

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005

A Magazine for Chicago Area Nurses

The Nurses' Lounge

Oncology
Nursing

Illinois'
Nursing Shortage

*Patient Finds Career
Inspiration In Her Nurses*

Attention: All Nurses!



The
Nurses' Lounge

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Each day, *The Nurses' Lounge* researches and posts news on our home page that impacts your nursing profession. Whether you're looking for advice or feedback, you can turn to other nurses at the lounge – a place to seek counsel, share experiences and have some fun while networking with other nursing professionals.

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Mail

Your inaugural issue of "The Nurses' Lounge Chicago" was an unexpected and enjoyable surprise! As a TV buff, the article "As Seen on TV" was fun to read and informative! It was also great to see how other nurses spent Nurses' Week in Chicago. Having recently moved here, the Nurses' Lounge really puts me in touch with the nursing community. I look forward to the next issue!

- Philip Francis, RN, MSN, CCRN

I recently received and enjoyed the first Chicago area edition of "The Nurses' Lounge" magazine. Thank you for highlighting the fast paced healthcare environment of Chicagoland nurses. I particularly enjoyed the option for continuing education credits offered.

- Sue Durkin, MSN, RN, CCRN, CCM, CNS

I read your new magazine from cover to cover. Loved it!

- Jill Moore

Clarification

In the preview edition of *The Nurses' Lounge*, under Career Spotlight, we featured Nurse Ella Echavez at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. We wrote, "Ella Echavez remembered a case where she stood on her feet in the OR for 36 hours." In fact, Ella was part of a team that rotated duties during a case that was 36 hours long.

Contact Us

Thanks to the tremendous feedback we received from our preview issue in June, I am pleased to announce that *The Nurses' Lounge Chicago* will move to a monthly publication starting in January 2006. We intend to maintain our commitment to produce a quality publication that speaks to nurses on a personal level. If you have news to share, a story idea or feedback to give, we would love to hear it. Just send us an email at: chicagoeditor@nurseslounge.com.

In good health,



Michael Maher
Publisher

The cure for the common career

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Former Cancer Patient Finds Career Inspiration From Her Nurses

By Sarah Downey

Desiree Murray was in the middle of a busy summer of high school pompon practice when she felt an unusual pain in her left knee. As a longtime dancer, she thought it was probably just a strained muscle. A few weeks later, when she went to the doctor, she was having pains in her hip and stomach as well. Since her belly button had recently been pierced, there was some thought it might be Hepatitis C. Mononucleosis was another possibility.

The results from a blood test a month later told Murray her worst fears. Her liver count was off.

"The doctor said, 'What do you know about tumors and cancer?'"

"Not much," she replied.

It turned out that a tumor was growing on Murray's pancreas, and pushing on her liver ducts. With almost no history of the cancer in her family, save for one of her uncles, who had smoked and subsequently died of lung cancer, it seemed even more unbelievable.

It wasn't readily apparent how long Murray had had the disease, officially diagnosed as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, but

clear she needed aggressive treatment. The official diagnosis had come on September 18, 2002, just two weeks in to her senior year of high school. Murray soon began treatments at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

Murray says the fact that she was "very independent"

and suddenly had to rely on so many other people was one of the most daunting adjustments she had to make. Nor could she eat solid foods; her nourishment came through an IV and her five-foot-seven frame fell to a weight of just 100 pounds.

As Murray went through the grueling treatments to shrink the tumor – enough so that her liver could once again do its job on its own – her goal to graduate with the rest of her class became a primary motivation.

In the pediatric unit, oncology nurse, **Margaret Sheehan**, and the trainee she worked with during the night shift gave Murray comfort and inspiration. "They were more like

friends than nurses and that's what I loved about them." On slow nights the three of them watched movies together, or just talked.



Margaret Sheehan, RN, Children's Memorial Hospital

Desiree Murray is now taking classes that will help her apply for nursing school in the Fall.

"I would usually fight to be her nurse," recalls Sheehan, who's been at Children's Memorial for three years. "It was a tough first month for her. It's very difficult when patients have to be stuck in one room."

It also turned out that the trainee had survived cancer herself. She told Murray about it on a particularly difficult night, and the empathy, Murray says, helped prepare her for things like losing her hair.

Before the cancer, Murray had been debating whether to become a psychologist. But soon after her release from the hospital, she realized that she had another choice in mind.

"It was great having somebody there who had gone through what I'd been through, and that's what kind of gave me the push into becoming a nurse," Murray says, adding, "They were always so nice to me. It was easier to talk to them than friends sometimes. My friends could sympathize but still not really know what it was like."

Murray, 20, is now taking organic chemistry and other classes at Oakton Community College, just outside Chicago. She plans to apply to nursing school this fall and hopes to enroll by next spring. She also works part-time, both as a waitress and as a secretary for her mother at a non-profit trade association for the confection industry.

"You can't come out of having cancer and not be stronger in some way," says Murray, who officially finished her two-and-a-half year chemotherapy treatment at Children's Memorial in June. She is still on medication, but now only has to go for checkups once a month.



During her outpatient visits, she makes a point of stopping by to see her nurses.

Learning that Murray is now studying to become a nurse is "a big compliment," Sheehan says. To get praise from a co-worker is one thing, she says, but it means a lot to hear how you've inspired a patient.

"To make that much of an impact is wonderful. I'm extremely proud of her. She went through such a horrific experience as a young person and it's very cool to hear how well she's doing."

Murray also credits the support of her family, the special tribute she received from the pom-pom squad shortly after her diagnosis, and getting to graduate with her class as factors that have helped propel her to where she is today.

But she reserves special praise for her nurses. "They were awesome." ♦

A photograph of a nurse in white scrubs holding a clipboard, looking off to the side. In the background, other healthcare workers in various colored scrubs are blurred. The title 'Illinois' Nursing Shortage' is overlaid on the top left.

Illinois' Nursing Shortage

by Janice Neumann

Chicagoland Hospitals Take Action

Statistics tell a dire story about the nursing shortage, with health care experts warning about the effects on patients, their families and nurses.

Statistics tell a dire story about the nursing shortage, with health care experts warning about the effects on patients, their families and nurses.

According to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, projections show that Illinois will have an annual shortage of about 8,000 registered nurses and 1,200 licensed practical nurses through at least 2010. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services expects this number to rise to over 21,000 by 2020.

Hospitals are developing creative approaches to combat the shortage, attract candidates and keep them happy in their jobs.

Hospital officials say one of their key goals is to keep their nurses happy, in addition to offering an enticing environment for new recruits. Hospitals are also having to make a special effort to fill positions in areas like gerontology, medical/surgical and the intensive care unit.

Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn, Children's Memorial Hospital and Rush University Medical Center each point to their Magnet designation for excellence in nursing services, which is granted by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, as a draw to new nurses. With the designation, hospitals develop a "shared governance" system for nurses.

Michelle Janney, RN, PhD, CNAA, vice president of operations and chief nurse executive at Northwestern Memorial

Hospital, said nurses are given flexible schedules with new electronic scheduling at Northwestern. The hospital also maintains a high nurse-to-student ratio of 1 to 4. Like many hospitals, Northwestern also offers development opportunities, such as a continuing education program.



Michelle Janney

To attract new nurses to an area of need, Janney said the hospital is starting a Critical Care Institute for nurses who recently graduated, to help them learn how to take care of patients in intensive care units. They also have a preceptor program to help acclimate new nurses to the hospital environment, with each nurse mentor first trained by the hospital. At Prentice Women's Hospital, the hospital even has one nurse solely dedicated to helping nurses with any questions or problems.

Advocate Christ Medical Center offers a "step" program in which nurses take courses and attend conferences to gain proficiency and in return attain advanced degrees, certification and a pay incentive.

The hospital also offers tuition reimbursement for obtaining a BSN through St. Xavier University, with courses on site. *(continued page 10)*

Chicagoland Hospitals Take Action (continued)

"Those are the kinds of things that really help nurses commit to working for an organization, if they can advance their career," said **Debbie O'Connell**, RN, MS, CIC, clinical nurse manager for nursing education at Advocate Christ Medical Center.



Debbie O'Connell

Illinois Masonic Medical Center also encourages nurses to advance their knowledge and skills through a step program, according to **Peter Gadau**, Senior Staffing Specialist. The hospital also reimburses \$20,000 for tuition of new graduates if they are hired for their first job. An employee, who has worked at the hospital for at least a year and wishes to go to nursing school, will have tuition paid by the hospital, if the individual agrees to work there for the next two years.

At West Suburban Medical Center in Oak Park, nurses have the chance to not only bid on their work schedules through an online system, but also on their pay. The system, called RES-BIDSM, offers extra shifts for premium pay, but is helping the hospital decrease costs and improve employee satisfaction.

Foreign recruitment is one of West Suburban's major recruiting initiatives. In 2002, the hospital began working with a private company that specializes in foreign recruitment of nurses and other professionals, and now has four nurses from Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and the Philippines.

"You have to always be thinking about something different or off the usual path to try to attract nurses," said **Nancy Gunnell**, RN, MS, professional recruiter for the hospital.

At Rush University Medical Center, new graduates in certain units are offered a tuition repayment bonus of up

to \$15,000 for the last year of school in exchange for a two-year commitment. Experienced registered nurses with a year of experience in gerontology receive a \$3,000 bonus to work on that unit. And medical center employees receive a \$3,000 bonus if they refer a nurse with a year of experience, who agrees to work full-time.



Nancy Gunnell

"I think we anticipated there was going to be a need and (said) let's figure out a way to help people want to come on board," said **Suzanne Klinetop**, RN, BSN, senior human resources consultant for Rush

Nurses and their families can also take two classes at Rush University College of Nursing for free or choose another nursing school and have the tuition reimbursed.

Loyola University Health System uses a number of strategies to keep nurses satisfied in their jobs and attract new ones. Salaries must remain competitive and are adjusted annually according to the market, according to **Paula Hindle**, vice president for patient care services and chief nurse executive. Nurses are given a say in decision making. Promotions and financial incentives are also given to nurses who advance their proficiency, thus "helping to improve the quality of care they provide," said Hindle.



Paula Hindle

"One of the big things is communication," said Hindle, explaining she goes to staff meetings on units, asking what works well and what doesn't. "I have an open door policy." ♦

photo by Oscar H. Izquierdo,
Loyola University Health System

Kelley Appointed Dean of Nursing at West Suburban College

Lois Kelley, DEd, RN, has been appointed dean of nursing at West Suburban College of Nursing in Oak Park, a member of Resurrection Health Care. In her new position, Dr. Kelley will be responsible for obtaining and maintaining program accreditation, curriculum planning, development, implementation and evaluation for all nursing programs.

Dr. Kelley comes to West Suburban College of Nursing with over 20 years of experience as a teacher administrator and scholar. Before assuming her new position, she was the chair for the Department of Nursing at Purdue University North Central, Westville, Indiana. Additionally, she has served at land grant institutions such as Penn State University, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Florida Atlantic University, as well as smaller institutions with responsibilities at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Dr. Kelley is active in numerous professional organizations including the American Association for Higher Education, American Nurses Association, National League for Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, American Public Health Association, American Psychiatric Nursing Association and The American Organization of Nurse Executives.

Currently, she is the U.S. coordinator for the International Consortium of Parse Scholars. ♦



Lois Kelley, DEd, RN

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