy. A nearly 3,000 square foot new Center is being planned in the heart of the new hospital on Pantops that is being developed by nurses for nurses.

OUR VISION

We believe that we have put together a core program for nursing advancement that would stack up to anyone's – community hospital or academic medical center. Our vision is to continue to grow and test the contribution that Martha Jefferson Nursing can make to improving patient care, advancing clinical leadership, increasing job satisfaction and career growth and making a marked improvement in community health. We also envision a union of these forces into an "institute" for nursing excellence and innovation that combines these great opportunities and provides a platform for even broader dissemination and contribution to the professional practice of nursing.

If Martha Jefferson is going to continue to broaden its continuum of care for the community and serve a higher-acuity care patient, our nursing staff must be ready now. If we cannot fund these initiatives through philanthropy and community support, their impact will be diluted through the operational budgeting process and competing with other important priorities over the next several years. These are bold, costly and necessary moves that will help guarantee the future for Martha Jefferson and our community today.

GIFT AND NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

- * \$2,000 funds our new graduate nursing retreats supporting our stellar new graduate retention rates;
- * \$30,000 funds an associate degree nurse (RN) to obtain his or her baccalaureate degree (BSN) in nursing, a factor proven to improve patient outcomes;
- * \$5,000 funds our annual *Week of the Nurse* in May to support retention and recognition of our nursing staff;
- * \$10,000 funds our annual Nursing Staff Development Days Continuing Education conference—available to our entire nursing team;
- * \$100,000 funds our Clinical Ladder program for one year – an incentive and advancement program recognizing and supporting skill development and professional patient-centered practice of nurses;
- * \$50,000 funds our Clinical Simulation and Learning Center for one year;
- * \$3,000 funds nursing certifications for one unit – specialty certification by unit through national certifying organizations;
- * \$15,000 funds nursing research fellowships for one year;
- * \$40,000 funds the recruitment and orientation for one nurse.