



DALLAS HOSPITAL

FY2024
Reimagining care

West Valley Hospital

Clinical Excellence Report



Table of Contents

West Valley Clinical Excellence Report Fiscal Year 2024

Page

3	Message from the Chief Nursing Officer
4-5	Message from Pathways Program Director
6-7	Pathways to Excellence Program Overview
8	Keys to the Pathways Standards
	<i>Safety:</i>
9	WV ED
10	House Supervisors
11	Campus Security Enhancements
	<i>Quality:</i>
12-13	WVH Expansion
14-15	“The best staff I’ve ever seen”
16	Specialty Clinic Opening
17	Care with Respect Ads
18-19	Salem Health Foundation
20	Imaging
21	Connections
	<i>Professional Development:</i>
22-23	Preceptor Recognition
	<i>Well-Being:</i>
24-25	Nurses Week
26-30	Star Awards
31	SERA Team
32	Retirements
33	Pet Therapy
34-35	From Stigma to “Magic Maker”
	<i>Quality, Safety and Well-Being:</i>
36-37	IDEAL
38-39	Lab of the Year
	<i>Shared Decision Making:</i>
40	Caring Beyond the Bedside
41	WVH Statistics

CNO's Message to Nursing

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I want to take a moment to honor and thank each of you for your unwavering dedication, compassion, and commitment to delivering the highest quality care to our patients and communities. At the heart of nursing lies the profound calling to care, and despite the challenges we've faced, this enduring principle continues to guide us forward. Nursing has continuously evolved throughout history, and today, we stand at a transformative moment — one that will shape not only the future of our profession but also the lives of those we serve. Your resilience, passion, and dedication are paving the way for a stronger, more innovative future in health care.

The nursing profession is at a turning point — one filled with opportunity and innovation. The challenges of the past few years have reshaped health care, highlighting the need for a new, more sustainable model of care. Through every challenge, our nursing team has shown remarkable resilience, creativity, and leadership. Innovation has always been at the heart of nursing, and the past few years have only reinforced our ability to adapt and drive meaningful change. From pioneering new care delivery models to advancing telehealth, virtual nursing, and optimizing resources, our nursing team has continuously found ways to enhance patient care.

Now is the time to reimagine the future of nursing. We have the opportunity to explore innovative care models that support safe staffing, reduce nurse burden, promote work-life balance, and ensure patients continue to receive the highest quality care. Could different team-based models of care or integrating nursing students more effectively into clinical settings provide both hands-on learning and essential support for staff? Might collaborations with engineering and technology fields lead to robotics and AI solutions that ease the physical demands of nursing? As we embrace advancements like smart IV pumps and AI-driven diagnostics, we must remember that technology is a powerful tool — but never a replacement for the human connection at the heart of nursing. Compassionate, patient-centered care will always define our profession. Our challenge is to harness innovation in ways that enhance, rather than replace, the essence of what makes nursing a calling, not just a career.

Moreover, we must champion policies that uplift nurses and ensure our voices are integral in shaping the future of health care. The health care landscape is on the cusp of significant transformation, driven by demographic changes, increasing medical complexity and rapid technological progress. To make this vision a reality, we need bold leadership, strategic foresight, and collaboration. Our focus should not only be on addressing current challenges but on actively designing a future that reflects our core values and mission. By innovating with purpose, we can develop solutions that are sustainable, equitable and centered on holistic, compassionate care. I encourage each of you to engage in this conversation. Share your ideas, voice your concerns, and help lead the way in reimagining the future of nursing. This is our moment to act. Together, we can shape a future where nurses are empowered, supported, and equipped to provide the highest level of care — not only for our patients but for ourselves as well.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to this profession. Your resilience, compassion, and commitment are the foundation of all that we do. Let's move forward, united, to create a future of nursing that honors our past while embracing the exciting innovations of tomorrow.

With deep gratitude and respect,
Sarah



Sarah Horn, MBA, BSN, RN, NE-BC,
RNC-LRN, Senior Vice President,
Chief Nursing & Clinical
Operations Officer

Message from Pathways Program Director

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Dear Clinical Staff,

I hope this message finds you well. It has been an incredible journey over the past few months as your new Clinical Practice-Pathway to Excellence Director.

Professional governance: Strengthening our foundation

After a brief pause, we proudly relaunched WVH Professional Governance in October, setting the stage for a renewed focus on relationship building, knowledge sharing, and well-being. One of our first major steps was establishing a new Professional Governance charter, aimed at strengthening collaboration and fostering a culture of support.

We have had the privilege of engaging with key stakeholders across the organization, including Case Management, Facilities, Staff Engagement & Resiliency Advocates, and the IDEAL (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Learning) Team. Guest speakers such as Dr. Hong Lee, Medical Ethicist, have enriched our understanding of ethical decision making, while training sessions on Stress First Aid, Crucial Conversations, and QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Suicide Prevention have provided valuable tools to support both our patients and colleagues.

The Pathway to Excellence journey: A commitment to nursing excellence

Our Pathway to Excellence journey represents more than just an accreditation—it is a transformative process designed to enhance our work environment, empower nurses, and elevate patient care. The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Pathway to Excellence designation recognizes organizations that create a positive, supportive workplace culture for nurses through shared decision-making and professional development opportunities.

The Pathway to Excellence Framework is built upon six essential standards that cultivate a thriving nursing practice environment in health care settings:

- **Shared Decision-Making:** Encouraging collaboration, idea-sharing, and active participation in decision-making.
- **Leadership:** Promoting a shared governance model where leaders are accessible, accountable, and invested in mentorship and succession planning.
- **Safety:** Prioritizing a respectful and secure work environment, free from incivility, bullying, and violence.
- **Quality:** Focusing on evidence-based, patient-centered care and continuous quality improvement.
- **Well-Being:** Recognizing and supporting the physical and mental health of nurses while fostering a culture of appreciation.
- **Professional Development:** Providing nurses with mentorship, learning opportunities, and career growth to support lifelong learning.



Kelly Bodnarchuk, MBA, BSN, CENP
Pathways to Excellence Program
Director, West Valley Hospital

Our progress so far

In preparation for our Pathway to Excellence journey:

- 18 employees attended the Pathway to Excellence Guidance Virtual Conference in spring 2024.
- 12 employees participated in a document writing workshop to understand key components of our written application.

Our commitment to you

As health care professionals, you are dedicating your time and energy to promoting, protecting, and improving patient health. In turn, you deserve an environment that nurtures your well-being, supports your professional aspirations, and empowers you to deliver the highest standard of care.

Together, we are building a culture where your voice matters, your contributions are valued, and your growth is prioritized. Thank you for your passion, commitment, and unwavering dedication to making WVH a model of clinical excellence.

Let's continue this journey together!

With gratitude,

Kelly Bodnarchuk, MBA, BSN, CENP
Pathway to Excellence Program Director
West Valley Hospital

American Nurses Credentialing Center Pathway to Excellence® Innovate. Involve. Inspire.

What is Pathway to Excellence®?

The Pathway to Excellence program is recognized globally as enabling nursing excellence, instilling a strong sense of professional pride and offers proven strategies to help ensure that the care that we deliver to our patients is of the highest standards.

Achieving Pathway to Excellence® designation will demonstrate our commitment to creating an environment where our staff can excel, that we are committed to continuous improvement, that we value and listen to feedback and that we provide safe and excellent standards of care for our patients and community. The framework consists of six key standards within nursing which are fundamental to creating a positive practice environment.

The Six Standards

- Shared Decision-Making
- Leadership
- Safety
- Quality
- Well-Being
- Professional Development



Application process

- **Self-assessment survey:** We conducted a survey spring/summer 2024 across all West Valley Hospital units.
- **Gap analysis:** Analyzing the surveys results and identified gaps to improve upon and have established a dedicated Pathway to Excellence Steering Team to guide improvements.
- **Organizational demographic form:** We must provide the ANCC with an overview of our workforce prior to commencing our journey.
- **Collect and submit evidence on the six standards:** We must demonstrate that we have successfully embedded the six practice standards. Each Standard has 'Elements of Performance' (EOPs) which describe essential elements concepts that must be in place.
- **Pathway to Excellence® Survey:** An anonymous online survey will be launched for 21 days following successful submission of the elements of performance. 60% of all eligible nurses will be required to participate in the survey, with 75% of those nurses agreeing or strongly agreeing with 21 out of 28 of the questions.
- **Designation:** If successful with all of the above, we will be notified of designation approximately 8 weeks after the survey closes.

What does this mean for me?

- Empowering staff to have a voice
- Increased autonomy and ownership of your role
- Encouraging creativity and innovation in the clinical areas
- Improved collaborative interprofessional work
- Visible and accessible leaders at every level
- Opportunities for further leadership development and coaching
- Improved staff retention, reduced turnover of staff
- Increased quality of care
- Improved patient outcomes
- Work in a positive environment that enables you to flourish and excel
- Improved work-life balance and wellbeing
- Professional development: training and development opportunities for lifelong learning

What opportunities are there for you?

- Join a Professional Governance/Shared Decision Making council. For more information, please contact tia.rodriquez@salemhealth.org
- Participate in upcoming survey assessments. The results will be used to close improvement gaps.
- Be an Elements of Performance writer. Share your personal experiences and stories of how Pathway to Excellences comes to life at West Valley Hospital every day.
- Join the Pathway Ambassadors. Coming soon! A development opportunity to participate in successfully designating West Valley Hospital.

**“We cannot be mere consumers of good governance,
we must be participants; we must be co-creators.”**

Rohini Nilekani

Key to Pathways Standards

The content in this report has been organized by the six Pathways standards to show how the excellent work we regularly do at West Valley Hospital supports our Pathways journey.

Shared Decision-Making (SDM)

Encouraging collaboration, idea-sharing, and active participation in decision-making.

A light blue diamond shape containing the text "SDM" in white, serif, uppercase letters.

Leadership (L)

Promoting a shared governance model where leaders are accessible, accountable and invested in mentorship and succession planning.

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Safety (S)

Prioritizing a respectful and secure work environment, free from incivility, bullying and violence.

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Quality (Q)

Focusing on evidence-based, patient-centered care and continuous quality improvement.

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Well-Being (WB)

Recognizing and supporting the physical and mental health of nurses while fostering a culture of appreciation.

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Professional Development (PD)

Providing nurses with mentorship, learning opportunities, and career growth to support lifelong learning.

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Decreasing ‘left without being seen’ patients at West Valley Hospital Emergency Department

During the summer of 2023, it was recognized that West Valley Emergency Department (WVED) had an opportunity to improve their left without being seen (LWBS) metric. Utilizing our 4SPS process and High Reliability Organization (HRO) principles, the frontline team quickly realized that a focus on door-to-triage times could positively affect LWBS.

Evidence shows that increased LWBS rates lead to increased risks of adverse patient outcomes. Our first test of change (TOC) began in August when the emergency room dedicated a triage nurse from the hours of 0900 to 2100 on the days with the biggest opportunities (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). Throughout the fall, the West Valley Hospital Emergency Department saw notable improvement in door-to-triage times which, as hypothesized, resulted in a significant reduction of LWBS patients and also an overall decrease in length of stay.

A full-time triage RN position was quickly requested and approved. Our baseline FY23 LWBS data was 2.77%, and our goal was to meet the national benchmark goal of less than 2%. Our FY23 baseline data for door to triage times was 11.9 minutes with a new goal of less than 10 minutes. FY23 length of stay was 161.12 minutes. The results were impressive: in FY24 we decreased our LWBS to 1.84%. Our door-to-triage times decreased to 9.0 minutes and our total length of stay decreased to 142.38 minutes. The WV ER team should be commended for their hard work which in the end keeps our patients and community safer.



A culture of safety is not a concept.
It is a way of life. – J.D. Power

As Salem Health moved towards further alignment across both hospitals, and West Valley Hospital expanded to 25 beds, West Valley increased their House Supervisor presence to 24/7 and all positions have been filled. The House Supervisors act as the primary point of contact for onsite clinical or campus needs, patient transfers, Rapid Response Team needs, emergencies and any area in which leader assistance is necessary.

On Nov. 28, House Supervisor Alyssa Miller was able to put these skills into action. The hospital experienced a power surge that caused smoke to become apparent within the Imaging department. Melissa Burgdorf, CT, and Matt Martin, CT, had identified that MRI was down due to power surge. Matt then saw smoke with no flames coming from the CT equipment. He promptly shut off the breaker, unplugged the CT machine to prevent damage from occurring, and notified Alyssa who called Dallas Fire.

Alyssa acted to quickly and efficiently ensure that staff and patients were safe. After she contacted Dallas Fire Department the Administrator On Call (AOC) was notified. This led to an urgent incident command, in which teams were able to work together to problem solve the next steps.

Not only did every Salem and West Valley leader lean in, but because of the alignment work we've done we had established systems in place and great synergy was achieved. This included:

- The Facilities team was so familiar with the campus, they were able to immediately identify this was not just an isolated incident, but the surges were ongoing, and external to the hospital. They were able to isolate the electrical branch most affected, and proactively shut down equipment and mitigate further damage. They were also able to identify that equipment should stay offline until the issue resolved. Within less than 24 hours, they were formulating a plan to prevent future occurrences and align equipment that we have at Salem Health to protect West Valley Hospital.
- In Imaging, a manager from the Salem campus was able to go to West Valley and immediately provide support, confirm the team's assessment, and help reschedule patients to Salem Hospital. This manager was accustomed to working with Salem Radiology Clinic (SRC) to move physician resources and was able to support the technicians at Salem Hospital who gracefully received patients that needed imaging that day. These patients were transported either by Dallas Fire or transportation assistance was approved.
- Due to the relationships built amongst the Laboratory teams, West Valley staff felt comfortable immediately dispatching empty water bottles to one of the Salem sites to get water filled. This allowed the Lab to maintain operations as the water filtration system at WVH was impacted by the power surge.
- West Valley Emergency Department worked with Salem Hospital Emergency Department for potential transfers related to Imaging needs that were unable to be performed during this time.

As this has been the first significant incident in which the updated West Valley Hospital House Supervisor model has been in place and the need for a modified incident command was triggered, the entire Salem Health team did an excellent job of aligning and using organizational system tools and leadership to problem solve.

Campus security enhancements

Salem Health has a strong commitment to ensuring the safety of staff and patients alike. In response to societal trends, a tragic fatal shooting incident at a neighboring Portland-area hospital in the summer of 2023, and an outpouring of staff voices, Salem Health rapidly began an initiative to transform security on Salem Health campuses starting in Fall 2023.

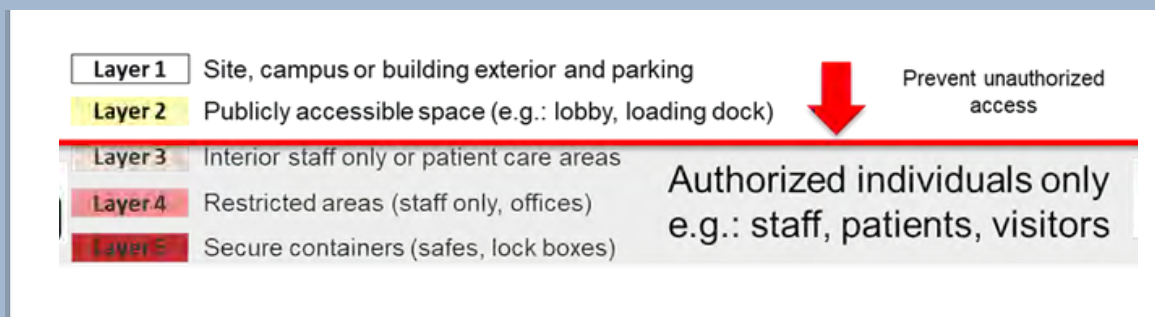
With the insight of a security consultant, the Security Department and a dedicated project team went to work evaluating the campus and making numerous changes that would increase security and safety for the benefit of staff, patients, and visitors. Over the following months, major actions were taken including:

- Weapons detection/screening at all public building entrances
- Hiring contracted security personnel to staff all secured public entrances
- Hiring additional SH Security Officers with expanded coverage and presence
- Facility upgrades to ensure all care departments have lockdown capability by which any unit can be fully locked down remotely by security.
- Restricting and securing all access points into Salem Health buildings with either badge-only staff entry or continuously-manned security screening stations
- Developing an armed security program to rapidly respond in the event of an active shooter scenario.

Many of these interventions are part of an overall effort to create “layers of security” levels by which every area throughout the organization has appropriate accessibility levels for staff and visitors. This ensures that anyone that has access into a given area has gone through weapons screening and/or has the appropriate clearance or permissions to be in the area.

The other aspect of the security enhancement project is increased presence and capability of security personnel throughout the campus. By doing both proactive rounding, and being ever at the ready to respond to “code grays” and other situations the team of Salem Health security officers serve a valuable role in ensuring a safe environment on Salem Health campuses where staff can focus on providing excellent care and services, and patients and visitors can focus on healing.

This work is ongoing with a timeline to finish all security enhancements by the end of 2026.





West Valley Hospital officially opened 19 new licensed beds June 28, 2023 with a ribbon cutting ceremony featuring comments from Cheryl Nester Wolfe, president and CEO, Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics, and Lane Shetterly, chairman, Board of Trustees, Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics, followed by a tour of the new unit.

West Valley Hospital operated six licensed beds before the expansion. The new beds are focused on swing bed level of care, which is an agreement with the federal government allowing a critical access hospital to use its beds as needed for acute or skilled nursing facility care. Beds can "swing" from inpatient to rehab, allowing patients who need additional services to stay longer and safely discharge. This addresses hospital capacity needs that have kept Oregon hospitals at and beyond 100% capacity. One cause of this challenge is the difficulty finding placement in long-term care or skilled nursing facilities for acute care patients ready for transfer to a different level of care. The West Valley Hospital expansion helps meet this need.

"Our job is to look to the future, and assess what health care needs each part of our community will face in the coming decades," said Shetterly. "That's what led to this expansion. As our community grows and ages, we need additional hospital beds, and beds that can serve more than one purpose — acute care or rehabilitation. So we made an investment to expand West Valley Hospital, to meet the needs of today and tomorrow."

Construction began in December 2022 for the \$25 million investment in the facility. The expansion creates more than 80 new full-time equivalency positions with Salem Health in Dallas, including nursing, environmental services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, pharmacy, access services, care management and supply chain.

"Hospitals, when managed well, are bedrock institutions for the communities they serve," said Wolfe. "They are a source of safety, healing and hope. They provide stable, well-paying jobs. They grow and change as the community they serve grows and changes. Ideally, they are a steady and lasting presence, a resource across generations, ready when they are needed."

Andrea Moye, Director, Adult Health Services added in her statement:

“Over the past 18 months of expansion work, West Valley staff and leadership have demonstrated immense flexibility and teamwork by safely moving patients to the new space while still providing quality and compassionate care that aligns with the organization mission, vision, and values.

“The addition of these beds has helped meet the community’s growing needs and has made a substantial contribution to decreasing length of stay for patients who are experiencing discharge delays. Since expanding the swing bed program, West Valley has reduced length of stay by 0.5 days. Currently, about 73% of patients return to their home setting which demonstrates the strong relationships between the Swing Bed unit, Inpatient Rehab, and Care Management.

“The Medical/Surgical unit won the Humpty Dumpty fall prevention award in FY24 and have had zero catheter-associated urinary tract infections since October 2022. West Valley has grown not only in physical space but has also been growing its patient care team. Within the past 18 months, 29 permanent staff have been hired including 19 RN’s, 1 Assistant Nurse Manager and 9 Clinical Technicians.

“West Valley was also selected to take part in hypervelocity hiring, utilizing an external recruiter and HR recruitment team to seek out and screen prospective candidates. The West Valley nursing leadership team has worked incredibly hard to conduct interviews and make offers. For the first time, West Valley has also hired new graduate RN’s and is accepting student nurses.”

Mission

To improve the health and well-being of the people
and communities we serve

Vision

Working together, we will reimagine care

Values

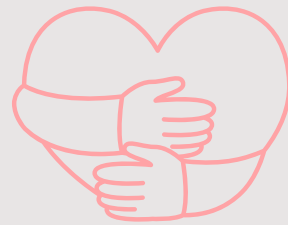
Excellence, Accountability, Integrity, Caring and Teamwork

“The best staff I’ve ever seen.”

West Valley Hospital swing bed unit made all the difference in Chris Rhines’ recovery.



“I just don't have enough words to say how great they were.”



Chris Rhines lives in Salem with her two rescue cats, Zoey and Charlie. Recently widowed and retired for several years, she volunteers with the Assistance League of Salem-Keizer. “I’m pretty busy with that,” Chris said. “It’s like a job, only without paychecks. But I do it because I believe in it.”

A former elementary teacher for the Salem-Keizer district, Chris later went on to work at the Title I office in town, then the Department of Education. From working to volunteering, her heart is with children living at or near the poverty level. “There are a lot of kids in poverty living in Salem,” Chris said. “So that’s why I that’s why I volunteer for the Assistance League — it’s the same clientele, the same kids.”

After a hip replacement went awry, Chris got very sick with a high fever. Her gut told her something was wrong. A close friend urged her to call an ambulance and at Salem Hospital, Chris discovered she had a serious staph infection. “I had surgery the next morning,” Chris said. They removed the first hip replacement, performed a second one and started her on intense antibiotics.

Chris stayed at Salem Hospital for about a week. “I’ve always had good care there,” she said. “My husband, too. He was there for a month in the Neuro unit before he died from lung cancer and I just can’t even say enough about how fabulous they were. Gosh, they were wonderful. They were so gentle with him and so gentle with me. Even though they knew that it was terminal, they didn’t treat him like that. They treated him like there was a possibility, you know, and that that meant a lot to me. They didn’t give up until I finally said, ‘That’s it. We need to stop.’”

Her husband’s death and her own battle with a serious infection make Chris more mindful of her health and mortality. “I need to make sure I’m doing everything I can to stay as healthy as I can for as long as I can,” she said, whether that’s Pilates, water aerobics or eating healthy. “Even though we all know it logically, time is short,” Chris said. “You need to appreciate every single moment because it could have been taken away from me if that infection had gotten much worse. That’s all part of why I feel I need to make every single day count,” she said. “You just never know when it might be your last one.”

When it came time to discharge from Salem Hospital, Chris couldn't go home alone. With a big house and lots of stairs, staff pointed out that unless she had someone there to take care of her 24/7, it wouldn't be wise for her to go. Chris agreed. "I knew I didn't want to hire somebody to come to my house," Chris said. "I needed 24/7 nursing care because I was having these antibiotic infusions three times a day. So they gave me a choice of where I wanted to go — so I did a little Googling." In her research, Chris saw that West Valley Hospital's swing bed unit had glowing reviews, so she chose to go to Dallas. Even though she was uncertain, West Valley staff quickly quelled her fears — she knew she made the right choice.

"At first it was shocking to me because I had never been in a place like that except to visit people," Chris said. "I was scared about this infection. It was serious. But right away the people there made me feel like I was in a good spot. The nurses were fabulous. I mean, I just don't have enough words to say how great they were. And the CNAs were all so helpful. It was among the best staff as a whole that I've ever seen."

Chris stayed six weeks in the swing bed unit. Almost a summer. She had occupational therapy and physical therapy twice a day. "When I first got there, I was shocked they were going to drag me out of bed four times a day," Chris laughed. "There were times they'd come in at 8 a.m. and I'd say, 'Oh golly, I just don't feel like it today.' And then they'd cheerlead for me, so that made me get up. It was good. The physical therapists and occupational therapists helped me so much."

Chris grew more mobile and self-sufficient. They practiced moving around in the kitchen, fixing meals, showering, going up and down the stairs. By the time she was ready to go home, Chris was able to walk with a cane and get herself in and out of bed.

The care from staff will stick with her. "They weren't just doing a job," Chris said. "I felt like they really cared about me. And you don't always feel that way when you're in the hospital, you know? But I did over there. And I've recommended it to many other people. I've said, if you end up in that same situation, that's the place to go." Staff grew close to Chris in her time there. Six weeks is a longer stay than most. And Chris' bright positivity — amid great difficulties — inspired them.



"In a field of horses, Chris is a unicorn," said Rachael Matthews, RN, care management lead and admissions coordinator at West Valley Hospital. Fittingly, the team threw Chris a unicorn-themed party as her time came to go home. She attributes her inspiring outlook to her role model, her mom. "She would always say when things get bad, you just have to buck up, you just have to," Chris said. "I learned that from her. So, I was kind of channeling her. She had major health issues at the end of her life, but she was always positive."

As Chris continues physical therapy, she hopes to return to one of her loves soon — hiking and taking long walks. "My progress has been slow, and I'm getting better all the time, but I'm still not quite ready to go back to some of those activities yet." In the meantime, there's Minto-Brown Island, Bush's Pasture and Riverfront Parks. "I like to explore any trail that's near me," she said. And, of course, there's dining. A foodie, Chris loves to hit the town with friends. Her top Salem recommendation? The Cozy Taberna, a Spanish restaurant just down the alley from Rudy's Steakhouse. "That's one of my favorites," she said.

Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics marked the grand opening of the specialty clinic for West Valley Hospital's outpatient services, with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

As part of our continued Polk County investment, Salem Health renovated a building on Uglow Avenue in Dallas across the street from West Valley Hospital. The new building will house outpatient services for wound care, anticoagulation, infusion, medication management and outpatient rehabilitation. This new clinic continues the expansion at West Valley Hospital that started last year with the opening of 25 swing beds.

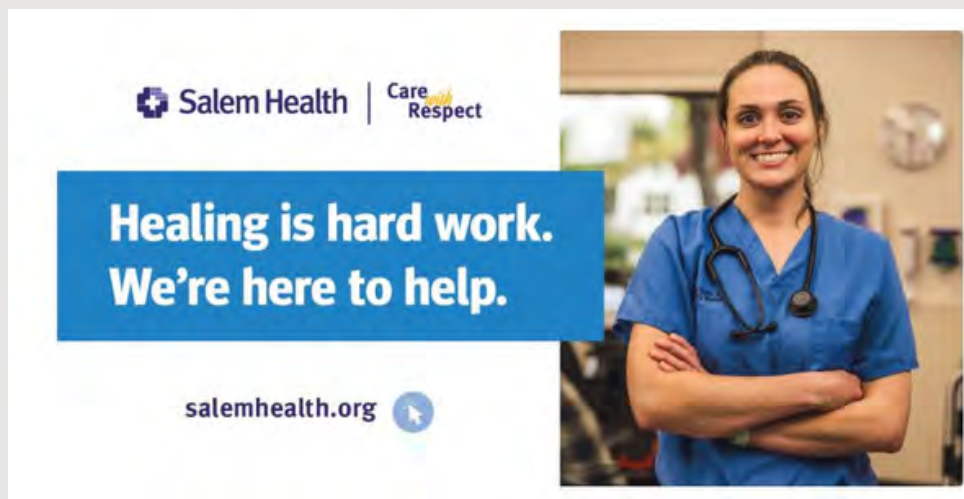
"In the last decade, Polk County's population has grown by nearly 20%, and the clinic expansion is one part of the equation as we consider the ways in which Salem Health must show up for our community," said Cheryl Nester Wolfe, president and CEO, Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics, as she addressed the crowd at the opening event. "We want to continue to provide care that is timely, accessible, affordable, and most importantly, improves the health of our community."

This investment in rural health access counters national trends of disinvestment that have harmed mortality in rural areas.

As seen on TV!
West Valley
Hospital staff
were featured on
KPTV channel 12,
highlighting the
March 20 ribbon
cutting ceremony
for outpatient
services
at 1050 SE Uglow
Avenue.



Cheryl Nester Wolfe, president and CEO, Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics, and Lane Shetterly, chairman, Board of Trustees, Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics, cut the ribbon for the new Specialty Clinic while West Valley Hospital employees look on.



Christina Meier, DO,
West Valley Hospital
Emergency Department

“Our Care with Respect campaign focuses on the respect we have for each other — our colleagues, our patients and our visitors,” said Julie Burton, director of marketing, brand and patient experience. “The new ads focus on connecting with our patients while showing our commitment to providing the health care service when and where they need it.”

“The goal of the new campaign is to bring the focus back to our health care services by highlighting Salem Health providers and patients through a series of stories set in four different health care environments,” Julie said. The new campaign phase features Labor and Delivery, West Valley Hospital, the Salem Hospital ED and Urgent Care in Woodburn. And our own providers and staff take a starring role.

At West Valley Hospital they told the story of a man who has a back injury and is treated by Christina Meier, DO, and Colleen Moosman, LPTA. “People in Oregon are known for living outdoorsy lives,” said Julie. “And whether that takes the form of clearing trees, hiking South Sister or strapping on skis, it can be hard on the body. We all have people in our lives who push themselves a little too hard, just like the patient in the video.”

“This ad celebrates and highlights West Valley Hospital and shows Salem Health’s commitment to providing high quality health care when and where people need it,” Julie said. “For this man, that’s close to home — right in Dallas.”

Colleen Moosman, Licensed
Physical Therapist Assistant





Staff pictured above include Phil Roark, Ray Sedano, Tish Gross, Michael Seraphin (Foundation), and Vicky Ruman. Not pictured is Kate Hainsworth.

For three years, Salem Health and the Salem Health Foundations participated in the Spirit Mountain Casino employee health fair — but this year, we added a big benefit. Our lab teams did blood draws and a series of free panels for over 80 SMC employees and delivered the panel results via MyChart within four hours of the draws being completed!

The Sept. 26 event offered various resources and services to its nearly 500 employees.

When staff from SMC reached out to ask about blood panels, Kate Hainsworth and Jamie Rouse guided them through the process, including troubleshooting up to the day before — and Salem Health made it happen.

The SMC team was so grateful to Salem Health for providing this service to their employees, and we are already talking about what we can do next year!

Salem Health Foundations also supports health screenings through the Community Health Education Center (CHEC), our Cardiovascular Service Line, Community Relations, West Valley Hospital, and Diabetes and Nutrition Services.

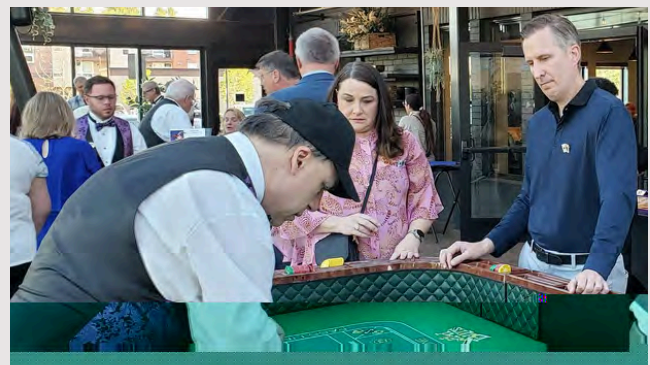
April 19th brought the second annual Salem Health West Valley Foundation All In for health care scholarships event! This event raises money for scholarships for those from Polk County. There was music, games (both casino-type and board), a silent auction, prizes and fun all around. The event raised over \$16,000.



Kate Hainsworth (in pink) hopes Lady Luck is favoring her.



Joyce Kintz, Surgery Manager, and her husband, Chris, play blackjack with Clinical Excellence Coordinator, Tia Rodriguez.



Dr. Eric Laro and his wife, Meghan, roll the dice and hope that Dame Fortune is smiling down on them.

Imaging updates

Earlier in 2023, the Imaging Department began an 18-month project to replace x-ray and fluoroscopy equipment on both the Salem and West Valley campuses. When complete, this project will replace five x-ray rooms and three fluoroscopy rooms across the campus, replacing every x-ray room on the Salem campus and half at West Valley. A project this big required a phased approach, taking specific pieces of equipment down at specific times, to minimize the patient impact. There are five planned out phases over 18 months.

The Imaging Department has a close relationship with Linn Benton Community College (LBCC), which it has developed and maintained over several years. They have partnered with LBCC to have their X-ray students perform their yearlong clinical externships at our facilities. Over the past 15 years, they have welcomed more than 25 students, helping them complete their clinical rotations and meet the requirements to both earn a degree in diagnostic imaging and to take the board examinations for state and national licensing.

This partnership has been a springboard for many imaging technologists working at Salem Health. Recently they worked with Linn-Benton to donate two of our X-ray room systems that are soon-to-be replaced with new equipment. While no longer sufficient to meet the needs of our patient population, these units will have continued life after being taken out of service for direct patient care. They are being installed at the Healthcare Occupations Center in Lebanon and will be used to help future diagnostic imaging students practice their patient positioning skills and prepare them for clinical rotations. SH Imaging is excited for the opportunity to support our long-standing partner and find a great home for our former equipment while helping prepare future students for a career in imaging.



Connections to the Community

Connections provides free, safe and accessible transportation for Polk County residents for medical appointments within the county. Funded by the West Valley Hospital Foundation and Cherriots, we are staffed entirely by West Valley Hospital volunteers. Beginning in 2001, this incredible resource gives patients an opportunity to attend medical appointments when they have no other transportation options. In March 2024, Connections received a much needed new vehicle, and we completed 825 rides (slower during construction). This year, the program is on pace to do around 1,000 rides and we average a new rider each week! Currently, we have six volunteer drivers serving weekly to help patients (and are always looking for more!).

Connections operates
weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Patients can smoothly
make Connections
appointments when
they make their
medical appointments.



Scott Day showing off the newest vehicle in the West Valley Hospital fleet.

For volunteer opportunities,
visit salemhealth.org/volunteer
or email Scott Day, West Valley
Hospital Volunteer
Services Assistant, at
scott.day@salemhealth.org



Preceptor Recognition Event 2024

Honoring our many outstanding preceptors

A Preceptor Recognition event hosted by Clinical Education on May 14, 2024 showcased the exceptional contributions of preceptors at Salem Health.

The event reinforced the importance of training, mentoring, and professional development while inspiring others to pursue preceptorship roles. This event would not have been possible without the support of our sponsor, the Salem Health Foundation.

The event took place in Creekside at Salem Hospital and had a 'cocktail hour' feel. Frank Sinatra was playing, delicious charcuterie was the fare and mocktails were flowing. Each nominee received a gift bag and a certificate including their personal nomination.

With nearly 100 people in attendance, the event acknowledged and celebrated the contributions of Preceptors at Salem Health, with a special recognition of the 50 preceptors that were nominated for an award in exceptional precepting.



Three West Valley Hospital employees were nominated this year:

Dustin Cooley | Nikki Dyer | Melissa Hancock

Nikki Dyer, Emergency Room technician, recognized for Excellence in Clinical Precepting

Nikki is an excellent preceptor and an asset to Salem Health. I am an individual who not only wants to know the correct way to do things but why we do them the way we do. With Nikki as my preceptor, I never had to ask, "Why?" She consistently and thoroughly explains both how and why everything is done the way it is. She does not cut corners, instead she upholds a higher standard to make West Valley Hospital ED the best place that it can be for both patients and employees. Nikki is extremely patient and informative while still allowing a hands-on learning experience.

An example of how Nikki has excelled as an instructor was on my third day. Although I had been taken on a thorough tour and had been shown how to do many skills and procedures, I was struggling to recall all the information I was given. Instead of appearing frustrated or put out by having to repeat herself, Nikki had patience and empathy while happily filling in the gaps in my knowledge without complaint. Instead of the nerves and apprehension I have experienced in the past, I felt extremely supported and empowered in my learning process. She gives me words of encouragement, allows me to move freely within my scope, and provides a helping hand when necessary.

Nikki is the gold standard for not only how to train Salem Health employees to achieve the standards set for us but pushes you to reach excellence in the process.



We extend our gratitude to all preceptors for the dedication and commitment to training staff. Their efforts play a vital role in shaping the future of our healthcare system and ensuring the delivery of an exceptional experience every time for Salem Health patients.

Nurses Week Recognition

Team Tributes: Nurse Leaders were asked to provide us with some recognition and kudos for their teams. The responses came pouring in, filled with respect and admiration for their teams.

Swing Bed

The nursing care team at West Valley MS/Swing has grown exponentially over the past eight months! With the newly expanded unit came the need for strong teamwork, collaboration, patience, and compassion for one another. The leadership team is so proud of the accomplishments we have overcome, and we are even more proud of the safe, quality care being provided for our patients.

Although we faced some early struggles while we built our team, we value and appreciate having a strong partnership with the float pool. They have been an integral part of helping to fill those staffing gaps along the way, thereby allowing us to continue to provide the highest level of care for our community. Our partnership with the therapy and care management teams has also demonstrated a true passion and commitment to the healing of our patients.

Now that we have this amazing care team at West Valley MS/Swing, it makes perfect sense that we restart our journey to becoming Pathways to Excellence accredited. Thank you, to ALL of you, for everything you do every day!

Infusion & Wound Care

The WV Infusion & Wound care team is made of four clinical techs and seven RNs. This team has great skills in both Infusion & Wound care. They are excellent patient advocates, caring for their needs 7 days a week.

There have been many changes this past year including new leadership and workflows, and adding new Advanced Wound Care Nurse Practitioners for wound care to advance the level of care we can provide patients. This team continues to impress with their desire to improve their skills and continually work through challenges together. Just recently, the team moved across the street to the new building and once again have already identified how to better serve their patients. Our next project will be focusing on going paperless and utilizing RightFax for order processing. This team continues to support each other as they work to meet their patients' needs. We are grateful for each member of our team!

Emergency Department

The nursing team at the West Valley Emergency Department is small but mighty! We are so proud of the teamwork and camaraderie that they foster and nurture every day. They have created a family atmosphere that makes West Valley an enjoyable place to work and visit. There is also a commitment to excellence and professionalism that has not gone unnoticed by either leadership or the community they serve.

Although we could spend hours writing about how each staff member is fantastic, our patients say it all with the comments they turn in each month, mentioning staff by name!

Each of you go above and beyond every day to ensure the best possible outcomes for each patient, whether that means quick stabilizing, critical care or arranging for family members to be in the room when discharge instructions are given. We also noticed the many stickers or little toys you gave to children to make them feel more comfortable in a scary environment, and that you took the time to sit with a patient for a few minutes to bring them comfort.

Big or small, you each navigate the many challenges of the emergency department each day and do so with a smile and compassionate care. You also take care of and lift each other up no matter the circumstance. We are in awe when you reach out to other team members and offer support outside of the work environment. We have the deepest appreciation for the extraordinary work that each one of you does every single day. We are privileged to be a part of such an excellent team and tight-knit family.



STAR AWARDS

The 'Excellence Above and Beyond' award includes specific examples of how the nominee demonstrates consistent above-and-beyond service that exceeds expectations. These recipients are considered for the Service Excellence Award presented at Salem Health's annual awards banquet. Winners of the Service Excellence award are selected by their peers who have also won the award in the past. Tiffany won the 2024 Service Excellence award for her consistent commitment to her anticoagulation patients.



Tiffany Duell, Ambulatory Care Pharmacist,
with her nominator, Mia Ha, West Valley Hospital
Pharmacy Manager

Tiffany's nomination, written by Mia Ha

I would like to nominate Tiffany Duell for the Excellence Above & Beyond Star Award. This is long overdue. Tiffany has been serving the community with the highest level of quality, safety, and patient experience in the WVH Anticoag Clinic. She knows all her patients and they adore her. She goes out of her way to make sure they are taken care of inside and outside of the clinic. She will often take the extra time to review all of the patient's medications and will help put them in pill reminders if they are struggling. She knows who needs reminder calls multiple times because they have a poor memory. These are just some examples of what she does daily. Recently, we experienced some significant staffing challenges to where she didn't have a tech to support her work for many days. Rather than moving patients around last minute or even closing the clinic, since this would leave her staffing the clinic alone, she opted to see all her patients. She came up with the idea of getting a bell so that she would be alerted when a patient arrived, put up signs letting them know she's in with a patient, created workflows with other departments and more to provide the best care for her patients. She always puts the patients first and she sets the bar very high for the rest of us. She is truly a rock star, and we and the community are so lucky to have her.



Mandy's nomination, written by Marilu Hess

Wonder Woman! That's the best kick off to a description of Mandy Graham. With all the hats that she wears as a wife and mother of four, master gardener, potter, music enthusiast, and so many others things, we have to WONDER how she manages to excel in everything she does for the Surgery Department at West Valley Hospital as well.

She goes so far above and beyond; from being a manager of the vaccine clinic, to getting additional training to become a First Assist to surgeons, and even training other staff at the new surgery center in Salem. When there is a need, Mandy jumps to fulfill it. If there is ever something we need from Salem in a timely manner, she is the first to volunteer to jump in her car and make the mad dash to retrieve supplies.

I have also caught her sneaking home baked goods into the break room late at night to surprise her staff the following morning. All of this while being wickedly smart! She sifts through the details of what each surgery or surgeon will need to complete the given procedure in the safest and best quality manner.

She has a quote near her desk that is her philosophy for her work ethic: "Working hard for something we don't care about is stress. Working hard for something we love is called PASSION." She has made it her passion/mission to be AT LEAST as good as any other location a patient could choose for any procedure. Patients, staff, and physicians alike agree that she and her team most often far exceed other locations around the area. Don't believe it? Check the survey scores. :-)

One physician put it this way, "I have worked with a lot of excellent nurses over the years but what Mandy has is FINESSE!" I couldn't agree more!



Mandy Graham, West Valley Surgical Services Assistant Nurse Manager, with her nominator, Marilu Hess, West Valley Surgical Services Scheduling Nurse

Sherri's nomination, written by Dora Mercier

I would like to nominate Sherri for a Star Award for going above and beyond to help a patient in need. One of our patients was scheduled for a Rehab appointment, but, after seeing their doctor, was prompted to undertake an urgent outpatient test to rule out a condition that could be life threatening. The patient had attempted without success to schedule this appointment, and did not know who to turn to. Sherri picked up the phone and did not rest until she was able to get an appointment scheduled for this patient.

She was determined in advocating for this patient. Thank you Sherri for your quiet force and daily gestures of dedication to our patients, you are appreciated by your patients, your peers and your leadership!



Sherri Nordyke, Patient Access Specialist, with her nominator, Dora Mercier, Rehab Services Supervisor



Joanna Peterson,
WV Licensed Clinical Social Worker,
with her Service Excellence awards
dinner invitation

Joanna's nomination, written by Jennifer Ball

Joanna is a superior role model and example of excellence in the workplace. Working with Joanna over the last year and a half I am continually impressed by the poise, kindness and enthusiasm she shows when working on some of the most challenging cases. As a social worker, by nature her niche is helping complex patients achieve their discharge goals. At West Valley we have a high number of challenging cases.

When she began on our unit she would take a smaller case load of patients than the RN Care Managers as her patients had a higher acuity. Over the past year Joanna has continued to increase her case load as the number of complex patients has increased on our unit. Often Joanna has more patients than the RN Case Managers. Although she has taken on a heavier caseload she has never once spoken about this or let it affect the level of attention she provides to each patient to help create a safe discharge plan.

Recently we had taken a referral for our swing bed program for a patient who was paraplegic. On initial review this did not look like a patient who had any complex needs but after admission we received information that this patient had been incarcerated for murder and was a sex offender. To complicate things more this patient had a stage IV pressure sore, colostomy and had been evicted from the previous care home. This patient also had some unfavorable personality traits that made it very challenging to meet his needs medically and psychosocially. With her case load already full, Joanna jumped at the chance to work with this patient. The patient's goal was to discharge to facility that could meet the patient's needs. With this patient's history finding a placement in a short time appeared almost impossible. Over a two week period, with an already full case load, Joanna diligently worked with this patient and found them appropriate placement. Her ability to set clear boundaries and show compassion is second to none. Close to discharge this patient attempted to foil the plans they had worked so hard on. Joanna did not give up, she worked with all of the disciplines daily that were seeing the patient to clearly communicate the plans and ensure that everyone was working as a team for this patient's safety and to reach their goals. The patient discharged to an appropriate facility and on time. During this same period of time Joanna also placed two other difficult patients and maintained a case load larger than the RN Case Managers on the unit. At West Valley we do not have assigned ED Case Managers, as a team we divvy out the ED referrals as they come in to whoever has capacity. Joanna is usually the first person to volunteer to take on the short notice and quick help that the ED needs. Although she has only been at Salem Health for a little over a year Joanna has become a leader among our team and quickly becoming the go-to resource within our hospital for complex patients. Joanna's advice on professional and personal matters is always encouraging, guiding, and calming. She shows up to work every day ready to take on any challenge. Her continued hard work has been a major factor in keeping our unfunded days to a minimum. Having this type of coworker at Salem Health is an example of Excellence.



Role Models for Excellence

Nominees for this award demonstrate excellence to their peers and often accept tasks outside of their job description. A few ideas of what this might look like include:

- Participates on a hospital committee outside of job requirements.
- Helps in another department outside of job description.
- Goes beyond normal assigned responsibilities within the department on a consistent basis and inspires others to do the same.
- Encourages patients to be more actively educated and involved regarding their medical condition and treatments.
- Receives a written thank you note from a patient.
- Uses Lean tools to improve processes.
- Ongoing unpaid community outreach that supports the health of our community.

West Valley Hospital employees nominated for this award last year were:

- Kara Scott, RN, Advanced Wound Care
- Kathleen D. Hainsworth, Laboratory Manager
- Tifanie R. Stambaugh, Nutrition Services Associate
- Lucky Hagen, Environmental Services Lead

Team Awards

The team star recognizes the achievements of 3 or more individuals who work together to achieve our vision of reimagining care together. These stories include how the team come together to accomplish the outcome, what the team achieved and specific examples of how each team member contributed above and beyond their regular duties to make the team successful.



West Valley Hospital employees nominated for this award last year include:

Sarah Wolf, Nurse Practitioner, Hospitalists
Dominique Holstad, Medical Services Clinical Tech
Fernando Gonzalez, House Supervisor, Medical Services
Rachael Matthews, Medical Services Care Manager Lead
Lauren Slowik, Laboratory Technical Lab Assistant
Pamela S. Murphy, Laboratory Medical Technologist
Stephanie Lairson, Laboratory Tech and Regulatory Lab Lead
Victoria Ruman, Laboratory Supervisor
Kimberly R. Bowen, Rehabilitation Services Manager
Azeneth Mejia Carbajal, Inpatient Therapy Aide
Grace Brown, WVH Inpatient Therapy Aide

STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND RESILIENCY ADVOCATE (SERA) PROGRAM

Fred Preston named as WVH's SERA team representative

By Tricia Shoun, MSN, RN, CCRN, Systems Operations Supervisor, Emergency Department

In 2019, recognizing burnout in their team and an increase in staff turnover, the Salem Health Emergency Department director and manager submitted a grant request to the Salem Health Foundation for support of a resiliency chaplain. The Foundation graciously approved and funded a part-time resiliency chaplain. With data showing the resiliency chaplain positively impacts staff turnover and resiliency, the role was increased to a full-time position. By March 2022, the team of four full-time advocates was fully in place. Fred Preston's responsibilities were expanded to include Surgical Services and West Valley Hospital in November of 2023.

One of the most important tasks of each SERA on the team are the one-to-one interactions they have with frontline staff. These interactions give staff the opportunity to share their experiences and difficulties of their day/week. Staff know no topic is off limits and share family and life concerns as well moments of stress in the workplace. The SERAs use their training and expertise to provide support to the team member, including referrals to Salem Health's Employee Assistance Program and other services when indicated.



Meet Fred!

Fred has been married to his wife Jennifer for 25 years and has two daughters. They have lived in Independence since 2002. Fred enjoys time with family, dancing, the beach, hiking along with sports (soccer, basketball, running, riding racing bike, and coaches high school track). His mission statement is helping one person might not change the whole world, but it could change the world for one person.

Work Experience

Pastor: 32 years

Hospice Chaplain: 15 years

- Chaplain for Salem Police/Marion County Sherriff Office/911 Dispatch Center
- Local Critical Incident Response team



Mike with his wife at the 2023 Service Excellence awards dinner

Michael Pryor, the Engineering Lead for West Valley Hospital retired after 46 years! He was celebrated on Feb. 21 at West Valley Hospital, but also at the Service Excellence awards dinner where he was honored for 40 years of service with Salem Health. Mike started here in EVS. He came to West Valley one night when he was in high school to help his mom who worked in EVS. Mike wasn't employed here at the time he was just helping his mom out. The story goes that he helped and did such a good job that he was offered a job, and the rest is history. He worked in EVS and slowly started helping in other areas until he later switched to the maintenance department. I believe Mike was able to last here for 46 years because of his ability to adapt and overcome. Few people have the temperament that Mr. Pryor has. He was a wonderful teacher, calm, patient, and understanding. I recall starting my career here as a 21-year-old. I was no exception to the saying "young and dumb" and I was so lucky to have someone like Mike to help coach and guide me. I can tell you that he cares about this place very much. He still stops by to check in to see how things are going.

By Josh Woodward,
West Valley Hospital Engineering Supervisor

"MAY YOUR RETIREMENT BE AS REWARDING AND FULFILLING AS YOUR CAREER."



Marty celebrating a bullseye at Oregon Ax Throwing for a WV Surgery resiliency activity

Marty has worked as a nurse for Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics for over 33 years! Her last day was November 16th.

She started her nursing career on 5 North working nights. She later transferred to IMCU on the night shift, and then to PACU in Building C, finally moving to a day shift! In 2012, she transferred to PACU at West Valley Hospital and has spent the last 11 years here caring for our post-anesthesia patients.

Marty is a champion for the environment and has taught all of us ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. In her retirement, Marty plans to do more world-traveling, including going to the Arctic to see a polar bear and taking an African safari. Thank you, Marty, for 33 years dedication to our patients. You will be missed, but we are so happy for you and your next adventure.

Volunteer Services: Pet therapy

In FY2024, pet therapy saw its biggest jump in utilization on record! After a 4SPS session and discussions about needs and demand, we expanded our service from nine teams to 16 teams over the course of the year. This allowed for our volunteers to serve 497 hours in FY2024 (130 more hours than FY2023), marking a substantial increase in the positive impacts our pets and handlers have in their primary focus group; patients, families and staff in frontline care areas.

The seven teams added to the program are the direct result of problem solving, focused recruitment and the help of our volunteer, Eric Schuman, who is an Alliance of Therapy Dogs trainer/observer. With Eric's help, we made a strong training program and removed barriers that previously held back pet therapy teams from joining our program. With more recruitment efforts continuing, we hope to see ongoing growth in pet therapy at Salem Health Hospital and Clinics in the coming years.



Volunteer Services brought kittens and puppies to West Valley Hospital in May as part of Mental Health Month AND National Nurses Week. It was very affirming to see the joy and calmness spread – from busy staff to grateful patients who stopped by, thanks to staff escorts. One patient said, “I haven't held a kitten in years . . . I can't thank you enough. This makes my day.” Good medicine.

FROM STIGMA TO “MAGIC MAKER:” RACHAEL SHARES HER MENTAL HEALTH STORY



Rachael with her husband, Kirk, and her daughters, Hayden, 8, and Harper, 6.

Rachael Matthews, RN, is care management lead and admissions coordinator at West Valley Hospital. She lives in Salem with her husband, two girls and two dogs. Rachael started at Salem Hospital as an orthopedic floor nurse in 2015 and later moved into care management. She was intrigued by the work and the schedule — a better fit for her and her family. “I just absolutely fell in love with care management,” she said. “It turned into what I was meant to be doing.”

In 2020, Rachael took a two-year hiatus to be with her kiddos and returned in October 2022 — this time to the Dallas campus, coaxed by a colleague who was expanding the care management team at West Valley Hospital. “Out here we have an average length of stay per patient of two weeks, so we really get to know the patients and their families,” Rachael said.

In short, care management is discharge planning — a team of social workers and nurses work together to tailor plans to meet patients’ unique needs. That process involves a ton of collaboration. It’s a group effort among all interdisciplinary teams, including nurse practitioners, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, pharmacy, transportation and more. Care management can coordinate medical equipment patients might need after discharge and find them new levels of care, such as assisted living, long-term nursing care or adult foster care homes. They can also help patients get on Medicaid.

When she was a floor nurse, Rachael saw care managers as nothing short of “magic makers.” She remembers watching them glean information from patients and floor nurses like her, then go back into their office and “work magic.” “Most other disciplines will tell you the same thing,” Rachael said. “We are magic makers.” Care managers can face many challenges, from costs of medication and sourcing medical equipment to finding caregivers and help for patients’ pets. “There’s a vast number of barriers,” Rachael said. “How are they, the patient, going to manage things, for example, their insulin at home? All those things! We’re the people who find the solutions to all those barriers.” Care managers have to be bulldogs, she added. “We gently push.”

It's a challenge Rachael loves. "'Fun' sounds like a silly word, but we get so much satisfaction out of our job," Rachael said. "I say that for me and, I know, for the rest of my team. We work so well together, and we pride ourselves on the accomplishments that we make and the work we do for patients and their families. It takes a certain kind of person to be able to do this job, and I feel very fortunate that I am one of those people who loves it and succeeds. The people I have on my team, we all love it and wouldn't do anything else. Having their support make a huge, huge, huge difference."

Many say they don't know how Rachael does it. But she will say the same thing about floor nurses, for example — everyone needs to find their fit. For Rachael, floor nursing brought stress, but care management brings, what she terms, "a healthy stress." Rachael didn't always have the best relationship with stress. A story she is very willing to share.

"A part of me taking a hiatus in 2020 was my mental health," she said. "I've always struggled with anxiety, but I was pretty stable, and then COVID hit." During the early days of pandemic, she went through "a pretty significant mental breakdown" and was diagnosed with Bipolar II and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). "I got appropriately medicated and got back to my self-care routine and stabilized," Rachael said. "Self-care is very important to me."

Now, Rachael meets up with a group of mom friends to walk at 5 a.m. every morning, then journals and meditates on her own. She also quit drinking in 2019 and eschews social media, for her mental health, and encourages others to do the same. "If people could just get off social media it would help them so much," Rachael said. "It's one of the best things I ever did." Rachael hopes her vulnerability will help others be brave to talk about their struggles with mental health and get the help they need. "There was a huge stigma around meds, and for a long time I didn't want them," Rachael said. "Then I had my rock-bottom breaking point and I went crying to my PCP and said, 'Something is not right. I think I need meds for this.' And so I got on meds."

In the middle of COVID, Rachael found her normal self-care routine wasn't helping like it used to. She began having suicidal thoughts. Working with her PCP and psychiatrist, Rachael found the right meds for her. It was rough at first. "Medications can be a disaster," she said. "You try different ones, then find the right dose and it's exhausting. That's really one of my biggest advocacy points for people who struggle with mental health, because a lot of people will try a med or two and be like, 'It doesn't work,' and give up."

Rachael encourages those struggling to stick it out until they find the right medication — and reach out for support. "There's such a big stigma," Rachael said. "But once you reach out, you'll find that it's so common and so many people struggle with all sorts of different mental health things. It opens a world of support. It's worth it." she said.



Rachael loves to travel with her family and camp during the summer. In 2022, she and her husband took their girls to Hawaii and Iceland (pictured) with her mother-in-law, "Gammy."

IDEAL Team

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Learning

IDEAL and HWA Initiatives FY24 was a time of growth and impact as the IDEAL team made significant strides in cultivating the organization's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and learning (IDEAL), as well as in fostering a respectful and safe work environment through the Harmful Words and Actions program. The team worked closely with a variety of departments, reflecting the organization's ongoing commitment to building a more inclusive, respectful, and safe culture for employees and patients alike.

Closing Systemic Inequity Gaps

A systemic inequity gap is defined as a system, standard, or lack of adherence to a standard, which hinders individuals or groups from participating, succeeding and thriving in their environment. Each year the IDEAL team works to address systemic inequity gaps within our organization as identified by the IDEAL Advisory Council.

In FY24, the IDEAL team collaborated with Clinical Education to provide standardized work and a tip sheet in efforts to ensure that annual, required, non-clinical HealthStream trainings meet a reading level range between 6th and 8th grade. This initiative helped to enhance non-clinical training, with a focus on increasing accessibility.

To address another systemic inequity gap, and in line with the organization's commitment to equity and inclusion, together with Language Access Services the team undertook the task of translating essential patient documents into Spanish, Russian and Chuukese.

To make these resources more accessible, the team secured catalog numbers for these documents, allowing them to be ordered through the Document Service Center. Furthermore, a new SharePoint site was launched, housing translated vital patient documents and providing an easy-to-navigate library. The site also facilitates requests for translations of both vital and non-vital patient documents, improving patient experience for those who speak languages other than English.



IDEAL Education System:

A foundation for ongoing development

One of the team's major accomplishments in FY24 was the creation of the IDEAL Education System, a robust framework providing "just-in-time" education and continuous development across the organization, including a new catalog of training topics to better serve employees. The team has also actively collaborated with managers, ANMs, supervisors, and other leaders through one-on-one or small group sessions, offering personalized guidance on IDEAL-related topics.

HWA: Promoting a Safe and Respectful Work Environment

Salem Health has put a lot of effort into reducing violence in the workplace, and it's paying off. Increased awareness and use of violence prediction tools, like the one below, are part of the measures that have helped cut down reported incidents of physical violence by 21% in the past year. The Harmful Words and Actions (HWA) program has gained national recognition from the Joint Commission and its unique approach to violence.

In FY24, Salem Health continued to focus on preventing Harmful Words and Actions (HWA). The HWA Sub-Committee, with over twenty-five members, met bi-monthly to work with nursing leaders, frontline teams, clinical partners, security, and medical groups. Together, they create a work environment that actively condemns harassment and violence. The committee also addressed specific drivers of physical harm and used risk-based modeling to identify high-severity areas and job roles that may need more resources or focused problem solving.

The culture at Salem Health has evolved to encourage reporting and addressing issues in the moment. Staff are empowered to act against workplace violence, echoing, “No more, no longer,” supported by executive sponsors like the CEO, who continues to advocate for employee rights and champions the importance of a safe work environment. Sustaining strong leadership commitments has been crucial in advancing the culture, providing the necessary support and resources to ensure that initiatives like the HWA program are successful.

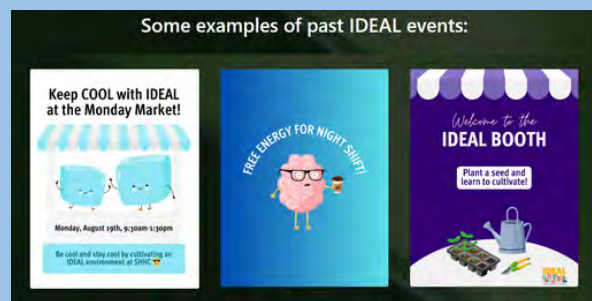
Inclusive Efforts for Employees

The IDEAL team also continued its efforts to close previously identified systemic inequity gaps within the organization. In June 2023, pronouns on staff badges were introduced as part of a broader push for inclusion. In FY24, the initiative was expanded, increasing the number of pronoun options from three to six, empowering employees to express themselves in a way that aligns with their identity.

IDEAL Monthly Calendar: Celebrating Diversity and Educating the Workforce

A hallmark of the IDEAL team’s work is the IDEAL Monthly Calendar, which highlights key holidays, commemorative events, and awareness days relevant to employees and the communities they serve. In FY24, over 312 holidays and commemorations were featured, including 50 educational articles shared via Daily Dose to help employees learn about these observances.

The IDEAL team also made improvements to the way this information is communicated. Starting in January 2024, we began publishing IDEAL Monthly Calendar Highlights on Leadership Link a few days before each new month, ensuring that leaders could preview and share them with their teams. In February, more detailed descriptions of events were added following a request from the IDEAL Advisory Council, providing additional context for each date on the calendar. Some of these dates were also highlighted through staff events at Salem Hospital, West Valley Hospital and the SHMG clinics.



MLO 2024 Lab of the Year

For most patients, an experience with the lab may be a blood collection, or a report in their medical record. Few may ever get to see the dedication of the employees and teams that are part of Salem Health Laboratories to enhancing clinical excellence for patients at Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics. However, all you need to do is ask about the lab, and you'll hear comments like, "The lab staff [are] some of the very highest performing staff: consistent with best practices and standard work, collaborative with nursing staff and compassionate with our patients," or "We all [know] you are awesome." What follows are some highlights of ways that the laboratory has been improving care through their commitment to clinical excellence in our community.

In spring 2024, Salem Health Laboratories was recognized 2024 Lab of the Year by Medical Laboratory Observer, a peer reviewed journal serving the laboratory community since 1969. Salem Health stood out for its commitment to improvement, said MLO Editor Christina Wichmann. Labs across the country were judged on achievement in five areas: Customer service, productivity, teamwork, education and training, and strategic outlook. Among the highlights were projects that improved availability and on-time readiness of blood products at West Valley Hospital from 70% to 100%. At Salem Hospital, inpatient phlebotomy improved on-time completion of AM rounds from 66% to 98%. Through targeted teamwork exercises, the lab improved employee resiliency by 40%. And in the process, their improvement work saved over \$4 million dollars for the health care system.

Karl Kamper, System Director of Clinical Support Operations, had this to say about the award: "I attribute this honor to our lean culture. Staff constantly work to increase efficiency, which improves patient care. The real credit goes to our 226 co-workers — even though only 30 percent are featured on the magazine's April cover, pictured here. I love this quote by Peter Drucker — Culture eats strategy for breakfast. We are an example that culture combined with strategy can propel an organization to excellence. When that happens, our community wins. Our work has a direct impact on everyone — from patients and families to clinicians."



Salem Health Laboratories employ 226 people and handle 1.6 million test requests at its three high-complexity laboratories which support and oversee all point-of-care testing across our health system.

Candida auris

In 2021, Salem Hospital was the first hospital in Oregon to identify a patient with *Candida auris*. *Candida auris* is a newly emerging, antimicrobial resistant yeast. It is highly contagious and difficult to treat. The identification for this first was performed by our own microbiologists, who immediately took action to partner with our infection prevention program. As a result of those collaborations, we became the first health system in Oregon in February 2024 to initiate a surveillance program for *Candida auris*.

OHA Recognition

In fall 2023, the Oregon Health Authority presented Salem Health Laboratories with an award for being a vital partner and protecting public health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Salem Health Laboratories was among some of the few that participated in a state-wide laboratory consortium focused on navigating and implementing best practices in COVID-19 testing. Together, the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory and health system labs across the state participate to share professional information, evaluate response to public health concerns, prepare for emerging pathogens and other discuss other threats that could affect the laboratory's ability to support our communities. It allows us to collaborate with other leaders as we plan and share best practices. Through the consortium, our laboratory bench marked our testing performance against other hospital and health systems in the state. Participation enabled us to always be at the front of care for our patients and community.



Izzy Rodriguez-Snowden, Regional Lab Manager, Kate Hainsworth, West Valley Hospital Lab Manager and Karl Kamper, System Director of Clinical Support Operations accepted the award.

“Our laboratories made a significant difference in the fight against COVID-19, and it's a testament to their expertise, resilience, and teamwork,” said Jamie Rouse, Director of Salem Health Laboratories. “Laboratory team members demonstrated an extraordinary ability to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, collaborate seamlessly, and maintain a high level of professionalism which has been truly remarkable. Their contributions extended far beyond the walls of the laboratory, impacting countless lives in a positive way. They are the unsung heroes of this pandemic, and I am incredibly proud to lead such an exceptional team.”

Protecting Patients and Reducing Blood Draws

In 2024, the laboratory led an initiative to protect patients from the risk of transfusion with incompatible blood products. Partnering with nurses and other clinicians, the laboratory led a redesign of the specimen collection process that is designed to prevent selecting an incompatible blood product for patients with no prior transfusion history, by independently performing a second verification of the patient's blood type prior to transfusion. Not only did this improve patient safety, but it also reduced unneeded specimen collections by 70% for transfusion patients. The collaborative effort to improve patient care is another example of how the laboratory continues to ensure clinical excellence.

WEST VALLEY HOSPITAL'S FIRST EVER 'CARING BEYOND THE BEDSIDE' DONATION GOES TO THEIR VERY OWN EMPLOYEE



In 2010, the “Nurses Give Back” program launched under the approval of Salem Health’s Practice Council, Chief Nursing Officer and Nurses Week Committee. The program was born from attendance at the 2009 American Nurses Credentialing Committee (ANCC) National Magnet® Conference in Kentucky. Nurses unanimously voted to forgo their traditional Nurses Week gift and instead donate those monies along with volunteerism to charitable organizations. This spirit of volunteerism supports the mission, vision and values of Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics to support our community.

Sherri Nordyke's organization, Clara's Closet, was awarded \$500 by West Valley Caring Beyond the Bedside to help her care for more vulnerable infants within the rural areas of Oregon including Polk County.

Sherri Nordyke is a patient access specialist III for Salem Health Rehabilitation in Monmouth and Dallas. Sherri consistently goes above and beyond in her daily work at Salem Health and is a role model for making patients the central focus of her actions at work. In her spare time, she runs her nonprofit organization, Clara's Closet, focusing on caring for the most vulnerable babies in rural Oregon.

“When I worked at another rural hospital, there was a young mom who was discharging from the hospital after having a baby,” Sherri said. “She asked if she could keep the blanket the baby was wrapped in because it was the only thing she had to keep them warm.” Based on this experience, Sherri was inspired to start a nonprofit organization in 2011 to provide essentials for families in need who are referred by providers and social workers. She named it “Clara's Closet” after her first granddaughter, whose outgrown clothes helped that first young mom.

The mission of Clara's Closet is to lower the infant mortality rate in the rural areas of Oregon by providing safe sleep education and safe sleeping environments for infants in need. They distribute items through hospitals, shelters and churches in Yamhill, Polk and Lincoln Counties. Each baby receives approximately 20 items, like a baby box complete with a safe place for baby to sleep, essential clothing, diapers, safety and hygiene items, toys, books and more. Upon receiving her award Sherri said, “I just had a request for a car seat that I wasn't going to be able to fulfill and this means I can provide for their need. Thank you so much.”

West Valley Hospital 2024 Statistics

- 25-bed critical access hospital
- 332 employees
- On our first Pathways to Excellence journey
- Diagnostic imaging procedures - 41,797
- Emergency department visits - 20,617
- Laboratory procedures - 364,250
- Patient meals and meal equivalents served - 36,403
- Surgeries - 304



“We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give.”

Winston Churchill

