

Children's of Alabama 2022 Nursing Annual Report



Children's
of Alabama®

A Letter from the Chief Nursing Officer

Greetings from Delicia Mason,

Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer

It is my pleasure to present the 2022 Children’s of Alabama Nursing Annual Report. As we reflect on the past year, we cannot ignore the turbulent tides of volume surges we experienced that sparked intense focus on capacity management within clinical areas. As we navigated processes to incorporate staffing abilities and creativity in designing or repurposing bed space, our nursing teams demonstrated strength and commitment by continuing to incorporate evidenced based practice into accomplishing our mission to provide the finest pediatric care to children who needed services at our hospital.

We are incrementally gaining ground in recovering our nursing workforce and have incorporated strategies to continue to rebound. Adopting a more diverse approach to onboarding nurses and broadening our reach have been integral to increasing the number of nurses serving on our teams. Providing additional “Day in the Life” opportunities for nursing students has enriched recruitment ability as well. Unit-level shared governance groups have actively engaged in mapping retention strategies to enhance nursing satisfaction and joy in work. The purposeful work that has gone into recruitment and retention has promoted stronger collegial and staff collaboration while also having positive impact on sustaining healthier work environments.

I am honored to lead Nursing at our hospital. I am proud of all we have accomplished. I am inspired by the conversations and stories shared by our nurses, and I am optimistic about our future. Together, we will get there.

Thank you for your compassionate care.



Delicia Y. Mason, RN, MNHSA, NEA-BC
Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer



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Nursing by the Numbers

2,041 Nurses including 35 LPNs

- **74%** Full-time
- **11%** Part-time
- **15%** PRN/Flex
- **68%** Nurses reporting < 10 years in practice
- **32%** Nurses reporting > 10 years in practice

332 Beds

48 NICU Bassinets

1,057 Critical Care Transports

72,720 Emergency Department Visits

28,053 Surgeries Performed

16,074 Hospital Discharges



Strategic Goals



Recruitment/Retention

Team Support

- Leadership rounds
- Clinical Partners Program
- Proactive compensation review

Staffing Stability

- Schedule flexibility
- Staffing Escalation Plan
- Expanded preceptor opportunities

Great Place to Work

Staff Engagement

- Nurses Week celebrations
- Shared Governance
- Professional Achievement Program

Safe and State of the Art Care

HAC Goals:

- 10% reduction in CLABSI and UE and
- 20% reduction in Pressure Injury

Continue Transfer to higher level of care initiative

Focus efforts on Bedside Shift Report, IDC and Narcotic Waste processes

Prioritize preparation for TJC site visit 2nd qtr 2022

Complete NDNQI pressure injury prevalence assessments on 85% of inpatients

2022 Nursing Staff Goals

Increase reliability with team completion of bedside shift report on my unit by 50% before December 31, 2022.

NRC Picker Focus Questions

- Inpatient** - Achieve and maintain at least 81% for NRC Picker results for my unit on the question, "Did you have confidence and trust in the nurses treating your child?" by November 30, 2022.
- Emergency Department** - Achieve and maintain at least 75% for NRC picker results on the question "How often did staff introduce themselves and explain their role in your child's care?" by November 30, 2022.
- Dialysis** - Achieve and maintain at least 86% for NRC Picker results on the question, "Did nurses treat you with courtesy and respect?" by November 30, 2022.

Staffing Solutions



Pediatric hospitals across the nation have been impacted by atypical high volumes partnered with continued staffing challenges. Children's of Alabama has experienced similar impacts and has implemented strategies to recruit, retain and incentivize nurses for working additional shifts.

Weekend Scheduling Option

A weekend scheduling option was implemented in 2022. This option provided needed staffing on weekend days while allowing flexibility for nurses choosing the weekend scheduling plan.

Internal Staffing Option

The Internal Staffing Option (ISO) was implemented December 2021.

Nurses participating in ISO commit to work 12 extra hours each week for a 4-week cohort. The nurse also agrees to work in the inpatient unit with the greatest need each shift within the nurse's competencies. An hourly incentive tier is paid for all ISO shifts and a bonus is paid to participants upon the successful completion of each cohort. Nurses self-schedule the hours from shifts posted to an electronic billboard.

The ISO program expanded to the Behavioral Health unit in February 2022 and to Renal Dialysis in March 2022. Nurses committing to ISO for these specialty units work only in the designated unit and are not reallocated to other areas.

Higher weekend staffing needs resulted in the implementation of ISO specifically for weekends in June. Nurses participating in the weekend option commit to work a specified number of ISO weekend hours each pay period. Weekend is defined as Friday at 7pm through Monday at 7am.

To meet the staffing demand for behavioral associates, the first ISO plan for support staff was implemented in December 2022.

Retention and Orientation plans

All nursing departments recognize the need for proactive strategies with the end goal of retaining nurses while providing robust orientation experiences. A few examples are highlighted:

Staff Retention

Retention Strategies in the NICU

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) nursing leadership recognized a trend in nurses with less than 2 years experience leaving NICU for different opportunities. The leadership team implemented a process to meet with all staff that were 2 years and less in the NICU. This included experienced RNS that transferred from other facilities and rehires with less than 2 years experience. An interview tool was developed with open-ended questions to focus on issues from retention research. Initial questions were general and informal with more probing questions in future interviews. Since implementing the process there have been fewer nurses with less than 2 years experience leaving NICU.

Can We Make a Difference? Retention Strategies in the NICU

Becki McCullough, BSN RNC-NIC, Jill Jones-Smith, MSN, RNC-NIC,CNML, Brittany Yeager, BSN, RNC-NIC

Enhancing Preceptor and Orientee Communication in the CVICU

Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU) nursing leadership along with the unit educator implemented an onboarding process for CVICU. This included adopting a phased orientation model, incorporating personality, and learning style assessments to match preceptors with orientees, and structured regular process meetings to evaluate learning needs. Each orientation phase has clear expectations. Goals are set for orientees for each week and phase. Preceptors are encouraged to provide specific, timely feedback in an appropriate environment with the orientees, and has resulted in a decrease in orientation length from 20 weeks to 10-18 weeks. The approach to orientation resulted in a 1-year retention rate of 94%.

Enhancing Preceptor and Orientee Communication in the CVICU

Harley Carlisle, BSN, RN; Sara Rhodes, BSN, RN,

Special Care Unit Bootcamp

The Special Care Unit (SCU) is a 26-bed step-down unit. Newly hired nurses complete a 12–18-week orientation to gain experience caring for medically complex patients. Newly hired nurses consistently expressed the desire to have more hands-on experience with emergency situations. The SCU education council, led by the unit educator identified 5 scenarios highly applicable to SCU. The unit educator collaborated with the Pediatric Simulation Center to develop specific simulation scenarios that cover neurological diagnoses, tracheostomy dependence, diabetic ketoacidosis, pediatric sepsis, and CPR.

The sessions, named SCU Bootcamp, include a simulated event and a review of the pathophysiology of each topic. All newly hired SCU nurses attend one session during their first year of employment. Nurses attending SCU Bootcamp express increased confidence and understanding of the care of patients with the identified diagnoses.

SCU Bootcamp

Amanda Morris, MSN, RN, NPD-BC; Kathleen Ansley, RN; Chanlee Black, RN; Caroline Cole BSN, RN; Alexandria McPherson BSN, RN; Kristen Miller BSN, RN; Erin Scheiter, BSN, RN

Orienting Advanced Practice Providers: Clear Expectations Matter

A process was implemented to standardize the onboarding and orientation process for all Children's of Alabama advance practice providers (APP) while still individualizing each role. The goal is to improve knowledge, competency, and satisfaction with the orientation process. The APP onboarding and orientation plan was implemented in June 2022. Preliminary data shows an increase in a formal process to nearly 100%. The percentage of APP orientees who felt prepared to practice independently when orientation was complete increased from 33% to 63%. Evaluation of the process is on-going. Future initiatives include real time education for nursing and medical directors as well as collaborating physicians. There are also plans to improve the written educational information provided to each orientee and to improve and standardize hospital orientation with the APP needs in mind.

Orienting Advanced Practice Providers: Clear Expectations Matter

Kristen Waddell, CRNP

Patient Care



Emergency Department Follow-up: The Impact of Post-Discharge Support

The Children’s of Alabama Emergency Department (ED) utilizes a post-discharge follow-up system to ensure appropriate handling, treatment and follow-up of abnormal lab and imaging results for all patients seen in the Emergency Department who are discharged or transferred from ED care.

The follow-up allows for continued care and communication after discharge. The process is coordinated by a follow-up nurse and includes:

- Clarifying discharge instructions, follow-up care and addressing caregiver concerns
- Reviewing and managing any needed follow-up on lab results, radiology results or EKG reports
- Contacting caregivers to provide support on discharged patients as determined by their Emergence Severity Index and other criteria.

The follow-up nurse utilizes established ED follow-up guidelines and ED provider consultation to coordinate any needed treatment or care post-discharge. ED visits are often an overwhelming experience which can result in caregiver misunderstanding or forgetting important facts and information regarding the post-discharge care for their child. The use of an ED follow-up system allows for better post-discharge care.

Emergency Department Follow Up: The Impact of Post-Discharge Support

Shannon Wiley, BSN, RN; Rachel Skeen, RN; Ashley Covin, RN



Patient Care



Behavioral Health

Caring for children with behavioral health needs requires a strong interdisciplinary team approach to build upon experience and skills of all staff while ensuring patients receive exceptional care.

Acute Behavioral Health Certification

An internal Acute Behavioral Health Certification was developed and implemented to increase awareness of the needs of patients and staff, therapeutic engagement, co-worker relationships and therapeutic communication. The certification is available to nurses, behavioral interventionists, behavioral associates, and behavioral health sitters. Staff members complete a required course and 4 elective classes specific to a pre-determined focus each quarter. Focus topics for each quarter include: de-escalation, self-care, ethical communication and diagnosis.

Results of the certification have been very positive including a significant decrease in the number of restraint/seclusion events. Post class surveys indicate the education has improved their therapeutic engagement, provided professional growth, and improved communication among staff members.

Internal Staffing Education Through an Acute Behavioral Health Certification

Amy Brown, MPS, ATR-BC; Ashley C. Davis, LPC, NCC; Rebekah Gilmore, RN; Colleen M. Horrell, RN, BSN; Tiffany Hutto, MSN, RN; Caryn Kyzer, MS; Tammy Newman, BSN, RN; Camron Shekarforoosh, LMFT

Use of De-Escalation and Rapid Response to Decrease use of Seclusion and Restraints

Children's behavioral health inpatient staff are trained to engage therapeutically with patients and caregivers. In situations with physical or verbal aggression by the patient, the staff first use verbal de-escalation techniques. If verbal de-escalation is unsuccessful restraint and seclusion may be necessary. To decrease use of restraint and seclusion the behavioral health team utilizes two different teams to de-escalate the patient.

The rapid response team is a group of trained behavioral health staff who are called when a patient is escalating and may require physical intervention to maintain safety.

The de-escalation team is a group of staff trained to use verbal de-escalation techniques in a supportive and directive approach. This is an early intervention team that focuses heavily on matching the correct intervention to the patient's needs. Use of the de-escalation team began several years ago. A recent review of data shows a correlation of decreased use of restraint and seclusion with an increase in calls for de-escalation or rapid response.

Reduction of Seclusion and Restraints Through Increased Calls for De-Escalation and Rapid Response

Amy Brown, MPS, ATR-BC, Josh Brown, BSN, RN; Rebekah Gilmore, RN; Tabitha Howard, BSN, RN; Carace Murray, RN; Tammy Newman, BSN, RN; Kayla Williams, BSN, RN

Nursing Professional Development

Simulation Experiences: 355 simulations specific to nursing, 116 of these were for Pressure Injury prevention which was a hospital wide strategic goal for the year.

BLS and PALS: NPD provided 1, 471 BLS licenses, through either BLS Marathons, or BLS Complete. 519 PALS licenses were provided in 2022, through either a PALS course or PALS Complete.

NSO and TIP: 280 new inpatient nurses were taught in Nursing Services Orientation, 221 of these new hires were newly graduated nurses, meaning COA hired 79% new grads into the nursing work force. 208 of these nurses completed the Transition into Practice program. Sometimes new nurses need additional resources, and educational development plans are created, NPD and unit-based educators managed 16 nurses on action plans in 2022, and the simulation center provided 20 Professional Success coaching sessions.

Continuing Education:

Courses assigned contact hours: 198

ABN contact hours: 426.2

ABN Pharmacy contact hours: 58.2

ANCC contact hours: 347.5

ANCC Pharmacy contact hours: 48.8

Clinical Rotations and Preceptorships:

- 16 schools of nursing (9 from ADN programs, and 7 from BSN programs) utilized COA in 2022 for Clinical Rotation experiences. This brought a total of 1212 nursing students through our doors.
- Nursing Professional Development (NPD) organized, and COA provided 152 preceptorship experiences for undergraduate nurses in 2022.
- We also provided 7 preceptorships for undergraduate AD nurses that were advancing to a BSN.
- 98 Nurse Practitioner students were afforded learning opportunities at COA in 2022.
- 5 preceptorships were provided for nurses seeking advanced degrees in education, leadership, administration.
- NPD also organized Physician Assistant experiences for 19 UAB PA students.



Nursing Professional Development



Other:

- COA hosted 8 University of Alabama nursing interns in the summer months of 2022.
- In 2022, Children’s of Alabama hired 23 UAB School of Nursing students into the role of Clinical Extender. This partnership allows students to experience pediatrics while in nursing school. COA ends up hiring almost 70% of these employees as nurses post-graduation. These students experience a shortened orientation, due to already working prior to transitioning to the RN role.
- NPD provides a “Day in the Life of COA” for ADN and BSN programs that do not currently experiences clinical rotations at Children’s. In 2022, we hosted 24 Jefferson State Community College - night campus students, 25 Southern Union Community College nursing students, and 40 Tuskegee University nursing students.
- NPD also serves as the electronic repository of covid vaccines, for all students and instructors from any discipline.



Nursing Professional Development



Community Activities

School Nurse Workshops

Children's of Alabama provided virtual school nurse workshops in 2022 with 1,442 attendees. Topics included ADHD, Bullying, PATHS program, Diabetes, Teen Driving, Sex Trafficking, Trauma Informed Care and Seizures.

Virtual skill sessions for tracheotomy and gastrostomy tube education was provided to 100 participants.

Myschoolnurse.net

Myschoolnurse.net is a Children's of Alabama website that houses all recorded educational offerings along with resources and forms used by school nurses for the care of their students.

The Pulse

The Pulse is a monthly newsletter sent to all 1,700 school nurses in the state. The newsletter highlights recorded lectures and monthly health observances related to the care of students.

Safe Sitter

Two virtual Safe Sitter classes were held in 2022 with 24 students.



Shared Governance Council

Children’s of Alabama Shared Governance Council is an empowering forum for nurses to identify, prioritize and recommend actions related to leadership, education, practice and innovation.

Clinical Practice Council

The Clinical Practice Council remained committed to the mission of promoting the acquisition of knowledge and competencies necessary to support nurses and nursing support staff in acquiring, creating, and disseminating evidence-based practice to improve the care of patients and families at Children’s of Alabama.

The council’s primary focus for 2022 was to evaluate a medication labeling process and explore options such as medication label printers. The council ultimately decided to revise and standardize the current medication label to include only required components. The council reviewed and provided input for the revision of numerous nursing practice policies. In anticipation of the 2023 conversion to EPIC, the council provided input based on EPIC demos.



Evidence-Based Practice Council

The evidence-based council establishes the professional atmosphere in which staff are expected to perform using evidence-based practice. As many nurses continue to feel the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The group had many fruitful discussions in 2022 and originally decided to focus on burnout, and what sort of resources are available for staff nurses, specifically here at Children’s of Alabama. The team conducted a literature review regarding burnout and resources. A survey was created and underwent two revisions, with the changes aimed at homing in on available resources and less about burnout. The survey was not sent during 2022. The goal for 2023, is to disseminate the survey, garner results and move forward from there.



Shared Governance Council

Management Council

Management Council promotes the responsible and creative use of resources so that expenses are controlled while exceeding the healthcare expectations of the patients and their caregivers.

Management Council was responsible for planning the events and activities to celebrate National Nurses Week. The council was also responsible for planning the activities associated with Support Staff Day. Celebrating and honoring all nurses and clinical support staff is important in boosting morale and encouraging retention. Management Council representatives shared unit-based projects and initiatives with each other each month to promote potential for hospital wide change.

Finally, we began gathering information to update the hospital's website, starting with the inpatient unit's webpages. We created a template for units to use to ensure essential basic information is included on their webpages and we will begin gathering this data in 2023.

Quality and Safety Council

The Quality council promotes quality improvement work at the unit level utilizing pre-determined process improvement methodologies.

A hospital wide focus for 2022 was the prevention of pressure injuries. A hospital initiative included a simulation lab for skin assessment including communicating with patients and families the need for thorough skin assessments. The quality council collaborated with wound ostomy nurses to implement an assessment tool for inpatient nursing units. In addition to the assessment tool, clings were created and placed in patient rooms to help parents and families with awareness for the need for full head-to-toe skin assessments. Each patient newly admitted to the hospital and/or transferred to a new unit will receive a head-to-toe skin assessment by 2 nurses, called a 4-eyes assessment. The 4-eyes assessment tool is widely used on all patients in many nursing units.



Awards and Honors

The 2022 DAISY Award Winners

Nurses receiving the DAISY award personify Children's of Alabama remarkable patient experience. These individuals demonstrate excellence by serving as a role model for the nursing profession demonstrating a caring attitude in all situations, communicating, and making a significant difference in the life of a patient.

- **Erin Campbell**, 9 Harbert
- **McKenzie Babb**, 8QB
- **Hannah Clark**, CVICU
- **Brianna Master**, SCU
- **Brooke Owens**, PICU
- **Chloe Wade**, Float Pool
- **Allyson McCay**, CVOR
- **Adele Fink**, SCU
- **Morgan Thornton**, SCU
- **Courtney Zimmer**, NICU
- **Al Bonds**, 9QB
- **Carly Cahela**, 8QB



Awards and Honors

2022 Excellence in Nursing Awards

Eleven Children's of Alabama nurses were recognized for Excellence in Nursing as part of the hospital's National Nurse's Wee annual observance in May. The awards recognize and celebrate nurses for their skill, compassion, and professionalism.

- **Ann Patterson**, Over the Mountain Pediatrics, Pediatric Practices Excellence
- **AlexAnn McPherson**, Special Care Unit, Critical Care Excellence
- **Kayla Clay**, Endocrinology Clinic, Specialty Care Services Excellence
- **Leslie Pitts**, Endocrinology Clinic, Advanced Practice Excellence
- **Ashley Green**, 10QB, Rising Star
- **Dee Robinson**, ENT Main, Charge Nurse Excellence
- **Al Bonds**, 9QB, Acute Cre Excellence
- **John Ross Clay**, Minor Procedure One Day, Surgical Services Excellence
- **Amber Akers**, Nursing Professional Development, Education Excellence
- **Cinnamon Banks**, 10 Harbert, Leadership Excellence
- **Julie Martin**, PICU, Excellence in Mentorship



Professional Achievement Program

The program is designed to recognize nurses for accomplishments above their required job duties.

Fifty-six nurses met the criteria for professional achievement in 2022.

New to 2022, was the addition of the Educator tract.

There are 4 tracts:

- Nursing (direct caregivers)
- Charge Nurse/Coordinator
- Educator
- Nurse Practitioner

Each tract has 5 levels; levels II, III and IV are eligible for recognition. Each level has specific experience, education and performance review criteria.

The activities are assigned points, the required points are higher for each level.

Nurses submit documentation of completed activities in the categories listed below:

- Continued Nursing Education
- Leadership
- Education
- Quality Improvement
- Practice and Research
- Community Service





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