

Transforming Together

NURSING ANNUAL REPORT FY2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD Anderson
~~Cancer Center~~

Making Cancer History®

Nursing Annual Report FY 2023

Carol Porter, D.N.P., RN, FAAN
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nursing Officer

Managing Editor
KirstiAnn Clifford
Program Manager
Internal Communications

Graphic Design
Shalise Daniels
Strategic Communications

Photographers
Adolfo Chavez III
Thomas Campbell
Mark Mulligan

Contributors
Katie Brooks



Our Nursing team is recognized as an integral piece of MD Anderson's community and is celebrated in the institutional FY2023 Annual Report, A Leading Light, as well as in this companion report.

CONTENTS

Nursing by the numbers	5
Our 4,888 nurses fulfill a variety of roles throughout MD Anderson.	
Shaping the future of oncology nursing	6
MD Anderson's Nursing Transformation named a top priority.	
Advancing nursing professional practice	8
Nurses at all levels brought new knowledge, innovation and improvements to enhance patient care.	
Leadership and professional engagement	13
Sherry Adkins inducted as fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Danya Garner elected president of the Oncology Nursing Society.	
Awards and appointments	14
Highlighting internal and external achievements and new leadership roles.	

Transforming together

A message from the Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer

When I reflect on this past year, I'm reminded of Florence Nightingale, whose dedication and unwavering commitment to patient care revolutionized the field of nursing. Her legacy reminds us that nursing is more than a profession – it's a calling to lead. As a nursing community, we've been focused on supporting and advancing our profession so that we are all well prepared to be active leaders.

Our 4,800+ nurses and teams continue to shed a light on what is possible at the No. 1 cancer hospital in the country. In 2023, we embarked on a transformational effort to shape the future of oncology nursing at MD Anderson – and beyond. More than 120 nursing and multidisciplinary leaders and frontline staff are guiding our Nursing Transformation forward. Steadfast support from executive leadership, as well as significant philanthropic investment, are accelerating our efforts to innovate and enhance the nursing team experience, including leadership training and development, nursing practice innovation, virtual nursing opportunities, work-life balance and wellness, and more.

In the following pages, you'll see the notable progress we've made in the first six months and beyond, from launching a virtual nursing program to developing leadership training tailored to the needs of frontline nurse leaders. This is just the beginning. Our Nursing Transformation continues to gain momentum and create positive change in the way we support and value our nursing teams across the institution.

You'll also see several examples of how MD Anderson nurses have continued to reach new heights when it comes to clinical expertise and proven outcomes, ensuring patients receive the safest and highest quality care. To show their deep commitment to patients, our amazing Main OR nursing team even led the way in blood donation at MD Anderson, helping maintain a steady blood supply for patients in need. In addition, I was proud to be a sponsor for one of our own nurse leaders, Sherry Adkins, MSN, RN, ANP-C, FAAN, who was subsequently inducted into the American Academy of Nursing's 2023 Class of Fellows. We are also celebrating Danya Garner, Ph.D., who began his term as the president of the national Oncology Nursing Society.



As we look ahead, I'm confident that our nursing community will continue to illuminate the path forward. We are well on our way to a 6th Magnet designation in 2025 – an achievement that only 2% of Magnet hospitals have earned. By embracing innovation and fostering a culture of excellence, we will persist in transforming patient care and making a profound impact on the thousands of lives we touch.

I continue to be honored to serve as your senior vice president and chief nursing officer. Thank you for your ongoing dedication to our mission and for being a beacon of hope and healing at MD Anderson. Let us continue to inspire, innovate and transform – together.

Carol Porter, D.N.P., RN, FAAN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer

4,888 total number of nurses

This number includes inpatient nurses, research nurses, advanced practice nurses, and nurses in ambulatory and leadership roles. **Data based on Magnet reporting definitions. Approximate values for FY23.*



Our workforce includes nurses in a variety of roles, including:

OUR NURSES

3,266
clinical nurses

662
advanced practice
registered nurses

115
certified registered
nurse anesthetists

269
research nurses

69
case managers

37
nurse educators



66%
have a specialty
certification



85%
have a bachelor's
degree or higher



36%
of nurses in
leadership positions
have a doctoral degree

Shaping the future of oncology nursing

MD Anderson's Nursing Transformation named a top priority

MD Anderson is reimagining the nursing profession to build a better and more future-focused team as the national and local nursing landscape continues to evolve. In 2023, leaders announced a significant investment and philanthropic support to accelerate this bold strategic effort and further MD Anderson's leadership in oncology nursing.

"MD Anderson is committed to creating a new model for nurses, so they feel supported – both professionally and personally – at our institution," said President Peter WT Pisters, M.D., in a June 2023 message to all employees highlighting Nursing Transformation efforts.

Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Rosanna Morris and Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer Carol Porter, D.N.P., serve as co-sponsors, providing leadership and ensuring success of the transformation. Porter says it's an exciting time for nursing at MD Anderson.

"We are taking action now to create a sustainable team environment that values nurses and the impact they have on patients and families, care teams and communities," says Porter. "Our ability to provide exceptional patient care is directly linked to our ability to recruit and retain world-class nurses in a career that inspires and empowers them."

Nursing Transformation: Initial priorities

Based on feedback from frontline staff who participated in listening sessions and focus groups, as well as nursing educational and employment trends, leaders identified five initial workstreams to innovate and improve nursing practice, health and wellness, growth opportunities and individualized career paths:

- **Culture and Connection:** Encouraging a positive environment in which each member of the care team feels valued, supported and important as part of a thriving nursing community.
- **Nursing Team Rewards:** Reviewing pay components to identify areas for simplification and improve the way we pay and reward nurses.
- **Leadership Training and Career Development:** Providing clear paths to progression and growth through educational opportunities, leadership training and active mentoring.



Virtual Registered Nurse Christian Perez goes over discharge teaching and medication instructions with a patient.

- **Nurse Support Team:** Examining the roles of patient care technicians (PCTs), surgical technicians (STs), medical assistants (MAs) and nursing assistants (NAs) as important members of the nursing team. This work includes improving how we recruit these team members and how we provide growth and development opportunities to increase retention.
- **Virtual Nursing Program:** Implementing a nursing practice model where bedside nurses get an additional layer of support from another licensed nurse who is in a different location yet helping with important tasks by using technology. This model adds efficiency to nursing care while improving nurse wellness and satisfaction.

Nursing Transformation co-sponsors formed a steering committee to guide the transformation, establish goals and timelines and oversee progress. The multidisciplinary committee includes representation from Nursing, Human Resources, Strategic Communications, Finance, Development, Innovations, Information Services and others who are fully vested in supporting the vision of the transformation.



Learn more about MD Anderson's Virtual Nursing Program in the FY23 Institutional Annual Report.

Frontline Nurses Council

A Frontline Nurses Council (FNC) was created to provide valuable feedback on Nursing Transformation initiatives. The 15-member advisory group represents nurses from across the institution and all tenures – from newly hired to those with more than 25 years of experience at MD Anderson.

Corey Russell, D.N.P., director of Clinical Nursing, and Brenda Brown, executive director, Ambulatory Treatment Center and Clinical and Translational Research Center, serve as co-sponsors of the FNC, making sure the voices of frontline nurses are heard every step of the way.

“We want to elevate nursing at MD Anderson to the point where we have a waitlist of nurses who dream of working here,” says Russell. “And those who are here find their careers fulfilling, challenging and rewarding.”

Nursing Transformation key highlights

Several workstreams made progress quickly, as teams launched a Virtual Nursing Program and developed leadership training.

The **Virtual Nursing program** launched in April on the Urology and Orthopaedic Surgery Unit before expanding to two additional units over the following months. The new nursing model continues to evolve through process improvements based on MD Anderson nurses’ feedback while integrating best practices from organizations across the country, including our own Hemovigilance Unit, to promote quality, safety and efficiency.

Between April and September 2023, MD Anderson VRNs completed admission paperwork for 650 patients and discharge teaching for 854 patients. This translates to more than 400 hours returned to the bedside nurse, enabling more patient interactions and care activities. In addition, the team of VRNs expanded from five to 10.

“Virtual nursing represents a model of care delivery poised to transform nursing practice,” says Lavonia Thomas, D.N.P., nursing informatics officer. “The role, designed by MD Anderson nurses, focuses on improving efficiency and allowing the bedside nurse to center their attention on hands-on patient care. This is just the beginning of an innovative effort that will span across nursing.”

A **New Nurse Leader Training** was developed in partnership with the Leadership Institute and the first cohort of 29 new nurse leaders from inpatient and procedural areas successfully finished the training in August. The five-day curriculum aims to enhance new nurse leaders’ comfort and competence in managing daily role demands and business practices such as budgeting and recruitment, as well as nurse-specific leadership principles. Discussion is underway to expand the training curriculum to other nursing areas, as well as provide similarly customized offerings for other experience levels.



Nursing Transformation Leader Summit

In September 2023, more than 120 nurse leaders and interdisciplinary colleagues came together for a full day of idea sharing and FY24 planning to build upon Nursing Transformation efforts.

The summit generated valuable action plans and enthusiasm about the future of nursing at MD Anderson.

“These are exciting times – the energy is here and it’s our time to take our culture to the next level,” says Brad Philips, chief nurse anesthetist.

Chief Nurse Anesthetist Brad Philips discusses priorities for the next phase of the Nursing Transformation during the Leader Summit.

Advancing nursing professional practice

At MD Anderson, the pursuit of excellence in nursing practice is a continuous journey, marked by our five consecutive Magnet designations since 2001. This prestigious recognition reflects our commitment to advancing patient care through evidence-based, innovative nurse-led initiatives.

In FY23, nurses at all levels have been committed to applying the five Magnet Model Components: Transformational Leadership, Structural Empowerment, Exemplary Professional Practice, New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements, and Empirical Outcomes.

Magnet key:

- Transformational Leadership
- Exemplary Professional Practice
- Structural Empowerment
- New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements
- Empirical Outcomes

Preparation pays off for FACT accreditation

Nurses on MD Anderson's inpatient Stem Cell Transplant units worked collaboratively to prepare for the most recent Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT) survey. Over a year of meticulous planning, preparation and education resulted in the successful completion of the FACT survey with zero deficiencies identified.

The interprofessional team of nurses, physicians, pharmacists and facilities experts each had an integral role in the



The interdisciplinary FACT accreditation team reviews documents and medical records that support compliance for each FACT standard.

successful reaccreditation. Preparation for the three-year designation involved a rigorous review and update of inpatient nursing standard operating procedures, as well as a review of documentation of safety processes and transcripts for each employee, ensuring all appropriate standards were demonstrated. Unit educators also incorporated FACT standards into early orientation, preparing staff to confidently answer any questions.

Catt Delanoix, associate director of Clinical Nursing on G18 – Stem Cell Transplantation & Cellular Therapy, helped lead the survey in March 2023, showing all the critical aspects of the unit and complex transplant care. The survey team was so impressed with her professionalism and expertise, they invited her to be the very first nurse surveyor for the FACT accreditation program.

"I have never been so proud of our nursing leaders, our program, and how marvelous MD Anderson has been to support the growth and development of our nurses," says Elizabeth Shpall, M.D., chair ad interim, Stem Cell Transplantation and Cellular Therapy department. "The lead inspector said he had never seen such an impressive transplant and cellular therapy program. We were accredited with no deficiencies, which rarely happens with FACT!"

G17 and G18 units are FACT-accredited as standard cellular therapy units. The staff on these units have made major contributions to stem cell transplantation and therapy, setting the standard nationally for patient care and safety.

Building a culture of nursing scholarship

In November 2022, the Nursing department introduced Nursing Research Grand Rounds to advance oncology nursing science at MD Anderson. It's an initiative that's promoting research engagement among nurses and providing a platform for learning, idea sharing and collaboration.

In FY23, the department held seven grand rounds covering a variety of research topics including disparities in cancer care and end-of-life preparedness for patients enrolled in clinical trials. Internal as well as external speakers, primarily from the Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston, were asked to present to enhance our collaborative research efforts.

"Presenting my research was an incredibly rewarding experience that allowed me to share my findings with a wider nursing community, as well as facilitate valuable feedback and insightful questions that have helped refine my work," says Eunju Choi, Ph.D., postdoctoral fellow in the Nursing department. "These sessions are crucial for the ongoing professional development of nurses and the advancement of nursing science. They serve as a bridge between research and clinical practice, ensuring that new knowledge is integrated into patient care."

Eileen Hacker, Ph.D., Nursing department chair, says MD Anderson nurses are uniquely positioned to drive innovative research and clinical practice improvements.

"Our nursing community's unparalleled expertise, access to advanced resources and collaborative spirit enable them to make significant contributions to nursing science, ultimately improving patient outcomes and advancing the field of oncology nursing," says Hacker. "These grand rounds are helping to build an environment where ideas can flourish and advance our practice."

Providing rapid relief for pediatric patients

Every second counts when it comes to giving the first dose of antibiotics to patients with a fever and neutropenia (low white blood cell count). Nurses in the Pediatric Acute Cancer Care Center (PACCC) recently championed an evidence-based change that is helping patients receive the appropriate treatment in a timely manner.

Administering antibiotics within one hour of identifying a febrile, neutropenic patient has been proven to improve outcomes and decrease sepsis risk and ICU admissions. However, pediatric cancer patients often become anxious with needle sticks and require numbing before being poked. The previous method involved applying a numbing cream that required a prescription and a 30-minute wait after application, contributing to only 40% of PACCC patients receiving antibiotics within 60 minutes.

Observing this issue, PACCC Associate Director Janet Smith and her nursing colleagues sought ways to speed up the treatment process. They found evidence supporting the use of a different numbing spray to reduce the time needed to numb a patient's port access. They obtained approval to trial the new spray in April 2023 and worked with the vendor to provide nursing education.

“Through the trial period, we confirmed that the new spray worked much faster than the previous numbing cream, helping us start the IV quicker for patients, and with less anxiety and discomfort,” says Smith. “By combining clinical evidence with our firsthand experience, we identified a solution that is helping ensure our pediatric patients receive their first dose of antibiotics within the critical one-hour window.”

The nursing team continuously monitored key metrics to track effectiveness, such as time to antibiotic administration



Clinical Nurse Alexander Browne prepares to apply numbing spray over a patient's port access area in the PACCC.

and overall patient outcomes. By August 2023, 61% of patients received their antibiotic within one hour, and that continued to improve, reaching over 75% by October. Their efforts resulted in the numbing spray being permanently added to the supply inventory in the PACCC.

Sharing and learning from the world's first cancer hospital

When the world's oldest cancer hospital transitioned from a paper-based system to an electronic health record (EHR) in March 2023, teams from the No. 1 cancer hospital were there to help.

A highly skilled team from MDAnderson, including Nursing Informatics specialists and Information Services (IS) liaisons flew to London, England, to share their expertise and learn as The Royal Marsden went live with their EHR. Their EHR launch was described as “the largest and most important digital transformation program” in The Royal Marsden's more than 170-year history.

Lavonia Thomas, D.N.P., nursing informatics officer, was joined by more than a dozen Nursing Informatics nurses, many of whom supported MD Anderson's EHR implementation in 2016. Each member was assigned a specific unit to provide at-the-elbow support for a two-week period following implementation. This included helping the London nursing staff navigate



Members of the Nursing Informatics team at Royal Marsden (from left): Kevin Lim, Imelda Febryani, Rowena Enojo, Falguni Shah, Michael Vondenstein and Dr. Lavonia Thomas.

the EHR, talking through nursing workflows and helping to enter and escalate tickets as needed. Supporting The Royal Marsden in leveraging technology can enhance health care delivery in London, making the process more efficient for patients and the care team alike.

The trip was an opportunity not only to provide expertise, but to gain new knowledge.

“It was great to work alongside The Royal Marsden nurses and experience patient care delivery outside the U.S. health care system,” says Thomas. “Our Nursing Informatics team provided invaluable support to nurses who have similar workflows to those we see at MD Anderson; however, our team also learned a lot and adapted to processes that were different than our own. The positive energy of the Royal Marsden team mirrors the enthusiasm at MD Anderson, as we are all working toward the same goal.”

Communicating with COMFORT

At the heart of compassionate care lies effective communication, especially when it comes to aligning treatment with a patient's personal goals and values. Using the COMFORT model, Nurse Educator **Tori McClosky** has taught more than 1,000 nurses and social work counselors evidence-based techniques for having effective and empathetic conversations with patients and caregivers. It's all part of MD Anderson's Goal Concordant Care initiative, which is part of the Value theme of Our Strategy.

COMFORT is an acronym for the basic principles of goals of care communication: Connect, Options, Making Meaning, Family Caregiver, Openings, Relating and Team. Case managers and chaplains will be the next group taking classes to improve their patient communication skills.

McClosky's commitment to goal concordant care is deeply personal. Her life was upended in high school when a tumor was discovered on her brain due to neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), a genetic condition. As both an MD Anderson patient and a nurse educator, McClosky's experiences with recurring tumors, multiple surgeries and ongoing treatment have shaped her perspective on care.

Her own routine conversations with her medical team about her treatment goals have had a profound influence, ensuring that her care aligns with her personal values. These experiences have, in turn, fueled her passion to teach others how to facilitate similar conversations with their patients, helping them navigate complex choices and find the right path for their care.

"I love my role because I have the opportunity to help others approach complex conversations around patient goals, values and preferences – and provide it from a patient's perspective," she says. "It's not about providing a specific script or magic bullet for what to say to patients and their families, rather, it's based upon listening and relationship-building, and making a connection to their life outside the clinic."



Nurse Educator Tori McClosky uses her own experiences with NF1 to help teach others about goal concordant care.

Reducing hyperglycemia, improving care for diabetic cancer patients

Maintaining stable blood glucose levels is essential for cancer patients to prevent infections and can make the difference in being able to have timely surgery, qualifying for a clinical trial or continuing a particular therapy. With that in mind, an interprofessional glycemic management team co-led by Petra Grami, D.N.P., director of Clinical Nursing, and Sonali Thosani, M.D., associate professor, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders, is reducing hyperglycemia rates and improving outcomes for diabetic cancer patients at all stages of care. Their work is important to ensure MD Anderson is compliant with national glucose management guidelines.

The team, comprising nurses, physicians, advanced practice providers (APPs), pharmacists, informatics specialists and analysts, initially focused on the Lymphoma/Myeloma service line. They identified and implemented several key interventions, including the addition of a Glycemic Management Resource Nurse role, staff education, the use of insulin decision support tools, and standardized management of diabetes mellitus through institutional algorithms to decrease hyperglycemia events.

Grami organized nursing education and collaborated with an electronic health record systems analyst to create an insulin decision support tool. In January 2023, the education was complete, clinical decision support tools were live and the diabetes treatment algorithm was approved. As a result of these efforts, by May 2023, the hyperglycemia rate for diabetic patients on the Lymphoma/Myeloma service was reduced from 54% to 35%.

"Reducing hyperglycemia is a vital step in improving the overall care and outcomes for our diabetic cancer patients," says Grami. "We are proud of the progress we've made and look forward to continuing our comprehensive work to ensure all cancer patients with diabetes receive the highest quality care."

The next step is to achieve Disease Specific Joint Commission Certification in Diabetes Management.

Leading the way in blood donations

The Main OR Nursing team donates blood for many reasons, stemming from personal and professional experiences. Regardless of what gets them to roll up their sleeves, this remarkable team has distinguished itself as the top blood donor group within the institution, making a significant impact on the lives of patients and families.

The need for blood at MD Anderson is constant, especially for patients with blood cancers like leukemia and lymphoma and those requiring surgery. With hundreds of surgeries scheduled in the Main Building OR each week, the OR nursing team is committed to rolling up their sleeves to help ensure blood is available for patients when they need it. Their combined efforts resulted in an impressive 123 blood donations at MD Anderson's Blood Bank in 2023.



About 60 members of the Main OR Nursing team donated blood to MD Anderson patients in 2023. Nursing team donors in this photo include (top row L-R) Varughese Mathew, Cindy Segal, Ph.D.; Suzanne Bailin, Kimberly Potts and Joseph Ervin. (Bottom row L-R) Maria Delgado, Steve Suwannakinthorn, Midori Pedroza and Rhonda Ross.

"I've experienced situations in the OR where patients require multiple units of blood," says Suzanne Bailin, perioperative clinical development specialist. "I feel it is my duty as a steward and a registered nurse to do everything I can to help our patients have the best possible outcome for their surgeries and donating blood is one way I can help."

MD Anderson supports employee blood donors including the OR Nursing team, providing time off to donate as well as Donor Appreciation Leave for those who donate regularly.

Handling antibiotics with care

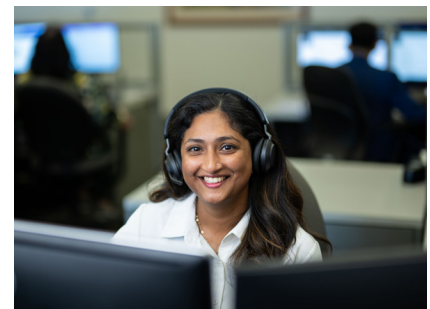
Trained registered nurses and advanced practice providers on askMDAnderson's clinical team are enhancing safety and promoting antimicrobial stewardship through a new quality improvement initiative that began in May 2023 in collaboration with the Infectious Diseases department. Proactive patient outreach and monitoring ensures antimicrobial therapy is delivered safely while preventing readmissions to the hospital.

A dedicated team of care managers are supporting the Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy (OPAT) program by delivering care management and follow-up for all hospital patients discharged with antibiotic prescriptions, including both oral and intravenous antibiotics. The outreach follows a predetermined schedule set by the Infectious Disease service. Care team members assess patient progress, address

any concerns, and ensure adherence to the OPAT program through documentation in the electronic health record. The askMDA clinician communicates updates regarding patient progress, confirm laboratory tests were obtained, review laboratory results, and any necessary adjustments to the Infectious Disease service directly.

"It's rewarding to help discharged patients manage their antibiotic therapy and also know we're contributing to preventing readmissions by helping them manage their care at home," says Amsha Alexander, registered nurse and lead care manager in askMDAnderson.

In FY23, the askMDAnderson team had 248 encounters helping patients manage their antibiotics. This is in addition to the 65,000 patients they helped after discharge from the hospital, Acute Cancer Care Center and outpatient procedures.



Amsha Alexander calls patients after they are discharged from the hospital and helps them manage their antibiotic therapy.

Since 2019, the team has been available around-the-clock to triage patient concerns across the oncology spectrum and provide follow-up for those who have been discharged from the hospital and respond to an automated phone call with questions or concerns. The most common issues the team helps patients with are pain, medication management, fever, nausea and medication refills.

Designing an oncology navigation program

Seven registered nurses helped more than 350 Head & Neck patients as part of an institutional patient navigation pilot from October 2022 to April 2023. Pilot results and nurses' experience will help inform the design of the institutional program, which will likely be the largest program of its kind for oncology.

As cancer treatment often involves multiple specialties, the team of nurse navigators coordinated complex treatment plans and helped patients understand the roles of different providers in their treatment and why multiple appointments may be needed. They had more than 1,700 encounters with patients during the pilot, offering specialized expertise and personalized support before the patient's first appointment and throughout their treatment to improve care coordination and their overall experience.

At the first interaction, nurse navigators assessed any potential barriers to care and addressed any concerns before the patient's initial appointment with the care team.

"Looking at the entire patient and their needs helps make the first visit successful," says Marie Pope, a clinical nurse in the Head & Neck Center and one of the nurse navigators for the pilot.



As part of an institutional patient navigation pilot, Marie Pope provided nurse navigation to Head & Neck patients during intake, before their first appointment and through their treatment.

Feedback from patients who participated in the pilot was overwhelmingly positive, with 98% saying they would recommend the program. Results showed that patient navigation helped new patients decide to receive their treatment at MD Anderson and made patients feel supported during their treatment. We also learned what we could do to make improvements as we plan to implement our institutional patient navigation program in FY24 using a phased approach.

"Asking 'What matters most to you?' is a simple but powerful concept," says Pope. "It requires us to be present and actively listen to the patient to elicit what is important in their life, what they are afraid of, what they hope for, and what their goals are with treatment. Understanding patient goals and priorities empowers and equips us to provide better care."



Nursing Professional Practice Model

MD Anderson's Nursing Professional Practice Model (PPM) represents how key elements of professional nursing practice at MD Anderson connect to each other. The PPM is based on the Quality Caring Model by Joanne Duffy, Ph.D. All PPM components operate within the context of MD Anderson's core values of Caring, Integrity, Safety, Discovery and Stewardship.

MD Anderson frontline nurses developed the PPM graphic, featuring open hand imagery—a universal symbol of caring—and colors that represent the breadth of caregivers and patients at MD Anderson.

LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Sherry Adkins inducted as fellow of American Academy of Nursing



Sherry Adkins, APP supervisor in Lymphoma-Myeloma, has been inducted into the American Academy of Nursing's 2023 Class of Fellows, recognizing her significant contributions to nursing and health care at the local, national and international levels.

Improving the safety of CAR T-cell therapy

After completing MD Anderson's Post Graduate Fellowship in Oncology Nursing in 2008, Adkins worked as an APP in inpatient lymphoma. In 2016, she joined the research team led by Sattva Neelapu, M.D., professor and deputy chair of Lymphoma-Myeloma, whose work ultimately led to the first Food and Drug Administration-approved chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy for the treatment of lymphoma. She now leads a team of APPs who manage patients receiving immune-effector cell therapy and is developing the program for outpatient cell infusion for lymphoma/myeloma patients.

"Sherry's innovative contributions to patient care have made a lasting impact to improve the safety of administering CAR T-cell therapy at MD Anderson and for patients around the world due to her leading role on the team that developed the CARTOX mobile app, used by health care providers in 25 countries," says Neelapu.

Adkins shares her expertise through mentorships, education modules, peer-reviewed publications, speaking engagements and as an expert panel member for the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the Society of Immunotherapy for Cancer in developing guidelines for immunotherapies.

Inspiring the next generation of industry leaders

As Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, Dr. Carol Porter has made it a priority to provide mentorship and sponsorship to other nurses, ensuring they are not only leaders within the institution but also influential voices in the broader nursing community.

"I'm honored to have sponsored six MD Anderson candidates who have all been accepted into the academy," says Porter, who also is a fellow of the AAN. "This is a tremendous distinction that lets the world know our nurses are among the very best."

MD Anderson currently has 10 nurses who have been inducted as AAN fellows, including:

- Sherry Adkins
- Diane Barber, Ph.D.
- Garry Brydges, Ph.D., D.N.P.
- Joyce E Dains, Dr.P.H., J.D.
- Anecita Fadol, Ph.D.
- Eileen Hacker, Ph.D.
- Susan Lee, Ph.D.
- Joyce Neumann, Ph.D.
- Joan O'Hanlon Curry, D.N.P.
- Carol Porter, D.N.P.

Danya Garner leads national nursing association



Danya Garner, Ph.D., associate director of Continuing Professional Education, began his one-year term as president of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) in April 2023.

"I'm extremely honored to be elected to lead the Oncology Nursing Society, which is more than 35,000 members strong and has been my primary nursing professional home since I joined MD Anderson more than 15 years ago," he says. "I plan to continue to positively influence the pipeline of oncology nurses while using the exceptional framework that has been established to advance the field."

Garner has been involved with ONS for several years on local, national, and international levels. Most recently, he served as director-at-large on the ONS national Board of Directors, where he worked with nurses from across the world to build upon improving the quality of life and outcomes for patients with cancer and their families.

Awards and appointments

Lovette Alegado

2022 Jennifer Kreykes-Pohl Clinical Coach Award
Awarded by: Department of Stem Cell Transplantation and Cellular Therapy, MD Anderson, November 2022

Roy Aleonar

Salute to Nurses – Top 200 nurse winner
Awarded by: Houston Chronicle, May 2023

Shibi Babu

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Reena Binu

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, March 2023

Sharon Boado

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, March 2023

Amanda Brink, D.N.P.

APRN awards: Core Value Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Jackie Broadway-Duren, Ph.D., D.N.P.

2022 Brown Foundation Award for Excellence in Oncology Nursing
Awarded by: The Brown Foundation Inc. and the Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, November 2022

Sylvia Brown

Elected as president of the Houston Chapter of the Academy of Oncology Nurse and Patient Navigators (AONN)
Awarded by: AONN, March 2023

Melisa Calmo

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Clinical Nurse - Inpatient
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Bethsaida Camacho

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Top 10% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Teresita Campanas

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

James Cavalier, Jr., Ph.D.

Dillard University College of Nursing Great Award
Awarded by: Dillard University, October 2022

Hannah Chaharlangi

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Suji Chako

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, March 2023

Mary Cline

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Perfect Score)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Cassie Crauswell

Excellence in Safety Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson, May 2023

LaShena Crump

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Joyce Dains, Dr.P.H.

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Joanne Dalusung, D.N.P.

Elected as president of the Vascular Access Certification Corporation (VACC)
Awarded by: VACC, January 2023

Marilyn Do

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Perfect Score)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Edith Dimiri

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, May 2023

Tera Dubose

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, March 2023

Marifel Esculto

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Rhonda Fanaey

Selected as president-elect for the Galveston/Bay Area chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS)
Awarded by: ONS Galveston/Bay Area Chapter, December 2022

Danielle Fournier, D.N.P.

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Perfect Score)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Advanced Oncology Nurse of the Year

Awarded by: Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation, April 2023

Mariana Gallardo

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Clinical Research Nurse
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Poonam Goswami, D.N.P.

APRN awards: Best of Professional Practice Model (Education)
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Eileen Hacker, Ph.D.

Appointed to the Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research (FNINR) Board of Directors
Awarded by: FNINR, January 2023

Krista Henderson

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Mary Hughes

Accepted into the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS) Fellowship, Class of 2023
Awarded by: APOS, December 2022

Chandra Hummons

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Perfect Score)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Jason Borg Infante

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, August 2023

Shiji Idicula

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Li Jiang

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, August 2023

Jaimy John

Advanced Practice Provider “Top Performer” Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Largie Jomuaud

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, May 2023

Nadia Jones

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Case Management
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Rayshad Joseph

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, August 2023

Abbey Kaler

2022 Brown Foundation Award for Excellence in Oncology Nursing (finalist)
Awarded by: The Brown Foundation Inc. and the Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, November 2022

2023 Extraordinary Healer Award

Awarded by: Cure magazine, April 2023

Maria Keith

Salute to Nurses – Top 200 nurse winner
Awarded by: Houston Chronicle, May 2023

Melinda Keyhani

Salute to Nurses – Top 200 nurse winner
Awarded by: Houston Chronicle, May 2023

Ashley Knox

APRN awards: Best of Professional Practice Model (Administration)
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Lini Koshy

Salute to Nurses – Top 200 nurse winner
Awarded by: Houston Chronicle, May 2023

Angela Krach

APRN awards: Mentor of the Year
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Cynthia Kudakachira

Advanced Practice Provider "Top Performer" Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Saramma Kurian

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Sharon Kuruvilla

2022 Excellence in LEADership Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson, September 2022

Madison LaRose

Advanced Practice Provider "Top Performer" Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Liliana Larsson

2023 Distinguished Mentor Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson, February 2023

"Igniting Creative Excellence in Oncology Practice" award

Awarded by: ONS, Houston Chapter, December 2022

TaCharra Laury, D.N.P.

Top 25 Outstanding Texas Nurses for 2023 honoree
Awarded by: Texas Nurses Association, May 2023

Elected to the Texas Nurses Association (TNA) Leadership
Succession Committee

Awarded by: TNA, May 2023

Tong Liu

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, August 2023

Rebecca Lu

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Nursing Leadership
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Carlo Magno

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, August 2023

Mary Grace Martinez

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, May 2023

Thomas Mathew

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Barbara Merutka

Dawn Gross Memorial Scholarship recipient (Master's degree)
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Jeffrey Miller

The Heart of MD Anderson Outstanding Employee Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson, May 2023

Kathy Mishaw

Staff Educator of the Year
Awarded by: MD Anderson, March 2023

Richard Morse

Staff Educator of the Quarter
Awarded by: Division of Education and Training, August 2023

Margaret Neidhart

The Heart of MD Anderson Outstanding Employee Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Salute to Nurses – Top 200 nurse winner

Awarded by: Houston Chronicle, May 2023

LaShon Nelms

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Yenphi Ngo

Advanced Practice Provider "Top Performer" Award (Top 10% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Judith Odityo, Ph.D.

Harris County Medical Society Auxiliary Clinical Excellence Award
Awarded by: Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston, August 2023

Jewel Parro

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, May 2023

Charusal Patel

Advanced Practice Provider "Top Performer" Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Leah Pemberton

The Heart of MD Anderson Outstanding Employee Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson, January 2023

Sinobi Perakattu

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, May 2023

Fritzie Perez

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Nurse Preceptor
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Michael Pham, Ph.D.

APRN awards: Best of Professional Practice Model (overall)
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Amber Potter

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Laila Puthenpurayil

Emma Josephine Loffelholz McNorris RN Spirituality Award
Awarded by: Institute for Spirituality and Health at the Texas
Medical Center, October 2022

Whitney Randolph

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Sharon Reine

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, August 2023

Rae Brana Reynolds, Ph.D.

APRN awards: Loretta Ford MD Anderson Award
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

LouFranz Roque

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Brianna Salinas

Dawn Gross Memorial Scholarship recipient (Doctoral degree)
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

2024 Young Professional Voices honoree

Awarded by: American Organization for Nursing Leadership,
August 2023

Esmy Samuels

Staff Educator of the Quarter
Awarded by: Division of Education and Training,
MD Anderson, October 2022

Joy Schindler

APRN awards: Rookie of the Year
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Gary Sheppard

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, January 2023

Ebony Smith

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Education
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Uniqua Smith, Ph.D.

Julie and Ben Rogers Award for Excellence in Cancer Administration
Awarded by: MD Anderson, September 2022

April Thomas

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, March 2023

Marla Throssel

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Lisa Triche, D.N.P.

APRN awards: Best of Professional Practice Model (Research)
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Lillian Trinh

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, May 2023

Jeremainesuzette Urizza

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Clinical Nurse – Ambulatory
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Joyace G. Ussin

Salute to Nurses – Top 200 nurse winner
Awarded by: Houston Chronicle, May 2023

Carolyn Varghese

2023 Alice Judkins Award
Awarded by: Department of Surgery, MD Anderson, March 2023

Shibi Kalappuraackal Varkey

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, March 2023

Ashley Watson

APRN awards: Best of Professional Practice Model (Clinical)
Awarded by: MD Anderson APRN Council, November 2022

Nancy Wiipf

Alice Judkins APP Professional Development Grant recipient
Awarded by: Division of Surgery, MD Anderson, September 2022

2022 Brown Foundation Award for Excellence in Oncology Nursing
(finalist)

Awarded by: The Brown Foundation Inc. and the Division of Nursing,
MD Anderson, November 2022

Alexis Wischan

Nursing Quality Caring Award – Rookie of the Year
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, July 2023

Chasity Yajima

Advanced Practice Provider "Top Performer" Award (Top 1% nationally)
Awarded by: MD Anderson, October 2022

Haiwen (Heather) Zhao

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses
Awarded by: Division of Nursing, MD Anderson, March 2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MDAnderson
~~Cancer~~ Center

Making Cancer History®