



MedStar Health

# Four Times a Charm!

Celebrating Nursing Excellence with Magnet Designation #4



MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center Nursing Annual Report  
Reflecting activity from July 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023

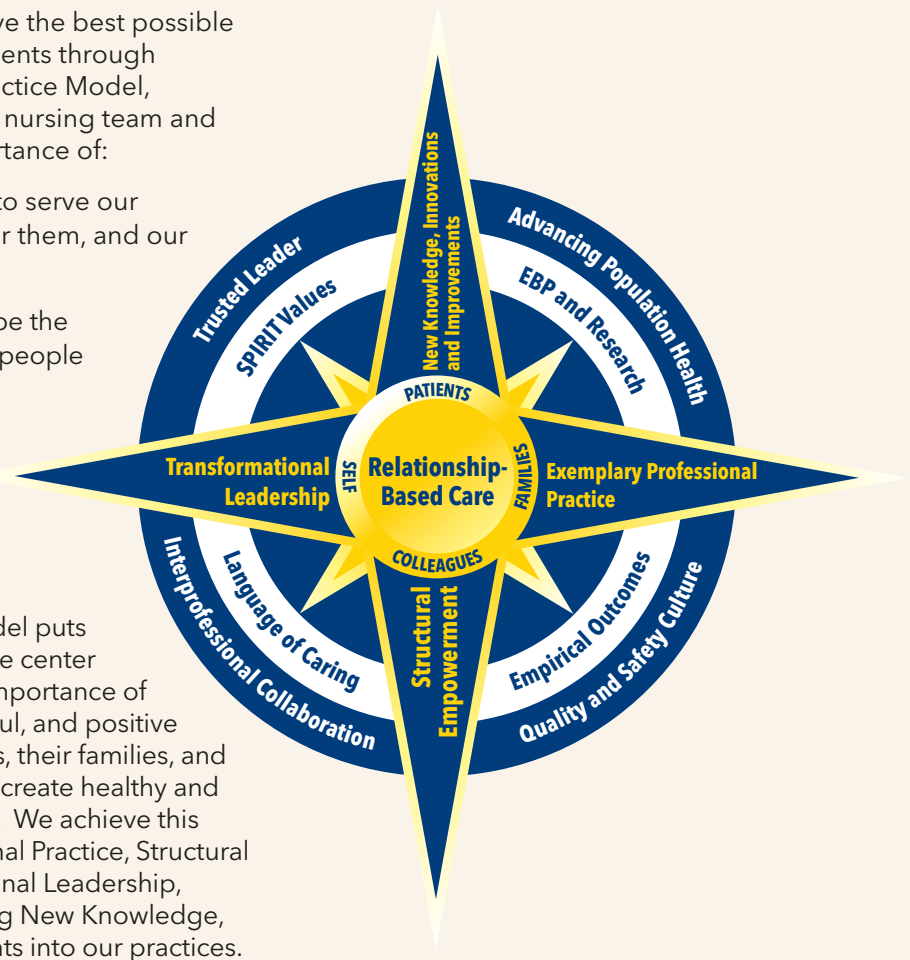
# Our Nursing Professional Practice Model

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center's Nursing Professional Practice Model provides the framework for how our nurses deliver the highest quality care, collaborate to make decisions, and communicate with patients, families, and each other.

Our ultimate goal is to achieve the best possible clinical outcomes for our patients through applying our Professional Practice Model, which was developed by our nursing team and emphasizes the critical importance of:

- MedStar Health's Mission to serve our patients, those who care for them, and our communities.
- MedStar Health's Vision to be the trusted leader in caring for people and advancing health.
- MedStar Health's SPIRIT Values of Service, Patient First, Integrity, Respect, Innovation, and Teamwork

Our Professional Practice Model puts Relationship-Based Care at the center of all we do, embracing the importance of building meaningful, respectful, and positive relationships with our patients, their families, and our colleagues as we work to create healthy and healing environments of care. We achieve this through Exemplary Professional Practice, Structural Empowerment, Transformational Leadership, and a commitment to bringing New Knowledge, Innovations, and Improvements into our practices.



"The Professional Practice Model should be used as a guide for nurses as they are advancing in their careers. We encourage our nurses to identify a value within the model that resonates with them, and apply it in their daily work."

–Kim Schwenk, MSN, RN, *Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer*



## A message from the Chief Nursing Officer

So many amazing things are happening at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center. It is a true honor and privilege to serve as this hospital’s Chief Nursing Officer, and the accolades within the pages of this publication underscore why.

Our nursing team strives for and achieves excellence in just about everything that we do. We work together to establish goals and take the right steps to reach them. We look at where we can improve and put systems in place to move the needle forward. We assess what we are doing right and identify opportunities to set the bar even higher. Together, we are **optimizing, innovating, and transforming** what the healthcare experience looks and feels like, and creating a better culture of care that serves both our patients and our associates. It’s safe to say that I am surrounded by a team of nurses who truly symbolize what nursing excellence looks like. You make me proud, each and every day.

One of our greatest milestone moments of 2023 came in September, when MedStar Franklin Square was awarded Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) for the FOURTH time. You can read more about it and see photos from our celebration on pages 2-5. It is difficult to describe the amount of time, effort, energy, and love that goes into pursuing and achieving Magnet designation, repeatedly. But we did it, and this is an accomplishment that every single nurse and every single associate at our hospital should be proud of.

Know that our leadership team is committed to working with you, and for you. Here, nursing has a powerful voice, and we are always willing and eager to hear it. Thanks for all you do to make MedStar Franklin Square such a special place to be.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Schwenk, MSN, RN  
Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer

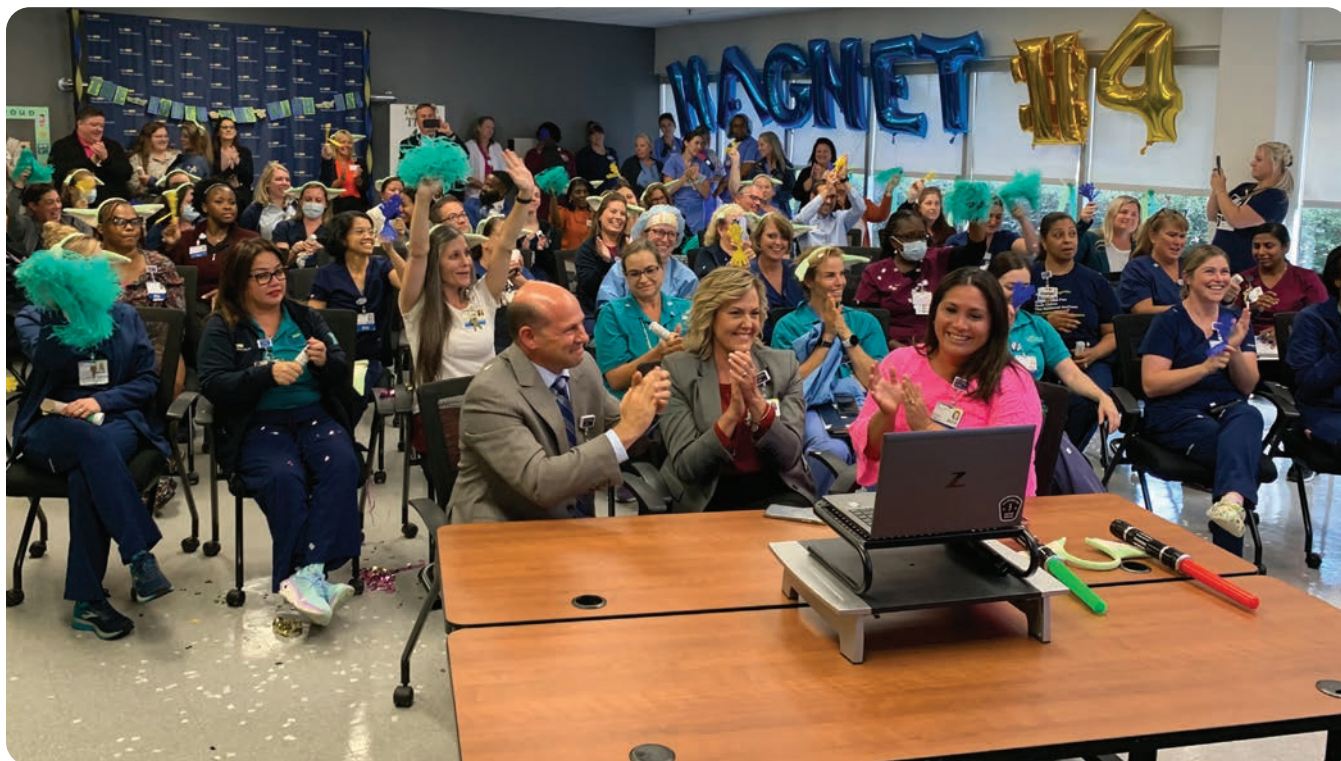
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## A Culture Built Around Magnet

Celebrating the Journey and Achievement of Designation #4



The saying goes that three time's a charm. At MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, there is a new number that's causing all the hype, and that number is FOUR. In September 2023, the hospital achieved its fourth consecutive Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), making history as the first hospital in the state of Maryland to earn the prestigious recognition four times.

"This designation is a result of the hard work, great attitude, and professionalism of our nurses," said Kim Schwenk, MSN, RN, vice president and chief nursing officer. "Magnet designation is the highest level of recognition a nursing program can achieve in the United States. We are so proud to be ranked among the most elite hospitals in recognition of our nursing standards."

MedStar Franklin Square's first Magnet designation was awarded in 2008—a time when only five percent of hospitals in the U.S. were

designated, and only three hospitals total, in the state of Maryland, had earned the status. The hospital has repeatedly applied for and been awarded the Magnet designation, every four years. Currently, less than 10 percent of hospitals nationwide are designated, with 8 others located in Maryland (including MedStar Harbor Hospital, also from the Baltimore region of MedStar Health, which earned designation in December 2023).

The ANCC awards Magnet designation to hospitals that demonstrate the highest standards in patient care and innovation, while making the nursing team an integral part of the patient experience process. Additionally, Magnet emphasizes the importance of nursing education and professional development; the ANCC encourages hospitals to invite nurses to have a seat at the table, while supporting and guiding them on a journey of lifelong education and professional growth.



"We submitted more than 90 sources of evidence—or stories - that collectively, showcase what our culture of nursing is all about," said Gina Shelley, DNP, MS, RN, CENP, NPD-BC, nursing practice innovation and Magnet director.



"Our stories offer perspective from our leaders and nursing teams and highlight the progress we are continuously making in nursing, to give our patients the best possible clinical outcomes and experience, while also making MedStar Franklin Square a great place for nurses to work and advance in their careers."

Adam Meier, MSN, RN, NE-BC, an executive committee member from the ANCC's Magnet Recognition Program Commission, presented MedStar Franklin Square's fourth Magnet designation during a Zoom conference call with leadership. He cited the family-oriented culture of the hospital, a clear commitment to quality and interdisciplinary teamwork, and MedStar Franklin Square's strong reputation. Additionally, he noted that the data provided to the ANCC, in pursuit of this fourth Magnet designation, outperformed national benchmarks 100 percent of the time for eight consecutive quarters.

"I am incredibly proud of this recognition, as it affirms how seamlessly our nurses and clinical teams work and innovate together to deliver the highest quality and safest patient care with an exceptional experience," said Stuart Levine, MD, FACP, president of MedStar Franklin Square.





## Ten Things to Know About the Magnet Recognition Program

### From the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)

- 1** This program was developed to recognize healthcare organizations that provide nursing excellence through successful nursing practices and strategies.
- 2** The program was initially formed in 1990, and was called the Magnet Hospital Recognition Program for Excellence in Nursing Services. At the time of its founding, it leveraged criteria from a study conducted in 1983 by the American Academy of Nursing's Task Force on Nursing Practice in Hospitals. This process identified 14 characteristics that create an environment conducive to attracting and retaining well-qualified nurses.
- 3** The program was renamed in 2002, officially becoming the Magnet Recognition Program®.
- 4** Today, Magnet designation is recognized as the gold standard in nursing excellence.
- 5** Hospitals that are Magnet designated report better Nurse Sensitive Indicators (NSI's), including lower fall rates and improved skin integrity. Additionally, Magnet hospitals report high ratings of patient satisfaction, nurse communication, and patient receipt of discharge information.
- 6** Magnet designation remains in effect for four years and can be renewed if an organization chooses to reapply while continuously demonstrating quality benchmarks and reporting.
- 7** Magnet designated hospitals are asked to promote quality in an environment that supports professional practice, identify excellence in the delivery of nursing services for patients, and disseminate best practices in nursing services.
- 8** The Magnet Model encompasses five key principles that collectively aim to measure quality, patient care, and performance outcomes. They are Transformational Leadership; Structural Empowerment; Exemplary Professional Practice; New Knowledge, Innovation, and Improvement; and Empirical Quality Results.
- 9** Magnet designated organizations employ the best-trained and most qualified nurses. 51.4 percent of nurse decision makers hold graduate degrees and 50.4 percent are certified by nationally recognized organizations.
- 10** Magnet supports nurse recruitment and retention; it gives nurses a reason to come, and stay. The average length of employment at Magnet designated organizations is 9.8 years and the average nurse vacancy rate is 2.4 percent.



## Recognizing the Exemplars that set us apart

Six exemplars were cited by the ANCC Magnet Appraisers, and shared in MedStar Franklin Square's Magnet Recognition Program Executive Summary Report. They highlight quality, safety and nurse satisfaction as key areas where the hospital's nursing team are exhibiting best practices. The exemplars noted are as follows:

1. Tele Triage in the Emergency Department, reducing time to provider and treatment. Our team documented a 47 percent decrease in the median door to first provider contact, and a 40 percent decrease in the median door to triage time.
2. Falls with injury out-performed national benchmarks in 100 percent of the units.
3. CLASBI out-performed national benchmarks in 100 percent of the units.
4. CAUTI out-performed national benchmarks in 100 percent of the units.
5. Falls with injury in an outpatient setting out-performed national benchmarks in 100 percent of the units.
6. The Stroke Response Unit's performance with door-to-needle time and access to care was highlighted as a best practice and out-performed national benchmarks as well as significantly improved patient flow.





## Innovation and New Models of Care



It's no secret that the COVID pandemic resulted in significant change in healthcare environments. One of the most significant challenges was,

and still is, nurse staffing shortages. During a Chief Nursing Officer retreat, nurse leaders from MedStar put their heads together and decided to tackle the challenge head on. Together, they came up with creative strategies and solutions, with focus on fully utilizing available resources.

"We needed to make sure we were staffing in a way that allows our nurses to work to the top of their licensure, and knew we could fill gaps by bringing the LPN model back into the acute care setting," said Kim Schwenk, MSN, RN, vice

president and chief nursing officer at MedStar Franklin Square. "We also knew there was opportunity to be more efficient using continuous visual monitoring and virtual nursing, along with a RN/CPN/tech model, which ultimately formed our nursing SPRINT teams."

Virtual nursing was piloted on Tower 5 and Tower 6. The SPRINT team model was tested on Tower 6. Many key insights were gained, with the most impactful being that there are in fact new and better ways to manage capacity.

"We are doing things differently because we see the possibilities now," said Kim. "There is a strong level of collective knowledge that has been gained as we have recovered from the pandemic and moved on in creative ways."

Significant efforts were made this year to plan for remote visual monitoring and telesitting services, for implementation in Fiscal Year 2024.

## Growing our Interventional Cardiology Services

MedStar Franklin Square is growing its cardiac service line in a way that is allowing more patients, at higher levels of acuity, to be cared for in-house. The hospital recently earned designation as a CPORT-E Center from the Maryland Health Care Commission, allowing

for elective percutaneous coronary interventions (PCIs) to be performed. In line with that, investments are being made in people and technology, to expand diagnostic and interventional cardiac care.

"Nurses in our cardiac telemetry unit and intensive care unit have been uptrained, to assure they

have the right knowledge and skills to handle complex interventional procedures," said Fran Strauss, DNP, MBA, MHA, RN, CNOR, NE-BC, senior director of nursing operations and patient care services. "We are definitely seeing an increase in patients who require these services, and we are committed to putting the right resources in place to provide their care."

Construction is underway to expand space in the cardiac catheterization lab - making room for three new Tesla (T) MRI systems. Fran emphasized her appreciation for the nurse leaders, nursing teams, and professional development specialists who are working hard now to make these advancements possible.

"Trish Bray, who leads the cath lab, and Missy Baumgardner, who is leading our educational efforts, deserve credit for their outstanding efforts as we propel this vision forward," said Fran. "We are proud of the progress we've made in becoming true experts in the delivery of interventional cardiac care."



**Fran Strauss, DNP, MBA, MHA, RN, CNOR, NE-BC**





## Nurses Shine as **Comprehensive Stroke Center Designation is Achieved**



In November 2023, MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center was named a Comprehensive Stroke Center by The Joint Commission and The Maryland Institute of EMS Systems (MIEMSS). This is the highest level of designation that can be achieved and positions the hospital as one of the best places in the region to turn for lifesaving stroke care. According to Ariel Woodward, BSN, RN, stroke program coordinator, it could not have been done without the relentless commitment and compassion demonstrated by the nursing team.

“Our nursing leaders, professional development specialists, bedside nurses, Neuro IT team, and other clinical staff members have done a phenomenal job, and were engaged and supportive throughout the entire process as we transitioned from a Thrombectomy Capable Stroke Center to a Comprehensive Stroke Center,” said Ariel.

The hospital’s Stroke Response Unit provides a dedicated space for Intensive Care nurses, Emergency Department nurses, and multi-functional technicians to collaborate - leading stroke codes and administering medication as patients arrive and require immediate clinical attention. Nurses in the Intermediate Care Unit, Neurocritical Care Unit, and stroke units play a critical role as patients are admitted and require ongoing clinical care before, during, and following lifesaving procedures. The role of nursing remains important even after patients are discharged. Many take advantage of the nursing support and education offered by MedStar Franklin Square’s Post-Stroke Follow-up Clinic.

“The amount of documentation that is required throughout a stroke patient’s journey of care is incredibly detailed, and our nurses are very efficient and thorough,” said Ariel. “We would not have achieved this designation without the exceptionally devoted nurses at MedStar Franklin Square.”

The commitment of nurses has also made it possible for the stroke team to earn other important industry recognitions. Numerous Get with the Guidelines® Awards are presented each year by the American Heart Association, recognizing hospitals that are meeting and exceeding national benchmarks in the delivery of evidence-based stroke care. MedStar Franklin Square has been receiving these awards since 2010.

# Making Our Hospital Campus a Safe Place to Be

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center introduced a new system-wide Patient and Visitor Code of Conduct in early 2023, with a goal to set clear guidelines and expectations for how communication occurs amongst staff, patients, and visitors. It emphasizes the importance of treating others with kindness, dignity, and respect, while also recognizing the importance of patient privacy and the creation of an environment that supports healing. The Patient and Visitor Code of Conduct is posted at hospital entrance points and is shared throughout the patient care environment, to assure the guidelines and expectations are clear. It is also published in the Patient Admission and Discharge Packet, which is provided to all patients to optimize their experience during their time in the hospital.



**Nathan Barbo, FACHE**

“Our clinical and operational teams are committed to delivering the highest level of care for our patients, and they deserve respect as we interact with patients and visitors, and work to assure communication lines are clear and positive,” said Nathan Barbo, FACHE, senior vice president of operations.

“We are also reinforcing these guidelines and expectations during huddles and rounds, so that staff is continuously reminded about the steps we are taking to make our hospital campus safe.”

Another major effort to help increase safety and security is the hospital’s focus on de-escalation of hostile events and expansion of Workplace Violence Prevention. Local leadership collaborates with Bill Pallozzi, chief security officer for the system, and other leaders at the system-level, to offer frequent trainings, both virtually and in person for hands-on learning

opportunities. With enhanced reporting and data capabilities, trends and frequent areas where our associates and providers are experiencing hostile events can be more easily identified. When instances do occur, an event review is performed in a timely way to quickly respond, support our team members, and pursue remediation steps as needed. This has included many tactics, up to and including assistance to our staff members in pursuing legal action through the court system.

To further augment our safety and security efforts on campus, MedStar Franklin Square has invested in ID badge access readers and video cameras (interior & exterior) around campus, increased the locations and hours of contracted armed security, and engaged in frequent partnership discussions with Baltimore County Police Department’s leadership. For the year ahead, we have started planning combined drills with the police force and have reviewed new ways to stay connected between real events that occur.

“Sadly, there is a lot of violence taking place in today’s world, and we know that hospitals are not immune,” said Nathan. “Our proactive strategies and frequent event reviews aim to keep our teams safe, so that they can focus on our ultimate mission of caring for patients.”





## Spotlight on the Purple Ribbon Initiative

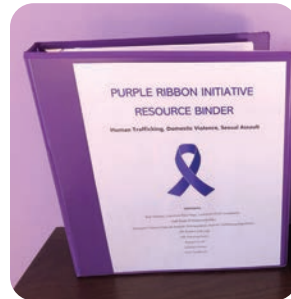
Caring for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking



The Purple Ribbon Initiative is a violence prevention program that has been adopted by various organizations and healthcare systems nationwide. Thanks to the dedication of a small group of nurses, MedStar Franklin Square became one of them in 2022. They saw a need to put standardized processes and protocols in place to care for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, as they were presenting in the Emergency Department (ED).

“Every patient has a unique and personal situation, and we needed to have the right knowledge and resources to identify the signs of violence and trafficking, and address them,” said Amanda Woodward, RN, case manager and co-chair of the Purple Ribbon Initiative. “The scenarios are diverse; we needed to know how to properly care for patients who are neglected, physically abused, sexually abused, or strangled, as well as how to gently communicate and earn their trust.”

Amanda, along with her colleague Jennifer DiNoto, MSN, RN, CEN, FNE-A/P, nursing professional development specialist and co-chair of the Purple Ribbon Initiative, got involved with



the Baltimore City Human Trafficking Medical Committee. Their goal was to gather information, perspective, and resources that could aid in the development of a standardized care plan for these patients.

Another goal was to develop an internal training program.

“Doctors, nurses, social workers, peer recovery coaches, technicians, and unit secretaries all need to understand how to work with these patients,” said Jennifer. “We created resource binders, packed with information, guidelines for communication and screening, algorithms for how to handle various patient scenarios, and lists of local resources that might be helpful for these patients once they leave the hospital.”

Jhila Snyder, LCSW-C, social work team lead, says these resources were especially important as she transitioned her role from Tower 5 to the ED.

“I didn’t realize I would encounter human trafficking cases, and I saw quickly that I needed to grow my knowledge so that I could help, and help fast,” said Jhila. “These patients are vulnerable and complex. We need to keep their needs at the forefront of our minds so we can see the signs and move quickly.”

Being able to identify the signs has led to a progressive uptick in the number of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking cases documented in the ED. Prior to February 2022, seven were documented. In 2022, 33 patient encounters were documented. In 2023, that number was 64.

“We have learned so much, and are so passionate about helping these patients,” said Jennifer.

# Optimizing the Patient Experience, Every Day

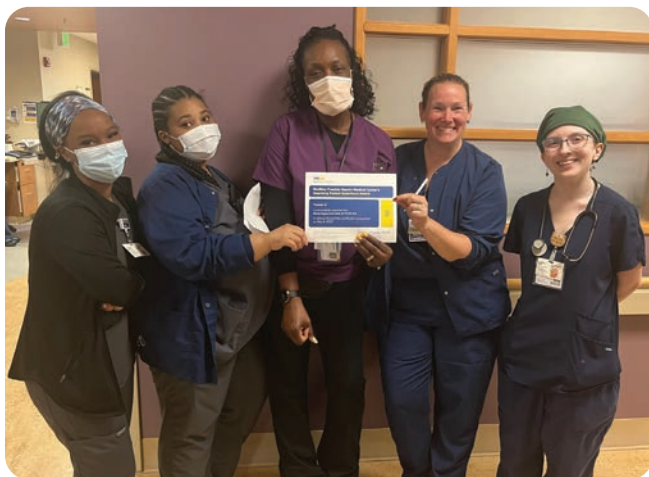
Hospital leaders are able to gain valuable insights and perspective from patients about the experience they had during their hospital stay, through use of the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey. In 2023, survey results proved that many positive things are happening at MedStar Franklin Square, with a remarkable 12.65 percent increase in our overall hospital rating documented between February and August.



**Rachael Kurek, MS,  
LSSGB, CPXP**

"We are seeing tremendous improvement due to many operational changes and initiatives that have been in place to assure our patients receive the best possible clinical care while also having the best possible patient experience," said Rachael Kurek, MS, LSSGB, CPXP, director of patient experience.

Among those changes - a reinvigoration of the bedside shift reporting process that engages the patient as shift changes take place. It gives patients a chance to connect with their nurse before he or she departs for the day, and instills confidence that the nurse who is taking over is updated on their established plan of care. This process increases communication, improves the human and personal connection between patients and their nurses, and allows for quick and efficient problem solving.

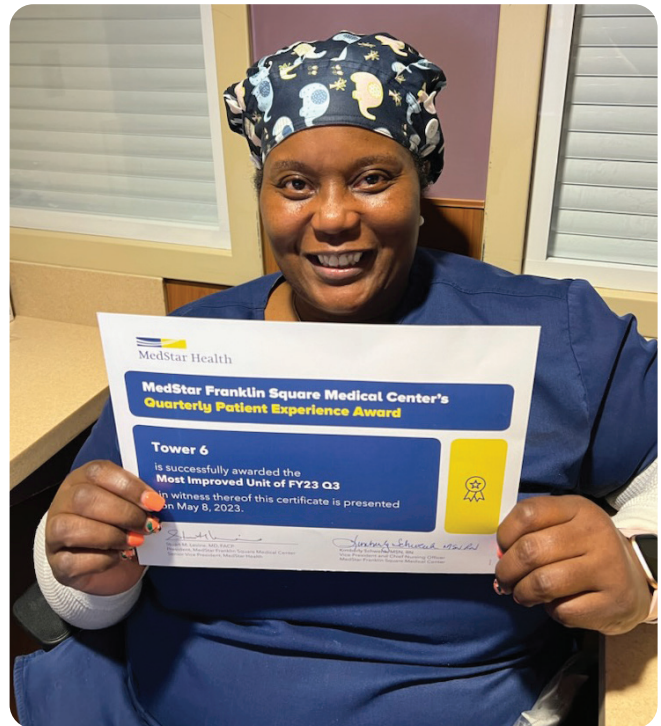


"Historically, patient experience has always been heavily driven by nursing, and our bedside shift report changes have resulted in increased positive feedback about our nursing teams," said Rachael. "Patients appreciate that their nurses and techs know them by name and that they are taking time to build relationships with them. It matters."

In June 2023, a link to MedStar Franklin Square's DAISY Award nomination form was added to the patient experience survey. The addition of the DAISY Award gives patients cared for in our inpatient, Emergency Department, and ambulatory care settings the opportunity to recognize nursing excellence, which in turn engages nurses with patient experience in a new and positive way. Additionally, new "Quality Talk Boards" were installed in various clinical care units across the house, demonstrating the link between patient experience initiatives and clinical outcomes.

"We are integrating patient experience into our culture in ways that shows everyone - both staff and patients - how important it is and how committed we are," said Rachael. "I am very proud of how far our team has come in a short amount of time."



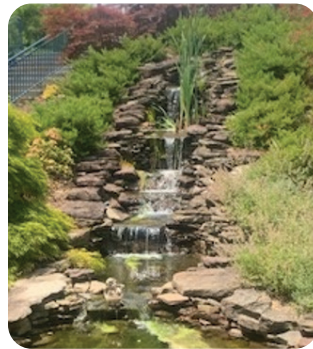




# Keeping Our Nurses Well, Balanced, and Supported

Nurses across MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center continue to take advantage of the many programs and services offered by the Wellness Team. Led by Orville Henry and Reverend Cherie Smith, and with executive leadership support from Stuart Levine, MD, FACP, and Nathan Barbo, FACHE, the Wellness Team's charter is to plan activities to promote good health and well-being in the workplace.

In line with continued demand, the Wellness Cart and Wellness Wagon rounded to the clinical units, delivering special treats and stress reduction tools. Other highlights in 2023 included the "Your Favorite Kiss" contest, a spring walking challenge, yoga classes, visits from lovable dogs, a carnival, seated back massages, breakroom upgrades, and various wellness presentations. Staff were also continuously encouraged to use wellness spaces across the hospital campus, established in both indoor and outdoor settings and with a collective goal to give people areas for rest and recharge.





# Embedding Education and Professional Development into Our Culture of Nursing

## Onboarding and Orientation

The Nursing Professional Development (NPD) team has developed a robust process for welcoming new and transferring nurses. Two comprehensive orientation sessions are held each month, allowing associates to learn essential information, skills, and competencies that are relevant to their new roles. Additionally, new nurses are connected with preceptors who provide guidance during and following the orientation process. During Fiscal Year 2023, a total of 477 new nurses completed orientation.



## Ongoing Professional Development

Nurses at MedStar Franklin Square are encouraged to pursue learning as a lifelong journey. One option is the Clinical Advancement Program (CAP), which recognizes nurses for their professional growth and valuable contributions to nursing. CAP nurses are supported as they work toward certifications, which establish professional credibility and demonstrate a higher level of clinical competence. In Fiscal Year 2023, Heather McKnee, Leah Christian, Sarah Potera, and Meredith Dunn were part of this program, along with existing CAP nurses, Nicole Nida and Deborah Rouse. Another example that demonstrates MedStar Franklin Square's commitment to ongoing professional development was the Labor and Delivery team's goal for all nurses to achieve certification in electronic fetal monitoring (C-EFM). Nurses participated in classes and online content reviews, and were provided with informational binders to prepare for their exams. By the end of Fiscal Year 2023, 100 percent of eligible nurses had become certified!



## Supporting New Program Implementation

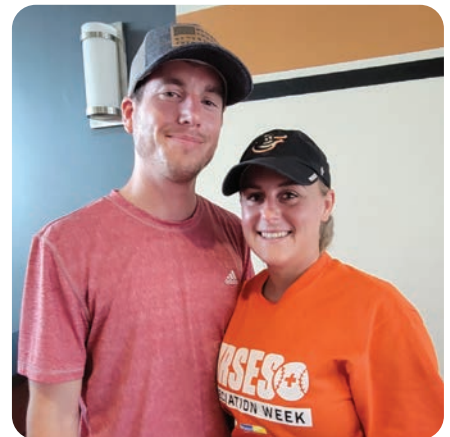
The Nursing Professional Development team plays an instrumental role as major educational initiatives are rolled out on the clinical units—from implementing new EKG machines and automating blood administration processes through barcoding, to introducing radial approaches for cardiac interventions and establishing bedside shift reports and Tenecteplase for stroke patients.

## Integrating Nursing Students into Our Clinical Environments

Nursing students at all levels have opportunities to engage at MedStar Franklin Square. The Student Nurse Extern (SNE) program is available for nursing students entering their senior year, and offers a robust practicum experience, along with training and education sessions on various clinical topics. Additionally, in Fiscal Year 2023, three cohorts of nursing students graduated from the Nurse Residency Program. This year-long program assists new-to-practice nurses in the transition to nursing student to bedside nurse, with focus on communication, critical thinking, and safety. Residents complete reflection exercises and present evidence-based practice projects to complete the program.

# Celebrating Nurses with a **Splash of Orange**

A Night Out at Camden Yards





## Messages of Gratitude, Expressed During Nurses Week

Every May, hospitals celebrate the valuable and impactful work of those who work on the front line with a special line-up of Nurses Week events. MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center's leadership team puts a lot of time, thought, energy, and love into planning a series of activities to celebrate our nurses and commemorate the many ways their work makes a positive difference. One of those events is a special awards ceremony, with remarks from key leaders. Here, we share some of what was said by those who know and understand just how important the role of nursing is.



"You are beautiful, strong, and smart. You could have done anything, and you chose to be nurses. We are so grateful for you and proud of the work you do."

—Rev. Cherie Smith, MDIV, BCC  
Director of Pastoral Care Services

"Thank you for what you do for our patients, our community, and our hospital. You did tremendous work before the pandemic and during the pandemic. Today I want to thank you for all you are doing after the pandemic."

—Chukwuma Ebo, MD  
President of the Medical Staff



"You have been through a lot in the past three years. It has been difficult. It has been challenging. In many ways it has also been rewarding. No group of healthcare workers has been through more, or contributed more than you – our nurses. I want to say thank you. You not only got through it, but you are also an example of how to rise above. The best days are ahead of us. I am so proud of you and proud to be your colleague."

—Stuart Levine, MD, FACP  
President

"Our theme for Nurses Week was 'You Make a Difference' and that difference has been seen in so many ways. So much has happened over the past three years. Relish in those experiences and use what we have learned to move forward. Now is the time for new beginnings for a team of nurses whose work is excellent and admirable, in every way."

—Kim Schwenk, MSN, RN  
Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer



"Thank you for educating our doctors over the years. They are better people because of what they have learned from you. I see you. I appreciate you. And I want to thank you and congratulate you."

—Stephanie Detterline, MD  
Vice President of Medical Affairs

# Celebrating Our Nurse of the Year

## Alisson Arias Lopez, RN, ADN



As a clinical nurse on the behavioral health unit at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, Alisson Arias Lopez, RN, ADN, wants her patients to understand that her goal is not to change them. Instead, she is there to guide them. It's

an important message for every patient who is suffering with mental health challenges, but is especially critical for Alisson's patients, who range in age from 11 to 17, and have been admitted to the hospital for comprehensive inpatient care.

"We have so much opportunity to make a big difference for kids, and it's such a privilege to see how much they can improve when they are being taken care of by someone they trust," said Alisson. "I get attached to my patients and will do anything I can to help them and give them hope."

It's that level of personal commitment to her work that earned Alisson recognition as MedStar Franklin Square's 2023 Nurse of the Year. It's an honor she never expected to receive, but will always remember as a major milestone in her career.

"There are so many amazing nurses at this hospital, so I never expected to hear my name called," said Alisson. "It was such a proud moment—to not only win the award, but also to understand how much I am valued as a nurse."

Alisson says she is grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a strong team of clinical care providers who are diligently working to address today's youth mental health crisis. There is comfort in knowing you are surrounded by a team that will jump in quickly and help when someone is in crisis, and where leaders are willing to hear and embrace new ideas.

"I feel like I am part of a family when I come into work," said Alisson, who plays an especially critical role when patients and families are in need of translation services. She is fluent in Spanish!

Alisson's husband Brian (pictured below), was in attendance when her award was announced. Shortly afterward, she put a Facetime call into her parents, who were in tears upon hearing her exciting news.

"My family is Salvadorian, and psychiatric health is not talked about openly in our native culture. So, it took a long time for my parents to understand what I do and why it is important," said Alisson. "Today, they are so proud of me."

Outside of work, Alisson enjoys exercising, hiking, gardening, cleaning, visiting her parents, and spending quality time with her husband and their two dogs, Biscuit and Raven.





# Service Line Awards

Nurses Week is the perfect time to recognize nurses who set a positive example for those around them. Each year, MedStar Franklin Square identifies a few stellar nurses who work in each core clinical area of the hospital. From each set of nominees, a service line award winner is announced. We congratulate our 2023 honorees!



**Rachel Bullock, RN**  
Nurse Residency



**Tinna Kersey, RN**  
Ambulatory and  
Community Health



**Alisson Arias Lopez, RN**  
Behavioral Health



**Catherine Michaelis, RN**  
Critical Care



**Brooke Bonnell, RN**  
Medicine/Surgery



**Lauren Askew, RN**  
Perioperative Services



**Helena Chescini, RN**  
Supplemental Staff



**Christina Bertram, RN**  
Women's and Children's



**Elizabeth Chandler, RN**  
Advance Practice



**Jessica Johnson, RN**  
Outstanding Nurse in a  
Support Role



**Soumya Xavier, RN**  
Distinguished Nurse in a  
Leadership Role

## MedStar Health IMPACT Award

Amanda Woodward, RN, and  
Jennifer DiNoto, MSN, RN, CEN, FNE-A/P



Amanda and Jennifer were presented with this award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to launching and growing the Purple Ribbon Initiative at MedStar Franklin Square (see page 9 for more information). The award celebrates the efforts of nurses, clinicians, and teams that support advancing practice, quality and process improvement, strategic goals, patient experience, and research. Chief Nursing Officers at each hospital partner with nursing leaders to identify and nominate associates or teams for award consideration at the system level. The award is presented quarterly by LynnMarie Verzino, senior vice president and chief nursing officer of MedStar Health.

## SPIRIT SuperStar Awards



Kate McCreesh, RN

Kate was presented with this award in recognition of her quick and efficient response when an unusual emergency happened on our hospital campus. Kate was walking to her car when she witnessed

a car jump a curb on the CCBC campus, right next door, hitting a transformer and landing on hospital grounds. Seeing that the driver was trapped, Kate called 911 and immediately began trying to assist. During this time, Kate felt a surge of electricity go through her body. This is when she noticed that live electrical wires from the transformer were touching the car. She calmly backed away, while continuing to comfort and support the driver as first responders were en route. Kate stayed on-site and helped the driver for over an hour as efforts were made to extract her from the vehicle, and transfer her to MedStar Franklin Square for care. She exemplified MedStar's SPIRIT values through her caring actions, choosing to help even when her own safety was at risk.



Ariel Woodward,  
BSN, RN

Ariel earned this award for her ongoing demonstration of MedStar's SPIRIT values in her day-to-day work. However, a specific

situation with a patient on Tower 5 is what truly inspired her nomination. One day, a stroke code was called on the neuro floor, and although Ariel is not responsible for responding, she immediately sprang into action, knowing the unit was short staffed. She assisted with line placement and helped with medication prep, so that tPA could be administered as quickly as possible. She remained with the patient in the CT area for nearly two hours, providing nonstop support for both the patient and the other clinical providers who were involved. As stroke coordinator, Ariel's job is very focused on data collection but on this particular day, she did not hesitate to shift quickly into the role of patient care provider. She truly went above and beyond for the wellbeing of the patient and her team.



## Baltimore Magazine Excellence in Nursing Awards

Every May, Baltimore magazine publishes its annual "Excellence in Nursing" list. It honors nurses who practice all over the greater Baltimore area and who go above and beyond the call of duty. Nominations are submitted by healthcare professionals and patients, and are reviewed by a panel of nursing advisors and leaders who understand the complexities today's nurses face in their day-to-day work.

We are incredibly proud that MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center was represented on the list in 2023, with five nurses earning recognition. We congratulate and thank each for their outstanding contributions to our hospital and the delivery of excellence in nursing for the patients we serve.

**Pictured left to right: Irmalyn Carreon, BSN, RNC-NIC; Patrick Mayo, BSHCA, BSN, RN; Sara McJilton, BSN, RN; Stephanie Dawson, MS, BSN, RN; and Laura Butler, MS, RN-BC, CNL.**



## DAISY Awards

DAISY Awards recognize nurses who go above and beyond the duty, and demonstrate excellence in nursing in ways that inspire others to be their best. Congratulations!



**Michelle Frock, RN**  
Mother/Baby Unit



**Tanisha Thomas, RN**  
Emergency Department



**Diodetta Ricohermoso, RN**  
Intensive Care Unit



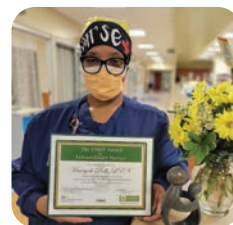
**Susan Piscitelli, RN**  
Nursing Supervisor



**Alex O'Bara, RN**  
Tower 1



**Brooke Bonnell, RN**  
Tower 6



**Miwaya Bell, LPN**  
Emergency Department

### Fast Fact!

Mawiyah was the first LPN at MedStar Franklin Square to win this award!

# Technology Advancements, Supported by Nursing Champions

MedStar Franklin Square's nursing informatics team is constantly examining ways to integrate technology and innovation into the clinical care environment, with a goal to optimize workflows, efficiency, staff satisfaction, and patient outcomes.



In 2023, one significant implementation was the Cerner Bridge Program, which eliminated the need for written documentation (on paper) for blood product transfusions and improved electronic breast milk administration.

Both processes optimize patient safety through positive patient identification at the bedside and improve workflow through use of barcode technology. The Bridge Breast Milk Program allows for tracking, storage, thawing, preparation, administration, and expiration management of products, electronically. The Cerner system integrates with MedConnect, making it possible for nurses to log-in, see volumes, and view exactly what is happening with products their patients need, in real time. In the early stages of this project, pilot work groups were formed and nurses were asked to provide input and feedback. This allowed the informatics team to customize and optimize the application based on what the nursing team at MedStar Franklin Square needs.



**Alicia Wilkerson,  
MSN, RN, CCRN**

"The process of preparing, building, testing, and training was intense, and also very collaborative," said Alicia Wilkerson, MSN, RN, CCRN, informatics nurse specialist. "Bridge is a reflection of true collaboration between nursing professional development and

informatics. The teamwork was amazing, which made the training and the go live process so successful."

Another key technology priority was the integration of a new capacity management tool in MedConnect, designed to optimize throughput in the Emergency Department, ambulatory surgery, and in admission, transfer, and discharge procedures, for utilization across MedStar Health.

"There was an opportunity for all 10 MedStar hospitals to align, and work together to move patients throughout the healthcare system in a more streamlined manner," said Stephanie Dawson, MSN, BSN, RN, informatics nurse specialist. "We took what was working best at each entity, and brought it all together to create a standardized and collaborative capacity management tool that can be used across all of the hospitals."



**Stephanie Dawson,  
MSN, BSN, RN**

The capacity management tool is instrumental during patient volume surges, and when patients require transfer within the MedStar system. Nurses from every clinical area were involved as the tool was built from the ground up, and then as training and implementation took place.

"The perspective of our bedside nurses and nursing leadership was so important because they need transparency of patient care across the system, so the right clinical decisions can be made for patient transfers," said Stephanie. "Throughput is always a challenge, but this tool gives us a new approach, and we are continuously assessing and changing our applications based on user input."





## Why is MedStar Franklin Square a great place to advance your nursing career?



"MedStar Franklin Square is known for its commitment to professional development, offering a range of educational opportunities to assist in advancing our careers. In 2022, I had the opportunity to participate in the Wharton Nurse Leadership Development Program (NLDP) which provided invaluable education and mentorship directly related to my role as a new nurse leader. From this, I am collaborating with other leaders to work on initiatives that will directly support our organizational growth. This is one example of how MedStar Franklin Square invests in professional development for its nurses."

–Mary Rice, BSN, RN



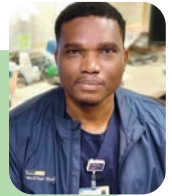
"The Nursing Professional Development team is here to support you during all stages of your nursing career and professional life-long learning journey. There is support if you are interested in going back to school, while you are in school, as you transition to new nurse, as an experienced nurse with certification, professional development engagement experiences, and the clinical advancement program- just to name a few!"

–Beth Kilmoyer, DNP, MS, RN-BC, NPD-BC



"I have been able to excel in my professional practice as a bedside operating room nurse and also participate in unit based, hospital-wide, and system-wide councils. My peers and leaders have encouraged me to pursue advancement on the clinical ladder and have allowed me to be part of service line performance improvement projects, and therefore seen as an integral part of our perioperative services team."

– Gina McDonnell, MBA, BSN, RN, CNOR



"MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center offers a robust Clinical Advancement Program (CAP) in a supportive environment that encourages professional development. Its commitment to innovative technology and patient-centered care, paired with a reputation for nurturing leadership, makes it an ideal workplace for nurses aspiring to excel in their field."

–Paul Ademola, BSN, RN-BC, PMHN



"Over my 15-year career with MedStar, I've been encouraged and supported in my growth and development. Our leaders are always guiding me to consider future opportunities. They are committed to associate development and have helped me achieve my goals."

–Cindy Roles, MSN, RN, CNML

# Giving Back to Our Community in Meaningful Ways









## A Special Tribute

Honoring the Lifetime Contributions of Our Own Debbie Kisner



After calling MedStar Franklin Square home for 36 years, Debbie Kisner, PhD, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC, closed her office door and departed the building for the final time, in February 2023. While she has transitioned into retirement and her well-deserved “golden years,” Debbie will always be known and respected as a transformational nurse leader whose skills, talent, and compassion helped make MedStar Franklin Square the hospital it is, today.

“MedStar gave me so many opportunities throughout my career, that I will forever be grateful for,” said Debbie. “I am so proud of the things that were accomplished during my time here, especially our repeated achievement of Magnet designation and our phenomenal response as a nursing team during the COVID pandemic.”

Debbie assumed the role of vice president and chief nursing officer at MedStar Franklin Square in 2016, after serving as vice president of nursing operations since 2013. Before that, she served in a variety of nursing leadership roles, always promoting the importance of collaboration between the nursing team, physicians, leadership,

and support services teams. Debbie was a leader who advocated for and supported nurses at all levels within the organization. She wanted to hear the voice of nurses, and empowered them to make key decisions that could influence safety, quality, and the practice of nursing.

“As a leader here, so much of my focus was on relationship building and investing in people. I feel so fortunate that I was able to do so much of that during my time as a leader,” said Debbie. “What I will miss the most are the people—both here at this hospital and across the system.”

In retirement, Debbie is spending time with her husband Darrell, her three adult children, Dustin, Chip, and Amanda, and her grandchildren. She is also looking forward to doing some of the things she hasn’t had time for in the midst of her busy career.

“I finally have time to clean my house and do some of those home improvement projects I have been thinking about for a while,” said Debbie, with a giggle. “I am ready!”



In 2023, MedStar Franklin Square announced that a new award will be presented each year, fondly called “**The Kisner Award.**” This award will honor Debbie’s legacy, while recognizing nursing lifetime achievements and supporting nursing professional development.



# Nurse Leadership Directory

## Senior Nursing Leadership



**Kimberly Schwenk, MSN, RN**

Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer



**Cindy Roles, MSN, RN, CNML**

Assistant Vice President, Nursing Operations & Patient Care Services



**Courtney Schappell, MSN, RN**

Senior Director, Critical Care (ICU & IMC)



**Susan Pribyl, MSN, RN, CMSRN**

Senior Director, Med/Surg, Oncology



**Rebecca Landreth, MS, BSN, RN**

Senior Director, Nursing Administration, Behavioral Health & Womens & Children



**Frances Strauss, DNP, MBA, MHA, RN, CNOR, NE-BC**

Senior Director, Perioperative, Interim Operating Room

## Inpatient Directors



**Sharon Bonner, MS, RN-BC**

Multisite Director, Clinical Informatics



**Gina Shelley, DNP, MS, RN, CENP, NPD-BC**

Director, Nursing Practice Innovation & Magnet



**Becky Grant, MSN, RN**

Director, Capacity Management



**Beth Kilmoyer, DNP, MS, RN-BC, NPD-BC**

Multisite Director Professional Development



**Kurt Strudwick, MS, RRT-NPS**

Director, Cardiopulmonary Services



**Erika Akers, MSN, RN**

Director, Ambulatory Oncology



**Karen Polite-Lamma, MSN, RN, CTTS, NCTTP, MCHES\***

Interim RN Regional Director, Population & Community Health

## Outpatient Directors

## Patient Care Directors

### Med/Surg and Critical Care



**Gail Zephyr, MSN, RN, OCN**

T1 Med/Surg/3SB Oncology



**Nathaniel Woods, BSN, RN, CCRN**

T2 ICU



**Jacob Russ, BSN, RN**

T3 IMC



**Nadine Henry-Thomas, DNP, MSN-Ed, CMSRN, PCCN**

T4 Acute Cardiac



**Heather Lyon, BSN, RN, CMSRN**

T5 Neuro-Tele/Med/Surg



**Kandace Goode-Janczak, MSN, RN**

T6 Med/Surg/Renal

### Women's & Children's Services



**Sasha Francis, MHA, MSN, WHNP-BC**

Mother/Baby



**Alexius Hall, MSN, BSN, RNC-NIC**

NICU, Interim Labor & Delivery



**Trish Bray, RN BSN CGRN**

ASC, PACU, ENDO, IRU, Cath Lab

### Perioperative Svcs.



**Nicole Noga, BSN, RN**

ED & Stroke Response

### ED & Stroke



**Mary Rice, BSN, RN**

Float Pool

### Float Pool



**Cindy Ebelein, PMH-BC**

2SB, CAPS, CIS

### Behavioral Health

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center  
9000 Franklin Square Dr.  
Baltimore, MD 21237  
**MedStarFranklinSquare.org**



MedStar Health