



2023 SSM Health Nursing Annual Review



Connect. Inspire. Belong.





Table of Contents

Welcome	1
Senior Leadership Team	3
SSM Health Overview	4
System Nursing Professional Practice Model	5
Strategic Framework	7
I Am Statements	8
I Am a Professional	9
I Am an Advocate	27
I Am a Partner	34
I Am Accountable	40
I Am a Leader	47
SSM Health Ministries	54

Welcome

From Our Chief Nurse Executive



As we reflect on the remarkable journey of 2023, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for each and every one of you. Your unwavering dedication, compassion, and commitment to excellence have been the cornerstone of our success throughout the year. Your ability to adapt, innovate, and collaborate has been truly inspiring, and it is a testament to your exceptional skills and character. I want to take this opportunity to shine a spotlight on the extraordinary achievements of our nursing team.

From implementing innovative patient care initiatives to leading groundbreaking research projects, your contributions have been instrumental in advancing the Mission of our organization. Your dedication to continuous learning and improvement has not only elevated the standard of care we provide but has also inspired positive change within our health care community.

Looking ahead, I am filled with optimism for the future of nursing. As we navigate the evolving landscape of health care, I am confident that our nursing team will continue to lead with compassion, professionalism, and excellence. Together, we will embrace new challenges as opportunities for growth, and we will continue to push the boundaries of what is possible.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your exceptional service and unwavering commitment to our patients, our organization, and each other. Your dedication and resilience are truly the heart and soul of our nursing team, and I am honored to work alongside such an extraordinary group of professionals.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Amy Wilson, DNP, RN, CPHQ

From the Chair of Our System Professional Nursing Practice Council (SPNPC)

My name is **Alicia Elliston**, and my career at SSM Health started in 2014 on a telemetry unit at Good Samaritan Hospital in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. Since that time, I have worked as a staff nurse in the Southern Illinois Region in CCU, Cardiac Cath Lab, and the Float Pool. **I became a member of SPNPC in 2020, representing Southern Illinois, and accepted the Chair in 2023.** My affiliation with Shared Governance began at the unit and regional level with hopes of *inspiring better morale* through COVID-19 and encouraging the idea of *getting back to the basics*. I have learned to truly appreciate the meaning of Shared Governance. **We encourage all nurses to own their work, respect fellow nurses, and strive to uphold our Mission and Values at SSM Health.**

The **System Professional Nursing Practice Council** represents every Ministry and department in one capacity or another. As frontline, hands-on, bedside nurses, **we are a voice for nursing**. We are respected and appreciated for what we bring to the table. *We have developed into a strong team, determined to accomplish goals that were set this past year.* We strive to **“make the nurse's day and patient's lives easier across SSM Health”**. We have worked hard to set up an environment for a nurse to feel *empowered to speak up, ask questions, and express differing opinions*. We support and encourage one another through all endeavors.

We work diligently to accomplish our goals by attending SPNPC meetings and soliciting feedback from our local nurses. Subgroups have been formed to better understand issues, discuss what decisions need to be made, and how those will affect our fellow nurses. **Schwartz Rounds** were conducted to discuss the effects of COVID-19 and how to obtain a healthy work-life balance. We follow SSM Health KPIs while using evidence-based practice to provide structure and guidance to the ever-changing nursing field in which we work.

Nurse Well-Being is a project I am very passionate about and fortunate to be a part of. We are taking charting with EPIC and streamlining it to benefit practicing clinicians. This is being accomplished in four waves with two waves already in effect. I am proud to be a part of such an amazing council. I've learned so much from this group of phenomenal nurses and leaders. This council will continue to accomplish great things as Leslie Tomlin, RN, BSN transitions from co-chair to chair.

Please reach out to your regional nursing councils and leaders if you'd like to learn more.



Alicia Elliston, RN, CCRN

Chair, System Professional Nursing Practice Council



Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team is SSM Health's highest level of leadership in the system and is responsible for key strategic, operating, and clinical decisions to ensure the best possible outcomes for our team members, patients, and the communities we serve.



Steve Smoot
Chief Operating
Officer



Amy Wilson, DNP, RN
Chief Nursing
Executive



Laura S. Kaiser
President/Chief
Executive Officer



Joan Bachleitner
Chief Strategy
Officer



Carter Dredge
Lead
Futurist



Janet Smith-Hill
Chief Human
Resources Officer



Stephanie Duggan, MD
Chief Clinical
Officer



Kevin Smith
Chief Financial
Officer



John Nguyen
Chief Administrative
Officer



Patrick McCrudden
Chief Mission
Integration Officer



Douglas P. Long
General
Counsel



Alexander Garza, MD
Chief Community
Health Officer

Organizational Overview

SSM Health is a Catholic, not-for-profit health system serving the comprehensive health needs of communities across the Midwest through a robust and fully integrated health care delivery system. The organization's 40,000 team members and more than 13,900 providers are committed to [providing exceptional health care services and revealing God's healing presence](#) to everyone they serve.

With care delivery sites in [Southern Illinois](#), the [Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area](#), [Mid-Missouri](#), [Oklahoma](#), and [South Central Wisconsin](#), SSM Health includes 23 hospitals, more than 650 physician offices and other outpatient and virtual care services, 12 post-acute facilities, comprehensive home care and hospice services, a pharmacy benefit company, a health insurance company, and an accountable care organization. It is one of the largest employers in every community it serves.



Our Mission, Vision, Values

Our Mission

Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.

Taking nearly a year with input from 3,000 employees, a short, but powerful Mission statement was formed and continues to inspire and guide us in our work each day.

Our Vision

Peace, hope and health for every person, family, and community, especially those most in need.

Our Values

Inspired by our founding religious sisters, we value the sacredness and dignity of each person. Therefore, we find these five Values consistent with our heritage and ministry:

- **Compassion:** We reveal the healing presence of God through compassionate care focused on the fullness of the person.
- **Respect:** We respect life at all stages and promote the dignity and well-being of every person.
- **Excellence:** We provide exceptional care and service through employees and physicians dedicated to our Mission.
- **Stewardship:** We use financial, human, and natural resources responsibly and care for the environment.
- **Community:** We cultivate relationships that inspire service and promote justice in our organization and throughout our communities, with special concern for the poor and marginalized.

System Nursing Professional Practice Model

The System Nursing Professional Practice Model was created in 2016 by the System Professional Nursing Practice Council as a visual representation of what we in nursing contribute to SSM Health. A professional practice model provides a universal set of expectations for SSM Health nurses. Guided by this shared philosophy across our system, we can provide consistent, exceptional service to our patients, customers, and the communities we serve. The practice model:

- **Defines structure, process, and values to guide and support team members.**
- **Serves as a visual tool to help explain how exceptional care is delivered.**
- **Provides a framework to guide and evaluate practices.**

Nursing Philosophy:

As SSM Health nurses, we have the responsibility to carry on the ministry our founding sisters set forth more than 150 years ago; it is in our hands. SSM Health nurses consider our work and calling to be grounded in sacred trust. We strive for continuous improvement to provide exceptional care while revealing the healing presence of God through:



Nursing Professional Practice Model

Our Mission: Through our exceptional health care services,
we reveal the healing presence of God.

Our Values: Compassion • Respect • Excellence • Stewardship • Community

Sacred Trust

Shared Leadership • Relationship-Based Care

Patient
and
Family







Nursing Philosophy

As SSM Health nurses, we have the responsibility to carry on the ministry our founding sisters set forth more than 145 years ago; it is in our hands. SSM Health nurses consider our work and calling to be grounded in sacred trust. We strive for continuous improvement to provide exceptional care while revealing the healing presence of God through:

- Creating an innovative environment through interprofessional collaboration for the achievement of excellence while advancing and contributing to the profession.
- Advocating for our patients, with special concern for those who are underserved and marginalized.
- Partnering with patients, families, customers and colleagues to provide exceptional care and service in every encounter.
- Demonstrating accountability to our patients and colleagues for our practice and for achieving exceptional outcomes.
- Serving as a leader of the care team and being instrumental in implementing our Mission.



Strategic Framework

Strategic Pillars	Strategies
<p>Community <i>Health equity for all</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Health • Care Gaps • Healthy Environments
<p>Culture and Inclusion <i>A flourishing culture that promotes the individual dignity and well-being of our team members and carries forward the heritage of SSM Health.</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and Formation • Safe and Thriving Workplace • Comprehensive Talent Approach • Diversity, Inclusion, & Belonging
<p>Exceptional Care and Performance <i>A high-performing system that helps people live healthy lives</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, Safety, Service, and Affordability • Home-based and Virtual Care • Primary Care Optimization
<p>Growth and Sustainability <i>A value-based economic model that delivers health care transformation</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-Based Performance • Revenue Diversification • Smart Growth

**I am a
professional**

I am a professional...

I create an innovative environment for achievement of exceptional outcomes while advancing and contributing to the profession.

I seek ways to broaden my knowledge and continually pursue professional development and life-long learning.

**I am an
advocate**

I am an advocate...

I am an advocate for my patients, with special concern for those who are underserved and marginalized. I support other nurses in my profession, offering exceptional mentoring, teaching, and coaching.

I act in ways to advance the best interests of my patients.

**I am a
partner**

I am a partner...

I partner with patients, families, customers and colleagues to provide exceptional care and service in every encounter.

I communicate well with colleagues.

**I am
accountable**

I am accountable...

I am accountable to my patients and colleagues for delivering our best practice and for achieving exceptional outcomes.

I am competent, using research and evidence-based practice to support my nursing practice.

**I am a
leader**

I am a leader...

I am responsible for serving as a leader on my team and in my department. I am instrumental in implementing our Mission.

I participate in practice councils or teams focused on improvements in nursing.

I am a professional

Professionalism is not just about what you do, but how you do it. It's about taking pride in your work, demonstrating integrity in your actions, and showing respect for others.



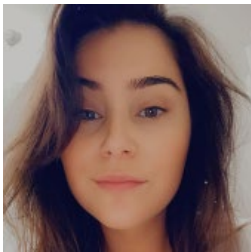
Professional Practice Model Awards

The **Professional Practice Model (PPM) Awards** were created in 2018 to recognize nurses who embody our PPM through their consistent, exceptional service to our patients, customers, and the communities we serve. Our model is operationalized through our “I am” statements. We partner with patients, families, providers, and each other, using practices that are restorative, supportive, and promotive in nature. **In 2023, over 250 nurses were nominated for the PPM Awards.** Our winners were:



I am a professional: Elizabeth A. Fritz, PhD, NPDA-BC
System Office Program Manager Clinical Education

“Elizabeth shares her passion for advancing nursing research and EBP through her precepting and mentoring of both students and colleagues. She continually broadens her knowledge and pursues professional development and lifelong learning through her completion of an advanced education degree PhD, ongoing research projects, numerous publications, and several certifications in her areas of specialty.”



I am an advocate: Mallory Donahue, RN
SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital - Madison

“Mallory is skilled at holding her coworkers accountable to providing unbiased care. She approaches sensitive subject in nonconfrontational and objective ways that makes her coworkers reflect. She is the first person to note special concerns when caring for a specific patient population.”



I am a partner: Lisa Smieja, RN
SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital - Madison

“Lisa is a true team player and does what is needed without complaints. Whether it’s a funny story, a deliciously made coffee or heartfelt advice, Lisa’s support to her coworkers is endless. She spreads a loving and fun atmosphere throughout 2E. Lisa was truly meant to be a nurse. It’s very clear that she has found her passion and purpose.”



I am accountable: Sylvia Barnes, RN
SSM Health St. Clare Hospital - Fenton

“Sylvia pulls policies and review proper documentation with all the new graduates – which in turn becomes a policy review for our entire unit! Because of Sylvia’s dedication to teaching and coaching our new graduates – our entire unit is benefiting. I am so thankful and proud of the work she has put in for our unit and could not be more thankful for her!”



I am a leader: Alicia Elliston, RN, CCRN
SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital - Centralia

“Alicia partners with everyone so the work can get done. Her dedication to the art of nursing is evident by her compassion, articulation of ideas, day-to-day accomplishments with staff and patients. She continues to lead through example by obtaining her specialty certification. She is the person everyone wants on their team. She may not have a leadership title, but she leads by example.”

System Professional Nursing Practice Council

The System Professional Nursing Practice Council (SPNPC) defines the practice of nursing at SSM Health. SPNPC has the authority and accountability to establish and maintain the evidence-based standards of practice, policies, and procedures that describe and guide nursing care. Representation on the council includes a direct-care nurse from each ministry, subject matter experts from various departments including Infection Prevention, Nursing Informatics, Clinical Education, etc., and a nursing practice lead representative from each region.

Role of the SPNPC Council member includes:

- Being the voice of frontline nurses when making decisions that affect the nursing profession and patient care
- Exploring issues and challenges related to defining, advancing, and improving nurses' roles in health care
- Partnering with other clinical and operational leaders to transform and advance nursing principles, values, protocols, measures, and practices
- Applying evidence-based learning and practices in decision making
- Supporting the enculturation of the Nursing Professional Practice Model
- Facilitating communication between the council and frontline staff
- Participating in decision-making that supports our Mission, Vision, Values, Quality Principles and Strategic Plan

Here are a few examples of the many initiatives SPNPC accomplished in 2023:

- SPNPC partnered with SSM IHT and Epic to **reduce the nursing documentation burden** through the ongoing **Project One, the Nurse Well-Being project**. The primary goals of this project were to reduce nurses' time spent on documentation and improve patient outcomes and nursing satisfaction by returning nurses' time to caregiving.
- As part of this project, SPNPC assisted in developing **SSM Health's guiding principles for EHR documentation**, and multiple team members participated in the in-person design sessions in Verona, WI.
- Created a new **System Professional Nursing Practice Council SharePoint** to increase awareness of the SPNPC [System Professional Nursing Practice Council - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)
- Members assisted with reviewing and developing the **new SSM Health Heparin Nomograms**.
- Hosted the first annual **"Recognizing Excellence in SSM Health Nursing Practice"** event honoring the 2023 Professional Practice Model Award winners and the 2023 DAISY Lifetime Achievement Award recipients.
- Assisted with the **SSM Health Hypoglycemia FMEA** work, identifying gaps and solutions to preventing hypoglycemia events.
- Supported the **SDoH screening rollout**, ensuring that nurses were aware of the new screening and why it was important to the health and well-being of our patients and their families.

System Nursing Professional Development Council

The System Nursing Professional Development Council was formed in January 2023 to help guide and encourage professional development, support career growth, and maintain the Clinical Ladder Program. Current council members represent areas like Continuum of Care, Ambulatory, and Acute Care. In October, SNPDC announced the launch of the SSM Health Professional Development Website. This site contains a leader playbook and information about professional development opportunities including nursing professional organizations and certifications, nursing career pathways, tuition discounts, and the interprofessional clinical ladder program. These resources are here to help you grow and develop professionally. The site can be accessed via this link: [Professional Development - Home](#) or by selecting Professional Development from the Clinicians Tab on the Intranet Homepage.

“Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses...we must be learning all of our lives.”
~Florence Nightingale

MyLearning Continuing Education – Free Certification Prep Courses

MyLearning Continuing Education is a resource available to all SSM Health employees. It provides free continuing education credits. There are a series of certification prep courses available for a variety of nursing professional certifications, including but not limited to the following:

- Certified Nurse Manager Leader (CNML)
- Certified Infection Control Nurse (CIC)
- Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN)
- Pediatric Nursing Certification (PED-BC)
- Informatics Nursing Certification (RN-BC)
- Cardiovascular Nursing Level I (CVRN-BC)
- Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN)
- Critical Care Certified Nurse (CCRN)
- Certified Ostomy Care Nurse (COCN)
- Certified Neuroscience Nurse (CNRN)
- Certified Medical Surgical Nurse (CMSRN)

A banner for MyLearning: Continuing Education. It features a blue header with the text "MyLearning: Continuing Education" and a photo of four healthcare professionals. Below the header, there is a white box with blue text that reads: "Need continuing education credits or professional development? MyLearning: Continuing Education has thousands of courses available to help satisfy continuing education needs for 20+ professions. You can search based upon your area of interest OR your licensure requirements." Below this, there is a smaller line of text: "Don't need continuing education credits? There are additional professional development opportunities, even if you don't require continuing education." At the bottom of the white box, there is a blue link: "Click to access MyLearning: Continuing Education".

MyLearning: Continuing Education

Need continuing education credits or professional development?
MyLearning: Continuing Education has thousands of courses available to help satisfy continuing education needs for 20+ professions. You can search based upon your area of interest OR your licensure requirements.

Don't need continuing education credits? There are additional professional development opportunities, even if you don't require continuing education.

[Click to access MyLearning: Continuing Education](#)

To access MyLearning: Continuing Education, log into MyLearning (LMS). On the right side of the homepage, click to enter MyLearning: Continuing Education.

Evidence-Based Practice Cohort Spotlight



Over the past year, I participated in the Evidence-Based Practice Fellowship Program. This program entailed monthly workshops and a mentorship program to guide me through the Evidence-based Practice process to address the long-standing issue of lateral violence, also known as bullying in the workplace. Through my research and guidance in this program, I developed a much-needed workshop surrounding bullying in the workplace.

Bullying in the workplace, also known as incivility and lateral violence, are behaviors that intend to harm, shame, intimidate or isolate an individual, or group of individuals, and are repeated over time. If these behaviors are not addressed, they tend to have a ripple effect across team members and can be seen as acceptable behaviors. With the guidance of my EBP fellowship

mentor, I began a literature search on this topic and found a great deal of research articles and statements released by professional organizations on the importance of addressing these behaviors and understanding the direct impact they have on patient safety. Based on evidence I found in the literature, I built a workshop using cognitive rehearsal training to address these behaviors. Cognitive rehearsal training involves coaching individuals on how to respond to these types of incidents by rehearsing what you will say when it happens so you can speak up in the moment. The workshop also covers the impact of these behaviors, a review of our employee conduct policy, the corrective action process, and resources for reporting.

Part of the EBP process is tracking outcomes. Following these workshops, I will compile outcome data of the program and present the findings next year. I am thankful for having the opportunity to participate in the EBP Fellowship Program and having the guidance and support to work on this important topic.

“Bullying in the workplace is something I am passionate about, as I experienced it myself as a new nurse. I know what it is like to be scared to ask questions or ask for help when you need it. My hope is after taking this workshop, individuals will be able to recognize these behaviors and feel empowered to respond in the moment, whether as the victim or the witness.”

Recognizing our Nurses who have published/presented their work

Celebrating excellence at the 2023 SSM Health Symposium

Close to 1,200 team members from across SSM Health gathered virtually on August 30 to learn about innovative best practices for their professions at the 2023 SSM Health Symposium: Celebrating Clinical and Operational Excellence. Now in its third year, this special event challenged our thinking and inspired us with the great work happening within our health ministry – and our SSM Health nurses shined throughout the day as Best Practice, poster presenters, and as award winners. Click on the images below to watch recordings of the amazing work shared by our nurses or [click here](#) for a look at the day in its entirety.

Best Practices



Workplace Violence Event Reporting: Why does it have to be so hard?

Tiffany Schmidt, Application Developer Lead, System RMIS Team, SSM Health System Business Office

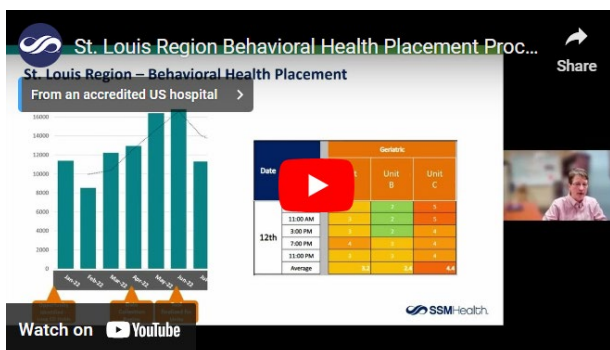
Jennifer Luer, MSN, RN, CPPS, CPHQ, System Director Employee Safety, SSM Health System Business Office



The BRIDGE Clinic: Better Care Transitions Equates to Fewer Readmissions

F. Gerald Wade, MD, Section Chief of Ambulatory Medicine and BRIDGE Clinic Director, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

Ashley Rushing, RN, BRIDGE Clinic Nurse Manager, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital



St. Louis Region Behavioral Health Placement Process

Jessica Bangert, MHA, BSN, RN, CEN, Continuous Improvement Manager Senior, SSM Health, St. Louis Region

Michelle Limberg, DHA, MSN, RN, CEN, Regional Director, Behavioral Health Service Line and Administrative Director of Nursing Operations, SSM Health, St. Louis Region

Publications

- [Witwer, S., Fritz, E., Antol, S., & Bilskis, S. \(2022\). In search of the evidence: Informing academic-practice partnerships in ambulatory care. *Nursing Economic\\$, 40\(3\), 146-155*](#)
- Brzozowski, S., & Fritz, E. (2024). Recruiting nurse participants in ambulatory care nursing research. *Clinical Nursing Research, 33(1), 27-33.* <https://doi.org/10.1177/10547738231197444>
- Fritz, E. (2023). Nursing professional development practitioners' responsibility for inquiry: Research, evidence-based practice, and quality improvement. In Harper, M. (Ed.), *Core Curriculum for Nursing Professional Development* (6th ed, pp. 406-423). Association for Nursing Professional Development.

Poster Presentations

- *Onboarding, Orientation, and Beyond: Building an NPD Foundation.* Kayla Brenner BSN, RN, NPD-BC. ANPD ASPIRE Convention - Poster Presentation. Chicago, IL, on April 10, 2024.

- *Mystery Escape Room*. Farrah Barnes, BSN, RN, CNOR and Missy DeVore, BSN, RN. 2024 AORN Global Surgical Conference. Nashville, TN., March 8-12, 2024.
- *Hurt People are Hurting People: De-Escalation Through Trauma Informed Care*. Jaimie Talir, MSN, RN, NPD-BC. 2024 ANPD Aspire Convention. Chicago, IL, on April 11, 2024.
- *Dissemination tips for success: Evidence-based techniques to present your research and practice improvement work*. Presented by Margo Halm, Jessica Varghese, and Elizabeth Fritz at American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing annual convention, Chicago, IL, on April 3, 2024.
- *Promoting Professional Growth and Retention Through a Clinical Ladder Program*. Amber Wood, DNP, RN, MBA; Stacey Weiler, MSN, RN; Elizabeth Fritz, PhD, RN, NPDA-BC. SSM Health System Business Office.
- *Building a culture of clinical inquiry: SSM Health Evidence-Based Practice Fellowship Program*. Christine Baker, Darcy Egging, Elizabeth Fritz, Katheryne Amba, Rebecca Chambers, Jeannie Mollohan. SSM Health System Business Office.
- *Humans of SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles and Wentzville*. Laura Weaver, RN, MSN. SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Wentzville.
- *Sustaining Zero CAUTIs*. Janita Collier, BSN, RN - Director, Med-Surg; Cyndi Renth, BSN, RN - Manager ICU/PCU; Mary Frazier, MSN, RN, CIC – IP; Tracy Fiscus MSN, RN, CCRN, CENP – ADNO. SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Centralia.
- *Pilot intervention to reduce potential Home Health-acquired skin infections*. Bonita J Westover, MSPH; Tammy LaRocco, RN, MSN, APNP; Kelly Jones, RN WCC; Kimberly Reynolds, RN, MSN-Ed. SSM Health at Home, Home Health.
- *Tales from the crib: Operation Safe Sleep*. Lori Winkler, MSN, RN, TNS, CPEN. SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital.
- *Critical Response Nursing - Support for the patient and the team*. Andrew Eilers, BSN, RN, MBA; Nicole Deluca, and Katie Bernsen. SSM Health St. Louis Region.
- *Implementing an increase in nurse leader rounding and its effect on patient experience*. Maret Visser, Lisa Austin, Janita Collier. SSM Health Good Samaritan Hospital - Mt. Vernon, SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Centralia.
- *Implementation of a "Second Sign Review" process to ensure appropriate Clostridioides difficile testing*. Brad Schmidt, MD; James Lehman, MD; Amanda Carlson, MD; Lauren Watson, BS; Kristi Schmidt, MSN, RN, CIC and Amina Mujabasic, MPH. SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Madison.

Nursing Awards at the 2023 SSM Health Symposium

After receiving a record number of peer nominations, Clinical and Operational Awards were presented to 42 outstanding team members at the 2023 SSM Health Symposium –including 11 Nurses in the categories of Nurse of the Year, Clinical Support of the Year, Operational Support of the Year, and Shared Services Support of the Year. Here are our 2023 winners, as well as an excerpt from their nominations. For a full list of 2023 SSM Health Clinical and Operational Award winners and nominees, [click here](#).

Nurse of the Year award winners



Mid-Missouri

Cindy Jensen, RN, ANCC-certified

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Jefferson City

"Cindy is praised for going above and beyond. She's known for coming in when she's not on call - and even while on vacation - to answer questions and help scrub techs through a case. She answers her phone 24/7 to support the endoscopy team and freely shares her extensive knowledge with new scrub techs on the team."



Oklahoma

Orville Fisher, RN

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

"Orville is an exceptional leader in stroke care, providing invaluable insight on the care and treatment of patients from presentation in the ED to discharge. He transports patients, provides monitoring in other departments, and organizes his days to meet their needs and support his team. Orville is a mentor to many and always answers the call for guidance."



Post-Acute

Vanessa Rodriguez, RN

SSM Health at Home - Hospice

"Vanessa is a rock on our team and has been an amazing asset since the day she arrived. She is kind, compassionate, patient, and caring – and the most supportive person we could ever hope to have on our team. Vanessa builds people up and encourages them. She is an active educator and always the perfect preceptor for our new nurses and all staff. We are truly blessed to say she is ours!"



Southern Illinois

Ashley Calvert, RN

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Centralia

"Ashley is a one-of-a-kind nurse. She provides a calming presence and extra human touch to patients who are afraid and in pain. She goes in early, leaves late, and gives a part of herself to each of her patients. She is truly an amazing nurse and lives our Mission daily by taking care of everyone who comes through our doors."



St. Louis

Bridney Killiebrew, BSN, RN

SSM Health DePaul Hospital - St. Louis

"Bridney is the heart of the hospital. She is the loving mother to our unit that provides comfort and care to our employees and patients through difficult times. If there is ever a need, Bridney jumps in to lead the way, showing others that this is not only a career to her, but a calling. I am honored to work alongside Bridney as she lives our Mission every day."



System Business Office

Kelly Weary, BSN, RN

"Kelly is an influential leader and facilitates meetings with grace. She brings best practices, regulations and other guiding principles to the System Professional Nurse Practice Council, System Fall Team, Clinical Programs and more. She has led and has been part of many successful projects, such as standardizing skin and wound order sets, updating telesitter documentation and social determinates of health screening."



Wisconsin

Nicole Baker, RN

SSM Health Medical Group

"Nicole's leadership keeps us on track. Her way of being, working and practicing, as well as her kind, collaborative and non-judgmental approach has contributed directly to a culture shift in our department. Our team is cohesive, collaborative, engaged and committed to each other's well-being. Nicole is very warm with an excellent patient care touch, which she demonstrates with our families each day."

Clinical Support of the Year award winner



System Business Office

Dena Fisher, RN, PharmD

“Dena manages the infusion library and is the go-to person for questions related to the infusion pumps. She has led the Alaris infusion pump project, which required each pump to be manually upgraded and programmed. She identifies new services and software, advocating for use of the technology available. Dena is very invested in her role, and we are lucky to have her.”

Operational Support of the Year award winner



St. Louis

Pamela Golden, RN, MSN-CS, CCRN-K, TCRN, TNS

SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

“Pam has always strived for excellence both as a trauma ICU nurse and as Trauma Program Director. Her impact on trauma care over the past 34 years has been invaluable, and we would not have been able to achieve and maintain ACS verified Level 1 Trauma Center status without her exceptional leadership. Pam shows me what it means to be a leader each and every day.”

Shared Services Support of the Year award winners



Oklahoma

Angela Woodard, BSN, RN

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

“Angela is vivacious, creative and highly respected. She is the sole clinical educator for the Emergency Departments and health plex campuses in the Oklahoma region and the instructor for Trauma Nurse Core Course and Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course. Angela is always present and is a role model for advocating for our patients. She truly emulates what it means to live a life of service.”



St. Louis

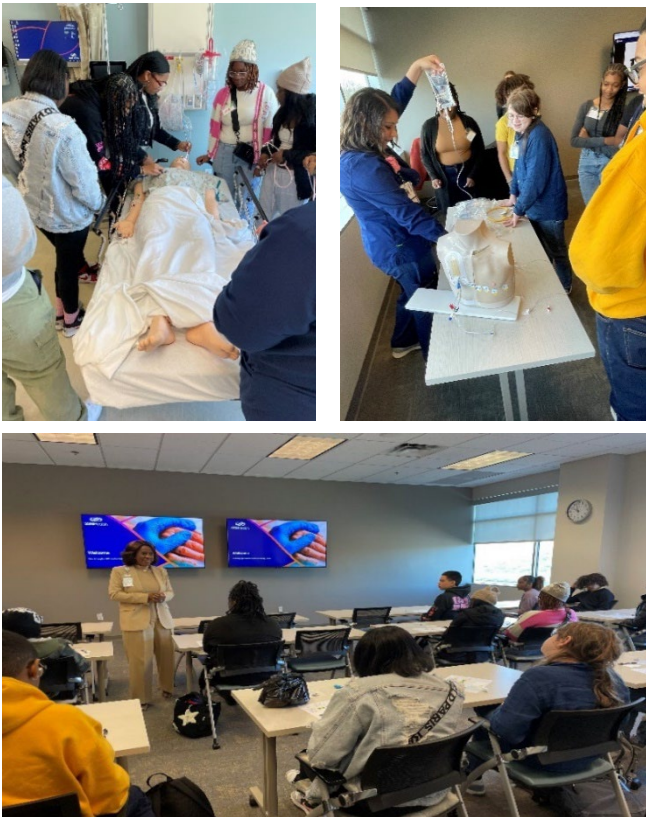
Becky Dosenbach, RN

SSM Health, St. Louis

“Whether it is a RN needing assistance or a department needing a new report built in Epic, Becky will stop what she is doing, roll up her sleeves and pitch in. She has a magical way of listening and quickly coming up with solutions. Her can-do attitude is contagious, and she inspires her coworkers to better clinicians. Behind the scenes, Becky is the reason things run so smoothly.”

High School Immersion Day

In November of 2023, Talent Acquisition in partnership with Clinical Education and the organization, Next Prep, hosted students from Kairos Academy, a free public charter school in St. Louis City. The tenth-grade students had expressed an interest in health care and through the partnership with Next Prep, the students can start developing that passion for their future careers early on in life. The morning with these students at our Simulation Lab in Fenton, Missouri was filled with answering the question, “Why get into health care?” They sat through presentations and hands-on experiences in nursing, surgical technology, and lab. The students were very engaged throughout the presentations and were able to ask our subject matter experts who presented all of their top-of-mind questions. They wrapped up the day by going through a simulation of a patient experiencing a “Code Blue” and seeing for themselves how we are training up the future of healthcare through our virtual reality headsets.



Campus Recruitment Review

SSM Health is committed to creating a robust nursing pipeline by maximizing our Student Nurse Externship and Graduate Nurse programs. Below is a 2023 review of our campus recruitment efforts across the system.

Partner Universities



- Frontier Community College
- Kaskaskia College
- Rend Lake College



- Columbia College
- State Technical College
- Lincoln University
- State Fair Community College



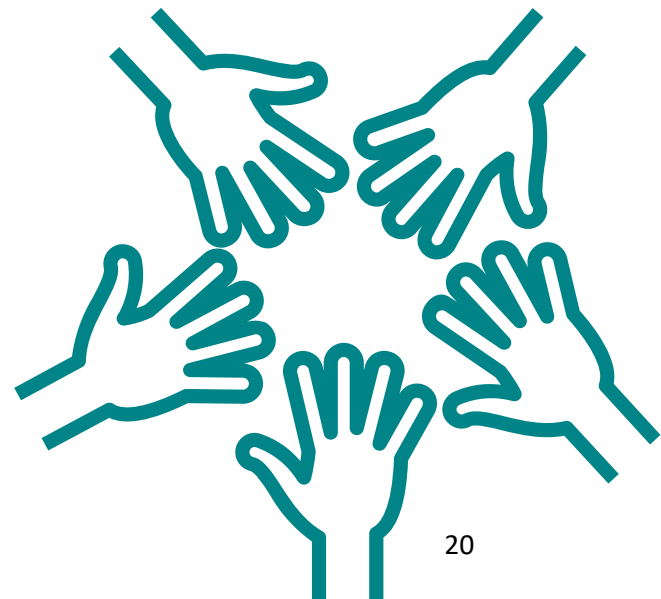
- St. Louis Community College
- Chamberlain
- St. Charles Community College
- St. Louis University
- Maryville University
- University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL)
- Lewis & Clark Community College
- Goldfarb
- Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO)
- St. Louis College of Health Careers
- Missouri State University
- Missouri Baptist University



- Oklahoma City Community College
- Rose State College
- Oklahoma State University – Oklahoma City
- Seminole State College
- Oklahoma City University
- University of Central Oklahoma
- East Central University
- Oklahoma Baptists University

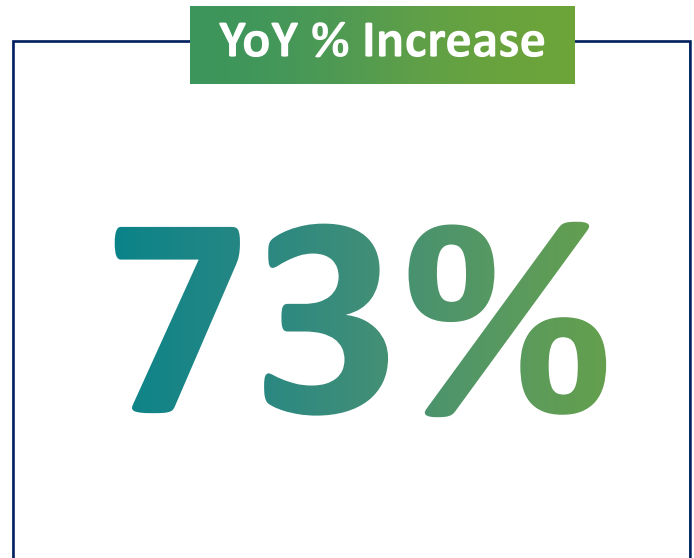
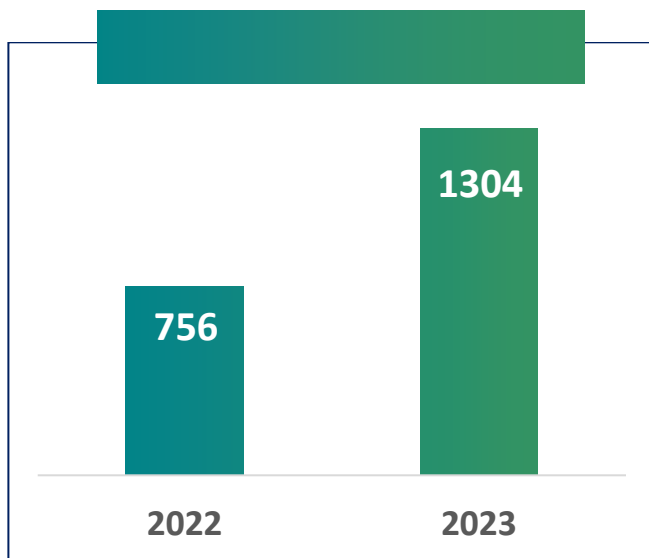


- Moraine Park Technical College
- Madison College
- Marian University
- UW Oshkosh
- UW Madison
- Edgewood College
- Blackhawk Technical College
- Herzing University
- UW LaCrosse
- Chippewa Valley Tech



Systemwide Extern and Graduate Nurse Hiring

The graph below depicts the number of student nurse externs and graduate nurses the Talent Acquisition team has hired year-over-year (YoY) through 2023. Tremendous efforts have been made in candidate outreach and retention to welcome new nurses to SSM Health. We are committed to investing back into our nurses through comprehensive development programs. By offering continued education, leadership training, and wellness initiatives, we **strive** to support our nurses' professional growth and personal well-being.

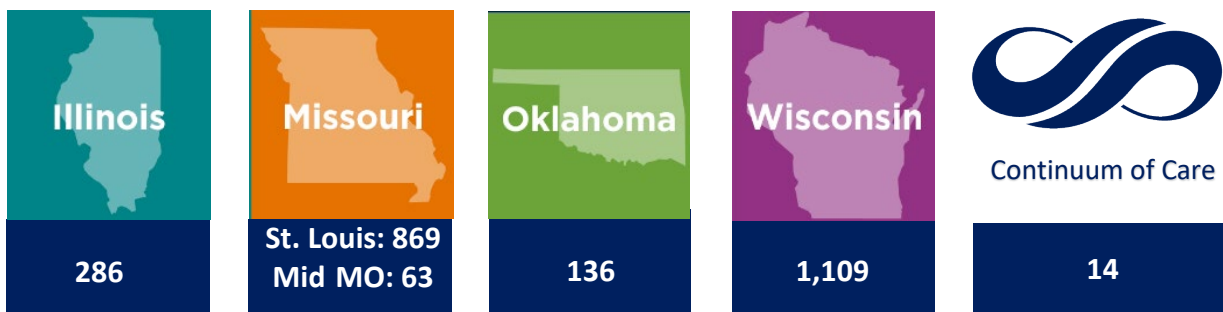


Systemwide Extern/GN YoY Increase, HR Dashboard

Clinical Ladder Program

SSM Health's Clinical Ladder Program was created to support our nurses' professional growth and recognize them for their dedication and contributions to our health ministry. **In 2023, we more than doubled the amount of participation with a total of 2,480 nurses successfully completing the Clinical Ladder Program!** SSM Health nurses are encouraged to visit the [Clinical Ladder SharePoint](#) for details on eligibility and how to participate in the program.

Participation by region:

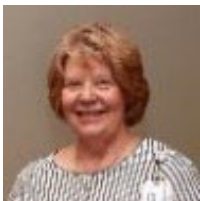




DAISY Lifetime Achievement Awards

The **DAISY Lifetime Achievement Award** was created to recognize nurses who have devoted their life's work to the compassionate care of others. These recipients serve as a beacon of inspiration to those at all stages of their careers and in the various roles of nursing. This Award provides us an opportunity to recognize nurses with 25+ years of service who have made a lasting impact on SSM Health. **The 2023 DAISY Lifetime Achievement award winners are listed below, with highlights from their nominations:**

Mid-Missouri Region Awardee



Juliana Henley, RN, BSN, M.Ed

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Jefferson City

"Julie is always advocating for nursing as we navigate through risk and quality issues/case review. She has been one of the strongest advocates for nursing that I have ever known, for as long as I have known her."

Southern Illinois Region Awardees



Marla Smith, RN, BSN

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Centralia

"Marla holds the nursing profession very near and dear to her heart. She has devoted her entire adult life to nursing, often sacrificing her own family time to helping others in need. She is always available and ready to offer advice, take hospital calls, or lend a compassionate shoulder."

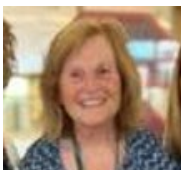


Darcy Egging, DNP, APRN, ANP-BC, ENP-BC, CEN, FAEN

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Mt. Vernon

“Darcy has the uncanny ability to encourage others to step outside of their comfort zone while giving constructive criticism in a way that leaves a positive impact with every conversation. She truly cares about everyone she meets. She is always available as a boss, support system, and friend.”

St. Louis Region Awardees



Rosanna Tochtrop, RN

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital

“Rosanna’s 48-year career at SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital has made a considerable impact on patients, families, and the many disciplines she has partnered with. She fosters growth in students and newly hired individuals, as well as being able to coach seasoned veterans. Rosanna has proved RNs have a place in the highly skilled, specialized field that assists emergency departments across the state in triaging and caring for toxicological emergencies and exposures.”



Robin Gilder, RN

SSM Health DePaul Hospital - St. Louis

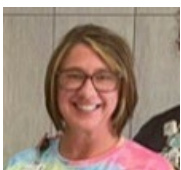
“Robin is a wonderful example of nursing professionalism and practice. Throughout her career, she has participated in podium presentations at the national level, continues to assist with research collection data, is a certified ortho nurse, promotes certification with her staff, and is a member of NAON, who attends congress frequently and supports this professional organization.”



Kerrie Conroy, RN, MSN

SSM Health St. Clare Hospital - Fenton

“Kerrie really cares for her team and has said many of times, ‘I work for all of you; you don’t work for me.’ As our leader, she leads us in just that way. If you need off from work, she exhausts all avenues to help with that. That is why, no matter what she asks of us, we go above and beyond.”



Joanna Hoelscher, RN

SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis

“Joanna is always encouraging her staff to live SSM Health’s Mission, just as she lives the Mission every day. She is on many teams in the hospital, ensuring patient care is exceptional. She is amazing at brainstorming and comes up with innovative ways to have an impact on care. She is truly one-of-a-kind and one of the most empowering leaders I have met.”



Tina Krieger, RN

SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles

“Tina’s leadership and legacy of care has included daily collaboration and partnership with patients and families in providing behavioral health care. As she has progressed through several roles in her career, she has consistently provided a steady, objective perspective and included the broader care team (patient, family, multi-disciplinary team) in providing comprehensive care for those she serves.”



Mary Jo Zinn, RN

SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

“Mary Jo is literally an advocate for all, including nurses, patients, and families. As a pillar in the Pre/Post/Phase II Department, she fully supports each nurse. Nearly every shift she works, someone can attest to her saying, ‘I’m here to serve.’ She serves each of us as a tremendous resource, a wealth of knowledge, most notably with questions related to post-op surgery issues or concerns.”



Lore Gross, RN

SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital - St. Louis

“Lore has worked her entire 37-year nursing career at SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital. She has earned the love and respect of many colleagues along the way. She has undoubtedly made a difference in the lives of many patients – from saving lives in the ICU to bringing new life into the world in L&D. From supporting and caring for the underserved population in the internal medicine clinic to educating and celebrating progress with our patients in Diabetes Education. St. Mary’s has been truly blessed to have her.”

Wisconsin Region Awardees



Renee Weier, RN

SSM Health Ripon Hospital

“Renee is truly the embodiment of a professional nurse. She cares for patients in a kind and compassionate manner, with heartfelt words and gentle hands, yet has the bravery to face the most difficult situation with calm resolve and leadership. She has led a career filled with personal and professional achievements in emergency nursing at the bedside and in director level leadership roles.”



Denise Mitton, RN

SSM Health’s Wisconsin Region

“Denise demonstrates the Mission and Values of SSM Health in all that she does. She has a deep passion for the delivery of exceptional care to our patients and families. Denise makes sure that every member of her team fulfills on the promise of being a healing presence for those who entrust us with their care. She understands that exceptional health care requires a community of

professionals in partnership with patients and families.”



Stephanie Ranum, RN

SSM Health at Home, Hospice - Wisconsin

“Stephanie was and continues to be a leader who leads by example. She was instrumental as a coach in getting the Hospice House more known in the community by setting a high standard. As a result, word of mouth spread, and our reputation improved in the community. She continues to lead by example as a staff nurse by her caring for patients and families, encouraging all staff to put patient and families first, and supporting them on their journey.”



Lorna O'Donovan

SSM Health Waupun Memorial Hospital

“Lorna is a safe, competent nurse how is a team player. It is evident that she believes in hard work and putting in an effort to get the job done as a team. Lorna is well-respected by her peers, and they trust her opinion and expertise. Lorna is a critical thinker and has a great understanding of diagnosis and associated plans of care.”



Patrick May, RN

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Janesville

“Patrick is an asset to our Ministry, with many years of ICU clinical practice. He shares his vast knowledge by mentoring any nurse, provider, or ancillary staff that he connects with. Patrick connects with patients and families on a personal, human level. He is not afraid to advocate for patients or staff, escalating concerns, often with solutions in mind. Patrick has touched so many lives throughout his nursing career and has a humble way of simply being.”



Barbara Hauge, RN

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Madison

“Barb speaks and lives the Mission of SSM Health. She is dedicated to success and mostly dedicated to making sure families and patients have exactly what they need to have an exceptional experience. Her heart is in health care.”



Teri Marshall, RN

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Baraboo

“Teri is a lifetime learner and is very passionate about GI education. She thrives on being able to understand the “why” behind every GI diagnosis. She is such a value to our team and to our patients because she cares about the entire spectrum and shows it daily in her work.”



Ann Sorgent, RN

SSM Health St. Agnes Hospital

“Ann has the heart of a servant and leads with her faith. She exemplifies this by having a positive attitude every day and maintaining healthy relationships with every member of our Cancer Center team. Ann is always the first one to reach out to coworkers to see if she can help them with their work. She commits to following through with all tasks to completion. Ann is an excellent nurse and an exceptional leader.”



Sue Campbell, RN

SSM Health Monroe Clinic

“Our Mission is carried out by Sue on a daily basis. She seeks to show care to her team as we often encounter difficult patient outcomes. She has brought spiritual care to our team to debrief when needed. Her collaboration with all areas provides well rounded care for the team and patients.”



Patricia Devries, RN

SSM Health Dean Medical Group

“Pattie Devries has been a reliable leader and loyal team member for 18 years in West OB/GYN. She rises above the expectations of the job and is a wealth of knowledge! On the off chance she does not know something, she researches the topic and will reach out to the experts to give our patient’s the best care and resources.”

Oklahoma Region Awardees



George Benard, RN

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

“George Benard is an amazingly compassionate, caring leader. He advocates for his team, promotes their successes and encourages them with their challenges. He attends award celebrations for team members. Should his team face hardships, he is an amazing encourager, never prying, but always supportive.”



Sally Schafer, RN

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Midwest

“Sally is a wonderful nurse who gives her patients the absolute best of her every day. She has cried with patients and laughed with patients. She embodies the Mission of SSM Health and has devoted her nursing career to serving others.”

I am an advocate

Being an advocate in health care means standing up for the needs and rights of patients, ensuring their voices are heard, and tirelessly working to provide them with the best possible care.



Nurses in the Community

Recognizing SSM Health Nurses who are revealing the healing presence of God through their work in the community.

Nationwide Age-Friendly Health System Initiative

SSM Health's Age-Friendly Initiative is dedicated to transforming health care for older adults by focusing on their unique needs and preferences. This comprehensive approach ensures that every aspect of care—from medication management to mobility support and mental health—aligns with best practices for aging populations. By prioritizing dignity, respect, and personalized care plans, SSM Health strives to enhance the quality of life and overall well-being of seniors, helping them to age with grace and confidence.

Chris Baker, Regional Administrative Director for Nursing Excellence and Professional Practice, and Clinical Nurse Specialist Jo Goffinet were featured on WKOW in Madison, Wisconsin to share the news! Watch the [full segment](#) here.



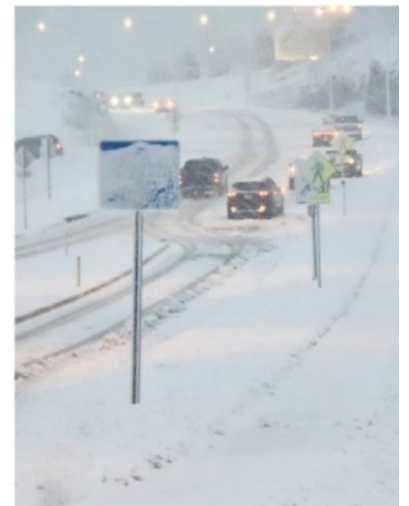
Collecting items for Angels' Cove Residential Maternity Home

Southern Illinois nurses collected personal care supplies for moms and babies at Angels' Cove Residential Maternity Home, a local nonprofit organization that offers housing, prenatal care, education, counseling, and aftercare to pregnant women 18 and older.



SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Jefferson City team comes together during an unexpected snowstorm

On January 18, Mid-Missouri experienced an unexpected snow during the morning hour commute. What was supposed to be a dusting turned into several inches, making roads and driving conditions very dangerous for staff coming onto duty. Several staff members were not able to make it in due to the storm. Members of the management team were able to make it in early that morning, make rounds, and determine emergency needs - especially staffing. Leaders found that the nursing teams had already begun to devise plans to ensure that the patients were taken care of. Staff members offered to stay until the incoming staff could come in. The Director of Critical Care was driving around entrance points to the hospital, giving status updates on the best road conditions to get in. When several employee vehicles were stuck at the hospital's main entrance, security and maintenance went out and helped get their cars up the hill. The teamwork between all the departments was remarkable!



Nurse helps complete 300th WATCHMAN Procedure

Congratulations to the SSM Health Dale Michels Heart & Vascular Care, including Dr. Sampornima Setty, Dr. Tadeo Diaz Balderrama, Julie Malkowski, Dr. Jeremy Zimmermann, Ashley Black, and nurse Tiffany Mlodzik for implanting its 300th WATCHMAN™ device!

The WATCHMAN Implant is a one-time, minimally invasive procedure for people with atrial fibrillation (AFib) not caused by a heart valve problem who need an alternative to blood thinners. The WATCHMAN Implant fits into the patient's left atrial appendage and is designed to permanently close it off and keep those blood clots from escaping, preventing stroke. It's a permanent device that doesn't have to be replaced and can't be seen outside the body. The procedure is done under general anesthesia and takes about an hour. Patients commonly stay in the hospital overnight and leave the next day.



AFib is a heart condition where the upper chambers of the heart (atrium) beat too fast with irregular rhythm (fibrillation). According to the CDC, an estimated 2.7 to 6.1 million Americans are impacted by this condition, and these individuals have a five times greater risk of stroke when compared to individuals with a normal heart rhythm. The most common treatment to reduce stroke risk in patients with AFib is blood-thinning medication. While very effective at reducing the risk of stroke, blood thinners increase the risk of serious bleeding over time and come with certain requirements and restrictions.

Narcan Machine installed at SSM Health St. Clare Hospital – Baraboo

According to the Sauk County Public Health website, overdose deaths in Wisconsin have tripled in the past eight years and about 90% of overdose deaths in Sauk County are due to opioid use. Naloxone (Narcan) is a life-saving medication that is used to reverse respiratory depression in both intentional and accidental opioid overdose. Narcan nasal spray takes effect in 2 to 3 minutes and lasts 20 to 60 minutes.



Sauk County Public Health and SSM Health have partnered through a state grant to install a Naloxone (Narcan) dispensing machine at SSM Health St. Clare Hospital - Baraboo near the Emergency Department entrance in hopes that it will help save lives in Sauk

County. The machine will be stocked routinely by the Sauk County Health Department and will contain Narcan nasal spray, medication disposal kits, and substance use/mental health resources. Community members who use Naloxone (Narcan) in a suspected opioid overdose emergency are covered by the Wisconsin Good Samaritan Law. To access the machine, enter through the hospital’s emergency entrance.

In addition to the new machine installed in Baraboo, **Sauk provides free Naloxone training.** The training session takes 45 minutes, and participants receive free Narcan and refills after completing the training. **County**

- **Pre-registration is required:**
 - Call (608) 355-4325
 - Email ethan.borchardt@saukcountywi.gov
 - Visit the Sauk County Health Department

Thank you to Sauk County Public Health for your partnership and to all the SSM Health employees who have worked on this life-saving new program in Baraboo!

Planting it Forward

Not only does the **General Surgery team at SSM Health Fond du Lac Regional Clinic** have good hands – they’ve also got green thumbs. They love their plants, and they like to share that love. Thinking about how they could show their appreciation for other departments across the clinic, an idea began to germinate and then flower – how about a horticultural handout? What a fun way to collaborate and spread some green around.

Now, when one of their plant mothers starts to grow a new baby, the team nurtures it until it is ready to “graduate” to its own pot. Then they plant it forward, presenting the youngster to another department as a token of their appreciation.

Each green gift comes with this message: “Always remember, the General Surgery Clinic is rooting for you – keep up the great work!” To that, we say, “Way to grow General Surgery!”



SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Jefferson City announces the creation of Hope and Healing Food Bags

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri and SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Jefferson City joined together to create the Hope and Healing Food Bags for improve access to food resources, which will impact the overall health and well-being of area residents through this collaborative partnership.

Three years ago, SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital Foundation began a relationship with Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri to address food insecurity in our community.

In August a soft launch of the food bag program was initiated at St. Mary's Hospital, and shortly thereafter expanded to SSM Health Medical Group Pediatrics Clinic with the support of the pediatricians who recognized the need for nutrition for families served by the clinic. As children grow and develop, they need important nutrients to be strong and healthy. Some of the benefits of healthy eating include:

- Stable energy
- Strong bones and teeth
- Improved mental health:
Makes us think clearly and be more alert
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Prevent chronic diseases



Patients without adequate nutrition are more likely to return to the hospital. These efforts are not to just solve the issue of needs for food for two days but to connect patients with resources like Catholic Charities that can remove food insecurity from their life.

SSM Health is investing \$50,000 in the Hope and Healing Food Bag program for patients in Mid-Missouri. **Thank you to our nurses at SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Jefferson City for preparing food bags and taking exceptional care of our patients.**

SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital's Clinical Community Outreach Program goes above and beyond to support children in local area

We recognize and honor the Clinical Community Outreach Program at SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital (SLU-H). This group, comprised of team members from across the SLU family, wears many hats and collaborates on many initiatives to support and promote inclusion within our local community.



Several times a year, the Clinical Community Outreach Program works to ensure underserved children in our community can safely partake in fun, festive activities - that they otherwise may not be able to enjoy. As an example, this team has been able to provide safe trick-or-treating opportunities for kids in the Fox, Gravois, and Benton Park neighborhoods with no or minimal cost to the hospital – **for the last 10 years.**

Team members throughout SLU-H donate much of the required food or supplies for these events. Our incredible SLU-H employees do this without compensation – without personal acknowledgment. They go the extra mile because our SLU-H family is committed to providing exceptional care and service not only to our patients – but also to their families and the larger St. Louis community. Their compassion extends beyond the walls of SLU-H and is shared to all from the kindness of their hearts.

Thank you, SLU-H family, for living out the SSM Health Mission and Values every day – and going above and beyond to serve those who need us most!

Mission Action Team coordinates “adopt-a-kid” gift drive for patients in behavioral health programs

Each year, our Mission Action Team coordinates an "adopt-a-kid" gift drive for our patients in our behavioral health programs. We have been blessed by the generosity of our Saints in Action team members, visitors, family members, interns, local churches and community groups who have participated as a part of this project.

It is absolutely amazing the love and support our patients have received! A special thank you to New City Church for providing needed items of shoes, sweatshirts, hats, pants, gloves and more.

In total, well more than 100 patients were served.



I am a partner

Remarkable partners embrace collaborative work, value diverse perspectives, and strive together towards shared goals for the greater good of our patients and their families.



SSM Health improves hospital-acquired infection rate

Hospital-acquired infections are serious and preventable harm events. In 2019, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality estimated a hospital-acquired infection costs the U.S. healthcare system \$31,000. Certain infections increased the total cost of the hospital stay by more than 50 percent. Patients with preventable hospital-acquired infections were more likely to be readmitted within 90 days.

Recently, Shephali Wulff, DO, System Vice President of Quality and Safety (below left), and Chris Zirges, System Director of Infection Prevention (below right), participated in Vizient's podcast, "Hospital-acquired infection improvement journey." They shared how SSM Health improved patient safety and quality by standardizing processes across the system resulting in a 60 percent infection reduction and a \$10M cost savings.



In 2019, a System Infectious Disease (ID) team consisting of systemwide infectious diseases physicians, infection preventionists, microbiology and stewardship and infectious diseases pharmacists came together to focus on preventing hospital-acquired infections (HAI), and improving patient safety and quality through the lens of infectious diseases and infection prevention.

"These infections are preventable, and it is important to come together as a team to develop a sustainment plan," said Zirges. "The best way to achieve this is to ensure that visibility of HAI prevention efforts are always a part of our daily work by reporting out during daily safety huddles."

As part of the integration work, the team also centralized the HAI data at a system level.

The System ID team joined subject matter experts that included critical care, emergency medicine physicians, hospitalists, nursing practice leaders, environmental services, supply chain, and other health partners, who came together as an organization to develop best practice guidelines to prevent the three most common hospital-acquired infections.

These evidence-based best practices were collated into change packages called "reduction guides" in partnership with Continuous Improvement. They then partnered with the point of care teams to deliver these guides, worked closely with them to understand existing variation, and then narrowed the variation gap. After two years, this work resulted in a reduction of catheter urinary tract, central line associated blood stream, and hospital associated onset *Clostridioides - difficile* infections.

Wulff concluded, "As we think about improvement, it is important to listen to our point of care teams that do the work every day to ensure this process improvement plan really makes sense within their workflow."

SSM Health unveils plans for a new Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital in 2023



SSM Health announced it will build a new, state-of-the-art children’s hospital at Chouteau Avenue and Grand Boulevard in St. Louis.

When SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital first opened in 1956 as the nation’s first free-standing, not-for-profit Catholic children’s hospital, it provided a much-needed beacon of hope and healing for children and families across St. Louis and beyond. Today, that pioneering commitment continues, and the hospital – which is nationally ranked in five specialties by U.S. News & World Report – **is responding to the growing need for highly specialized neonatal and pediatric services with a brand-new healing facility designed to support world-class care for the next 70 years and beyond.**

“Cardinal Glennon plays a critical role in SSM Health’s Mission and Vision to transform health care delivery and ensure all people have access to high-quality, affordable, and sustainable health care services to live their fullest and healthiest lives,” said Laura S. Kaiser, FACHE, President and CEO of SSM Health. “This investment will ensure we’re able to continue meeting the evolving needs of our community’s most vulnerable infants, children and adolescents for future generations.



This is also a signal of SSM Health’s continued commitment to investing in the City of St. Louis – in workforce and economic development.

While the current hospital has served the community well, SSM Health will use this opportunity to design state-of-the-art academic pediatric medical facilities that incorporate the latest best practices in patient- and family-centered design. The health system envisions a 14-story facility, with more than 200 inpatient beds, and larger areas to accommodate families – parents, siblings, and grandparents – who are important to the healing journey.

The new Cardinal Glennon will also support expanded and enhanced services including NICU (neonatal intensive care unit), ICU (intensive care unit), cancer, cardiology, and dialysis care in a therapeutic healing environment that seamlessly integrates the very latest technology and research to meet the evolving needs of the communities it serves both now and into the future.



“Driven by our Mission, and with the partnership and support of our generous community, we are devoted to building a healthier, brighter future – one where every child receives the care they need to thrive,” said Hossain Marandi, MD, MBA, FACHE, President of SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital and Vice President of SSM Health Pediatrics. “Together, we have an opportunity to envision the transformation of pediatric health care in the region, to serve more children and families who are depending on us, and further solidify our position as a national leader in caring for kids.”

Construction of the new hospital will be a multi-year project anticipated to be completed in 2027. SSM Health has engaged St. Louis-based McCarthy Buildings Companies as general contractor for the project. Today’s announcement is another milestone in SSM Health’s more than 150-year commitment to investing in St. Louis city’s workforce and economic development – while ensuring access to high-quality, compassionate, and affordable care.

SSM Health Oklahoma Launches New Nursing Scholarship Program

Reach for the Stars is a scholarship program designed to help meet the demand for nurses by educating and cultivating new registered nurses (RN) throughout the United States. **Designed to cover the full cost of an ADN program**, we are thrilled to offer this opportunity to our Saints in Action team members interested in furthering their careers at SSM Health as an RN.

Ten scholarships were offered during both Spring and Fall interview periods. An additional 10 scholarships will be offered for Spring 2024. Up to twenty scholarships will be offered to SSM Health employees annually through this program. **The emphasis of this program is to create RNs; but however, a small number of RN or LVN to BSN scholarships may be available.**

We are grateful for this partnership and the generous donation to the St. Anthony Foundation by the Reach for the Stars organization to make these scholarships possible in order to support our employees’ career goals and to further the nursing profession in our community.

How do I apply?

[To apply and learn more about the 'Reach for the Stars' scholarship program, click here.](#)

Care for Caregivers Program Brings Art Therapy to Hospital Departments at SSM Health St. Anthony

The Care for Caregivers program was formed at SSM Health St. Anthony to help connect Saints in Action with resources during times of stress. You may have seen members of the Care for Caregivers committee delivering the Lavender Cart to your unit, praying with coworkers during a difficult time or connecting team members with mental health resources during stressful times.

One point of feedback the Care for Caregivers Committee has heard time and again from Saints in Action is a request for art therapy. **With this in mind, the hospital has partnered with the Oklahoma City Museum of Art to deliver art therapy sessions directly to hospital departments.**



A Museum educator and an artist-in-residence teamed up to pull together supplies to help our team members create their own facial sculptures inspired by the Museum's internationally recognized exhibition, *True Nature: Rodin and the Age of Impressionism*.

These crafts were made on a voluntary, come-and-go basis, so it could fit the many demands of our caregivers' schedules; they also brought "grab and go" kits of all supplies and instructions for anyone who couldn't participate on-site to be able to take home. We appreciate the Museum for working so diligently to customize this setup for our team.

More than 200 team members across three departments were able to take advantage! The Museum will be back visiting three different units later this year and will continue rotating each quarter, so watch out for your opportunity to participate.

Health and Fitness Discounts and Resources for Nurses

Regardless of where you are in your wellness journey, increasing your daily movement, and making good nutritional choices can improve your well-being. Your SSM Health Employee Benefits include access to a wide variety of health and fitness-related resources, tools, and discounts that can support you in taking positive action.

Fitness Resources

Interested in improving your physical fitness level? Check out these resources:

- Explore discounts available through [Benefits Plus](#) and [Vizient](#). Discounted memberships are available for Active&Fit Direct, Zeamo corporate fitness, Anytime Fitness, Joggo, Orange Theory, and more.
- If you elected medical coverage through a Medica plan, you may access fitness product discounts through [Partner Perks](#).
- Participate in the *myhealthylife* challenges. Through *myhealthylife*, the system-wide wellness program, you can join [monthly fitness challenges](#) that are both fun and rewarding. Visit ssmhealth.sharecare.com to learn more and get registered.



Nutritional Resources

The following resources can help you improve your nutrition and plan healthy, satisfying meals.

- Nutritional discounts are available through [Benefits Plus](#) and [Vizient](#). Discounted memberships are available through Noom and Nutrisystem as well as meal prep services such as Home Chef, Green Chef, EveryPlate, and more.
- Connect with your [Employee Assistance Program](#) at 800-356-0845 to access personalized weight and nutrition coaching. **Note:** Greater Fond du Lac ministries employees should contact [SSM Health at Work](#) (Agnesian EAP) at 920-924-0614.
- SSM Health also provides nutrition and wellness programs through its Weight Management Services.* Registered dietitians provide support and guidance by tailoring healthy eating plans that match your individual goals and health concerns.

**Most insurance plans are accepted for nutrition services, but you are encouraged to verify coverage before receiving services.*

If you need assistance connecting with any of the above tools or resources, please contact People Services at 844-776-6947 or open an [AskHR case](#).

Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement may be eligible for this benefit if this benefit is provided for under the applicable CBA or a side agreement thereto.

I am a accountable

Being accountable means taking responsibility for your actions, being transparent in your decisions, and committing to continuous improvement in pursuit of excellence.



Center for Clinical Excellence: Just Culture Statement

A “**Just Culture**” is a system of shared accountability in which we are both collectively accountable for the care systems we design and maintain, and individually accountable for our choices and actions. Just Cultures respond to concerning behaviors in a fair and just manner. We believe in and embrace a culture of not blaming the individual(s). Instead, we address the system issues leading to the error(s), while holding individuals accountable for behaviors contrary to our culture of safety and our organizational values.

Individuals aren’t disciplined for making honest mistakes. However, there are progressive, consistently applied consequences for those who make poor choices or display unsafe and unproductive behaviors. Just Culture is a key enabler of High Reliability Organizing (HRO).

Just Culture Social Teaching

Just Culture is aligned with Catholic social teaching because it shows *respect for the dignity of all involved* specifically by considering the systems in place and the role of the individual within those systems.

Just Cultures *trust people to do their work to the best of their ability* with the knowledge that the organization supports their good faith efforts and commitment to our Mission, Vision, and Values.

Just Cultures promote a *spirit of support and forgiveness* when things go wrong, while also reinforcing a healthy level of accountability and empowerment to succeed.

Just Culture flourishes in a work environment that is *relational, empowering, satisfying, mindful, self reflective, and engaged in ongoing learning*.



Southern Illinois' success in CAUTI and CLABSI infection prevention

February was a great month for caregivers and patients at SSM Health!

February marked our second month of 2023 with zero CAUTI and CLABSI infections! Great job team!



To top off the month of February, the Southern Illinois ministries celebrated the go-live of our Safe Patient Handling and Mobility initiative!

We want to recognize the teams at SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Centralia and SSM Health Good Samaritan - Mt. Vernon who have led the adoption of what we call our **LIFTsmart** program (**L**-iving **I**-njury **F**-ree **T**-ogether).

A significant investment in new, state-of-the-art patient lifting and mobility equipment from ARJO, along with the use of the Epic BMAT patient assessment tool will bring early mobility and we think, shorter length of stay, and fewer complications to our patients. Patient care staff will benefit from a reduction in injuries from using the right equipment to move patients instead of their own bodies. The program also ensures that we meet Illinois Department of Health regulations.

Our Shared Governance Council has been involved in the implementation and added an inspiring tagline to our program, “Save a back, Ride a lift!”



Telesitter Program

Telesitter represents a new class of clinical monitoring in which patient activity is tracked and staff is notified of any concerns or emergency situations. Telesitter monitoring typically consists of a camera and speaker mounted in the patient room or to a mobile cart and is activated upon patient meeting criteria. Clinical staff in an offsite monitoring center are ready and available to SSM Health via our telesitter partner, Hicuity.

On March 7, SSM Health went live with Telesitter at SSM Health Good Samaritan Hospital - Mt. Vernon, followed by SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital on March 28. Next was SSM Health DePaul Hospital - St. Louis on May 9 and finally SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Madison, on May 30. Telesitter service initiation was funded by an FCC grant awarded to SSM Health during the pandemic to help support building infrastructure to increase our ability to remotely monitor patients. Telesitter is intended for patients who are easily redirected by voice prompts and only applies to patients in need of observation due to high fall risk.

SSM Health has installed over 280 cameras now that all sites are live. The goals of this program are to reduce the cost associated with in-person 1:1 sitters for patient safety, reducing falls, reducing falls with injury as well as staff satisfaction with an option to monitor patients without having to remove them to care for a single patient. Plans to expand telesitter services beyond the initial locations listed are ongoing.

Employee Safety

The USP 800 Hazardous Drug toolkit was updated this year. The toolkit includes resources to keep employees who are handling hazardous drugs safe. Check it out by clicking the Safety and Security Icon on your desktop, or by clicking [this link](#).



Acute Dialysis – SSM Health Monroe Hospital

Chelsea Hardacre, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer at SSM Health Monroe Hospital, recognized it would be necessary to create a more sustainable, patient-focused solution when faced with staffing challenges and the loss of our contracted acute dialysis supplier in 2020. Chelsea and her team worked with SSM Health Monroe Hospital Nephrologist, Dr. Charles Stuart and, after exploring options, determined adopting home dialysis technology was the best approach. The compact size and ease of use associated with home dialysis machines would allow the team to clear multiple hurdles to safely dialyze patients. With appropriate water connections, the machines can be easily transported between patient rooms, especially when paired with reverse osmosis (RO) technology. After extensive research, the Quanta Dialysis home machine was chosen. Two Quanta machines with RO Carts were purchased in February 2023, with an approximate cost of \$38,000 each. Pre-COVID-19, acute dialysis treatments ranged from 3-6 per month, while a higher-than-average volume has been experienced post-pandemic. **Since rolling out the service on March 6, 2023, SSM Health Monroe Hospital has provided 62 acute dialysis treatments, while preventing transfers to other health care facilities and allowing patients to continue receiving care in their home community.**

Wisconsin Regional Emergency Department Bootcamp

Denise Mitton MSN, RN, regional Clinical Nurse Specialist for Emergency Services, developed a Wisconsin Regional Emergency Department Bootcamp. In Wisconsin, as in the rest of the country, hospitals have been challenged to integrate less experienced and graduate-level nurses into acute care nursing areas, including Emergency Departments and Critical Care Units. Denise quickly recognized that a different approach to onboarding new nurses was required to support excellence in emergency nursing practice. **Bootcamp is an intensive 8-week program designed to provide the foundational knowledge required to care for multiple and complex patient populations while the nurse gains more experience in clinical practice.** The comments below demonstrate that the program is a success and could be a model for ED onboarding across our entire system.

“Bootcamp was amazing for a new ER RN. I have been a nurse for 20 years and didn't have any critical care experience nor ER experience. There was so much to learn and take in.”

“I found bootcamp VERY beneficial. Bootcamp increased my confidence. I enjoyed being in a "safe classroom" to ask questions and not feel judged or stupid.”

“I believe bootcamp, as it is currently, is invaluable and should be primary way of orientation for new grads like me and those experienced nurses transferring to the ministry.”

Sustained Excellence

In July, many of our health ministries were recognized for achieving sustained excellence in hospital-acquired infection (HAI) prevention. Thank you to all team members for your dedication to HAI prevention and excellence in patient care. Congratulations on these amazing accomplishments!



Wisconsin Region

In May 2023, the Wisconsin region celebrated zero!

- Zero CLABSI
- Zero CAUTI
- Zero C Diff Infections
- Zero Surgical Site Infections

Additional Accomplishments:

SSM Health Monroe Clinic

- No CLABSI/CDI for all of 2023

SSM Health Ripon Medical Center

- No CLABSI/CDI for all of 2023

SSM Health St. Agnes Hospital

- No CLABSI for all of 2023
- No CDI since April 2023

SSM Health St. Clare Hospital - Baraboo

- No CLABSI for all of 2023
- No CDI since March 2023

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Janesville

- No CLABSI/CDI for all of 2023

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Madison

- No CLABSI/CDI since April 2023

SSM Health Waupun Memorial Hospital

- No CLABSI/CDI for all of 2023

St. Louis Region

SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles

- No CLABSI for an entire year
- No CDI since January 2023

SSM Health St. Clare Hospital - Fenton

- No CLABSI since February 2023
- No CDI since May 2023

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital

- No CLABSI since May 2023

SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital

- No CLABSI since May 2023

SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis

- No CLABSI since May 2023
- No CDI since January 2023

SSM Health DePaul Hospital - St. Louis

- No CLABSI since April 2023
- No CDI since April 2023



Mid-Missouri

- No CLABSI for all of 2023
- No CDI since January 2023



Southern Illinois Region

- No CLABSI for all of 2023 in the Region

SSM Health Good Samaritan Hospital - Mt. Vernon

- No CDI since April 2023

Oklahoma Region

- No CDI in June in the Region

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Shawnee

- No CLABSI/CDI in all of 2023

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Midwest City

- 2 months since last CDI

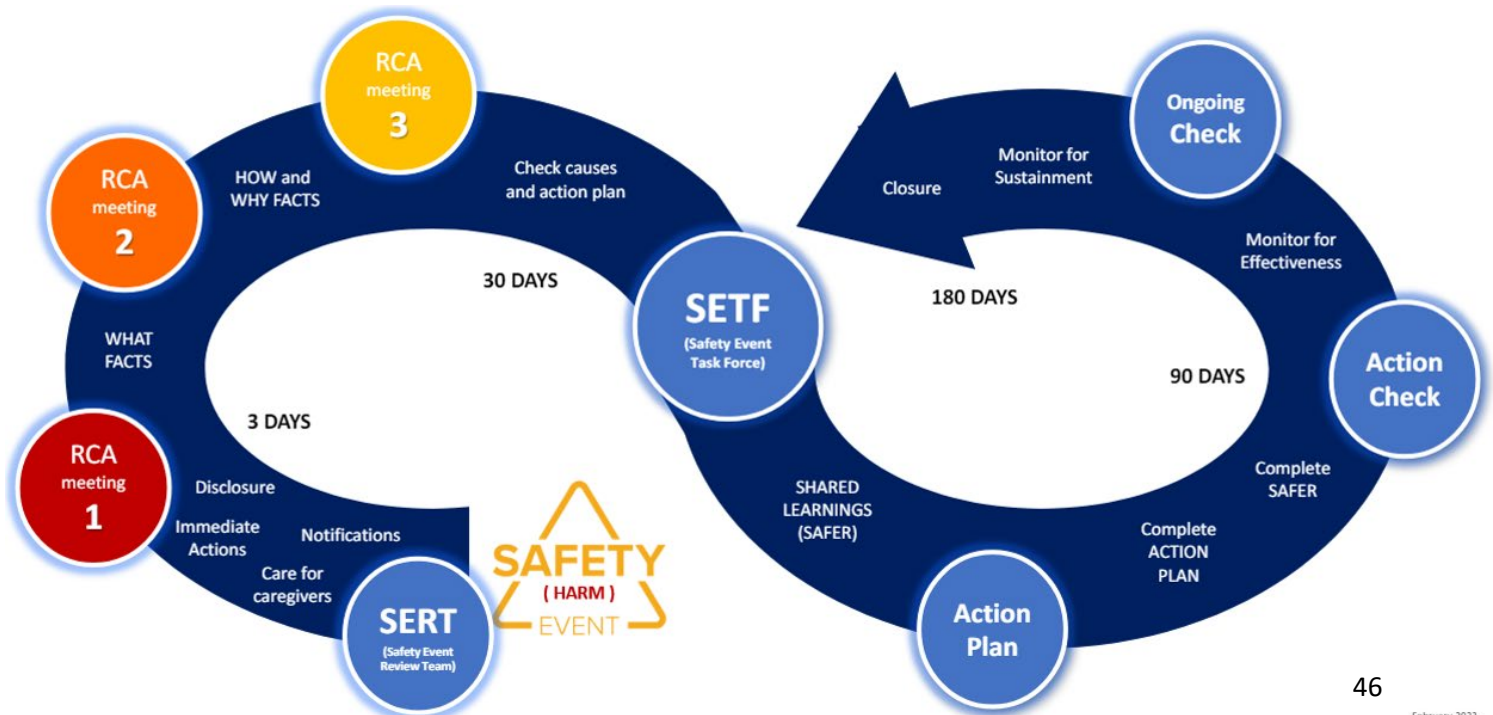
SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

- 1 month since last CDI



Root Cause Analysis – Safety Harm Event

RCA is a structured facilitated team process to identify the root causes of an event that resulted in an undesired outcome and develop corrective actions. The RCA process provides you with a way to identify breakdowns in processes and systems that contributed to the event and how to prevent future events. The purpose of an RCA is to find out what happened, why it happened, and determine what changes need to be made. It can be an early step in a PIP, helping to identify what needs to be changed to improve performance.



I am a leader

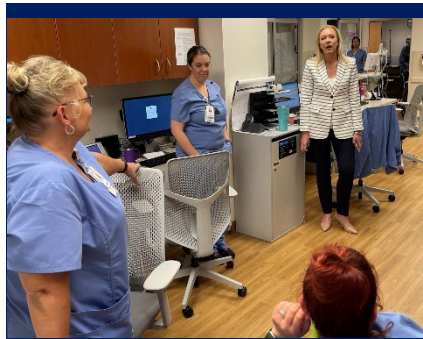
Positive leadership inspires and empowers others to achieve their best, fosters a culture of trust and collaboration, and leads by example with integrity and vision.



Amy Wilson, SSM Health System's Chief Nurse Executive, visits health ministries to connect with our practicing clinicians.

Amy Wilson, our Chief Nurse Executive, visited each health ministry in July and August and spent time getting to know staff and listening to feedback from practicing clinicians.

“These visits were *amazing*,” she said. “I am so grateful for the wonderful work our nurses are doing every day to fulfill our Mission. The insights provided – and will continue to provide – are invaluable as we forge a path forward! I am inspired and excited to build our strategic plan with them!”



CONNECT

INSPIRE

BELONG

Elizabeth Fritz was elected as Director to the Association for Nursing Professional Development's (ANPD) Board of Directors



Elizabeth Fritz has been elected as a Director to the Association for Nursing Professional Development's (ANPD) Board of Directors. Her two-year term began on March 17, 2023, while at the 2023 ANPD Aspire Convention in Atlanta. As a member of the Board of Directors, Elizabeth will collaborate with other Board members to provide oversight for management of ANPD and the organization's strategic direction. As a Director, Elizabeth will have responsibility for the implementation of strategic initiatives.

Elizabeth's commitment to nursing professional development is demonstrated by her engagement with ANPD. Elizabeth is a section editor for the 6th edition of the *Core Curriculum for Nursing Professional Development*, coming out later this year, and served as a member of the ANPD Diversity Task Force, a mentor for the ANPD Evidence-Based Practice Academy, and an instructor for the NPD Certification Prep Course.

JoAnne Brungart from SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles presented at the NDNQI Workplace Safety - Focusing on Assaults on Nursing Personnel webinar. She showcased tactics used by her ministry to decrease the number of assaults on their staff. Thank you, JoAnne, for your commitment to a safe workplace environment!

Helen Passafiume-Sandkuhl, RN, MSN, CEN, TNS, CHEP, FAEN serves as the Administrative Director-Nursing for EMS, Disaster & Clinical Community Outreach at SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital. She is also adjunct faculty at the TB Valentine School of Nursing at Saint Louis University. Helen is the chapter 4 contributor (Disaster Response, Triage and Decontamination) to the book *Preparing Nurses for Disaster Management A Global Perspective* by author Joanne Chaperlo Langan.

Amanda Kane, APNP, appointed to State Board of Nursing

Amanda Kane, APNP, a MEP Health nurse practitioner serving at SSM Health St. Agnes Hospital's Emergency Room, has been appointed by Governor Tony Evers to serve on the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) Wisconsin State Board of Nursing.

Kane is one of eight members to serve on the Board from across the state. She will serve as one of two licensed practical/registered nurses for a term of six years.

The Wisconsin State Board of Nursing is responsible for any issue related to the safety of public health and the protection of public from illegal and unauthorized nursing practices. It also enforces

standardized training and certifications for all nurse assistants, registered nurses, and advanced practice nurses in Wisconsin.

Kane earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, and her Master of Science in Nursing from Concordia University Wisconsin. She is certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.



Kane has been providing emergency care for 19 years at SSM Health St. Agnes Hospital. She has served as a staff nurse, charge nurse, educator, and sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE).

“I have always been very passionate about improving nursing standards, mentoring other nurses, advocating for access to mental health, caring for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors, and reducing violence against health care workers.” - Amanda Kane, APNP

First Evidence-Based Practice Fellowship launched in January 2023 – People Development

In January 2023 we launched our first Evidence-Based Practice Nursing Fellowship! To be a best-in-class nursing organization, one of the essential key attributes is that we (SSM Health) integrate the best research evidence with clinical expertise into the care we provide to patients and their families. To achieve our goal of creating an environment where our care is grounded in evidence will require that we provide our nurses with the tools to quickly integrate new evidence into their daily practice. We hope that one day, shortly, all of our nursing staff will be educated in EBP and its processes. Our goal is to provide our nurses with readily available technology that allows them to real-time search for the latest evidence that they can translate into the care they provide.

Our EBP Fellows are our Edge Runners: nurses who have been identified as the ones who will embark on the integration of evidence into our practice. We look forward with excitement for the work that they will do and the influence they will bring to our nursing teams. Please join us in thanking each of the individuals below for taking the risk of applying for this Fellowship and for putting us on the path of our future!

The SSM Health Evidence-Based Practice Fellowship has received recognition from the Helene Fuld Health Trust National Institute for Evidence-based Practice in Nursing and Healthcare at The Ohio State College of Nursing. The Fuld National Institute for EBP is a national hub for the formation, teaching, and dissemination of best practices to improve healthcare quality, safety, costs, and patient outcomes. Its cores include transdisciplinary clinical practice, academics, EBP implementation science, and consumer education. This program recognition from the Fuld National Institute will allow graduates of

the SSM Health EBP Fellowship Program to sit for the national EBP certification exam if they have not completed graduate study in EBP.

Mentors

Elizabeth Fritz PhD | WI
Chris Baker PhD | WI
Darcy Egging DNP | SO IL
Amber Wood DNP (c) | System
Sarah Donnell PhD (s) | System
Sarah Hall DNP | System
Becky Chambers DNP | STL
Jeannie Mollohan DNP | System
Nancy Patrick DNP CNS | WI
Kathryn Miller MSN CNS | WI
Jo Goffinet MS CNS | WI
Denise Mitton MSN CNS | WI

Fellows

Kelly Schubert CE | SO IL
Shannon Moore SN | STL
Holly Teeter NL | WI
Erin Carlson SN | WI
Stacey Weiler NL | System
Kelly Weary NL | System
Stacy Fuller SN | Mid-MO
Amy Bohanan CN | OK
Kayla Klusmeyer SN | WI
Mandie Miller SN | WI
Hailey Princ SN | WI
Suzanne Schmuhl CE | WI
Mimi Pfeffer CE | STL
Taylor Foecking SN | WI
Lisa Hein SN | WI

The Missouri Organization of Nurse Leaders Recognizes Emma Hirtz

Emma Hirtz, RN, BSN, Neuro Stepdown Manager at SSM Health DePaul Hospital - St. Louis is the recipient of the distinguished Missouri Organization of Nurse Leaders (MONL) DAISY Nurse Leader of the Year Award. For more than a decade Emma has served at SSM Health DePaul Hospital in various roles providing exceptional health care to patients and their families. As a leader, Emma leans on her experience as a practicing clinician to build strong partnerships with and among her team. Her ability to listen, lead, encourage, collaborate, and problem-solve with attention to detail earned her this statewide recognition.



According to one coworker and nominator, “She makes a concerted effort to listen to staff, encourage open communication, and collaborate on problem solving. This has created a supportive and cohesive work environment, where every member of the team feels valued and appreciated.”

The Missouri Organization of Nurse Leaders (MONL) DAISY Nurse Leader of the Year Award was presented to Emma on November 1 at the Missouri Hospital Association (MHA) 2023 Annual Convention held in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. During the event, MHA presented healthcare organizations, workers, and leaders with prestigious awards, recognizing outstanding personal achievement, honoring leadership in the delivery of healthcare, and featuring those who go above and beyond for their communities.

Nurses start Buddy Program for patients with mental illness

Patients who need a little extra support while getting mental health treatment at SSM Health DePaul Hospital — St. Louis are getting a buddy to help.

The buddies, all hospital employees, match with long-term patients in the behavioral health unit who have little to no outside support or don't get visits from friends and family. The pairs make a standing weekly appointment of at least 30 minutes to read together, play a game, color, make a craft, and otherwise forge a supportive relationship.

The Buddy Program started early 2023, but care providers already see results, including a decrease in negative behaviors among the patients. The idea for The Buddy Program came when nurse Caitlyn Obrock and the sitting nurse manager in charge of the obstetrics department were talking about babies who needed extra attention in the neonatal unit while waiting for placement in the foster care system. They quickly realized the situation of some patients in the behavioral health unit is similar.



Some patients come in and out of the unit their whole lives, and sometimes they're part of the foster care system. The unit is for acute crisis stabilization. While most patients stay three to five days, some stays are much longer. The longest so far has been more than 500 days. Stays lengthened during the pandemic because of a shortage of foster families and residential providers available for patients ready for discharge.



The discussion about the similarities between the neonatal babies and some of the patients in the behavioral health care unit prompted Obrock to confide that she'd love to take time to play a game or read a book with a long-term behavioral health patient. She asked colleagues if they would like to do the same thing as a buddy, and they said yes. That led to the launch of the program.

At any one time, the unit has about 15 buddy pairs. Some staffers have more than one buddy patient, and some staffers are waiting to be matched. To keep the program in compliance with federal privacy regulations, Obrock and this savvy team of nurses ask for permission from the guardians of patients before pairing anyone with a buddy.

They only accept employees within the campus as buddies. That makes it easier to maintain patient privacy. For the same reason, they pointed out, it would be difficult to bring in an outside volunteer group to be buddies to patients.

For those already being treated for mental health issues, Obrock said loneliness can exacerbate their illness. "Human connection is a basic need," she said. "And I think day to day we can get lost in that because we take it for granted."

Obrock said that employees love the program just as the patients do. "I would argue they were more impacted than we would have anticipated," she said. "It's been kind of a highlight of a lot of the staff's week."

Obrock said the impact of having a buddy can be especially profound for young patients. "If you sit down and look at the trajectory of a child's life, you just don't know what one person showing up for six months for 30 minutes can do," she said. "It can do a lot."



Mid-Missouri

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Jefferson City
2505 Mission Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65109

St. Louis

SSM Health DePaul Hospital - St. Louis
2303 DePaul Drive, Bridgeton, MO 63044

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - St. Louis
6420 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO 63117

SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles
300 First Capitol Drive, St. Charles, MO 63301

SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital
1201 S. Grand Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63104

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital
1465 S. Grand Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63104

SSM Health St. Clare Hospital - Fenton
1015 Bowles Ave., Fenton, MO 63026

SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis
100 Medical Plaza, Lake Saint Louis, MO 63367

Wisconsin

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Madison
700 S. Brooks St., Madison, WI 53715

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Janesville
3400 E. Racine St., Janesville, WI 53546

SSM Health Monroe Hospital
515 22nd Ave., Monroe, WI 53566

SSM Health St. Clare Hospital - Baraboo
707 14th St., Baraboo, WI 53913

SSM Health Waupun Memorial Hospital
620 W. Brown St., Waupun, WI 53963

SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital
845 Parkside St., Ripon, WI 54971

SSM Health St. Agnes Hospital - Fond du Lac
430 E. Division St., Fond du Lac, WI 54935

Southern Illinois

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Centralia
400 N. Pleasant Ave., Centralia, IL 62801

SSM Health Good Samaritan Hospital - Mt. Vernon
1 Good Samaritan Way, Mount Vernon, IL 62864

Oklahoma

SSM Health Bone & Joint Hospital at St. Anthony
1111 N. Dewey Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73103

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City
1000 N. Lee Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73102

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Midwest
2825 Parklawn Drive, Midwest City, OK 73110

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Shawnee
1102 W. MacArthur St., Shawnee, OK 74804

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Shawnee, Seminole Campus
2401 Wrangler Blvd., Seminole, OK 74868

SSM Health at Home/Post-Acute Services

SSM Health at Home Corporation
12312 Olive Blvd #400, St. Louis, MO 63141

For a detailed list of services and locations, visit www.ssmhealth.com/services/health-at-home.