
Destiny Bader, RN, BSN

Destiny is currently the Director of Nursing at Saunders Medical Center in Wahoo. She has 16 years of experience as a Registered Nurse in a variety of areas including cardiac, surgery, and the ER. In addition, she has 7 years of nursing management experience. Healthcare is ever changing and Destiny enjoys learning new innovative ways to improve the health of the patients they serve.

Kristin Bailey, RN, BSN, MHA

Kristin serves as the Director of Quality and Infection Control at Jennie M. Melham Memorial Medical Center in Broken Bow. She graduated from Clarkson College with her BSN and received her MHA from Walden University. She has worked in the quality/risk/ infection control role for eight years and has been focused on educating herself during the pandemic through APIC and CDC.

Brittany Brockman, RN

Brittany graduated with a dual major in Biopsychology and General Psychology from Hastings College in 2011 and earned her Bachelor of Nursing from Nebraska Methodist College in 2015. Brittany has worked at CHI Health St. Elizabeth since May 2013 starting as an emergency department technician and medication aide. In 2015, she started her role as an ICU nurse and has been a charge nurse and supervisor since 2018.

Troy Brown

Troy is a manager with The Chartis Center for Rural Health. Troy spent 10 years at Charles A. Dean Memorial Hospital, a Critical Access Hospital in Maine, serving in a variety of roles, including Director of Business Services, Registration, Patient Accounts, HIM, IT, Materials Management, Performance Improvement and Community Relations and Development. Troy has built upon this foundation at The Chartis Center for Rural Health, facilitating a variety of strategic performance improvement-related projects with independent rural hospitals, system- affiliated facilities and statewide networks of rural and Critical Access Hospitals nationally.

Kristen Colsden, RN, BSN, CSSBB

Kristen's passion for quality improvement began as a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Department where her hands-on experience with projects paved her path to where she is today. With over 15 years in health care, Kristen is the RN-Quality Project Manager for Faith Regional Health Services and the Quality Improvement Coordinator for the Carson Cancer Center. Her current responsibilities are focused primarily on nursing projects but with her vast knowledge of hospital processes and systems she is also a key member in hospital wide projects. Kristen received her Associate of Nursing Degree in 2006, her Bachelor of Nursing in 2013 and is currently working on her Master of Science in Nursing with an Emphasis in Leadership in Health Care Systems. Kristen is also a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt (CSSBB) and uses Lean Principles in assisting with quality improvement projects. Even though it's been a few years since working in the Emergency Department she still finds time to course direct and teach the hospital's Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) class. Her motto is: "Once an ER nurse, always an ER nurse."

Deborah M. Conley, MSN, APRN-CNS, GCNS-BC

Deborah is a Service Executive and Gerontological Clinical Nurse Specialist at Methodist Hospital in Omaha. She leads nursing practice and influences patient outcomes by implementing and sustaining geriatrics care models. Under her leadership, five major geriatrics models of care exist in the interdisciplinary practice environment. These include the Acute Care for Elders unit, the Hospital Elder Life Program, Nurses Improving Care for Health System Elders exemplar hospital designation, AgeWISE, and a Geriatric Resource Nurse Model in the Emergency Department. One of her favorite responsibilities is collaborating with colleagues in the AgeWISE Geropalliative Care nurse residency. There are over 200 AgeWISE nurses at Methodist. She currently leads Methodist Health System in the Age-Friendly Health system national initiative. Her work exemplifies excellence in innovation, collaboration, leadership, and patient-centered care.

Sharon Conroy, BSN, RN, CIC

Sharon serves as an Infection Prevention and Employee Health Nurse at Community Hospital in McCook, where she has been on staff since 1990. She was a staff nurse from 1992 – 2007, at which time she transferred to her current role. In 2013, Sharon received her Certification in Infection Prevention from the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology.

Stephanie Copp

Stephanie currently serves as Patient Financial Services Manager, Transportation Manager and HIPAA Privacy Officer at Valley County Health System in Ord, where she has worked for the past 23 years. She is responsible for the recruitment, training, and supervision of 2 full time and 3 part time drivers, and 10 PA/PFS staff. She attends annual state regulated Transportation Manager meetings to network with peers and gain insight into new rules and regulations related to transportation.

Gloria Dawson, RN

Gloria has worked at Lexington Regional Health Center for over 35 years. She has worked in Diabetes Education for past 24 years. Gloria works with diabetes patients to manage their chronic disease. Lexington Regional Health Center is accredited through the American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Self-Management Education programs. Gloria is involved in community health fairs, employee and community wellness, diabetes screenings and community education that targets the minority population.

Austin Farnstrom, PharmD, RP

Austin is a Clinical Staff Pharmacist at Brodstone Memorial Hospital in Superior. Austin is originally from Hebron and graduated from UNMC College of Pharmacy in Omaha in 2011. Upon graduation, Austin started practice as a staff pharmacist with CHI Health – Good Samaritan in Kearney. In 2016, Austin and his family chose to move back home to rural Nebraska and began working as a clinical pharmacist for Cardinal Health Innovative Delivery Solutions at Brodstone Memorial Hospital in Superior. He is involved with numerous interdisciplinary initiatives at Brodstone such as antimicrobial stewardship, sepsis, readmissions and transitions of care.

Michelle George, BSN, RN

Michelle is currently the Quality and Compliance Officer at CHI Nebraska Spine Hospital in Omaha. She has worked in health care for 33 years with experience in: Critical Care, Perioperative Nursing, LTACH, Ortho Spine and Quality and Compliance. Her biggest accomplishments include opening three acute care specialty hospitals in Omaha Nebraska over the last 20 years.

Anne Hansen, MSN, RN-BC, CPHQ

Anne currently serves as Director of Quality and Population Health for Prairie Health Ventures. In the role of Director, she is primarily responsible for the management of NPG Health Collaborative, LLC – a rural Medicare Shared Savings Program Accountable Care Organization. Prior to joining Prairie Health Ventures, she served as Regional Quality Consultant for a large integrated health system based in Omaha, Nebraska, and specifically supported Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) and CAH networks in the areas of Quality, Infection Prevention, Safety and Care Coordination. Anne is board certified in Gerontological nursing by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, and is designated as a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ) by the Healthcare Quality Certification Board.

Angela J. Herbert, RN, MSN

Angela is currently the Quality and Patient Safety Director at Bryan Medical Center in Lincoln. Her nursing career spans 36 years with many clinical experiences and leadership positions. Her first position was in a 100-bed hospital to gain med-surg experience and then transitioned to a large academic medical center and trauma intensive care; both in the Phoenix metro area. She held several leadership positions with oversight over four critical care areas. Angela then relocated to Lincoln in 1993, where she began a career at Bryan Medical Center. Since then, she has held multiple positions including: Administrative Manager/ House Supervisor; Critical Care leadership positions; Clinical Informatics; and for the past 7 ½ years Director of Quality and Patient Safety and Organizational Quality. Responsibilities in Organization Quality include: Infection Prevention Department; Accreditation & Regulatory; Patient Safety; Policies & Procedures; Clinical Evidenced Based Order Set Program; Patient Education; High Risk Patients & Mortality; Clinical Quality Data; Promoting Interoperability.

Patrick A. Hotovy, MD

Dr. Hotovy is a family physician and directs clinical quality at York Medical Clinic; he is a long time chair of the York General Hospital quality committee. Dr. Hotovy is also part of the HRSA grant that is driving our institutions to institute quality changes. He earned his MD from UNMC in 1989.

Brittany Hueftle, BSN, RN

Brittany is a registered nurse and earned her Bachelor of Nursing at UNMC of Kearney in 2012. She has worked at Lexington Regional Health Center since 2008, starting as an aide then an RN after earning her degree. She started working as a patient care coordinator in 2013 and in 2016, she became the Director of Transitional Care Services. She has also spent a portion of her career working in home health & hospice. Brittany was recently accepted into the AONL Nurse Director Fellowship program.

Stacey Jurgensen

Stacey Jurgensen is the inpatient manager at Memorial Community Hospital & Health System. She oversees the med/surg, labor & delivery, and case management. She has been a nurse since 2008. Before joining MCH she worked for a larger hospital system that provided several opportunities to learning multiple departments, such as med/surg, orthopedics, and post intensive. She obtained her master's degree in leadership and management in 2018. She also holds a certification in orthopedics as well.

Jennifer Klanecky, RN, BSN

Jennifer is a Chronic Care Manager at Howard County Medical Center in St. Paul. Prior to her current role, she worked at St. Francis Medical Center in Grand Island from 2007-2012 on the Progressive Care Unit and from there, she moved to the clinic setting. She worked at Internal Medical Associated of Grand Island until she started her career at Howard County Medical Center in 2015. She began her role in Chronic Care in 2018 and is a Certified Health Coach and a member of the Palliative Care Team.

Samantha Kenning, MSN, C-EFM

Samantha is a Perinatal Quality Clinical Resource Nurse at Bryan Health in Lincoln. Samantha has worked as a pediatric intensive care nurse, orthopedic nurse, and labor and delivery nurse through her career. During her time as a labor and delivery nurse, she also held the hat of being the perinatal bereavement coordinator and assisting in creation of the perinatal-neonatal navigator position at Bryan Health to assist high-risk deliveries. She serves as a co-chair for the perinatal quality committee and has been a member of the surgical site infection committee for the past three years.

Jared Kramer, MD

Dr. Kramer has been a primary care provider at Howard County Medical Center for 15 years. He is a member of the Bryan Health Connect board at Bryan Health and Chairperson of the Contracting committee. He has interest in end of life care and has participated in further education in palliative care.

Alexis Lewis, MSN, RNC-OB

Alexa started her nursing career as a labor and delivery nurse at Nebraska Methodist hospital. She was blessed to be a part of the first delivery at Methodist Women's Hospital in 2010 and continued to thrive as a nurse caring for mothers and families experiencing pregnancy complications on the high risk obstetric unit. In 2015, Alexa transitioned to the clinic manager role of a family medicine, internal medicine, pediatric and OBGYN outpatient practice. Alexa returned to Methodist Women's Hospital as the Mother Baby, Lactation, and women's health service line leader in 2016. In 2018, Alexa began leading labor and delivery and high risk OB in addition to postpartum and women's health. In 2019, Alexa joined Bryan Health as the Nursing Director for Women's & Children's services at Bryan Medical Center.

Leah Lonsdale, BSN, RN

Leah Lonsdale is the Med/Surg Coordinator at York General Hospital a 25 bed critical access hospital serving the local communities. She has been a nurse for the past 16 years working in various different roles. Leah started her career in healthcare as a nurse's aide at York General. From there, she attended Bryan School of nursing and Nebraska Wesleyan University. She worked in Lincoln in several roles including: Medical/Oncology, Labor and Delivery and the Arthritis clinic. She is currently back at York General as the Medical/Surgical Coordinator. She specializes in education for all staff as well as the community and she is a team member of the Age Friendly Hospitals implementation team.

Brooke Lukasiewicz, RN

Brooke is the Nurse Navigator at Howard County Medical Clinic in St. Paul, where her duties include chronic care management, transitional care management and Medicare annual wellness visits. She started at HCMC as a clinic nurse in 2010 and also worked in pre-op and PACU. Prior to that, she worked at Heartland Surgery Center in Kearney as an OR nurse and orthopedic coordinator. She has also experience as an OR nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney. Brooke is certified as a health coach and a member of the palliative care team.

Rita Maloley, MSW

Rita is the Social Services Director for York General Hospital, a position she has held for the past 15 years. Prior to being at York General, she worked at Penrose-St. Francis Hospital in Colorado Springs and St. Mary Corwin Hospital in Pueblo, Colorado. Rita started her career 30 years ago in the nursing home setting and moved into the child welfare arena for many years before rejoining the medical sector and working at an AIDS project. At York General, she has been part of the development of the Patient and Family Advisory Council at York General, their new volunteer program and most recently the Age-Friendly Team. Particular interests include addressing the mental health issues of our elderly population.

Andrew McCarty, RN, BSN, SCRNP, LSSGB

Andrew is currently the Stroke/Sepsis Program Coordinator at Mary Lanning Healthcare (MLH) in Hastings. He has been in various program coordinator roles with MLH since 2014; Stroke Program Coordinator (2014-Present), Vascular Access Program Coordinator (2017-2018), and Sepsis Program Coordinator (2018-2020). During this time, Mary Lanning Healthcare has been regularly recognized a top Primary Stroke Center in the state of Nebraska and was ranked #1 in 2019 for Sepsis quality of care. Andrew completed Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Training in 2017 and received Stroke Certified Registered Nurse (SCRNP) certification in 2018.

Jenni Meiergerd, BSN, RN

Jenni started her career as a Nursing Assistant at Nebraska Medicine in the Cardiovascular ICU. After graduation from nursing school, Jenni worked as an RN in the Cardiac Progressive Care Unit until 2011. After driving to Omaha from West Point for two years, she decided to find a job closer to her home. She started as an RN at Franciscan Healthcare in West Point in the fall of 2010 where she still continues to work as a nurse. She has been a Clinical Superuser for the Paragon EMR build as well as a Clinical Informatics Specialist for the Cerner EMR conversion. She helped develop a Care Transitions nurse role and assisted in that position. In 2016, Jenni decided to dip her toe into the Infection Control world and that position has grown into a full time Infection Control, Employee Health, and Safety Coordinator role. Jenni leads the Infection Control committee, Safety committee, as well as assists the pharmacist in leading the Antibiotic Stewardship committee. She also has served on the Sepsis committee since 2015 and currently leads that committee.

Denise Moeschen, RN, BSN

Denise serves as a Clinical Quality Specialist at Bryan Medical Center in Lincoln and brings over 35 years of nursing experience, having spent the first 25 years at the bedside in critical care. She currently works in Organizational Quality and has co-lead the sepsis team for the past five years. She participates in staff education on sepsis both internally and throughout the region.

Jessica Nordstrom, MLT(ASCP)

Jessica is currently the Infection Control Coordinator at Lexington Regional Health Center, where she has worked since 2003, starting in the Laboratory and transitioning to Infection Control in 2017. In January of 2020, she became a board member of the Nebraska Chapter of APIC as the Membership Secretary. Jessica earned her designation of Medical Laboratory Technician from UN-L.

Jason North, PharmD, MBA

Jason the Director of Pharmacy at Great Plains Health (GPH) in North Platte. Jason obtained his Doctorate of Pharmacy from Creighton University in 2000 and Masters of Business Administration from the University of the Cumberland in Williamsburg, Kentucky in 2012. Jason has an extensive pharmacy leadership background including hospital management positions in both Kentucky and Wyoming. Jason has led a large number of patient care initiatives including the initiation of an inpatient antimicrobial stewardship team, leading an opioid stewardship task force, reduction of patient harm through the use of adverse drug event monitoring and initiatives, and most recently has been pivotal on the COVID-19 HICs command team leading the team with ensuring procurement COVID-19 pharmaceuticals. Jason passionately leads his pharmacy team with performance excellence in supporting the region in cardiac, stroke, trauma, orthopedic, neonatal intensive care, chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

Tammy Norville, CPC-I, CPC, RMM, RMC, RMB

With a background in regulatory surveying, “troubleshooting” in the senior living private sector and being a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduate, Tammy Norville served rural safety-net providers for almost 15 years in the NC DHHS Office of Rural Health. Tammy has a strong background in administrative operations including all fiscal and administrative business areas. Tammy has developed and presented several hands-on coding and documentation workshops for providers and billing/coding teams both within North Carolina and nationally. She has also developed and delivered education sessions on various business literacy and management topics throughout her career including but not limited to Rural Health Clinic cost reporting, contracts monitoring, community development, human resource challenges as well as Federal grant coordination activities.

Lacey Pavlovsky, RN, BSN, CIC

Lacey is an Infection Preventionist at CHI Health St. Francis in Grand Island, NE. She received her certification in Infection Prevention and Control (CIC) in June of 2017 and has been in her present role for over 5 years. She has served as a board member of Greater Omaha APIC Chapter for the last 3 years, where she is currently acting as the Treasure elect. Prior to her work in Infection Prevention, she worked as a resource pool RN and a pediatric RN at CHI Health Good Samaritan in Kearney, NE. She earned her BSN is from the University of Northern Colorado and her MSN from American Sentinel University.

Barbara Petersen, RN, MSN, APRN-BC

Barbara currently serves as Chief Quality Officer at Great Plains Health in North Platte. She is a 1993 graduate of Mid Plains Community College as a Registered Nurse, 2002 Graduate of Midlands University with a BSN and a 2006 graduate of Clarkson College in 2006 with an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse in the area of Family Practice. Barb has been employed by Great Plains Health since 1993 and has had the opportunity to work in many areas and bring up several specialty programs such as the first Primary Stroke Center, Bariatric Center for Excellence, Total Hip and Knee Center of Excellence, practice as a Nurse Practitioner in the areas of pain management, cardiology and emergency medicine.

Melanie Pinette

Melanie earned a Master of Engineering Management (MEM) from Duke University as well as a BA in Physics and Economics from Bowdoin College and a Graduate Certificate of Data Analysis from Northeastern University. Melanie possesses extensive experience analyzing healthcare data. She works closely with CCRH’s state networks, providing insight into performance improvement opportunities through the Hospital Strength INDEX. Melanie plays a prominent role in the research conducted by CCRH into various aspects of the rural health safety net, including rural hospital vulnerability and the impact of COVID-19. Prior to joining CCRH, Melanie served as a Manager of Business Development for GNS Healthcare’s managed care team and led several program analyses and research efforts related to population health at Onpoint Health Data. She also worked with state health entities to implement and evaluate ACO networks designed to improve patient outcomes and lower total cost of care.

Sam Prokopec

Sam has worked in Senior Living since 2013. In 2015, he was accepted into the Administrator in Training program with The Good Samaritan Society. After completing 7 months of training and successfully completing Boards, Sam became a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator in 2016. Sam then transferred to Villisca, Iowa to be the Administrator for Good Samaritan Society-Villisca. In 2018, Sam took the Nursing Home Administrator position at Saunders Medical Center- Long Term Care. In 2019, Sam completed the NHA Leadership Institute program and is currently in the process of completing his Master's degree in Healthcare Administration from Clarkson College.

Nicole Ragon, RN, CCRN

Nicole has been a bedside nurse in Critical Care at CHI St. Elizabeth for 18 years. Nicole has been the Nurse Educator and Supervisor for the past two years for the Critical Care areas. She has been instrumental in teaching multiple programs in the Residency Program and New Nurse Orientation for the hospital. She has been on multiple committees including Quality Improvement. Nicole also is involved in her Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Sherri Redinger, RN, BSN

Sherri is currently the Director of Care Coordination & Nursing Services at York Medical Clinic. She has three years of experience in a Critical Care/Burn Unit area. In addition, she has 23 years in Home Health and Public Health Leadership. Sherri also has five years with Clinic Nursing and Care Coordination Management. She is co-founder of York County Health Coalition, a former Board Member of the Nebraska Home Health Association and served as the Director of the York County Health Department from 1999-2003.

Connie Rupp, MSN, RN

Connie currently serves as Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer at Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk. Faith Regional was recently named one of the Top 20 Rural Community Hospitals in the country by the National Rural Health Association. The hospital enjoys a rich history of providing award winning health-care. Over Connie's 19-year career as a registered nurse, 13 years has been in various nursing leadership roles with the last almost 5 years serving as an executive. She has a passion for improving patient quality, safety, and experience as well as staff experience and engagement. She recognizes that the number one asset in achieving goals are the people who serve the patients. Working collaboratively with an engaged team, Connie is transforming nursing care at Faith Regional through consistency and alignment using standardized tools and approaches. This investment by the team has resulted in many quality metric improvements and awards. She currently serves as the Nebraska Organization of Nurse Leaders (NONL) District 2 President.

Kari Ruse

Since 2013, Kari Ruse has been the Transit Manager at the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT). Ms. Ruse and her transit staff are responsible for funding and oversight of agencies for the provision of public transportation in the rural areas of Nebraska and specialized transportation for the elderly and disabled. Annually, NDOT Transit provides nearly \$20 million dollars in state and federal funds to eligible organizations including rural municipalities and public purpose organizations.

Denise Sabatka, BSN, RN

Denise is the Director of Quality Services at Saunders Medical Center (SMC) in Wahoo. Denise earned her Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and her career in healthcare spans three decades. Her healthcare experiences cover the spectrum from direct patient care to serving as a director of nursing and from clinical informatics to education. As technologies and their applications have evolved in healthcare, so, too, have quality tracking and trending of metrics. Denise is excited to be part of the SMC team that has worked through the transformations in patient care and patient experience models, and outcomes.

Stacie Sabatka, MS

Stacie is the Director of Clinics at Saunders Medical Center. Stacie has been involved in the healthcare field in a variety of roles for the past 28 years. She obtained her bachelor's degree from the College of Saint Mary in Omaha and her Master's degree from The University of Nebraska at Omaha. An advocate for quality, patient centered care led her to guide her organization to pursue PCMH certification. Stacie's commitment to utilizing the technology available in her organization has also pushed the transformation of care at Saunders Medical Center.

Marisa Schaffer, MSN, RNC-MNN

Marisa Schaffer is a Nurse Educator at Bryan Women's and Children's. She focuses on staff development and quality improvement. She received her BSN from UNMC-Lincoln in 2008. She has worked in adult progressive care, mother/baby and labor and delivery. Marisa completed her MSN in nursing education from Wesleyan in 2014 and a certificate in Simulation Education from Bryan in 2016.

Tanya Sharp

Tanya currently serves as CEO of Boone County Health Center in Albion. Tanya began her healthcare career in a CAH in North Dakota as a CFO/CEO. She is an active member on many local, state and national boards. She earned her BS in Healthcare Administration from the University of Minnesota.

Jaclyn Smith, RN

Jaclyn has worked at Saunders Medical Center (SMC) for the past 2 years as an infection control nurse and Quality Assurance nurse in Long Term Care. Prior to her time at SMC she has experience in neurology, infusion center, medical-surg and a Long Term Care-Rehab setting. She graduated from Bryan School of Nursing in 2003 and attained her Infection Prevention Certification in 2019.

Matthew Snyder RN, BSN

Matt has been the director of nursing at Johnson County Hospital in Tecumseh since 2014. Johnson County Hospital participated in the Age Friendly System and also the Transition of Care simultaneously last spring. Matt and his team at Johnson County have made a concerted effort to not only have Age Friendly certification but to make sure that every decision is made with elderly needs in mind. Matt started his career in healthcare in environmental services in Eugene, Oregon. He worked his way through school in Illinois as a housekeeper and then as a tech in the emergency department. He graduated with his BSN and immediately went to work in the same ER where he had worked his way up. Matt went on to work for a sister hospital in Chicago and worked there for almost eight years, flying back and forth to Nebraska for five of them. Matt specialized in ER nursing and was a certified emergency nurse for several years. He completely changed gears and has since graduated from the NHA Leadership institute. He has participated in numerous projects at the state level including being part of the NHA education advisory council and currently is a member of NONL.

Kevin Sponsel, PharmD, BCPS, AAHIVP

Dr. Sponsel is the infectious disease clinical pharmacy specialist at Bryan Health, where also serves as co-director of the Bryan Antimicrobial Stewardship Program. Originally from Plato, Missouri, Dr. Sponsel earned a bachelor's degree in biology at the University of Missouri and a doctor of pharmacy degree from Mercer College of Pharmacy in Atlanta, Georgia. He completed his PGY-1 Pharmacy Practice Residency at Emory Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia and his PGY-2 Infectious Disease Residency at Franciscan St. Francis Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Anne Thallas, BSEMS, MSN, RN, NE-BC, CPN

Anne is the Service Leader of the Medical Surgical unit and the IV team at Nebraska Methodist Hospital. She is the chair of the Central Line Committee for the Methodist Organization which includes three hospitals. Anne started her career as a Paramedic and then switched to Nursing in 2006. She worked at Creighton University Medical Center in the NICU and the PICU. In 2011 she worked at Children Hospital Medical Center in the Pulmonary division where she became a nurse supervisor and then working her way up to the clinic manager. In 2015, Anne started at Methodist Hospital as a Service Leader over the medical surgical unit and the IV team. Anne is a member of Nebraska Nurses Association, American Nurse Association, Sigma Theta Tau, and the Nebraska Organization of Nurse Leaders. She was the recipient of the Nurse of the Year March of Dimes Award in 2014, Nurse Excellence Award in 2018, Positive Image of Nursing in 2018, and March of Dimes Excellence in Leadership and Mentoring Award in 2018.

Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN

Nicole is currently the Chief Nursing Officer at Lexington Regional Health Center, where she held that position for the past 6 years. Prior to this role, she worked as an RN for 14 years and provided oversight of infection control for 5 years. Nicole is a TeamSteps Master Trainer, holds a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, earned a Just Culture Champion Certification and was recognized by the Nebraska Organization of Nurse Leaders as a Distinguished Nurse Leader and Mentor in 2018. In addition, this year she served as incident commander for all oversight of COVID-19 including all nursing and infection control processes related to the pandemic. Nicole earned her RN at Bryan College of Health Science and her BSN and MSN from Kaplan University.

Anne Timmerman MT, ASCP, CPHQ

Anne Timmerman is the Quality Assurance Performance Improvement Coordinator at Franciscan Care Services (FCS) in West Point. She helped develop their Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) and assists the Program leader with providing education for the Board of Directors, PFAC members and staff. She advocates to incorporate PFAC members suggestions into the practices at FCS. Her responsibilities include reporting, displaying and sharing HCAHPS survey results throughout the organization. She regularly educates department managers using feedback from these surveys to create exceptional care experiences for their patients.

Michael Topchik

Michael is the National Leader for The Chartis Center for Rural Health. He is a leading voice on the stability of the rural health safety net and rural hospital performance. He is a frequent presenter at state, regional and national rural health events and brings a wealth of experience utilizing big data for hospital benchmarking and performance improvement to The Chartis Center for Rural Health's client engagements. Michael offers his expertise and knowledge as a key resource on matters impacting rural healthcare for media outlets such as CNN, The Washington Post, Forbes, Reuters, The Boston Globe and FiveThirtyEight.

Krista Trimble

Krista has been with the Pender Community Hospital for 11 years. She started as the Pharmacy Coordinator / Technician and then transitioned to her current role in quality and performance improvement. Krista has a Bachelor's of Science in Biology which has heightened her ability to compile and perform project improvement projects and data analysis. Krista is a green belt in LEAN Methodology training and used this skill to develop and lead various quality projects. Her expertise in excel and pivot tables allow for effective communication of project progression to illustrate how changes in the system can drive results. She is committed to ensuring the patients at Pender Community Hospital receive exceptional care, delivered in a safe and caring environment.

Kate Tyner, RN, BSN, CIC

Kate is Nurse Coordinator of the Nebraska ICAP and ASAP. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UNMC and has been working in infection control and prevention since 2005 and was certified in Infection Control and Epidemiology in 2008. She is the Educational Program Director and a faculty member for The Nebraska Infection Control Network and has been a contributor to many publications and presentations, but her true passion is educating health-care professionals on the prevention of healthcare acquired infections.

Terra Uhing, MS

Terra is the Executive Director of Three Rivers Public Health Department serving the counties of Dodge, Saunders and Washington counties in eastern Nebraska. She has worked for Three Rivers since 2011 and has been in the Executive Director role since March 2013. She holds a Master of Science degree in Health Position from Nebraska Methodist College.

Amy Vertin, MD

Dr. Amy Vertin has been the Medical Director of the Emergency Department of Crete Area Medical Center for the last 10 years and has 17 years of experience practicing medicine and leading change in several different rural environments. She also works as the Physician Leader for the Order Set Program for Bryan Health, working to assuring evidence based practice and quality care for the organization.

Susi VonBergen

Susi is currently the Assistant Director of Nursing/Director of Quality and has worked at Nemaha County Hospital in Auburn for 33 years in multiple roles. She is a graduate of the Bryan School of Nursing.

Treg Vyzourek, MBA

Treg has served as CEO at Brodstone Memorial Hospital in Superior since 2018. Under his leadership, Brodstone was named a Top 100 Critical Access Hospital in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, Brodstone received the NOSDRH Performance Leadership Award for top performance in quality and patient perspective. In 2020, they were awarded 5 stars by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and is listed in the top 20 Critical Access Hospitals in the U.S.

Tamara Wiens, BS, RN

Tamara is the West View Medical Building Administrator at York General, and also serves as the Quality, Infection Control, and Risk Management Director. She has been a nurse for the past 16 years working in various different roles. Tamara started her career in healthcare as a nurse's aide at York General Hearthstone. From there, she has working in multiple departments and roles throughout the organization.

Kelli Wood, BSW

Kelli currently serves as Social Work Director and Utilization Review Coordinator at Howard County Medical Center in St. Paul. Prior to her current role, she worked at St. Francis Medical Center in Grand Island from 1988 to 2000 in both the acute and skilled nursing settings. She has worked at Howard County Medical Center for the past 20 years providing social work to inpatients and outpatients at the facility. Kelli is a member of the Palliative Care Team at Howard County Medical Center that can serve patients while they are in the hospital as well as in the community setting. Services she provides to palliative care patients and their families include discharge planning, resource identification and referrals, end of life support and assistance, Advance Directive education and planning, identification of goals of care and guidance on financial assistance programs and eligibility. She works in collaboration with other Palliative Care team members to provide an interdisciplinary approach to care for the patients and families served.

Lacey Zarek, RDN, LMNT

Lacey started working at Lexington Regional Health Center in 2015. She has been a Registered Dietitian for over 7 years. She is involved in the care of patients in the DSMES program by providing a variety of educational opportunities that provide nutrition therapy for diabetes, heart disease, obesity and other nutritional concerns. Lacey is involved in community events, health fairs, employee and community wellness. She also provides nutrition education in the Lexington Public School district. Lacey is a lifestyle coach for the National Diabetes Prevention Program. She teaches a Walk this Weigh class at LRHC for people who are at risk for developing Type 2 Diabetes.