



Nurse of Excellence

AWARD CEREMONY | Sept. 14, 2023



Nassau-Suffolk
Hospital Council

The Legend of the Teapot

The teapot tradition began in the 1980s with the New York State Legislature's Nurse of Distinction Program. The first recipient of the Long Island Nurse of Distinction nomination spoke of the challenges that nurses and other healthcare professionals face, and will face, in the decades to come.

In keeping with the message that day, it was recollected her comments included, "most of us nurses are like teabags, we don't know our own strength until we get into hot water." The allegory resonated among those involved in the program and it eventually became a custom for a prior recipient of the Nurse of Excellence award to bestow a teapot upon the current honoree.

The teapots remind our honored colleagues of their achievement and of their strengths. Like each of us, the teapots are seldom exactly alike. They celebrate the unique value that each Nurse of Excellence brings to those they serve.

The teapot symbolizes and reminds us that "hot water" often brings out the best in us and in our profession.



A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

SEPTEMBER 2023



Nurses are the heart of every hospital. Their strength, resilience and commitment to patients is evident every day, but even more so on the most challenging days. That's why it's the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's great privilege to sponsor the annual Nurse of Excellence award.

This award continues a tradition that began in 1989 when the New York State Legislature created a Nurse of Distinction program. The award was so highly regarded that when the state program ended six years later, Long Island hospital leaders were unwilling to let it end. The Hospital Council took up the mantle, developing its own program in the region to honor Long Island's outstanding registered nurses.

Member hospitals and Long Island schools of nursing each year nominate one extraordinary candidate from their institutions, in accordance with the criteria established by the Council's Nurse Executives Committee. These individual nominations are in and of themselves a significant honor, which is why we recognize every candidate today. The Nurse of Excellence subcommittee, comprised of chief nursing officers, deans of nursing, nurse managers and previous winners, then selects one winner from among the blinded nominations. Every year this is a challenge because every nominee is a winner in their own right.

Thank you all for your commitment to excellence. It inspires your peers, uplifts our communities and, most importantly, makes a difference in the lives of your patients. On behalf of our board of directors, the Council staff and the leadership at all of our institutions, we salute you.



WENDY D. DARWELL

President and Chief Executive Officer
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council



THE NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL 2023 NURSE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

ORDER OF PROGRAM

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

WENDY D. DARWELL

President and Chief Executive Officer
Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council

INTRODUCTION OF NURSE EXECUTIVES COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ALL NURSE OF EXCELLENCE NOMINEES

JANICE PATERES, MS, MBA, RN, BC

Chairwoman, 2023 Nurse of Excellence Subcommittee
Executive Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Nassau University Medical Center

STACEY CONKLIN, MSN, RN-BC, MHCDS, NE-BC

Chairwoman, Nurse Executives Committee
Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital

REMARKS BY THE HONOREES

LETICIA RIOS, PHD(C), RN, NPD-BC, IBCLC, RNC-NIC

Certified Nursing Professional Development Specialist
NYU Langone Hospital - Long Island

MARIA MILAZZO, PHD, PNP-C

Clinical Associate Professor
Stony Brook School of Nursing

PRESENTATION OF THE TEAPOT

CLOSING REMARKS

STACEY CONKLIN

Chairwoman, Nurse Executives Committee
Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital



NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL 2023 AWARD FOR
NURSING EXCELLENCE IS PRESENTED TO

LETICIA RIOS, PHD(C), RN, NPD-BC, IBCLC, RNC-NIC
Certified Nursing Professional Development Specialist
NYU Langone Hospital - Long Island

- AND -

MARIA MILAZZO, PHD, PNP-C
Clinical Associate Professor
Stony Brook School of Nursing

For achieving significant accomplishments in an area of practice, serving as a mentor and inspiration for staff, providing assistance to patients and families, and fostering a positive image of nursing.

NURSE OF EXCELLENCE SELECTION CRITERIA

Outstanding contributions to the nursing profession and to the field of healthcare must be demonstrated based on the following criteria:

- Significant achievement within a particular area of nursing, including clinical practice, education, research or administration. The provision of direct nursing services to assist patients and their families in functioning at optimum levels of health is one example within clinical practice.
- Demonstrated leadership that provides a role model for the quality of their performance and assists other nurses in their development.
- Participation in activities that foster a positive public image of nursing as a profession.

Note: All registered professional nurses employed at a Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council membership organization, or affiliated school of nursing, at any employment level or scope of responsibility, are eligible to be nominated for the award. Prior nominees are not eligible. Each hospital or nursing school member of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's Nurse Executives Committee is eligible to nominate one individual for the award. Each nominating entity has an internal selection process to facilitate making an appropriate nomination.

2023

Nurse Executive COMMITTEE

Althea Mills, MSN, RN

Chief Nursing Officer & Vice President Patient Services
Stony Brook Southampton Hospital

Ann Cella, MA, MEd, RN, NEA-BC

Senior Vice President Patient Care Services &
Chief Nursing Officer
St. Francis Hospital & Heart Center

Brandy Feliu, MSN, RN

Senior Director of Clinical Operations
Northwell Health

Carolyn Santora, MS, RN, NEA-BC, CPHQ

Chief Regulatory Affairs Officer & Chief Nursing Officer
Stony Brook University Hospital

Cheryl Shaffer, PhD, RN, PNP, ANP

Associate Dean for Nursing
Suffolk Community College

Christine Kippley, RN, MBA, NE-BC, CCM

Vice President Patient Care Services &
Chief Nursing Officer
Peconic Bay Medical Center Northwell Health

**Christopher Ruppert, MBA, MS, RN, NE-BC,
NHDP-BC**

Vice President, Patient Care Services &
Chief Nursing Officer
Mercy Hospital

Deborah Hunt, PhD, RN

Dean, College of Nursing and Public Health
Adelphi University

Fran Cherkis, PhD., MSN, BSN, CNE

Assistant Chair, Department of Nursing
Farmingdale State College

Gara Edelstein, RN, MSN

Chief Nursing Officer
Catholic Health

Irene Macyk, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN

Chief Nursing Officer & Associate Executive Director
Patient Care Services
North Shore University Hospital Northwell Health

Janice Pateres, MS, MBA, RN, BC

Executive Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Nassau University Medical Center

Kathryn Lang, DNP, RN, NE-BC

Vice President, Nursing and Patient Care Services
Long Island Community Hospital

Marcia R. Gardner, PhD, RN, CPNP, CPN, ANEF

Dean, The Barbara H. Hagan School of Nursing &
Health Sciences
Molloy University

Maria Fletcher, PhD, RN, CNE

Director, Department of Nursing
St. Joseph's University

Marianna Vazquez, MSN, RN, NE-BC

Associate Executive Director, Patient Care Services &
Chief Nursing Officer
Plainview Hospital and Syosset Hospital Northwell Health

Marie Mulligan, PhD, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC

Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Huntington Hospital Northwell Health

Mary Jane Finnegan, RN, MSN

Chief Nursing Officer
St. Catherine of Siena Hospital

Maureen T. White, RN, MBA, NEA-BC, FAAN

Executive Vice President & Chief Nurse Executive
Northwell Health

Nicolette Fiore-Lopez, PhD, RN, CENP, FAAN

Chief Nursing Officer
St. Charles Hospital



Patricia Bruckenthal PhD, RN, FAAN

Dean and Professor
Stony Brook School of Nursing

R. J. Civello, MSN, RN, NE-BC

Associate Executive Director, Patient Care Services &
Chief Nursing Officer
South Shore University Hospital Northwell Health

Stacey Conklin, MSN, RN-BC, MHCDS, NE-BC

Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital

Susan Knoepffler, MPA, BSN, RN, NE-BC

Chief Nursing Officer
Good Samaritan University Hospital

Suzanne Marriott, MS, RN, PMH-BC

Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services &
Chief Nursing Officer
Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital

Tara Matz, RN, MSN, NEA-BC

Chief Nursing Officer & Vice President for Nursing
Mather Hospital Northwell Health

Terry Pando, RN, NEA-BC

Chief Nursing Officer
Long Island Jewish Valley Stream Northwell Health

Theresa Dillman, DNP, MSN, MHA, RN, NE-BC

Chief Nursing Officer & Associate Executive Director,
Patient Services
Glen Cove Hospital Northwell Health

Valerie T. Terzano, PhD, RN, NEA-BC

Vice President, Nursing and Patient Care Services
NYU Langone Hospital – Long Island

**2023 NURSE OF EXCELLENCE
SUB-COMMITTEE**

Janice Pateres, Chair

Executive Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Nassau University Medical Center

Brandy Feliu

Senior Director of Clinical Operations
Northwell Health

Deborah Hunt

Dean, College of Nursing and Public Health
Adelphi University

Gara Edelstein

Chief Nursing Officer
Catholic Health

Stacey Conklin

Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer
Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital

Suzanne Marriott

Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services &
Chief Nursing Officer
Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital

Valerie T. Terzano

Vice President, Nursing and Patient Care Services
NYU Langone Hospital – Long Island

Patricia Woloszyn

2022 Nurse of Excellence Honoree
Stony Brook University Hospital

Marijean Buhse

2021 Nurse of Excellence Honoree
Stony Brook School of Nursing



2023 Nurse of Excellence Honoree

LETICIA RIOS PHD(C), RN, NPD-BC, IBCLC, RNC-NIC

Certified Nursing Professional Development Specialist, NYU Langone Hospital - Long Island

It is with distinct pleasure to nominate Leticia Rios for the 2023 Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Nurse of Excellence Award. She is a registered professional nurse with 15 years of clinical experience and serves as the NICU Nursing Professional Development Specialist. She is a Certified Neonatal Nurse (RNC-NIC), International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), NRP Instructor and PhD Candidate at Adelphi University. That is just her day job!

As a founding member and co-chair of the Black Mothers Matter Committee (BMMC), Leticia is passionate about advocating for Black maternal health equity on a local, regional, and global level by engaging members of the NYU community in equity initiatives and beyond, including help to facilitate a Speaker Series by recruiting BIPOC speakers from the community to advance maternal health education and promote advocacy to the staff. Leticia also leads a large-scale initiative called, the Holistic Care Partners (HCP) which is designed to provide culturally competent care and amplify the voices of Black birthing persons prenatally through one year postpartum by engaging community holistic practitioners and OB/GYN practices.

In addition, Leticia is the owner of Perfect Latch, LLC, and a contracted facilitator of the NYC Brownsville Baby Cafe, a community breastfeeding support group. She also consults for the Department of Health Maternal and Infant Reproductive Health Program and the Creating Breastfeeding Friendly Community, a NYC grant-funded program where she works to increase the knowledge, normalization, initiation and duration of breastfeeding for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations to neutralize the effects of racism and discrimination and to promote equity and social justice

Leticia is also a core member of the NYS Birth Equity Improvement Project, Assistant Director of the NYS Black Breastfeeding Coalition, and member of the Birth Justice Warriors, the American Nurses Association Education Committee and New York National League of Nursing.

Her work with both the BMMC and HCP initiatives demonstrate exemplary teamwork, working together with a group of other nurses to achieve a common goal of advancing racial health equity. Through her work on the HCP initiative, she has also collaborated with an outpatient faculty group practice and additional holistic practitioners to offer resources for Black birthing persons through one year postpartum.

Leticia's contributions align with our organization's mission, values, and vision to provide patients a highly reliable experience, focused on clinical excellence, patient safety, and transparent communication. Her work with the BMMC and Holistic Care Partners initiative focuses on excellent care and improved outcomes as well as physical and psychological patient safety with improved communication during care. Her collaborative efforts align with the organizational strategic objective of pursuing quality by facilitating internal task forces and structured work group activities. In addition, her publication, Health Inequities in The Black Maternal Population: A Concept Analysis, shows involvement in national publishing efforts and demonstrates achievement of a nursing strategic goal to promote research and evidence-based practice.



2023 Nurse of Excellence Honoree

MARIA MILAZZO, PHD, PNP-C

Clinical Associate Professor, Stony Brook School of Nursing

Maria Milazzo has made significant contributions to the nursing profession. As a pediatric nurse practitioner with nearly 30 years, her expertise and service goes far beyond her clinical practice and role as a clinical nurse instructor in an academic setting.

Specific to clinical expertise as a nurse practitioner, Maria cares for children in her practice and has made contributions that are national and international in scope in terms of her work with children with disabilities and at clinical centers for Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis (MS) across the US, Canada and Europe. Her research in community building, peer support, and pediatric MS is ground-breaking. She has received external funding for her research from multiple foundation sources and has collaborated in federally funded projects as well. Within the pediatric community, Maria has made a deep impact by founding and directing a summer weeklong camp program for adolescents with Multiple Sclerosis. Teen Adventure MS Camp was initiated in 2004 and now has a long history of empowering kids with MS, developing leadership skills in teens through mentorship programs and creating the opportunity for lifelong supportive relationships to blossom. Teen campers with MS come from all across the US and Canada, as well as Panama and Jordan to experience this week-long event.

As a clinical expert, Maria has combined her deep commitment to her community with her leadership ability to serve on the board of directors for the Long Island Head Start program. For the past 11 years, she has assisted in planning comprehensive early childhood education, health and nutrition services and activities that foster more parental involvement to low-income and at-risk children and families.

Specific to the nurse faculty role, Maria's scholarship, teaching, and service go above and beyond. For example, as a faculty member there is an expectation that one will teach and guide the next generation of nurse practitioners, however Maria has also taken what she has learned into the community by participating in a variety of community enrichment programs that provide support both locally and globally. For example, this past October, Maria participated in a comprehensive community-based cardiac screening program with NP students at Ward Melville HS identifying youths with cardiac risk. In 2020, Maria mentored NP students serving as a medical team providing care in the Dominican Republic. The exceptional mentorship that she provides is not limited to the Master's prepared NP students she is assigned to teach. For the past 4 years, she has served as a mentor to undergraduate students in the Scholars' program. This is a program aimed to develop future nurse leaders and Maria seeks out research and leadership opportunities that promote their professional growth and development. These students are quite fortunate to have Maria as their mentor. She also promotes the nursing profession by mentoring PhD-level nursing students studying both within and outside of our school. Patients, students, the community and the nursing profession have been enriched by Maria's contributions, who we feel is most deserving of this nomination for the Nurse of Excellence Award.

GLEN COVE HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

Tameka Wallace, MBA, MSN-RN, CPAN, CCRN-K

Senior Director, Perioperative Services

The essence of Tameka Wallace's career is to establish nurse leaders from the bedside and beyond, focusing on behaviors and knowledge necessary for self-development that leads to successful, outcome-driven initiatives. She is not only dedicated to making every moment matter for our patients and families, but she has made it her mission to spread that ideology across her service-line and the organization. Tameka is the Senior Director for a complex multifaceted patient population where quality, safety, and staff professional development are at the center of everything she does. She developed a true professional governance infrastructure driving change, impacting sustained improvements in care-delivery, quality, and experience. She transformed the unit from a Tier 2 workforce of low morale and engagement to a Tier 1 workforce that represents the highest employee engagement tier group.

Tameka leads by example and understands the value of professional development as evidenced by her obtaining a master's degree in nursing, a master's degree in business administration and additional certifications. She sponsors and participates in the nurse leader mentorship program, designed to acculturate nurses new in their roles beyond a clinical acumen with the guidance of experienced mentors that promote growth, community-involvement and patient advocacy.

Tameka's advocacy reaches many within the community to support special-need patient populations with clothing, food drives, and other events, as she also has two boys with special-needs who are her world. She supports underserved populations with a food pantry drive that collects over 400 pounds of food monthly for our local church. She encourages and supports staff to grow professionally through collaborations with nursing education and physician leadership.

Tameka fosters an environment of development, which is the driving force for RN academic progression at the BSN level or higher and RN appreciation for research based on academic progression and outcomes. Her influence and support resulted in increased staff certification by 27-percentile points and improved clinical ladder advancements by 70 percent. In alignment with the IOM BSN standard, she improved her BSN rates from 86 percent to 92.5 percent. She develops and leads multidisciplinary teams to incorporate learning and development through the lense of the entire team.

Through her leadership and empowerment, one of her units received the first AACN Silver BEACON award for the hospital and was third in the U.S. for the PACU. Furthermore, her unit has outperformed the magnet mean in every domain of the NDNQI employee engagement and quality survey for in-patient and ambulatory care services. Tameka facilitates a healthy work environment by partnering with her teams utilizing effective communication skills, offering feedback and providing staff-recognition. She strives for a "culture of recognition" to create a positive work environment.

Tameka sets the standard for leaders to follow in regard to the quality and experience of rounds and patient care. She pioneered the infrastructure for staff leading from the bedside by providing her team with the tools for success. Her daily briefs outline and review the quality, engagement, and patient-experience scores. Her entire team turns data into information and information into innovation. Her service line has demonstrated zero falls for the past five years and for the past three years, zero CLABSI and HAPI.

GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL

Ericka Castilletti, MSN, RN, CPN, CDCES, CNE

Clinical Nurse Educator Pediatrics/Pediatric Intensive Care Unit

Ericka Castilletti is a clinical nurse educator on the pediatric/pediatric intensive care unit and someone we consider to be a true Nurse of Excellence. She has made many significant achievements in her career, earned multiple certifications, tackled many challenges, and continues to make advancements in her education.

One of her greatest achievements is a quality improvement project called, "Improving Nursing Competence and Patient Care through Mock Codes." This project was conceived after an influx of new nurses to the pediatric unit following the pandemic. Ericka conducted a needs assessment and staff survey which identified a knowledge gap in emergency care, including staff taking mock codes seriously. She developed an educational plan which included mock codes for all shifts utilizing a mock code cart, "Med of the Month," and "Code Cart Olympics." Post survey results showed an 85 percent increase in perceived knowledge items and a 90 percent increase in perceived confidence items. The project was presented at our systems Evidence Based Practice (EBP) conference, National Annual Clinical Nurse Specialist Conference, Society of Pediatric Nurses' Conference, the American Nurses' Association Conference, and has been accepted for the International Pediatric Congress to be held in Paris, France in 2024.

Ericka's leadership is demonstrated by her development of a Nurse Residency Program in pediatrics which includes supporting a resident EBP project. The current project is nurse resiliency, PEACE (Pause, Empathy, Acknowledge, Connect, Encourage), and targeting any high stressful situations. She fosters a positive image of nursing by volunteering at local high schools to speak about pediatric emergencies, teaching parents in the community about safety for children, and participating in Teddy Bear Clinics in local elementary schools.

Ericka's achievements continue as she is a Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN), Certified Nurse Educator (CNE), a Certified Diabetic Educator (CDCES), and is preparing to take her Pediatric Critical Care Certification (CCRN). She provides high quality, expert, holistic and compassionate care to her patients in pediatrics and the entire Maternal Health division where each unit has a unique and specific population. A true professional that is always looking at the big picture, she will go wherever she is needed within the division, and has gone into Delivery Room OR's for a hemorrhage emergency, where she jumped in and took over documentation, assisted with initiation of blood products, and then followed the patient into PACU where she assisted with Phase 1 recovery. She leads by example and has demonstrated to staff the need to change from a division of multiple specialties to a team that works to improve the care of the patient within the institution. When adverse events occur she is able to analyze the event and create improved processes. For example, improving care of psychiatric patients awaiting transfer, enhancing the graduate orientation program, cross-covering divisions and building relationships with the pediatric emergency room. She is a lifelong learner who started on pediatrics as a new graduate and has developed into an exemplary employee, teacher, advocate, change-agent, and nurse.

HUNTINGTON HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

Loren Hand, MSN, RN-BC

Clinical Professional Development Educator

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Loren Hand recognized the pain and suffering front-line staff were experiencing. Many had not allowed themselves permission to heal from the traumatic experience of being on the front line during the pandemic. This led Loren to create, "Healing the Heart of Healthcare." The event was a 24-hour ceremony, inclusive of all shifts, to provide closure and acknowledgment of the trauma endured through the pandemic.

The event was a formal intervention to help healthcare workers heal from the ramifications of being on the front-line of a pandemic. The goals were to provide acknowledgment of the trauma endured, closure to a traumatic chapter, and to reinstate a sense of purpose and hope.

The event consisted of multiple healing stations, which started with an opening ceremony and lighting of the 24-hour Eternal Flame. The flame, which burned throughout the event, became a station where staff could write letters thanking themselves for their own sacrifices and processing painful images or events. Dropping the letters into the flame, then provided an emotional release. The event, held outdoors, was lined with luminaries, each commemorating a life lost to COVID-19 at our hospital, providing another opportunity for staff to visualize, remember, and process their experience.

Staff were pinned with a badge that said, "HOPE." Loren created a message read to each staff member that said, "This pin serves as a reminder that HOPE will always live at Huntington Hospital, even in our darkest times. Thank you for making a personal sacrifice to serve others in need and for never losing sight of hope." This pinning mimicked receiving a Purple Heart and was repeated to over 500 staff members being pinned.

A "Journey to Healing" wall highlighted quotes from employees about their experiences being frontline workers. Prior to the event, Loren asked staff to provide a quote about their experience being a frontline healthcare worker during the pandemic. These quotes were written on a large wooden board known as the Healing Wall. Paint-filled balloons were affixed covering the wall. During the event, participants threw darts at the paint-filled balloons. When the balloons burst, beautiful colors covered the quotes and transformed the negative experiences into a piece of art. Afterwards, the wall was displayed to commemorate the healing that took place.

Additional stations included stone paintings and a "grateful tree," both of which allowed staff to write and express words of affirmation for healing and gratefulness, as well as stations for pet therapy and massage therapy.

MATHER HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

Patricia Dodd, MS, LAc, ANP-C

Integrative Nurse Practitioner

Patricia Dodd is an outstanding candidate for the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's 2023 Nurse of Excellence Award. She is a Nurse Practitioner in the Integrative Care and Pain Management Program. Her role transcends traditional APRN practice by providing a holistic approach to enhance pain care and support clinical staff in health and wellbeing.

A graduate of the SUNY Stony Brook School of Nursing MSN program, she is committed to life-long learning which includes certification and training in a wide range of evidence-based nonpharmacologic modalities supporting patient comfort and staff resilience. She draws upon her foundation and education in Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture (LAc) ensuring her patients receive a comprehensive patient-centered approach to mitigate suffering and enhance quality-of-life. As a certified holistic nurse coach, she supports those who seek her guidance identifying actionable steps to support wellbeing.

Patricia is a true leader and role model for the nursing profession. She is a visionary for whole-person health care and was an integral part of a team that received grant funding to pilot a program supporting women affected by cancer. This Integrative Oncology Clinic provides participants with access to acupuncture, reiki, and other caring modalities supporting their ability to identify self-care strategies that enhance their quality of life. Her passion for nurse-led programming resulted in a collaborative development of a Nurse-led National Acupuncture Detox Association program supporting community-based patients impacted by the disease of addiction.

Patricia is a fierce advocate for the holistic care mindset, constantly seeking avenues to share her expertise inside and outside the walls of the organization. Serving as both collaborative mentor to a DNP student and as faculty for an Advanced Clinical Provider (ACP) Integrative Care Fellowship, she educates and inspires upcoming clinicians and leaders to think about holistic care from an evidence-based model.

Patricia is an experienced pragmatic nurse researcher. As co-investigator for two IRB-approved studies, her work contributed to the enhancement of the patient experience by supporting the organization's opioid stewardship initiatives. Her contributions as a clinical expert and acupuncturist were instrumental in obtaining grant funding to explore acupuncture as a modality for patients in the hospital. Findings of these studies served as the foundation for the expansion of integrative modalities within the Integrative Pain Management Program. She has disseminated her research findings at numerous conferences such as the American Society of Pain Management Nursing National Conference in 2019 and 2021.

Patricia fosters a positive public image of nursing as a profession via her work in nonpharmacologic and holistic care for pain and symptom management. She goes above and beyond her day-to-day responsibilities, sharing her unique skill-set of holistic modalities with patients and all hospital staff. A champion of staff wellness throughout the COVID pandemic, her commitment transcends time and disciplines to enhance a healthy work environment.

MERCY HOSPITAL

Kathleen Giretti, BSN, RN

Registered Nurse

Kathleen Giretti is viewed as a compassionate labor and delivery nurse who is guided by her strong personal integrity. She is highly respected by all her peers within the entire Maternal Child Division. Kathleen always demonstrates the best patient care. She has been part of the team for 27 years and has specialized in different areas and roles, but found her true love for nursing by providing her expert care and knowledge to mothers in the delivery room.

Kathleen started at Mercy Hospital as a nursing assistant and accepted her first position here as a registered nurse. She believes in this organization's values, mission, and vision. She is a highly creative mentor and leader to many. She approaches a problem with optimism, curiosity and a "can-do" attitude. There is never a challenge that Kathleen is not ready to take on. She is always willing to go above and beyond to find the right solution through engaging the right people/specialties and she always strives to do right for her patients, their family, and/or other staff involved. She is caring, with excellent clinical skills and always maintains a high level of positive engagement among all staff members. In addition, she has volunteered and has been instrumental in quality improvements and important organizational initiatives such as improving policies and procedures and promoting a culture of safety. She demonstrates her excellent patient experience skills daily and is a strong advocate for all of her patients. Her love for nursing always shines through in her willingness and passion for mentoring and precepting new nurses. This is reminiscent of Florence Nightingale's love for training nurses during the Crimean War.

We celebrate our hard-working nurses each year, as our way of letting them know how special they are through our Nurses' Week Awards. Kathleen plays a vital role in our Obstetrical Maternal Child health care team and deserves recognition. I would like to let her know how much she is appreciated by nominating her for this year's NSHC Nurse of Excellence Award.

MOUNT SINAI SOUTH NASSAU HOSPITAL

Josephine Murray, RN-MSN, CNE, CRNI

Registered Nurse

We are proud to nominate an extraordinary nurse for the 2023 Nurse of Excellence Award. Josephine Murray is a clinical nurse who chose nursing as a second career. She has been a registered nurse for five years. In a relatively short period, she has made a major impact on the patients she cares for and the nurses she works with. Josephine achieved her master's degree in nursing and holds dual professional certifications in Infusion nursing (CRNI) and nursing education (CNE). As an emergency room nurse, Josephine exemplifies leadership, advocacy, collaboration and serves as a role model, inspiring colleagues in supporting patients at their most vulnerable times.

Josephine is engaged in varied initiatives, committees, and councils that strengthen the ED practice environment and improve patient care. She is an active member of the ED unit-based council, the Trauma Committee, the Nurse Preceptor Council, the Holistic Council, and the Clinical Staffing Committee. She emphasizes self-care and stress reduction as a foundational, lifelong skill for nurses. Her sense of accountability and selflessness were highlighted during the pandemic. She was on the frontline, taking on the most challenging patient assignments without hesitation. When others became overwhelmed, Josephine lent a helping hand or shoulder to cry on – leaving no nurse behind!

Josephine is passionate about improving outcomes. She volunteered as a superuser when medication bar-code scanning was implemented in our ED. She leads educational initiatives varying from PPE training to promoting safe patient handling. Kathleen recently volunteered to attend a sexual assault forensic training, advancing her knowledge to care for this vulnerable patient population.

Josephine recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining nurses in the unpredictable practice environment that characterizes emergency nursing. She participates in student nurse recruitment and panel interviews for the ED. Josephine is recognized as the "go to" resource in our ED. Her passion and enthusiasm benefits our entire healthcare team. She serves as a trusted preceptor and mentor for other nurses. In 2022, she was nominated and received the preceptor of the year award during Emergency Nurses Week. Her orientees describes her as "having a calm, patient demeanor, providing the [utmost] respect to every individual, displaying a roll-with-the-punches work ethic, and having around-the-clock approachability" - and these are just a few of the positive comments made that sets her apart from most.

Josephine is also dedicated to providing charitable services in her community. She works with the Vietnam Veterans Association, providing advice on lowering blood pressure, volunteers at flu pods, promotes a veterans' yoga project, and helps veterans find services and adopt healthy lifestyle changes.

NASSAU UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

Nashia N. Williams, BSN, RN, CCHP

Registered Nurse

I am pleased to nominate Nashia Williams as our candidate for the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Nurse of Excellence award. I have had the distinct pleasure of knowing and working with her since 2004. She is familiar with the organization's history, operations, patient population, and is held in high regard among the medical providers, fellow staff, and patients. She listens carefully, and her contributions are based on wisdom, experience, and fairness. She serves as an excellent resource for novice and seasoned nurses. Her many years of emergency nursing brings important understanding to the demands of correctional nursing. She understands the vision of the organization, and she leads by example. She has received the New York State SAFE designation and is also a Certified Correctional Health Professional.

Nashia serves as a mentor for nursing students at Hofstra University's nursing program. In addition to her current employment, she also mentors new leaders at Southside Hospital in Bay Shore. She was the Southside Center of Excellence awardee in 2019, and graduated from the Clinical Development Leadership Program in 2020. She has fulfilled many roles across the nursing spectrum. She has completed medical missions to Guatemala, assisted with disaster relief during Hurricane Maria, and set up a nursing education exchange with Mission Hospital in India. She has recently completed travel to Cuba, and is undertaking an educational mission with the Ministry of Health to set up future visits for clinical nursing work. She has shown herself to be wise, innovative, and resourceful.

Nashia received her certification in Bioethics at Hofstra University in 2022. She was a crucial participant in assembling the nursing ethics committee at South Shore University Hospital, and presently serves as co-chair. She also currently serves on the Clinical Ethics Review Board at Nassau University Medical Center and is an Ethics Fellow at Northwell Health Eastern Region. Serving on these committees shows her familiarity and understanding of the intricacies of providing efficient and unbiased care to the population that she serves. As part of her continuing commitment to mentorship, she works with high-school students from underprivileged areas that have health care aspirations. She is a recipient of the 2023 I.D.E.A.L.S award from Hofstra University for her work with these students.

Nashia has made an immense contribution to the field of nursing. She and a colleague developed a podcast on "Audible" by Amazon which was launched on May 11, 2023 during Nurses' Week. The podcast centers around the need for a greater public health infrastructure to alleviate the overwhelming burden on emergency departments for resources they don't have. There are podcast topics that affect everyone across the continuum of life, from gun control to burnout, bringing the experienced voice of a nurse to larger audiences. Nashia has brought energy and insight to all the staff and she is to be commended for this endeavor.

NORTH SHORE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

Joy Orr, MSN, RN, CCRN-K, NE-BC

Director of Patient Care

When searching Wikipedia for excellence, it is best to replace the words with a picture of Joy Orr. Fiercely smart, driven, patient-centric and all-around great, are words her team uses to describe her. She is a strategic leader who has never forgotten what it is like to be a member of a front-line team.

Joy promotes empowerment, mental fortitude, and a healthy-work environment, inspiring innovations that advance the profession, resulting in RN engagement that consistently outperforms the NDNQI Magnet mean. She exemplifies the "Mentor Committee" mentality in her daily worklife because as a seasoned nurse, she provides nurses with support and mentorship at any stage of their career, focussing on mission, professionalism and hospital acculturation for those experiencing any type of stress. Understanding the adversity of burnout, she connected her team with the Center for Traumatic Stress, Resilience, and Recovery, providing education to promote colleague-to-colleague support in a crisis. Its success correlated to a decrease in turnover at a rate below the national mean that cannot be discounted.

With an outcome-focus, what began as a quality project 10 years ago called, "Be-Cauti-ous", a cauti-reduction program, became a standard of care hospital-wide, resulting in staff outperforming the CMS SIR for the past 10 years. Joy has extended her methods to HAPI in the ICUs. The pandemic resulted in increased HAPI rates, but through engaging stake-holders, seeking best evidence, and implementing 'bundles' for care, her successful efforts resulted in a 50 percent reduction in critical care HAPI organization-wide.

With acuity evolving and becoming more complex, Joy is a leader in a rapidly growing liver transplant program, developing guidelines and education for ICU nurses to perform intra-op CRRT and comprehensive post-op care. Recognizing every donation comes at another's sacrifice, she initiated the 'honor walk' in recognition of organ donation – assuring a respectful transition of life.

She is highly known for her work with patients with cognitive impairments. Overseeing a neuro-ICU, she is an expert on TBI, assuring patient psychosocial care that complements their physical care. She has mentored nurse managers on the complex neuro unit to be hyper-sensitive to these patients, modifying care plans and even the environment, such as using cork floors to protect patients from harm should they fall. This year, Joy mentored the creation of a cognitive impairment unit designed to add socialization, diversional activity and physical activity in an interprofessional milieu that promotes timely health and optimization of care through discharge.

Keenly aware that the values of the organization are sustained through interaction between nurses, patients/families, and the entire interdisciplinary team, she led the NSCU and MICU to achieve AACN Beacon Gold, a sustained recognition in both units for over 5 years. Additionally, she has mentored other units resulting in eight total Beacon-recognized units.

Joy grows leaders into change agents. One nurse manager serves as co-chair for the Patient Care Services Council, a forum that actualizes the facility strategic plan. Another nurse manager participates in the Health Management Academy Nurse Catalyst program for high-performing nurse leaders. Several nurse managers are active in a mentorship program. She is described as a leader that encompasses self-control, empathy, skilled communication and kindness and one who is determined to make the personal and professional growth of her team a priority. Joy is the exact definition of excellence!

PECONIC BAY MEDICAL CENTER NORTHWELL HEALTH

Donna Lyburt, RN, MSN

Stroke Program Manager

In the realm of healthcare, there exist extraordinary nurses who go above and beyond to provide comfort, care and healing to those in need. At Peconic Bay Medical Center, we believe this defines our nominee, Donna Lyburt. She is an amazing nurse who possess a unique set of qualities and skills, making a profound impact on patients' lives and the healthcare system as a whole.

In January 2006, Donna started her career at as a staff nurse in our emergency department. In October 2016, she transitioned to the role of Stroke Program Manager. She leads our team by approaching every day with a positive attitude, as well as a comforting presence for patients, caregivers and colleagues.

Donna is a nurse leader and role model who combines clinical expertise, leadership qualities, a commitment to learning, advocacy for patients and a dedication to mentoring. She inspires and motivates others to strive for excellence. This is well demonstrated with the program's stroke champions. Staff volunteer to be stroke champions. Donna takes the responsibility of nurturing and guiding the novice nurse seriously. She provides them with growth opportunities and helps them navigate the challenges of the profession. Recently, our nominee advocated for the champions to be given a day to attend a regional stroke conference. Our hospital was proud to have over twenty-five of its nurses attend this education. The stroke champions serve as clinical experts in the care of stroke patients that extends past our stroke unit and the walls of the building. Donna has, in essence, created an east-end stroke army.

Donna, along with her champions, are actively engaged in our community. They participate in community outreach programs, health fairs, presentations at local libraries and other community activities meant to raise stroke awareness, including the signs and symptoms of a stroke and when to dial 911 in the event of a stroke emergency. They volunteer their time to share their expertise and support to an underserved population, advocating for this important public health issue. Donna and her team foster a positive public image for nursing. They value diversity and cultural sensitivity and focus on nurturing an inclusive environment for patients.

Donna also goes above and beyond in setting the bar for other disease-specific programs. Her "Stroke Wednesdays" and close collegial relationships with our emergency medical service partners have been replicated by other disease-specific programs within the building and other stroke programs within the system.

Donna has partnered with resources in the building to establish our "East End Stroke Support Group". This group provides stroke patients with physical, emotional and psychological support. She has led the organization in obtaining its Stroke Program Joint Commission Disease-Specific Certification. Through her exceptional skills, unwavering advocacy and resilient spirit, she has led the mission for excellence in the care of stroke patients.

In closing, Donna is being chosen for this award to celebrate her commitment to quality care and for her genuine concern for the well-being of others. She is an indispensable asset to our hospital and our local community.

PLAINVIEW HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

Jennifer Dennehy, MSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA

Senior Manager, Clinical Professional Development

It is truly an honor to nominate Jennifer Dennehy for the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council 2023 Nurse of Excellence Award. She has a wide range of clinical, educational and leadership experience in clinical professional development, critical care, perioperative care, discharge planning, utilization management and nursing supervision. In the three years that she has been a part of our team, Jennifer has contributed not only to the education of the staff and leaders, but she brings with her an incredible spirit of positivity and creativity. Her welcoming attitude and ability to connect with everyone she meets has helped her build relationships across the organization. I applaud her for her professionalism, clinical competence, can-do attitude, and the joy she brings to work every day. Jennifer is a clinical educator, facilitator, mentor, change-agent, leader, consultant, and researcher.

Jennifer is highly skilled at obtaining buy-in from the nursing staff to drive change. Her creation of an "escape room" theme for nurse enrichment was so innovative, the nursing staff are still talking about it. Jennifer was a presenter at our Magnet visit for the research and evidence-based practice session. She earned the 2022 Florence Nightingale Award for Advancing the Profession of Nursing, voted on by all nurses in-house. At a 2022 nursing conference Jennifer was a Best Practice Showcase presenter. She is the site coordinator for our summer nurse extern program, clinical placement program and nurse residency program.

Jennifer demonstrates her commitment to teamwork in a very practical way, by being present, not only as an educator and a leader, but as a colleague. Her leadership takes the form of actions, not simply words. Her commitment to helping others is evident outside the hospital, as well. She is an active member of the YOLO Strong Foundation, a charity that supports medically-fragile children and their families. Through the YOLO Strong Foundation, Jennifer has helped raise funds through her volunteerism by competing in races of all kinds. She is part of a troop of more than 250 women who push themselves both mentally and physically to raise awareness and funds for local children.

Jennifer serves as a role model of what a committed, passionate, and resilient nurse can do when she brings her best to her patients and her team. She is an example of how one nurse can cause a ripple effect that can positively influence an entire organization. Thank you for the opportunity to recognize our 2023 Nurse of Excellence.

SOUTH SHORE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NORTHWELL HEALTH

Donna Rivera, DNP, RN, TCRN

Manager, Patient Care Services

Donna Rivera is an exemplar of nursing distinction and professionalism. She currently holds the position of Manager, Patient Care services and previously held the position of Nurse Educator. Her span of responsibility includes overseeing the day-to-day operations of a Tertiary, Level 2 Trauma Center and Emergency Department in a designated teaching hospital. Donna holds a doctoral degree in Nursing Practice (DNP) and is a Board Certified Trauma Nurse. Under her leadership we have received the ENA Lantern Award, Stroke Gold Plus designation, and AHA Mission Lifeline Gold Plus designation while also maintaining many other coveted ED-specific designations. Donna is the current President of the Suffolk County Chapter of the ENA. In this position, she is involved in disseminating education to the community, developing best practices for ED Nursing, and encouraging staff to join their professional organization.

Under Donna's direction, we facilitate five ED fellowships per year, onboarding both critical care and medical surgical nursing staff, increasing our ED capacity to over 82,000 visits per year. She exudes the ability for people to follow her management style and her staff view her as the epitome of an ED Nurse. She can be found working alongside her staff at the bedside, providing education to team members, incorporating simulation to create a safe learning environment, or simply speaking with patients and families to alleviate fears and promote open communication. Donna serves as a mentor and a role model for professional behavior, collaboration, support, and clinical expertise. She is incredibly dedicated to the staff she oversees and works to improve department efficiency so we can provide the best possible patient care. She teaches TNCC courses within and outside of our health system and is passionate about providing this opportunity to new and incumbent ED nurses. She promotes ENA educational offerings and most recently encouraged ten staff members to attend the ENA Pearls of Wisdom.

Donna is generous with her time and volunteers for community outreach activities including health fairs, EMS education, school fairs, and provides community substance abuse education. She is willing to do all she can to support her staff personally and in their professional growth and development. Recently, an employee wrote a letter to our CNO about Donna's commitment and humanistic demeanor. His wife was dying from cancer and Donna provided him with the time he needed to be at her side, even during routine doctor visits. He said that even when not at work, she would reach out to ensure he was okay and inquire about ways she could help. This is just one example of Donna's character and humanism. Thank you for considering her nomination.

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA HOSPITAL

Anna Chiramanni, DNP, ANP-BC

Lead NP/Perioperative Services

It is our pleasure to present Anna Chiramanni as our nominee for the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council 2023 Nurse of Excellence Award. Anna has provided excellence in patient care for 44 years, with her most recent 23 years at our facility. She joined our institution in 2000, as she pioneered the Perioperative Nurse Practitioner (PNP) role in our Ambulatory Surgery Unit/Pre-Surgical Testing (ASU/PST). Upon meeting Anna, one is immediately struck by her professionalism and the calm compassion that she exudes. She carved out the critical role of PNP to provide high quality perioperative care in concert with the surgeon, anesthesiologist, registered nurse and patient. She focuses on providing the highest quality of care consistent with published clinical practice guidelines, to ensure the best outcome for the patient. Her colleagues agree she demonstrates the ideal that there can be no compromise in patient care and that quality is foremost. Her nursing experience, education and expertise has continually contributed to the success of our Perioperative program and her many contributions has ensured that consistent high-quality and safe patient care is provided.

Anna attended a highly prestigious Nursing program, then quickly attained the highest degree in Nursing, yet has remained committed to bedside care in the Perioperative environment. This candidate completed her Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP), Adult Health/ Primary/

Acute, and Critical Care. She believes that her most important contributions can be made at the bedside, and believes that through her pursuit of higher learning she can further the "science of nursing," as well as continue to contribute to the development of future advance-practice nurses through her mentorship.

Anna has served as a role model for new Nurse Practitioners (NP) and to Nursing and support staff members at all levels. She has mentored countless NP students from the various Colleges/Universities, and novice NPs who have joined our team. She coaches our ASU nurses, helping them to hone their skills as perioperative care experts. She believed there was an opportunity to improve the patient experience during the pre-operative phase. She implemented research that suggested patients required a shorter period of NPO status, resulting in reduced patient nausea and vomiting post-operatively. She engaged the staff in her research project and worked closely with the medical team to revise our patient preparation education and practices, which ultimately improved patient experiences. She was instrumental in implementing our "Colon Bundle" initiative, educating staff on bundle elements, and assisting with implementation of interventions necessary to prevent surgical site infections.

Anna is a member of the "Y's Men Service Club" LI Chapter, serving in local food pantries to provide assistance for those experiencing kidney transplants, dialysis, and other advanced treatments. She was instrumental in organizing a local food drive, making approximately 1,000 sandwiches to feed our local homeless population. Our candidate's friends and family were instrumental in founding the LI Chapter, raising \$12,000 annually which is given directly to individuals and families in need. Anna places patients' and their families' wellbeing at the forefront of all she does. She is a lifelong advocate for the advancement of the Nursing profession.

ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL

Angelina C. Hall, BSN, RN

Assistant Nursing Care Coordinator

Angelina Hall is an outstanding example of what a nurse should exemplify to the field of nursing and its patients. The energy and exuberance she brings every day to our hospital is infectious and invigorating. It is impossible to have a bad day in her presence! Her love of nursing is obvious to those of us working alongside her, but most especially to the patients and family members with whom she interacts.

Angelina is committed to furthering her education and staying current on best nursing practices. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology and a BSN in Nursing from Pace University. Currently she is enrolled in the Master's degree program of Nursing Leadership at Stony Brook University. She has advanced her knowledge base by completing a PCCN certification and attends many continuing education conferences of various topics. She actively participates in committees and affiliations including NYONEL, the HAC Committee, the Falls Committee, the Daisy Committee and the Nursing Leadership Committee. All of this exemplifies her dedication to the nursing profession and being a lifelong learner.

As a nurse on our telemetry unit for five years, Angelina has proven herself time and again to be a responsible, diligent, and compassionate caregiver. Because of these attributes, she was promoted to Assistant Nursing Care Coordinator eighteen months ago. It is a position she instantly excelled at, becoming a resource and point-person for all staff on the unit - physicians, patients and their families. Her ability to provide confidence and assurance to staff makes our unit a better place to work. She leads by example, and brings positivity to every day. Always eager to expand her capabilities, if a question arises that she does not know the answer to, she will find the information needed and educate all her staff. She emphasizes that all questions are valid and treats everyone with respect and kindness. Her commitment to safety and proper procedures ensures a confident work day for all. New nurses are the recipients of her unwavering support and patience. When she is on the unit there is a palpable sense of calm and control. She has created a very positive and beneficial work environment for all of us!

Angelina's pride in being a nurse is an integral part of who she is. She advocates for her staff, and empowers them to be proud of their career choice. Her passion for nursing becomes very clear when she deals with patients and families. She truly cares about patient's wellbeing and is invested in their recovery. Families are reassured and comforted. There is a trust she facilitates with people that is an asset beyond measure. Her awareness of patient experience is a model for all to follow, she consistently sets the bar high by example. When the Director of Medical Surgical Nursing was out on an unexpected leave, Angelina stepped in and did a remarkable job. The best summary for Angelina is that she is up to whatever the challenge may be, every day!

ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL & HEART CENTER

John DePietro, MSN, RN, NP-C

Administrative Director of LVAD/MCS

John DePietro is a certified adult nurse practitioner (NP-C), outstanding clinician, leader and mentor who started his nursing career here 27 years ago on a medical-surgical telemetry unit as a clinical nurse. Within a year, he transferred to the respiratory intensive care unit (RICU). While working in the RICU, he earned a Masters degree in Nursing Science and became the adult nurse practitioner of the coronary care unit. With a thirst for new knowledge, he developed a passion for technology used in the care of patients with mechanical circulatory support (MCS) devices, specifically Left Ventricular Assist devices (LVADs).

As the LVAD coordinator and Administrative Director of the LVAD program since January 2018, John provides direct patient care to our patients with heart failure and assesses their eligibility for an LVAD and transplant. He communicates with the interprofessional team to ensure that both patients and their caregivers are provided with the time, information, caring and collaborative support needed to prepare them before, during and after LVAD implantation. John continues to ensure patients with LVADs have clinical and social support as they transition to home and "learn to live with an external device". His patient care management and coordination of the LVAD team has resulted in excellent patient outcomes: a decreased 30-day readmission rate of patients with LVADs from 27 percent in 2017 to 0, and a decreased LVAD driveline infection rate from 7.7 percent to 0 – both lower than the national benchmark. He is currently the principal investigator of an IRB-approved research study comparing the efficacy of a SILveron Silver Plated Dressing Pad compared to a Chlorhexidine (CHG) Impregnated Disc in reducing LVAD driveline infections. His contributions of expert care and guidance at the bedside, mentorship and coordination of the interprofessional mechanical circulatory support (MCS) team have resulted in three successful disease-specific LVAD Joint Commission re-certifications and recognition as an exemplar from the American Nurse Credentialing Center as part of our Magnet re-designation in 2020.

While John has been an inspiring teacher and coach for patients and caregivers, he also provides ongoing education at the bedside to maintain competency of our clinical nurses as LVAD experts. He initiated hospital-wide Patient Oriented Evidence-Based Power Rounds (POWER rounds) where clinical nurses identify and present complex patients for review and discussion at the bedside. John also developed a cardiogenic shock core curriculum which fosters interprofessional collaboration among nurses, advanced practice providers and physicians using simulation. He led a team to develop a cardiogenic shock initiative which includes an early detection Best Practice Advisory alert and cardiogenic shock order set in the electronic medical record that was implemented system-wide in April 2023. He also provided education to our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) colleagues to facilitate safe transport of patients with LVADs.

John increased public awareness regarding the care and management of patients with LVADs in the community while volunteering as a certified New York State Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Firefighter. He is extremely passionate in ensuring the very best care and outcomes for our patients. It is with deep respect and pride that we nominate him for the 2023 Nurse of Excellence Award.

ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL

Stephanie Narcisse, RN, BSN

Registered Nurse

Stephanie Narcisse has been a nurse at our facility since 2017. Since then, she has been an incredible mentor and role model to both staff nurses and leaders. She exemplifies professionalism in her practice, as well as in the way that she cares for her patients and their families. She knows and follows hospital policies and does not engage in or promote deviance from them. She prioritizes safety and upholds that as the focal point in how she develops her plan of care for each patient and for the overall good of the unit, whether she is in charge for the day or not. She has an easy nature to her that allows for and encourages collaboration with her peers, as well as members of the interdisciplinary team.

Stephanie is seen as an informal leader on the unit and is well respected in her roles as staff nurse, charge nurse and preceptor. She takes all of her experiences, both positive and negative and brings them to those around her. She utilizes them as learning and does not shy away from highlighting service failures as opportunities for improvement. She willingly takes on precepting and educating new nurses and capstone students. As new unit-based initiatives arise, she champions them with positivity and enthusiasm. She looks for areas of opportunity to bring evidence-based changes to the unit and finds parallels between what she is studying in school and her personal practice. She has supportive co-workers who are also in school and are willing to try new things as well. She knows her team and who she can depend on for support.

Stephanie is well known throughout the facility by staff and leadership as a resource and a team player. She exudes positivity and joy even on tough days. She is aware of how her reactions impact those around her and her self-awareness is on point. She smiles when others would not and tries to find the good in all situations. In summary, Stephanie is an all-around excellent clinician, role model and human. We are so happy and proud to have her as our nominee.

STONY BROOK EASTERN LONG ISLAND HOSPITAL

Kenya Clinton-Coles, RN, BSN

Nurse Manager

When asked to write a nomination statement for Kenya Clinton-Coles, I immediately said yes and thought that this would be a very easy statement to write. But, as I sat down, I quickly realized that this is, in fact, a very difficult statement to write because there are just too many wonderful things to say. Therefore, I will start from the beginning.

I had the pleasure of meeting Kenya in 2016 at Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital, while she was a nurse on the Detox and Rehab units, as well as an 1199 union delegate. I instantly knew she possessed the skills and character of an effective and kind leader. She is a fine advocate for the nursing staff represented and an exceptionally skilled and compassionate nurse. She has led the nursing staff by her ability to role model excellence. Colleagues respect her skill and know they can count on her to represent them.

Kenya continued to grow in her role as a staff nurse through the years and was considered for a position on the management team. She was concerned about her peers, knowing they needed an advocate. During her interview, quality leadership was discussed and she expressed that even as a manager it would also be her duty to advocate for the staff she serves. She has within her everything needed to lead a nursing team.

Kenya has been in her leadership role for over a year and has made incredible strides in the position. She created and instituted education for the nursing staff and has been consistently willing to jump in and help with whatever the staff may need. She continues to advocate for nurses and nursing assistants every day through participation in our staffing committee, making changes to our electronic medical record for ease of documentation and by listening and becoming the voice of our employees. Our nominee has mastered the art of nursing and of servant leadership. Kenya is an inspiration to us all and someone I am very proud to work alongside. This pride is shared by our physician, social work, nursing, ancillary and department head colleagues throughout the institution. I cannot imagine a better leader to nominate for this award.

STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON HOSPITAL

Ethel Feldman, RN

Nurse Manager, Phillips Family Cancer Center, Radiology and the Breast Center

I am very pleased to nominate Ethel Feldman for the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council 2023 Nurse of Excellence Award. Her achievements in the Nursing Profession is intriguing, passionate and worthy of great acclaim. Her twenty-five year career history is wide and diverse, spanning from Ireland to Long Island. Ethel's career began at a young age in Ireland working with the Irish Red Cross helping families impacted by famine. She then moved to the United States where her career catapulted. She was the first RN employed at one of our well-known radiology centers, and held a major role in growing that practice from three to a total of twenty-two centers across the region. In this role, Ethel developed policies, practices and work-flow that remains in effect today. In addition, she won a Dale Carnegie Golden Book for Excellence in Leadership Skills and became an inspector for the American Association of Ambulatory Facilities. She also went on to successfully facilitate the AAAASF accreditations of our renowned radiology practices.

This hospital is blessed and fortunate to have Ethel as an employee who effortlessly exemplifies the true meaning of our hospital's missions and values. She has been a great addition to our leadership team. During our safety huddles, Ethel speaks passionately about every area and every staff member under her purview, as if they were a family member. She holds her staff in very high regard. I am extremely proud to nominate Ethel for this prestigious award.

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Carol Amodeo, MS, RN

Nurse Supervisor

For the last 40 years, Carol Amodeo has been an exceptional nurse leader and clinician who provides the highest standard of patient care. She demonstrates superb clinical and leadership skills and acts with professional and ethical values. She fosters teamwork on her unit to accomplish common goals and creates an environment where everyone feels respected and valued. Her approachable personality and authenticity have won the respect of her peers and the staff that work for her.

Carol began her nursing career as a bachelor's prepared staff nurse on an acute surgical unit. In 2002, she transferred to the outpatient breast center where she developed a passion for oncology nursing. Her ability to lead and inspire staff was recognized by the cancer center leadership who recruited her as a nursing supervisor and entrusted her with opening a new surgical oncology unit in 2007. Working closely with hospital leadership, Carol established this new unit in a new building with a newly assembled team she hired and treated as equals. By 2015, planning began to construct another new building that would combine several departments, creating a new unit that tripled in size, requiring new staff and more specialized equipment. Through four years of multiple setbacks and changing plans, Carol kept her staff engaged and informed until the rolled-up blueprints in her office became reality in November 2019. She collaborated with multidisciplinary providers, departments, and staff to provide the highest quality care to cancer patients.

As a Nursing Supervisor, Carol coordinates the day-to-day clinical operations and ensures a warm and welcoming environment where patients and employees can feel comfortable. She can frequently be found speaking to patients and staff, helping and intervening when needed. It is impossible to separate this nurse from being a mentor, preceptor, and a role model to her colleagues. When Covid-19 closed our building in early 2020, many of our staff were scattered throughout the hospital. She stayed in contact with her work "family" and was a lifeline during that dark time. During Nurses' Week she organized a socially distanced caravan of staff that drove all over Suffolk County to the homes of our deployed nurses, bringing goodies, inspiring words, self-care items and most importantly, hope and a reminder that they were not forgotten.

An avid promoter of nursing in quality and research, Carol is the primary author of two posters that were accepted for presentations at the 43rd and 45th Oncology Nursing Society's Annual Congress titled "Hospital to Home: A Transition of Care Model" and "Improving Oncology Patients' Understanding of Care Between Visits."

She represents the nursing profession with pride in the community, volunteering her time towards cancer screenings and awareness events, including Candlelight Vigils and National Cancer Survivors' Day.

All colleagues asked, spoke with one voice praising Carol as a nursing champion. "If you have not worked alongside her nor had the opportunity to experience her, then you would never understand that there are not enough words that can describe her and how much she deserves this award."

SYOSSET HOSPITAL

Monica Wedell, BSN, RN, CCRN

Associate Clinical Professional Development Educator

Nursing excellence is exactly what comes to mind when I think of Monica Wedell. Her current role is Clinical Professional Development Educator for two hospitals that she effectively divides her time between. She is an extraordinary nurse who is highly motivated and skilled, not to mention extremely knowledgeable in critical care and telemetry nursing. She continues to be a valuable resource and mentor to her peers. She is also compassionate and caring to our patients and staff daily, while being dependable and approachable, facilitating effective communication.

While in nursing school, Monica worked as a nursing assistant graduating in 2017 with her BSN. Just three short years later, she elevated her nursing practice by becoming a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) providing medical, psychological, and forensic examinations to sexual assault victims. To date, she has provided specialized care to over twenty victims of sexual assault. Her desire to help people inspired her to become an adjunct clinical professor in January 2021, at a local college where she continues to teach and influence the future of Nursing.

In August 2021, Monica entered nursing leadership by becoming an Assistant Nurse Manager of a critical care unit. In the same year she earned her CCRN, setting an example to her colleagues and staff. Her true passion and calling remained in the art of educating. This influenced her to pursue her current role of educator. In less than a year, she has contributed so much by sharing her expertise and knowledge with those around her, collaborating and contributing to best practice. One recent example is when it was identified that there was opportunity for improvement in our ICU titration vital sign documentation. Monica worked with the leadership team and developed an education roll-out for staff on "block charting." Not only did she individually educate each nurse, but made it her mission to see its success. During a recent Total Joint Commission Survey, the surveyor was quoted as saying, "it's the best titration chart I've ever seen."

As if all the above mentioned is not enough, in her spare time, Monica spends quality time with her mother as they partner to volunteer at a local church in a soup kitchen providing nourishment to the poor. In and out of the hospital, she shows the courage to care and give of herself to help those in need. Monica's selflessness, compassion, dedication, and constant drive to help others makes her a Nurse of Excellence.

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF NURSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Debra Swenson, PhD, RN, NEA-BC

Clinical Associate Professor and Department Chair

Debra Swenson is a highly accomplished, dedicated and experienced nurse, educator, and leader. Throughout the years she has demonstrated a commitment to life-long learning and excellence with appointments in academia and in service. In both of these settings, she has had a lasting and significant impact. She has inspired, mentored and supported nursing students, current RNs, and nursing faculty and impacted patient care in many different ways, both directly and indirectly.

Mentoring is a common theme that threads through all of Debra's accomplishments, whether in teaching, academic leadership, or administration in the clinical setting. As department chair of a large faculty, one of her many responsibilities is supporting new faculty as they transition into their new role. Often, faculty are expert clinicians who may not have had prior teaching experience. Her calm, thoughtful demeanor and positive outlook has facilitated the transition of countless faculty over the years. She is viewed as a "voice of reason" and as someone whose feedback is greatly valued. Her peers view her as an exemplary nurse who is collegial, collaborative, knowledgeable, dedicated and an excellent leader.

As an educator in the classroom, Debra teaches key courses in our undergraduate program. She utilizes her knowledge of the challenges new graduates face in the practice setting to prepare students and lessen the impact of their transition experience. Students express their appreciation of Debra in many of their comments, such as "She treats all students with respect", "She speaks with a calm voice", "She was patient and kind and helped us through all the bumps in the road", and "She truly wants her students to succeed, both in the classroom and as future nurses."

In the clinical setting, many of the nurses Debra interacts with are former students that she once educated and guided. She is acutely aware of the often difficult first year of practice, and supports new graduates as they are developing clinical judgement skills and experiencing challenges. In this way, she helps to narrow the academic-practice gap for new graduates.

Another area where Debra excels is in educational leadership and decision making. She has spearheaded and implemented many educational innovations that have had a lasting and significant impact on our students. She developed strategies to improve exam rigor, implemented active learning techniques in the classroom, and designed quality improvement initiatives. She co-chairs our NCLEX Task Force that explores the preparation of students to take the licensing exam. An article she authored with colleagues on NCLEX predictors for success has recently been accepted for publication in the prestigious Journal of Professional Nursing. In addition, she has co-chaired and served as a member of the Simulation Committee, preparing students by providing them with innovative and engaging high fidelity experiences in our lab. During the initial COVID shutdown, when all coursework needed to be transitioned suddenly to online and clinical experiences were paused, her leadership was instrumental in ensuring that instruction continued at a high level. She also assisted in designing alternate clinical experiences.

Debra is an excellent candidate for the Nurse of Excellence Award. Her significant achievements, impact on patient care and her positive public image of the profession make her a role model for nursing excellence.

MOLLOY UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Elizabeth Cotter, PhD, RN, NPD, BC

Professor of Nursing

Elizabeth Cotter is a nursing educator and scholar whose work across teaching, scholarship, and service supports excellence in nursing education, assisting students in their development that results in competent, skilled and knowledgeable nurse graduates who make positive contributions to the healthcare workforce. Elizabeth works to assist healthcare organizations establish effective preceptorships for their nursing staff. Her service to the community is focused on ways that support good health. As a highly experienced nurse educator, Elizabeth's achievements and contributions, especially in scholarship and community service, has been most impactful during this critical time when the healthcare sector has been experiencing a severe shortage of nurses. Her commitment to fostering ways to provide a strong foundation for new nurses, so they can successfully transition to the healthcare workforce and remain in their profession long-term, is critical in providing safe and effective clinical care.

As an expert in acute care clinical practice she is also a caring professor of nursing who upholds her students to high standards of knowledge and practice competencies. Elizabeth is highly regarded by her students and colleagues as a model of professional nursing. Students value her ability to translate challenging acute care nursing concepts into manageable information that can be applied in practice. She promotes an excitement for learning through the use of active learning strategies and individualized teaching strategies to meet student needs. Her interest in new graduates' successful transition to practice resulted in her development of a valid and reliable instrument that can guide the selection of nursing preceptors. Her development has been published and presented widely, resulting in the adoption of this instrument by multiple hospitals and health systems nationally and internationally. The transition and retention of new nurse graduates to the professional role of nursing is significantly dependent on the quality of the mentorship and preceptorship they receive early on in their career. Elizabeth's work in this realm is increasingly relevant and important in building and maintaining a strong nursing workforce for generations to come.

As one of the leaders of our school's Heartsafe Community team, Elizabeth has mentored, engaged and participated with nursing students to deliver 'CPR anywhere' education to the university community that includes staff, administrators and students and the community at-large which includes high school students and various members of the local community. As a result of her work within the community, Elizabeth developed a microcredential for high school and college students called the Heartsafe Badge, which has been achieved by many students so far.

Elizabeth is a valued colleague. She exemplifies excellence through her work in various roles and is a person that always 'steps up' when needed by students, colleagues and community members. Her research-based preceptor instrument continues to have a significant impact in clinical practice.

NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL
NURSE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

PRIOR RECIPIENTS

2022

PATRICIA WOLOSZYN, Stony Brook University Hospital

2021

FAITH LYNCH, NYU Langone Hospital Long Island
MARIJEAN BUHSE, Stony Brook School of Nursing

2020

All Long Island nurses honored

2019

JUSTIN M. WARYLORD, Stony Brook School of Nursing

2018

LILA V. HAGEMAN-SHEEHAN, NYU Winthrop Hospital

2017

LISA A. KOSHANSKY, St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center

2016

EILEEN DWYER, St. Francis Hospital

2015

CHRISTINE GLASER, Farmingdale State College

2014

RENEE GILCHRIST, North Shore University Hospital

2013

CATHERINE VIDETTO, St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center
LORI ESCALLIER, Stony Brook University School of Nursing

2012

ANULI A. ERIKE, Nassau University Medical Center

2011

LISA QUINONES, Suffolk County Community College

2010

DEBRA GIUGLIANO, Stony Brook University Medical Center

2009

EILEEN M. ROBERTO, Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center

2008

AMY B. PAKES, Nassau University Medical Center

2007

DONNA A. TANZI, Huntington Hospital

2006

MAY-LYNN ANDRESEN, North Shore - LIJ Health System

2005

KATHLEEN PERRO, St. Francis Hospital

2004

MADLINE COZZI-GOTTLIEB, South Nassau Communities Hospital

2003

VIRGINIA REICHERT, North Shore University Hospital

2002

DONNA M. JOHNSON, Nassau University Medical Center

2001

SUSAN HOVANI, J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital

2000

KATHLEEN SOUTHERTON, University Hospital at Stony Brook

1999

KATHLEEN MILLER, Long Beach Medical Center

1998

ELIZABETH DEVINE, J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital

1997

ALICE FRIEDRICH, North Shore University Hospital at Plainview

LONG ISLAND NOMINATIONS TO THE NEW YORK STATE NURSE OF DISTINCTION AWARD PROGRAM 1989–1995

RACHEL LIN

Komanoff Center for Geriatric & Rehab Medicine (NYS recipient)

NANCY MAEHL

Veterans Affairs Medical Center

ELEANOR O'BOYLE

J. T. Mather Memorial

MILDRED O'CONNOR

Lutheran Center for the Aging

DARLENE PADUANO

University Hospital at Stony Brook

DOROTHY PESSOLI

Veterans Affairs Medical Center

CAROLYN VAN HELDEN

St. Charles Hospital and Rehabilitation Center

SR. RITA VANSON

Mercy Medical Center

NURSE OF EXCELLENCE 2023 AWARD CEREMONY

