



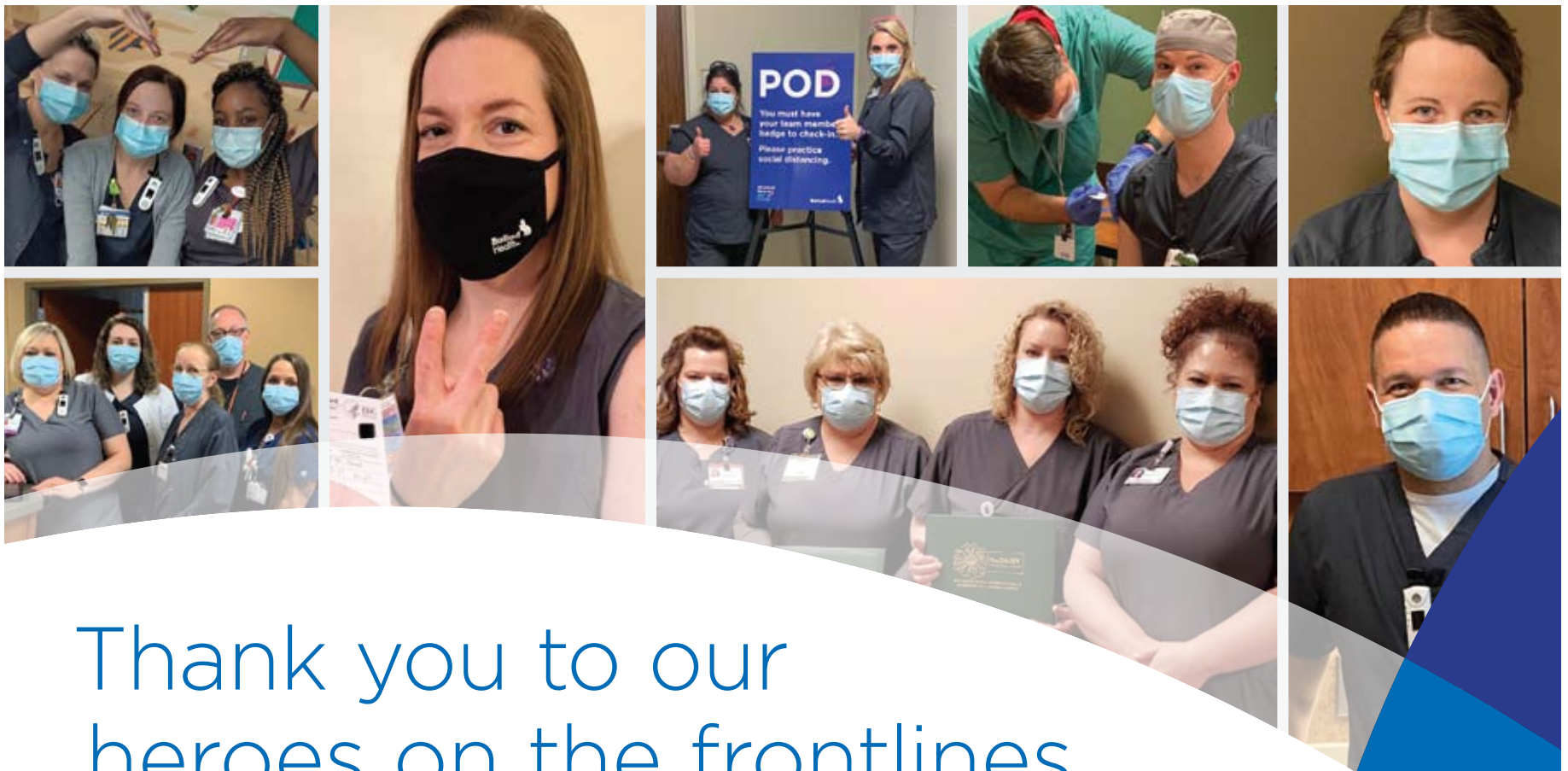
NURSES

the heart of health care

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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To those of you on the frontlines, and at the front of the line for vaccinations.

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Honoring Our Community Nursing Heroes

We're excited to honor extraordinary nurses in our area who go above and beyond to deliver compassionate care. In unprecedented times and with the added strain of COVID-19, this year we celebrate nurses who put others first and have made a significant impact in their community and on their patients.

Text by Carolyn R. Wilson

Laura L. Slaughter



As a travel nurse, Laura L. Slaughter was at the center of the pandemic last year when she saw first-hand the overwhelming numbers of COVID-19 patients at hospitals in New York City and Texas. She has served as a critical care nurse for seven years. The Bristol, Virginia, resident graduated from East Tennessee State University with a business degree before returning to school to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing in 2014. Laura currently is pursuing a graduate degree from King University. When she's not working as a nurse, she enjoys gardening and exercising. A nominator wrote, "She is one of many who answered the call for help when nurses were needed in cities. Laura stepped up and traveled to New York City to offer her nursing skills and was in a lockdown situation. Her efforts and sacrifices were part of a total commitment to help New York get control of the virus."

Allison D. Williams



Allison Denise Williams is a traveling registered nurse working in intensive care units. She has worked at JMH for two years—one year in the operating room and another year in the intensive care unit. Allison received an associate degree in nursing from Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge, Virginia. A resident of Abingdon, she describes herself as a "gypsy soul" who likes to move a lot. "Nurses are still working crazy schedules and pulling mandatory overtime in many places, and that just happens to be what I am currently doing," she said. When not working, she enjoys sports with her young children. A nominator wrote that Allie is a great asset to their hospital team as well as someone other nurses can look up to. She strives to provide the best possible experience for her patients.



Camille B. Miller



The most rewarding thing about nursing is making a big difference in people's lives, said Camille Burt Miller, who has worked at Bristol Regional Medical Center as an associate clinical leader in the intensive care unit for six years. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from King University. After a long day at the hospital, the Bristol, Tennessee resident enjoys riding horses with her mother. She also likes to exercise and lift weights. "She has dedicated her life to providing care to people in the community," wrote a nominator. "We've had family and friends under her care and each one of them remarked about the difference she made with their recovery from illness."




Judy Ann Franklin



Judy Ann Franklin is an associate clinical leader and emergency room nurse at Bristol Regional Medical Center. The Bluff City, Tennessee resident received a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from King University. When she's not at work, Judy enjoys hiking, biking and gardening. "I've always wanted to be a nurse since I was a little girl," said Judy. "I've been drawn to helping people, whether it's comforting a patient or lending an ear to a family member. I truly feel that this profession was my destiny." A nominator wrote, "She is a leader who goes above and beyond the call of duty giving her staff and patients exceptional care and guidance. She gives compassionate care to all emergency room patients and their families."



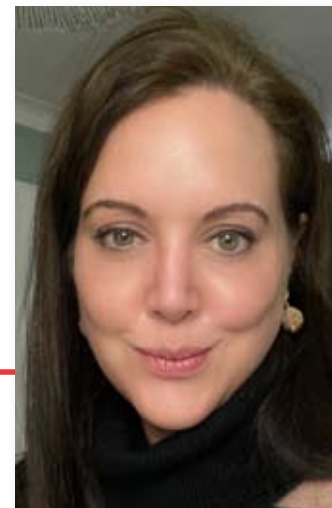
Emily Boucher



Emily Boucher is a registered nurse in the critical care unit at Johnston Memorial Hospital. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Lander University in South Carolina. She currently is pursuing a Master of Science degree in nursing at Duke University in North Carolina. When she's not studying, the Sugar Grove, Virginia, resident enjoys hiking and spending time with her friends and family. "My greatest reward is knowing that through my words and actions I can help improve someone's life and bring them comfort." A nominator wrote, "Emily has cared for a lot of our COVID patients and has always worked with a compassionate touch. She encompasses everything that makes a great nurse."



On the Front Lines



Story by Carolyn R. Wilson

BRISTOL, Va. --- When travel nurse Laura Slaughter learned about the need for medical workers in New York City last year, she never thought twice. The Bristol, Virginia ICU nurse packed her bags and headed to the city in the spring of 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Slaughter is the first-place recipient of “Nurses---The Heart of Health Care,” a celebration of extraordinary nurses in the region who have made significant impacts in their communities and on their patients.

Locating in New York City didn’t intimidate the Southwest Virginia native. She had traveled to the city many times to visit her grandfather Arthur Slaughter, who was a businessman in Bristol and New York.

“Since I was about five years old, New York has been like a second home to me,” she said. Slaughter called it an honor to serve as a nurse despite the vast number of sick patients she saw daily---horrific images that will linger in her memories for a lifetime.

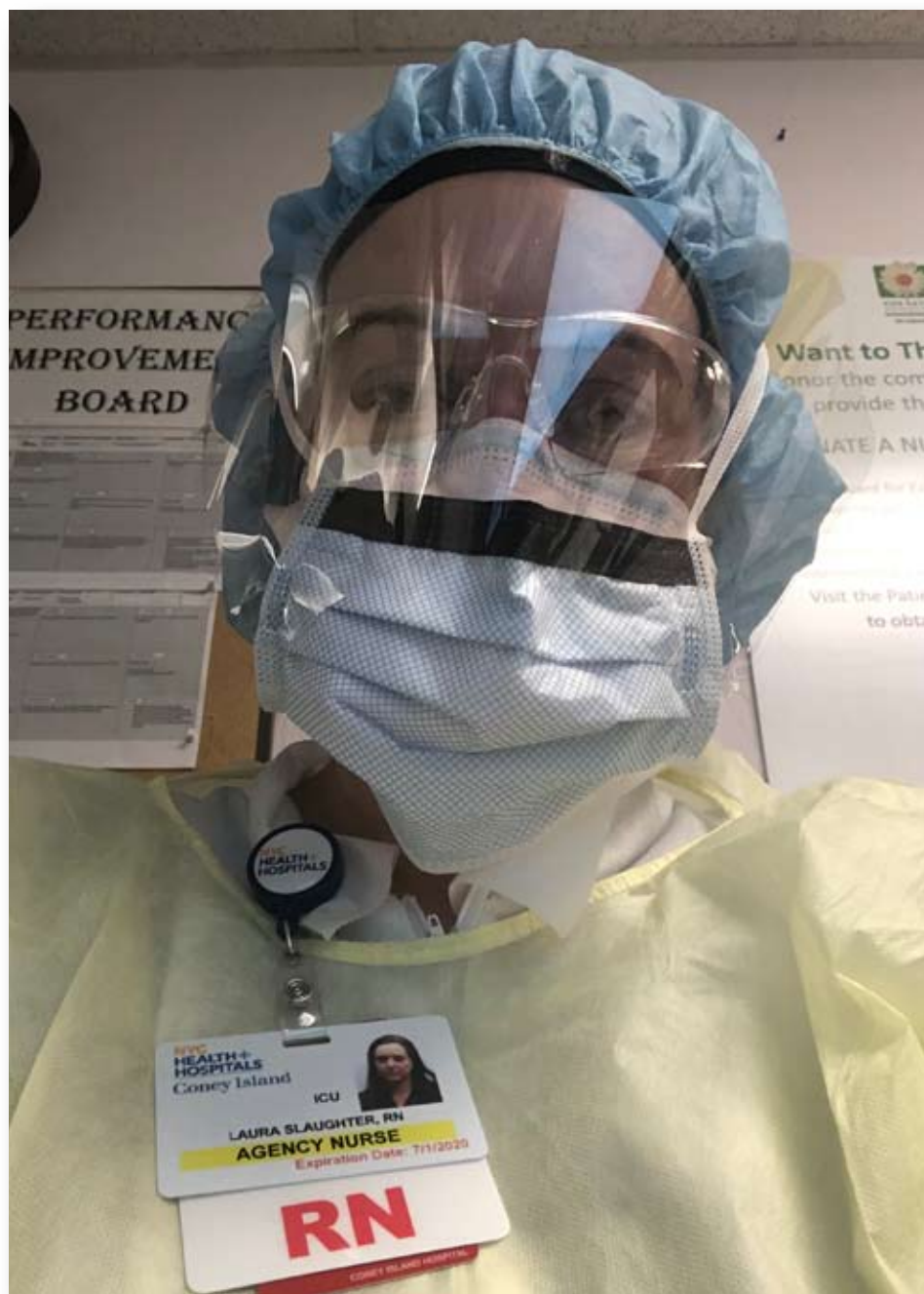
“As an ICU nurse, you deal with significantly dangerous diseases. COVID didn’t scare me,” said Slaughter, who believes the work experience during the pandemic has made her a stronger nurse.

“I’m very confident in my skills as an ICU nurse. When I look at really sick patients, I don’t focus on the emotions. I think ‘this is a problem, what do I do, I need to solve it. Now, go.’”

‘Like a war zone’

During her three-month stay in the city, Slaughter worked a labor intensive 91 hours each week at Coney Island Hospital in Brooklyn, New York, a hospital that received COVID-19 patient overflow from neighboring facilities. She later served as an ICU nurse at Valley Baptist Hospital in Harlingen, Texas---another location in the country that was hit hard by a wave of COVID-19 cases.

Once she arrived, Slaughter was amazed to see that the city that





usually had so much life was suddenly shut down with practically no one on the streets.

But, in the evenings when Slaughter and other night-shift nurses traveled in buses to work, people and emergency crews in the city lined the streets, flashing sirens and yelling. People even banged their pots outside their windows.

“It was to honor us. It was very humbling,” she said. Her first assignment in New York City is a difficult environment to describe.

“It felt like a war zone,” said Slaughter. “The devastating number of dying people was exhausting.” Medical supplies were scarce, forcing Slaughter and other nurses to make provisions in order to help their patients survive the deadly disease that to date has claimed the lives of more than half of a million people in the country.

Medications were delivered in boxes by the hospital pharmacy to the ICU department where Slaughter worked. While she was there, the 450-bed hospital eventually received as many as 650 patients and those numbers quickly grew.

“The nurses had to mix their own medications. The pharmacy could not keep up with the supply and demand,” she said.

“When boxes of drugs were delivered, nurses would have to sort through them to find what they needed. I sometimes had to pull medications from IV bags on patients to give to other patients just to keep them alive until we received more from the pharmacy.”

Slaughter worked in a surgery unit that had been converted to an ICU for an overflow of COVID-19 patients. Layers of personal protective equipment worn by the nurses were essential, but sometimes miserably hot.

“These make-shift ICU rooms were not ventilated with as many as 15 patients in one room. We stayed in these rooms for 12-hour shifts and couldn’t leave the room,” said Slaughter.

During this time, she was on a rapid response team, responding to frequent code blue

emergencies. “I never thought responding to COVID code blue alerts would become a normal part of my work day.”

After her assignment in New York City, Slaughter traveled to South Texas to work in Valley Baptist Hospital.

“That was awful in a different way,” she said.

Slaughter said the bodies of patients who had died that night were stored in coolers on an 18-wheel truck.

“I had to wheel the bodies on gurneys to the truck. Keep in mind, it’s south Texas in the summer. It was very hot outside,” she said.

“When security opened the refrigerated cooler, a gulf of windy contaminated air was blowing at you. I felt like I was in a horror movie.”

Once the cooler was opened, the nurses were expected to place the body bags inside the truck.

“When security opened the refrigerated cooler, a gulf of windy contaminated air was blowing at you. I felt like I was in a horror movie.”

“We had to transport the bodies to the back of the truck. As I’m walking in there, I noticed that many of the body bags had burst open due to the large sizes of the patients.”

Born healer

Slaughter often saw media including Fox News and CNN, reporting on the horrible



conditions each day. “I will never be able to say that I’ve worked in those conditions again,” she said.

She actually never planned on becoming a nurse when she was young. Slaughter graduated from Furman University and East Tennessee State University with business degrees.

Following college, her first job was as a pharmaceutical representative. She later worked in operating rooms as an orthopedic device representative, representing companies that make device implants for patients.

In 2011, she decided to go back to school to earn a registered nurse degree at East Tennessee State University. After graduation, she worked as an ICU nurse at Johnson City Medical Center before relocating to Holston Valley Medical Center. Slaughter became a travel nurse in 2019.

She currently is pursuing a graduate nursing degree at King University.

Had she not injured her ankle while working in Texas, she probably would be on the road again as a travel nurse.

While her ankle heals from surgery, she is volunteering as an administrator of local COVID-19 vaccines.

“I’m always striving to do more and to accomplish something else,” she said. “I can’t let down now. There’s still so much to get done.”



Kelly Read



Kelly Reed is a nurse supervisor at Mount Rogers Health District. She graduated from Tennessee Tech University with a degree in sociology, later receiving a nursing degree from the Community Hospital Roanoke School of Nursing. The Abingdon resident enjoys hiking and biking. “She has impacted the lives of thousands in our area with her nursing and organizational skills at COVID-19 vaccination clinics in the district,” wrote a nominator. “Many good nurses are at her side but without her organizational skills the success of these clinics might not be the same. She is compassionate, organized and a born leader.”




Brittney Tuel



Brittney Tuel is a registered nurse in the critical care unit at Johnston Memorial Hospital where she has worked for seven years. The Abingdon resident received her nursing degree from Virginia Highlands Community College. “Nursing has honestly been the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done. It’s not a career---it’s who I am. I know this is where I belong.”

A nominator wrote, “She is one of our nurses who takes the time to braid a patient’s hair if they are on a ventilator so that it does not get matted. She encourages our new team members and pushes them to think critically before she provides any of her own incite. She can safely take care of any type of patient in the hospital and her skills are unprecedented. Brittney is always diligent in monitoring her patients and ensuring the best possible care is provided.” When she’s not working, Brittney enjoys spending time with family and boating at the lake.



Raymond W. Luchini



Raymond W. Luchini is a registered nurse, working as a medical surgical nurse for the past two years at Johnston Memorial Hospital. He earned an associate degree in nursing, and business and science from Virginia Highlands Community College. He currently is enrolled at King University, graduating this summer with a Bachelor of Science in nursing. A resident of Meadowview, Raymond enjoys spending time with his wife and family and adventuring outdoors. Since becoming a nurse, he has have been nominated for three Daisy Awards and has been chosen twice as the Daisy Award Honoree. He received two 2020 Year of the Nurse awards. “My biggest reward of being a nurse is just being there for patients when they need someone to talk to or they are worried or frustrated. It can make a difference just by taking the time to show you care,” he said. A nominator wrote, “He always puts his patients first; he advocates for his patients and is not satisfied with anything less than what is absolutely the best.”



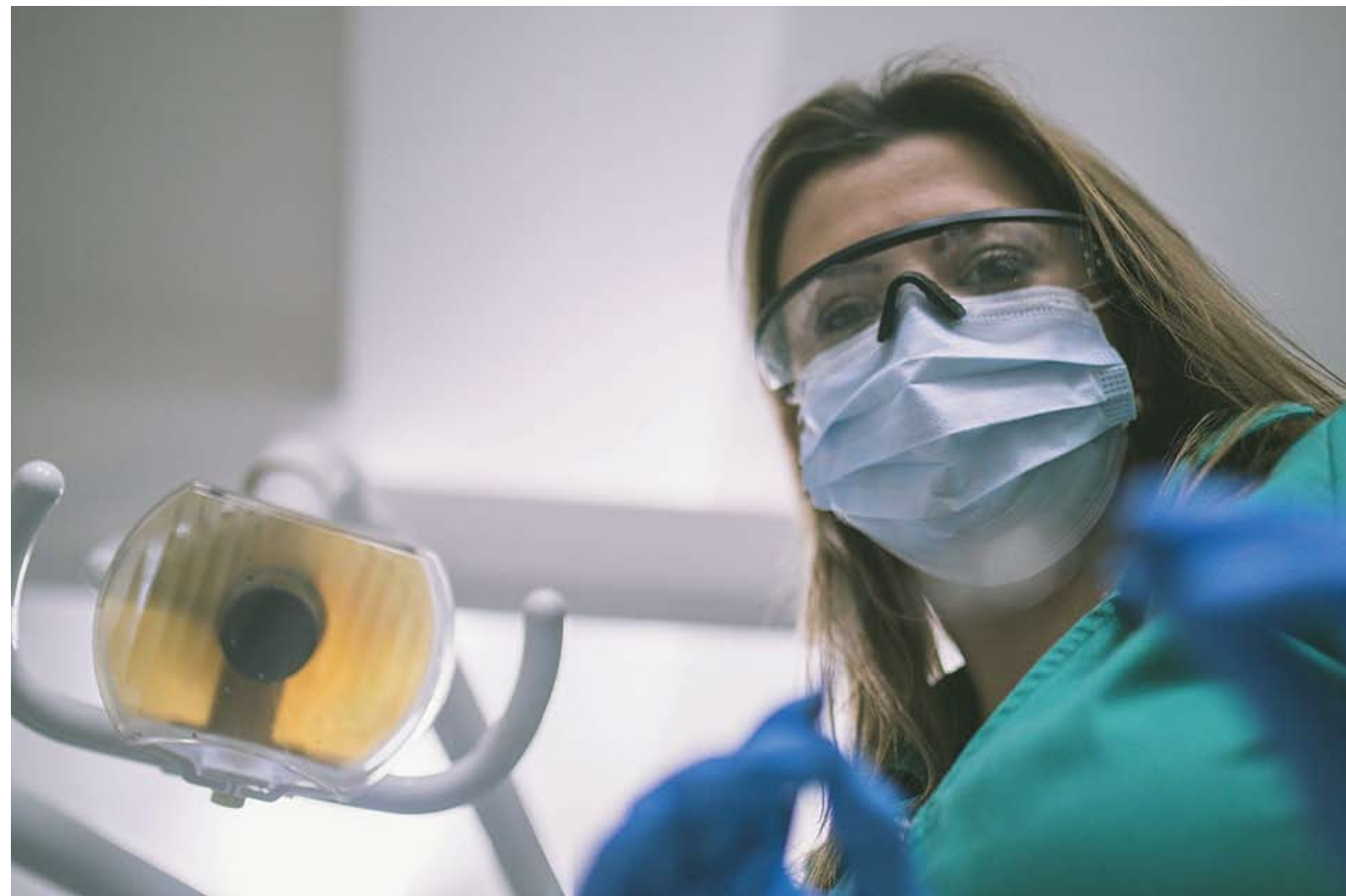
These nursing specialists are in demand

Nursing is a rewarding career, and nurses figure to be in high demand in the coming decades.

As fulfilling as nursing can be, nurses routinely confront issues that other professionals may never encounter. Nurses are in high-demand, but a shortage of openings in nursing schools in recent years has led to a widening gap between the demand for skilled nurses and the supply, according to the nursing support resource Nursing.org. As a result, many nurses are taking on more work than they can handle. Couple this with the inherently demanding nature of nursing, and it's not surprising that nurses may experience fatigue, mental exhaustion and doubts about the value of their work.

Holli Blazey, MSN, ANP-BC, the Nursing Program Coordinator for Employee Wellness at the Cleveland Clinic, says burnout is “a big problem nationally for all kinds of caregivers, whether you work in an ICU or an ambulatory setting.” Long hours, rotating shifts and the stress of caring for ill patients are other factors that can contribute to nurse burnout. Many times nurses muddle through and do not even realize burnout is occurring. However, if anxiety, exhaustion or the desire to skip work is cropping up more frequently, nurses should not hesitate to take action. The following are some ways nurses can cope with burnout.

- ✔ Identify your stressors.



Write down the things that are stressing you out. Pinpointing circumstances that are causing you to feel overwhelmed is the first step in addressing them. Try tracking responsibilities for a few days and write down feelings after each activity. Then try to identify which are the biggest sources of your stress. Communicate your findings with a supervisor or colleague who may offer advice or work with you to confront your stress in a positive way.

- ✔ Don't make new commitments. It's tempting to want to get involved in new projects,

especially if job dissatisfaction has you looking for fulfillment elsewhere. But overextending yourself even further may only add to your existing stress.

- ✔ Practice relaxation exercises. Engage in slow and meaningful breathing, set aside even a few moments to sit in quiet and take a break, and think about how you can approach the situation in a healthy way instead of giving in to your anxiety.

- ✔ Delegate when possible. Find out which tasks can be taken off of your to-do list. Is there something a patient care nursing

assistant can do at work? Can you rely on a friend or family member to help out at home? Lighten your load to give yourself time to recuperate.

- ✔ Join a support network. Many employers offer employee assistance programs, such as access to a professional therapist. Connecting with other colleagues also can be a great way to build up your support network.

These tips can help nurses find the relief they need when burnout starts to set in. More resources can be found at www.nursing.org.

How to Ellivate Nurses Burnout

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Nurses are invaluable to public health

Nurses have long been unsung heroes of the medical community. But that tide began to turn in 2020 as the world confronted the COVID-19 pandemic and realized just how invaluable nurses are to public health.

According to the American Nurses Association, nearly 400 nurses in the United States died as a result of COVID-19 within eight months of a pandemic being declared in America. Globally, data from the International Council of Nurses indicated that roughly 1,500 nurses lost their lives to COVID-19 by the end of October 2020.

That data is sobering and serves as a reminder that nurses put their lives on the line each day they go to work. Such sacrifices are worthy of widespread support, and there are many ways ordinary citizens can thank nurses working in their communities.

- Support efforts to protect nurses. Despite widespread recognition of how vital they are to public health, nurses still may not have unbridled access to personal protective equipment (PPE). An ANA survey of nurses working in various health care settings conducted in fall 2020 found that 42 percent of nurses indicated they

were still experiencing widespread or intermittent PPE shortages. In fact, more than half of the 21,000-plus nurses

when doing their jobs.

- Give nurses and their families a night off from cooking. Long shifts in stressful

it's a great way to remind nurses their heroic efforts are not going unnoticed.

- Help out with chores. Before going to the grocery store, text or call a friend or neighbor in the nursing field to see if he or she needs anything from the store.

If nurses shop online for their groceries, arrange to pick them up so nurses can spend more time relaxing at home with their families. During warm weather seasons, offer to mow the lawn or help with leaf pickup.

- Offer discounts to nurses in your community. Local business owners can do their part by offering discounts to nurses and other health care professionals in their communities. A 10 percent discount on a restaurant bill or a nursing discount on a fresh bouquet of flowers can lift nurses' spirits and reassure them that their communities are behind them.

Nurses have made immeasurable sacrifices throughout the pandemic. Communities can come together in various and often simple ways to show nurses just how much those sacrifices are appreciated.



surveyed reported that they were forced to re-use single-use PPE, a practice they said makes them feel unsafe. The public can do its part by urging local lawmakers to support legislation that increases domestic production of PPE so the brave men and women in the nursing profession can feel safe

situations have taken a toll on nurses and their families. Neighbors can pitch in by offering to cook and deliver meals or pay for takeout for nurses and their families. This simple gesture can provide a much-needed break for nurses and their spouses who have been stretched thin during the pandemic, and

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR NURSES!



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