Welcome
ICARE Winners
Professional Practice Model
Baby Friendly Hospital
George Cucchi’s Story
Children’s Emergency Center
Gary Hansen’s Story
Ella Kate Shuler’s Story
Skills Fair
IPOC Pain Management
Quality of Patient Care
OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE PATIENT-CENTERED EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTHCARE
You only need to turn to the exceptional nursing team at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) to see our mission in action. Each day, these compassionate colleagues place the needs of our patients and their families as the top priority—it is more than a career, it is truly a calling. And at TMH, we believe our nurses are called to care. They prove it each and every day.

TRANSFORMING CARE
This year, our nursing team developed a new professional practice model focused on a “canopy of care” based on the likeness of a tree, with deep roots in our ICARE values (integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence) and patient- and family-centered care at the core of what we do. Our patient experience, quality of care, commitment to safety and dedication to service branch out from the trunk. This model is more than theory; it is carried into patient care. From honing their clinical skills through regular training sessions to researching, developing and testing new nurse driven protocols, our nurses are transforming care.

At the end of the day, everything we do at TMH is for you - our community.

ADVANCING HEALTH
Healthcare is always changing, and so are we. Our clinical team worked hard, and continue to do so, to earn accreditations for our programs that speak to the high level of care we offer.

From launching a new Children’s Emergency Center with Wolfson Children’s Hospital to building better bonds between moms and babies through the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative at the Alexander D. Brickler, MD Women’s Pavilion, we are advancing the health of our community with technology and best practices.

IMPROVING LIVES
At the end of the day, everything we do at TMH is for you – our community. It’s for Gary Hansen who made a full recovery from his stroke. It’s for George Cucchi who survived a cycling accident. It’s for Ella Kate Shuler who was born a “micro preemie” at just over one pound. What an amazing opportunity it is to help improve the lives of our community.
WHAT IS RESILIENCY?
Interestingly, there are many definitions of resiliency in psychology, ecology, and physics. The construction of a building allows it to stretch, bend and flex based on environmental changes. As a quilter, I look for resilience in fabrics, the ability of fabric to spring back to its original shape after being twisted, crushed, wrinkled, washed and dried. Patients and families demonstrate resilience by “bouncing back” from illness, trauma and adverse health events. And what about healthcare? It seems regulations and standards are rapidly changing faster than a hospital or nurse can keep up. When we look at the growth we are experiencing and the soon-to-open M. T. Mustian Center, resiliency - structural and human - will be crucial in defining our future.

We are at a crossroads, where every minute of every day can, and does, reshape the landscape of healthcare. It is exhilarating and frightening!

I invite you to consider how resilient you are during these fast and furious changing times, and does, reshape the landscape of healthcare. It is exhilarating and frightening!

And I thank you from my heart!

Nursing is hard work. Let me say that again. Nursing is hard work- physically, emotionally and spiritually.

RESILIENCY - being able to recover, choose wisely, learn from mistakes, bounce back, enjoy life, adapt, be flexible…will help nurses be well, stay well, and allow them to intentionally focus on the care of their patients.

Change is the one constant all nurses understand. How we react to change and how resilient we are will determine how we care for ourselves, each other, and our patients and families.

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And I thank you from my heart!

"As a nurse, we have the opportunity to heal the heart, mind, soul and body of our patients, their families and ourselves. They may forget your name, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” - Maya Angelou

Recovery from stress, adversity
Embrace all aspects of healing arts and diversity
Spring back from time pressures, challenging situations, difficulties
Intentional focus on patients and families, and quality and safety
Loving kindness - what else is there?
Interact with colleagues, patients, and families
Expand education, knowledge, and engage in health and wellness activities
Nurture others with rewards, recognition, a note, a gift, a smile
Commit to a promise, to be caring, to heal, or to be present in the moment
Yearn to be what is to be
ICARE VALUES

At Tallahassee Memorial, we salute our nurses for providing compassionate, patient centered care. We recognize the following five nurses who embody our ICARE values of Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Excellence.

Integrity

Being described as “the type of nurse every patient deserves,” Stetson defines the true meaning of integrity. From going above and beyond to providing exceptional care to always looking for ways to improve the neurology unit, Stetson acts as a role model to many.

His heart is gold and his character embodies what a nurse should strive to be.

Compassion

Compassion is a key component of patient- and family-centered care. Tina’s compassion shines through when she is helping to welcome new babies into the world, but it is even more apparent through the work she does with grieving mothers and fathers. Tina’s ability to step in to help families make the most of trying times truly exemplifies her warmth.

Through compassion, Tina makes what feels like the impossible happen seamlessly and quickly for families during a difficult time.

STETSON SAVAGE, BSN
Bixler Emergency Unit

TINA BAILEY, BSN, RNC
Labor and Delivery
Shannon values accountability in every aspect of her job as a nurse at Tallahassee Memorial. As a clinical nurse for the Emergency Center - Northeast, Shannon ensures all standards for patient care are not only met, but are exceeded. As a colleague, Shannon has shown her dedication to Tallahassee Memorial through her willingness to help out whenever and wherever needed, and always putting the greater good of TMH, her colleagues and the patients before any of her own needs.

Shannon’s fellow nurses can count on her to provide patients with the superior care and attention they deserve.

To fully care for a patient means to actively respect them. Jensen always considers how her actions and words may impact others. She ensures that the excellent care she provides is matched with her attention to her patients’ needs. Beyond patient care, Jensen is respectful to her colleagues through her steadfast support and consistent dependability. Jensen’s ability to see other perspectives, not only makes her a strong advocate for her patients, but also a partner in care at bedside.

Julie is a natural teacher and strives to produce excellence in not only herself, but her colleagues as well. She is a calm, distinctive source of wisdom and guidance who is endlessly attempting to better patient care within her unit. Her ability to instill a sense of confidence and preparedness in new nurses truly elevates quality within her unit.

Julie’s unwavering devotion to her students and patient care continues to set the bar high for excellence in every facet.
PATIENT EXPERIENCE
QUALITY
SAFETY
SERVICE
PATIENT CENTERED CARE
SHARED GOVERNANCE
RELATIONSHIP BASED CARE
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
NURSING CARE DELIVERY
ACCOUNTABILITY
EXCELLENCE
INTEGRITY
COMPASSION
RESPECT
CANOPY OF CARE

Amanda Thompson, BSN, RN

TALLAHASSEE MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE

CANOPY OF CARE
In Spring of 2017, a group of about 25 nurses set out to create TMH nursing’s first professional practice model. These nurses represented areas across the organization with the majority being front line nurses who provide patient care daily. The first step in the journey was to gain an understanding of what a professional practice model was and why it was relevant to our nursing practice. A professional practice model represents all areas where nursing is practiced, is a visual representation of system that supports the delivery of nursing care and nursing’s contribution to the organization. After learning about professional practice models and reviewing examples from other organizations, the group took the next step to develop a model for TMH that was reflective of our nursing practice and the community where we practice. Several nurses came to the next group meeting with drawings that incorporated various community elements such as the state capital and other elements, but one depiction by Amanda Thompson, RN, BSN stood out as capturing nursing at TMH. This is the model you see here. This model is the visual representation of the values, organizational structures, and processes that provide a unifying framework for the practice of nursing at TMH. The iconic majestic oak, representative of our area, is used to symbolize our model’s elements.

Once the visual representation was complete, the group then defined each of the elements of the model. Our Canopy of Care represents our longstanding tradition of protecting and serving the patients and families in our North Florida and South Georgia community through the provision of safe, high quality health care. Our branches provide the supporting structure to ensure the delivery of patient-and family-centered care.

- **Relationship Based Care** - The harmonious relationship between the nurse, patient, colleague and self, realizing that quality care can only occur in environments where the standard among members of the healthcare team is to respect and affirm each other’s particular scope of practice and contribution.

- **Professional Practice** - National standards and the Florida Nurse Practice Act provide the framework for our nursing practice. Professional development begins with formal education at accredited colleges and universities. It continues with lifelong experiential learning, starting with the nurse residency program, and ongoing continuing education and advancement. With this knowledge and expertise, our nurses are uniquely qualified to deliver quality patient care.

- **Nursing Care Delivery** - Through the art and science of nursing, we use exemplary evidence based clinical knowledge and skills to provide quality care as defined by the individual needs and attributes of each patient.

- **Shared Governance** - A decision making model that is a partnership between colleagues collectively working towards a common goal. This model empowers us as professional nurses to use our clinical knowledge and expertise to impact decisions regarding our practice.

Our tree’s strong trunk represents our foundation in nursing theory and patient- and family-centered care focus. The heart is supported by the Caring Hands of Jean Watson’s Theory of Human Caring and Florence Nightingale’s Environment Theory, represented by the Lamp of Knowledge.

Our ICARE values are reflected in the roots of our tree. A tree grows strong and tall by planting deep roots, just as our nurses grow while remaining rooted in our core values of Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Excellence.
COMPREHENSIVE STROKE CENTER

Tallahassee Memorial is home to North Florida’s only Comprehensive Stroke Center and is the only facility in the region performing minimally invasive stroke interventions. We follow national standards and guidelines in stroke care that can significantly improve outcomes for patients.

A Comprehensive Stroke Center offers the most advanced stroke interventions and treatments from expert physicians who are specially trained in their fields. Tallahassee Memorial boasts a variety of revolutionary treatments for strokes, including tPA, a clot busting intravenous medication, and on-site endovascular neurosurgery, which removes blood clots and repairs aneurysms without opening the skull. These specialized treatment options also require highly-skilled nursing care with a strong commitment to continuing education and patient outcomes.

Having a stroke does not have to mean lifelong disability if quality care is administered quickly. We provide rapid diagnosis, innovative care, patient rehabilitation and dedicated support for our stroke survivors.

Nancy Anne Teems, MSN, RN, CNRN
Vogter Neuro ICU & Neuroscience Accreditations Nurse Manager

“Our nurses are the experts and leaders in performing minimally invasive stroke interventions. Evolving over the past few years, they have increased competency and education, with their expertise being known throughout the southeast region of the country.”

ATRIAL FIBRILLATION ACCREDITATION

A leader in the Southeast for complex cardiovascular care, the Tallahassee Memorial Heart & Vascular Center is also home to one of the top electrophysiology programs in the region. The electrophysiology program focuses on diagnosing, monitoring and treating irregular heart rhythms, including atrial fibrillation – a common arrhythmia where the heartbeat is irregular and often rapid. TMH successfully demonstrated the ability to expertly manage atrial fibrillation as well as provide full electrophysiology lab and surgical interventions for treatment, earning the program the American College of Cardiology’s (ACC) Atrial Fibrillation with EPS accreditation – the highest level available for this type of program.

Terri McDonald, RN, MBA, CPHQ
Heart & Vascular Services Administrator

“Each year we care for more than 1,000 patients with atrial fibrillation. As the disease burden, associated with atrial fibrillation, continues to increase our nurses and navigators have been committed to ensuring our patients receive evidence-based care. Achieving the American College of Cardiology accreditation for AFib Center with Electrophysiology Services is a reflection of our team’s expertise in treating patients with atrial fibrillation and excellence in our approach to improving patient outcomes.”

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM FOR BREAST CENTERS

At Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, we have an entire program dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment and survivorship of breast cancer. Through the Sharon Ewing Walker Breast Health Center and the Cancer Center, patients at TMH have access to a full array of diagnostic and support services for the detection and treatment of breast cancer. This program is the only one of its kind in the area to be accredited by the National Accreditation program for Breast Centers and be named a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology. This highly respected accreditation speaks to the comprehensive nature of TMH’s breast cancer program, from breast imaging and surgery with reconstruction to advanced treatment options and a network of clinical trials, and its commitment to exceptional patient outcomes through a collaborating care model.

Kathy Brooks, RN, BSN
Oncology Services Administrator

“The National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers is near and dear to our nursing and patient navigation teams. It allows them to connect with the patients across the continuum of care, from diagnosis to survivorship. Celebrating the completion of treatments is something many are able unable to experience, and we certainly are proud of this.”
Babys-FRIENDLY HOSPITAL

Tallahassee Memorial is on its way towards becoming recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as a hospital that “offers an optimal level of care for infant feeding and mother/baby bonding.” The Baby-Friendly accreditation is not a trend or a fad; it is considered a leading practice that requires a change in not only maternity care but also culture. For a hospital to become a Baby-Friendly facility, all the pieces must fall perfectly in place. In Summer of 2018, Tallahassee Memorial hopes to join the ranks of 476 hospitals in the United States who provide optimal care through this accreditation. This process is one that features many different steps and benefits for both mom and baby. Excited for the high-performing Women’s Pavilion staff, who will receive the recognition they deserve through this accreditation. Here are just a few of the programs implemented along this journey:

SKIN-TO-SKIN
Skin-to-skin contact, also known as “kangaroo care,” benefits premature and full-term babies. Following delivery, the baby is placed naked onto the mother’s chest and covered with a warm blanket. Studies have shown babies who are placed skin-to-skin on either mom or dad following birth have better weight gain, less stress and crying, enhanced bonding, improved sleep and improved brain development. These babies are calmer and warmer as they begin bonding and get their breastfeeding journey off to a good start.

“When a new mom comes to visit her baby in the NICU they are nervous, both physically and emotionally. The quickest cure to this is skin-to-skin. In every single situation, after 5 minutes the fear and anxiety leaves the mother. The impact of this is so satisfying and empowering for the mothers and nurses.”
– Judith Danford, BSN, RNC, NICU

DELAYED BATH
The time immediately following birth is precious for mom and baby. At Tallahassee Memorial, we delay newborns’ baths eight to twenty-four hours post-partum. This delay limits the stress on the baby, therefore increasing breastfeeding rates. Now, bath time is a teachable moment for the new family.

“We have found that delaying the baby’s bath decreases newborn stress and improves the baby’s recovery. Allowing both mom and family to participate in bathing the baby, after transferring to the Family Care Unit, gives the mom and baby time to rest and recover before the bath is scheduled.”
– Robin Glady, RN, BSN, Family Care Unit

ROOMING IN/REST AND RECOVERY
Now, mom and baby have a 24-hour period focused on bonding, relaxation and recovery immediately following the birth. This time is invaluable - so we want families to enjoy it. Research shows mothers and babies rest better when in the same room. This is called rooming in. Rooming in helps moms learn how to care for their baby, their baby’s feeding cues, how to feed their baby on demand and also helps the baby to recognize its parents. As part of the Baby Friendly requirements, all registered nurses who work in the Alexander D. Brickler, MD Women’s Pavilion and Tallahassee Memorial Children’s Center have extensive education and training in breastfeeding. Certified Lactation Counselors are available to work with the nursing staff and mothers if additional assistance is needed. This surrounds mother and baby with the utmost support.

Additionally, the support doesn’t stop when new mothers leave the hospital. Mother and baby can attend a twice-weekly breastfeeding support group offered at A Women’s Place. Along with our ten steps for successful breastfeeding, it is our hope to encourage mom/baby bonding in every moment possible.

“Our rest and recovery has made such an impact over recent years. We have continued to receive positive feedback from our mothers, especially those who have had children previously when these practices were not implement and have so enjoyed the skin-to-skin, delayed back and rest and recovery.”
– Kelley Tyre, RN, BSN, Family Care Unit

THE CORE VALUES OF Baby-Friendly USA

1. Every mother should be informed about the benefits of breastfeeding and respected to make her own choice.
2. The precious first days should be protected as a time of bonding and support not influenced by commercial interests.
3. Human milk fed through direct breastfeeding is the optimal way for human infants to be nurtured and nourished.
10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding


EVERY FACILITY PROVIDING MATERNITY SERVICES AND CARE FOR NEWBORN INFANTS SHOULD:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff.
2. Train all healthcare staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they are separated from their infants.
6. Give infants no food or drink other than breastmilk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in—allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or birth center.

BABY-FRIENDLY DESIGNATED FACILITIES IN THE US

The 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding form the basis of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, a worldwide breastfeeding quality improvement project created by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

Baby-Friendly hospitals and birth centers also uphold the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes by offering parents support, education, and educational materials that promote the use of human milk rather than other infant food or drinks, and by refusing to accept or distribute free or subsidized supplies of breastmilk substitutes, nipples, and other feeding devices.
Offers an optimal level of care for infant feeding and mother/baby bonding.
It takes a special person to compete in triathlons. The multi-stage competitions are an extreme test of physical and mental fortitude. Even more extraordinary are those with the desire to take it even further and compete in IRONMAN triathlons.

IRONMAN races are a mind-boggling amount of endurance. Comprising of 2.4 miles of swimming, 112 miles of cycling and 26.2 miles of running, the races can take upwards of 14 hours to complete. Contestants push their bodies to the absolute limits - battling blisters, muscle cramps and tremendous fatigue, among other things, to make it to the finish line. While the Ironman race itself is difficult, the countless hours of regimented training in preparation for the event takes a toll as well.

George Cucchi is one of the rare few with the desire to compete in IRONMAN races. This passion to finish an IRONMAN pushed him through an intense training schedule so he could compete in the Florida IRONMAN in December of 2017. However, one morning in July would radically change all of that.

“My Sunday morning started like many other Sunday mornings,” George recalled. “The triathlon season was in full swing, and I was out early for a few hours of training so I could return home to do some housework.”

While George was cruising on a familiar 50-mile bike ride down Meridian road, the brightness of the rising sun blinded the driver of a Dodge pick-up truck enough that the driver, unexpectedly, slammed into George at 60 mph. The violent collision sent George into a ditch where he laid motionless in a bed of fire ants.

George was rushed to the Tallahassee Memorial Bixler Trauma & Emergency Center with fractures in his ankle, kneecap, femur, humerus and ribs. He also had two damaged vertebrae, a cracked skull and multiple lacerations. While in the trauma center, he was triaged and received an emergency operation to insert a steel rod into his femur. A few days later, Hank Hutchinson, MD, Medical Director of Orthopedic Trauma Surgery, performed an operation to reinforce his mangled left arm with steel plates.

“The short-term goal, with an open fracture [like George’s], was to clean the wound, get skeletal stability, fix the fracture and get the wound closed,” said Dr. Hutchinson. “The long term goal with orthopedic trauma surgeries, and any orthopedic surgery, is to try to return the patient as close to their preinjury level of function as possible.”

Before the accident, George spent dozens of hours every week running, swimming or biking. He was an endurance athlete, with the goal to compete in a race that many view as borderline impossible. The next several days and weeks following his accident would test George’s physical and mental endurance in ways he had never experienced before.

George began his recovery in Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare’s (TMH) Vogter Neuro Intensive Care Unit (VNICU), where the nursing staff in that unit would be instrumental in helping George regain his independence.

“When I came out of the trauma center and into the VNICU, it was important that I became George again, and not just a trauma patient,” George said. “Slowly, I began to have conversations with the nursing staff and they treated me like a person. For most of the day, they were all I saw and the fact that they took time to talk to me and get to know me mattered a lot to me.”
The commitment of the nursing staff to not only care for George physically, but also personally, helped tremendously in his road to recovery.

After his time in the ICU, George underwent a short stent in a local inpatient rehabilitation center to undergo therapy. Afterwards he was released home with orders for biweekly physical and occupational therapy appointments.

In total, George would endure five different surgeries to repair his leg and arm, several days recovering in the hospital and many additional hours of difficult therapy. Through it all, his incredible commitment to return to what life was like prior to the accident, and back into his IRONMAN training, motivated him.

“We often see two types of recovery in patients: those who we have to actively hold back because they’re motivated and might hurt themselves, and others who we have to push because they’re the opposite. George was someone we had to hold back.”

George’s tenacity to return to what life was like before the accident led him to the gym five to six times a week, to defiantly throwing down his cane to force himself to walk independently, and to finishing a 5k in under 30 minutes only a few months after major surgery.

“When Dr. Hutchinson told me I wouldn’t be able to compete in the Ironman in November, I shouted ‘UNACCEPTABLE.’” George remembers with a laugh. “I’m just happy he didn’t fire me as a patient.”

George credits the amazing love of his family and friends for helping him get through his recovery. He’s also grateful for the straight-forward, honest approach of the doctors who cared for him and the personal touch of TMH’s nursing staff during his long stents in the hospital.

Today, George is still recovering from the accident. He regularly runs up to five miles, swims up to 1000 yards and can stationary bike for up to an hour. He still has plans to one day compete in an IRONMAN. That’s a fight he’s not ready to give up on.
The affiliation Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) has with Wolfson Children’s Hospital has expanded TMH’s ability to care for the region’s youngest patients in more ways than one. From easy access to world-class pediatric specialists, to bringing additional resources to enhance TMH’s already existing pediatric services, kids in the Big Bend have convenient access to the care they need.

In May, this partnership got even better with the opening of the Tallahassee Memorial Children’s Emergency Center.

Big or small, emergencies are stressful — for you and your child. But, at our Children’s Emergency Center you can put your mind at ease. Our affiliation with Wolfson Children’s Hospital of Jacksonville means access to board certified pediatric emergency medicine physicians and resources from one of the nation’s top-ranked children’s hospitals.

AS LONG AS KIDS WILL BE KIDS, WE’LL BE READY.

“The Emergency Center – Northeast has always provided high quality care to all members of the community since it opened in 2013,” said Kyrie Stewart, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, Director of Operations at the Emergency Center -- Northeast. “In light of the growing number of children in our area, and the expansions of specialized children’s care at TMH through our partnership with Wolfson Children’s Hospital, it became clear we needed a dedicated children’s emergency center in Tallahassee.”
The nursing team at the Children’s Emergency Center plays a critical role in the specialized emergency care offered to pediatric patients at the new center. While it has always been a requirement for nurses at the ECNE to keep a current Pediatric Advanced Lifesaving Support (PALS) and/or Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC) certification – with this new addition comes the need for further specialization and education for the staff who will work in the new emergency center.

This effort to further train nurses for the Children’s Emergency Center was led by Amanda Bolin, BSN, RN, former Clinical Education Coordinator at the ECNE.

“I became the educator for the Emergency Center - Northeast in October of 2016 and felt that there was a need for even more pediatric training for our nurses during orientation,” she said. “I wanted our nurses to really take the pediatric patient’s comfort into consideration prior to any procedures being done. That way the patient had the best possible experience given their circumstance.”

For nurses who will work in the Children’s Emergency Center, it is required they go through Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP), S.T.A.B.L.E classes and continued education with ENPC. Additionally, nurses with little or no pediatric experience are required to spend time in the Children’s Center in the Main Hospital to learn more from those nurses. She also recruited the help of Olivia Vincent, Certified Child Life Specialist at TMH, to educate nurses on positions of comfort, one voice and distraction techniques.

“The new Children’s Emergency Center is wonderful for the community,” Amanda said. “Anyone should feel comfortable bringing their children here because of the high quality pediatric care available through our well-trained staff.”

Telemedicine will be another major component of the Children’s Emergency Center. Although TMH and Wolfson Children’s Hospital may be separated by a stretch of I-10 that is close to 160 miles long, telemedicine will allow for specialists in Jacksonville to consult – virtually and in real time – patients being treated here in Tallahassee. This 24/7 access to specialized pediatric care helps medical staff be prepared for any emergency – big or small.

“No matter what,” said Kyrie, “the children in our community will now have a dedicated, specialty-trained team to meet their emergent healthcare needs.”

To stay up-to-date with the latest happenings, visit TMH.ORG/Children.
You may not realize it, but your brain is always making connections. It's home to about one billion neurons and each neuron forms 1,000 connections to other neurons, amounting to more than a trillion connections.

When a stroke happens, these connections are disrupted.

On January 12, 2017, Gary Hansen experienced this disruption first-hand when he suffered a subarachnoid hemorrhage, a life-threatening stroke caused by a ruptured aneurysm that bleeds into the space between the brain and skull, causing increased pressure and reduced oxygen flow to the brain.

When Gary woke up that morning, he was blindsided by symptoms. His sudden severe headache and nausea prompted his wife to act quickly by immediately calling 9-1-1.

He was rushed to Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH), North Florida’s only Comprehensive Stroke Center, where T. Adam Oliver, MD, endovascular neurosurgeon, and the team in the endovascular neurosurgery lab provided emergent stroke care to treat the bleeding in his brain.
Gary spent the next eight days in the Vogter Neuro Intensive Care Unit (ICU), under the constant care of his nurses. Although he survived the hemorrhage, Gary was at high-risk for another life-threatening, or debilitating, stroke.

“Dr. Oliver told me that 20 percent of people with this kind of hemorrhage do not survive, 60 percent survive but are paralyzed in some way, and 20 percent walk away like nothing ever happened,” Gary said. “I was thankfully in the last 20 percent.”

While at TMH, his family brought a sign with his favorite saying, “blessed beyond measure,” to have on display and serve as a constant reminder that every day is a gift.

With the dedicated support from the team in the Neuro ICU and his family, Gary was discharged walking, talking and enjoying life once again.

“When a stroke happens, time is of the essence. Gary’s wife did the right thing. As soon as she recognized his symptoms, she picked up the phone and made every second count,” said Dr. Oliver. “Gary survived a life-threatening injury and is very fortunate not to have a neurological deficit as a result. Get to the ER quickly and we have everything to save you.”

The connections Gary made with Dr. Oliver, along with his compassionate nurses, physical therapists and speech therapists, stretched far beyond hospital walls.

When Gary, who was a cashier at Publix, was cleared to return to work, he valued every opportunity to recognize any TMH nurse in scrubs who came through his line. He would ask them to say “hello” to Dr. Oliver on his behalf and he would even write “thank you!” on their receipts.

On January 12, 2018, the anniversary of his stroke, Gary and his wife visited the neurology unit to express their gratitude. They brought a cake that said “thanks for saving my life!” and “blessed beyond measure.” During the celebration, many nurses mentioned talking to him at Publix since his stay at TMH a year ago.

Marsha Hartline, MSN, RN, CNML, nurse manager, neurology/neurosurgery, shared how Gary’s visit left a lasting impression. “Healthcare is so fast paced, the fact that he took the time to come back and say ‘thank you’ was so nice. It really goes a long way here.”

During his anniversary visit, Gary was thrilled to reconnect with Dr. Oliver and his nurses. Being that he has come full circle, he expressed his appreciation for the dedicated high-quality care that was provided at Tallahassee Memorial. With his “blessed beyond measure” sign in hand, Gary felt emotional thanking the people who impacted his life in a way that very few people with his condition get to experience.

Before his stroke, “blessed beyond measure” used to be Gary’s motto for his grandchildren, and though it still applies to them, it is now also his motto for having a second chance at life.
At the age of 31, Jessie Shuler was preparing for the birth of her first child. Despite being classified as a high-risk pregnancy due to antiphospholipid syndrome—an autoimmune disease which causes improper blood flow and can cause development problems or even miscarriage—Jessie remained calm and filled her days with preparing the nursery, working, spending time with family and reading all about ‘what to expect.’ However, no amount of preparation could have prepared her for what was to come.

On April 28, at just 26 weeks in her pregnancy, Jessie was at a routine appointment with Physician Partners – Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialists.

Specializing in the care of both high and lower-risk pregnancies, maternal fetal medicine specialists screen, test and monitor babies developments while working to manage complications and provide patients with the critical support needed during their pregnancy.

During her appointment, Jessie noticed something different she had never experienced before. The nurse’s casual demeanor suddenly shifted.

“Every appointment is the same,” said Jessie. “The nurse does an ultrasound while we chat about updates, she reviews the screen, points out different developments, prints photos and gives them to me before the doctor comes in. This appointment I knew something was up. Instead of handing me the photos, the nurse told me she had found something and excused herself from the room. Once the doctor entered the room, I started to feel a familiar worry.”

Exactly one month prior, Jessie and her husband, Garet, had received the news that her sister-in-law had lost her baby. Just five weeks behind Jessie’s due date, her sister-in-law’s experience and loss of her nephew was unbearable. The strength of their family carried them through the coming month but the fear and feeling of worry quickly returned when Jessie got the news she dreaded.

William Dobak, DO, - Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist met with Jessie and explained their findings. Ella Kate’s heart, although healthy, was not getting the proper blood flow it needed to her umbilical cord. His recommendation was to admit Jessie to Tallahassee Memorial Hospital to get steroids which would help to mature her lungs.

Just 12 hours later, Jessie was informed Ella Kate’s oxygen levels had begun to decrease. The possibility of having to deliver early was now a reality.

“All babies born at 26 weeks gestation will need help accomplishing the things they will be able to do on their own in a few short weeks,” said Judith Danford, BSN,
“Once I was able to finally hold Ella Kate I couldn’t believe my eyes,” said Jessie. “She fit in the palm of my hand. I had dreamed of this moment for so long and was overcome with joy that she was finally here. No matter how small she was, my heart was bursting and I knew that I would do anything and everything to ensure that she made it through her NICU stay. She was so tiny but so strong. She is my miracle.”

Their 115-day stay in the NICU was one that will leave a mark on their family forever. Spending roughly 12-15 hours a day in the NICU with Ella Kate, Jessie connected with their team of doctors, nurses, lactation specialists and felt like they had a new extension of their family. Jessie knew Ella Kate was being cared for by the best.

“We had everything we could possibly need and I knew we were being cared for by the absolute best. The nursing staff would go above and beyond to make our home away from home as comfortable as possible. Every single person was so thoughtful. I remember one nurse in particular, Kristy Cooksy, RN, would always do certain things around the holidays to make them as special as they could be. We were in the hospital for Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and 4th of July and Kristy would make art or pictures with Ella Kate so we had little keepsakes when we went home. It was so kind of her.”

A major turning point in their time at the NICU was when Ella Kate learned to eat on her own. Like most premature babies, Ella Kate had a lot to learn before she could accomplish this difficult task.

“For all babies in Ella Kate’s situation our first area of focus is the most important – which is breathing,” said Judith. “Once they get the support they need for breathing, and their respiratory system catches up, then we can concentrate on the next priority, which is eating. The biggest challenge for a pre-term baby is coordinating the tasks of sucking, swallowing and breathing. This is a very complex activity at this age. Their central nervous system has to be mature in order to accomplish what is needed, which is why we rely on the feeding tube initially.”

In most premature situations, a nurse will offer the baby their first bottle. The first feed is the time for assessment of the infant’s ability to successfully suck. Because the danger of choking is high, the experienced nurse is better equipped to handle this milestone. Kristy sat with Ella Kate and patiently offered up her first bottle. The moment she started drinking, there was a unified sense of peace in the room – everyone felt a huge sigh of relief.

“We all just stood there and cried together. It’s really unexplainable when you watch your child drinking on her own after months of being on a feeding tube,” said Jessie. “Kristy was so sweet and saved that bottle for us marking how much she drank so we could keep it forever. This was a major moment for us because we knew she was almost ready to go home.”

On August 13, Jessie and Garet received the news that Ella Kate was ready to go home. Although their experience was had been nothing like they had anticipated, they wouldn’t change a thing about it.

“You can’t begin to understand the emotion you go through during this process but the amount of support we received from everyone at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare was what carried us through. We spent every day together and I have nothing but amazing things to say. The entire team of nurses, along with the doctors and support staff are all family to us now. I can’t thank them enough.”
Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) is committed to delivering exceptional care. TMH nurses, the heart of our healthcare system, are no different. With their promise to provide patient-centered and evidence-based care, they are continuously improving areas of operation and their nursing skills.

This past year, the TMH team has invested over half a million dollars for supportive educational resources for nursing. This investment has allowed for the expansion of education products and events including Healthstream, Lippincott, Ovid, free CEs, paid ACLS, PALS, BLS, NRP Mosby’s Preceptor, ENA orientation, CPI Training and Neonatal Resuscitation.

In addition, the team hosted their annual skills fair focused on helping nurses hone their specialized skills. Hosted on Tallahassee Memorial’s main campus, more than 1,000 registered nurses (RN) and licensed practical nurses (LPN) participated in the day-long event.

The event comprised of ten skills stations for nurses to demonstrate competencies and Joint Commission Readiness. A highlight of these stations included:

- Glucometers
- Non-Violent Restraints
- Wound and Skin Care
- STRYKER Bed Alarms
- Chest Tubes
- CAUTI

The event also included fifteen educational tables, which were staffed with supplemental information for participants, and multidisciplinary education stations. These tables included:

- Clinical Informatics – chart navigation tips
- LifeQuest Organ Donations
- Antimicrobial Stewardship
- Clinical Engineering/Bio-Med (medical equipment support)
- Interdisciplinary Shared Governance
- Nutrition Services
- Allevyn Skin and Wound Care Products
- Angelica Laundry
- Hand Hygiene
- Risk Management

The Nursing Shared Governance’s Nursing Science and Knowledge Council (NSKC) works closely with nursing educators, Professional Nurse Advancement Program (PNAP) volunteers, as well as the Nursing Care and Outcomes Council (NCOC) to bring these successful events to fruition each year.

“These events are designed to provide meaningful and enriching opportunities for nurses at TMH to practice skills and gain confidence in areas of medical training,” said Catherine Hanks, RN, CPN, Assistant Nurse Manager, Children’s Center. “This is why we continue to advance our team members’ knowledge and practices.”
Like a puzzle, the human body is dependent on its pieces properly fitting together and performing their function. When a piece becomes ill, it affects those around it and the picture as a whole; it requires attention on all sides.

Providing patient care is about restoring health and ensuring the puzzle pieces are working in harmony, something that requires a comprehensive approach. At Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH), nothing is more important than providing complete care to patients, however, in the ever-changing world of complex healthcare, maintaining clear communication amongst specialties within the electronic medical record can be a challenge.

In 2014, Tallahassee Memorial adopted the Interdisciplinary Plan of Care (IPOC) model, a software system allowing hospitals to customize care plans in their electronic medical record. Simply put, IPOC provides nurses and other disciplines with a framework to develop an individualized care plan for each patient.

The IPOC communicates the interdisciplinary plan for the patient’s care during hospitalization.

It serves as a roadmap, guiding patient’s care and incorporating individualized goals, interventions and timeframes. As the patient’s condition changes, the plan of care changes.

With new changes in healthcare systems, our team developed new IPOC improvement standards to reflect the most knowledgeable forms of patient care. New changes implement this year included:

- Unchecked Boxes
- Education Forms
- Plan of Care Summary Notes
- Suicide Precautions
- Care of Pediatric Patient

In turn, teams went through extensive trainings to demonstrate how to choose and individualize IPOC’s, while also learning how to set and complete patient goals. Training also included the identification of discontinued IPOCs, goals and interventions, while identifying the new functionalities.
Nursing has made a significant impact to reduce the number of Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI) at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH). Two of the most common problems are often inappropriate catheter use and lack of timely removal when the clinical need for the catheter no longer exists.

In turn, several initiatives have been implemented throughout the nursing units. In the Fall of 2016, the Tallahassee Memorial Medical Executive Committee approved nurse driven catheter removal protocol, allowing nurses to remove the catheter when the need no longer exists. As a team wide effort, Clinical Education Coordinators have also played a crucial role in supporting this initiative by offering incentives for proper protocol use, to positively reinforce the catheter removal.
Quality audits have also been implemented by bedside nurses to advance professional development and improve patient safety. These include multidisciplinary rounds in the intensive care settings to specifically keep the entire team apprised of catheter use.

CAUTI reduction was also a critical focus for the Annual Skills Fair, which have resulted in an overall 69 percentage reduction in CAUTIs hospital wide compared to 2017. This is just one way the team at TMH is leading to zero harm in patient population.