



MedStar Health

# Nurse Excellence Inspired from Within



MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center  
FY22 Nursing Annual Report

# Why I Am Proud to Be a Nurse



"I have been a nurse for 44 years. I absolutely love what I do. The work of a nurse is consuming, and we don't always pause to remind ourselves of the impact we have on others. Recently, a stranger approached me after overhearing me mention to a friend that I am a nurse. She told me how much she appreciated what I do, and thanked me for my service. It was a special moment that reminded me why the commitment I have made to my field is so important."

—Kathy Ellis, RN, *Float Pool*

"I am proud to be a nurse because I have the ability to care for and serve others in so many ways. Every day, I am blessed with another opportunity to learn from my caring relationships with patients and colleagues. I am so grateful to be able to practice nursing at MedStar Franklin Square."

—Lyndsay Rehak, RN, *Tower 5*



"I am proud to be a nurse because it gives me the opportunity to serve others using my skills and knowledge, to improve quality of life, and to support patients and their loved ones in their time of need. It also allows me to make a difference in the lives of others through care, compassion, prevention, and wellness."

—Debbie Rouse, RN, *Vascular Access Service Department*



"I am blessed to help patients when they need it most. I love when I can make my patients smile or be present when they need someone to listen. In my new role as a nurse supervisor, I am privileged to work with an amazing group of individuals. I am in a strategic position to promote best practices and staff engagement. Best of all, I can help more patients and drive positive outcomes."

—Mylene de Vera, RN, *Ambulatory Oncology*



"I'm proud to have such an impact on so many lives, both directly and indirectly. The pandemic has allowed the public to see what I have seen every day since becoming a nurse; nurses have a heart for their patients!"

—Heather Cox, RN, *Nursing Administration/ Nurse Residency Program*







## From the desk of the Chief Nursing Officer

In March 2020, the COVID pandemic began and healthcare workers everywhere were seen in a new light, as the world's greatest heroes. As hospitals near and far hung signage declaring "healthcare heroes work here," the work of nurses began to shine in new

and different ways. They had always been heroes. But suddenly, everyone in the world knew it.

As I reflect back on how our team has persevered through it all, the sentiment that comes to mind immediately is ... admiration.

I truly admire our nurses. I admire the courage and strength they have shown. I admire their continued resiliency and 'can do' attitude, even when the most challenging scenarios present. I admire their commitment to problem solving and teamwork; for pulling together and being willing to jump in, time and time again, to help their own in any way they possibly can. I admire our nurses as professionals, leaders, people, and yes ... heroes.

With the highest level of gratitude and admiration,

Debbie Kisner, PhD, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC  
Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer

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*Some photos were selected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. All patients and providers are expected to follow the current MedStar Health guidelines for safety including proper masking and physical distancing where appropriate. Learn more at [MedStarHealth.org/Safe](https://www.medstarhealth.org/Safe).*







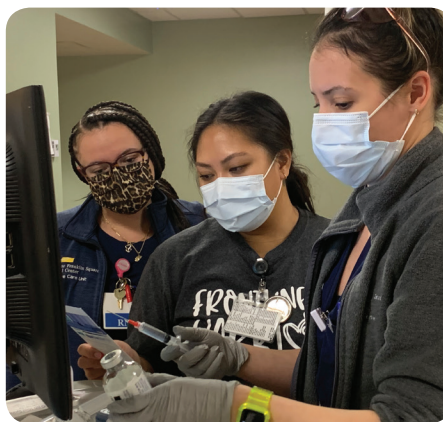
## Perseverance Through the Pandemic ... Continued

It's become fairly clear: COVID is not going to ever fully 'end.' What's also clear is that since March 2020, nurses have truly learned to roll with the punches—bracing for and adapting to continued change as surges have taken place and patient volumes have gone up...again and again. Here, we share perspectives from MedStar Franklin Square nurses who have lived through it all, and who believe we are stronger today than ever before.



“Through all of this, we have become very good at reinventing ourselves. When surges happen and the need for additional critical care coverage is in front of us, we shift. The difference now is that we know how and when to shift, efficiently and based on what we've learned. We don't freeze. We keep moving.” —*Debbie Kisner, RN, vice president and chief nursing officer*

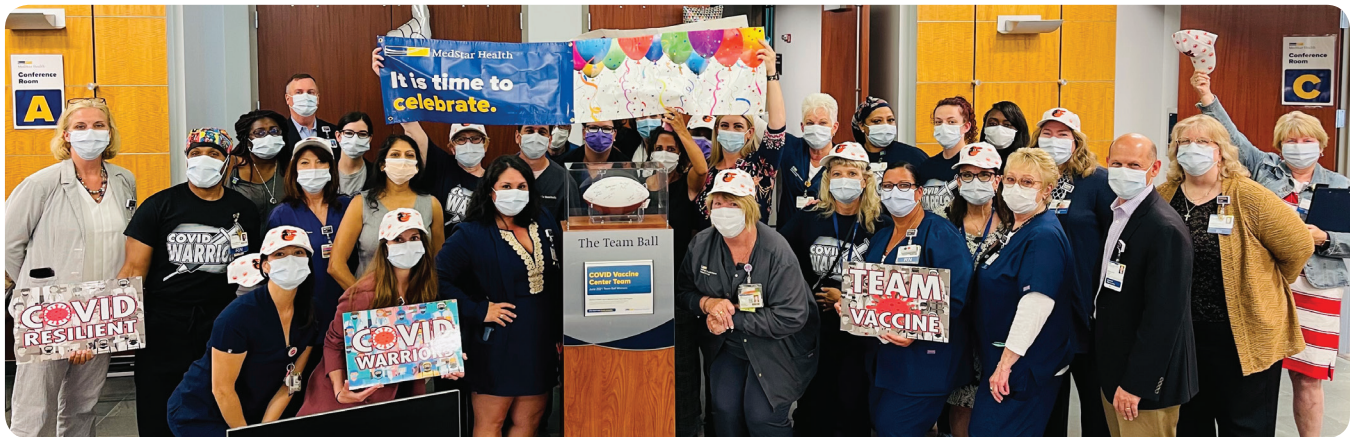
“As hospitals work to address staffing shortages and tap into agencies to fill the gaps, the process can be daunting because we are all competing for the same resources. There are so many logistics to coordinate as you identify the shifts and skill sets you need, and the agency works to align the right people. But, it's worth all of the effort. Because of this, we've been able to keep every bed open, every day through COVID—even during the Omicron surge. We have become very efficient in putting the right person in the right spot.” —*Lynn Petty, RN, senior director, patient care services*



“When the pandemic started, I was only a year and a half out of nursing school, and yes, sometimes it felt scary to come into work. Taking care of COVID patients now is very different. Now we know how to take care of them, and it's very rewarding to see patients regain their ability to talk or breath properly as their oxygen levels go up. I don't hesitate

at all anymore. We are educated, vaccinated, and boosted, and we know how to protect ourselves. I've learned so much as a nurse during the pandemic.” —*Jacob Russ, RN, nursing supervisor*





"One of our biggest challenges has been figuring out how to keep the unit running when our own nurses have been out with COVID or in quarantine due to exposure. Leader visibility and engagement has been very important on our most stressful days. 'All hands on deck' has taken on new meaning, with nurse educators and nurse leaders filling in at the bedside, and staff nurses continuing to pick up extra shifts to help their teams as needed. I am very proud of the resiliency our nurses have demonstrated and how the whole hospital has come together to figure things out, each step of the way." –Kathy Grzeskiewicz, RN, senior director, critical care, emergency and stroke response

"Nurses have really stepped up during this time, in ways that extend beyond being a great patient care provider. You saw nurses working together to solve problems and think of new approaches to take care of patients using every available inch of space. The word 'resiliency' truly has new meaning. I am incredibly proud to be a nurse here." –Nina Rodriguez, RN, emergency department, clinical nurse

"It was incredibly rewarding to work in the COVID vaccination center. Some days we vaccinated between 400 and 500 people, so it was very busy, with lots of moving people and parts. But we got our process down to a science and our team went above and beyond, in every possible way, which is why we earned the Team Ball! It was exciting, and reminded us all of the important role we played in keeping our staff and community safe." –Sherri Barr, RN, Tower 3 clinical nurse







“The third wave of COVID hit the emergency department the hardest. We saw the largest volumes and the highest levels of acuity. We lost a lot of nurses through this, but those who have stayed are bonded so strongly and today, we care about each other like a family. We know that we can make it through anything together now.” –Susan Cottrill, RN, emergency department clinical nurse

“Nurses have been asked to take on so many additional responsibilities during COVID surges; things like bringing dietary trays into and out of patient rooms, emptying trash cans in patient rooms, and handling blood draws when the phlebotomy team is short staffed. As we resume normalcy, we have to remember that COVID has been traumatic and has affected different people in different ways. What I know for sure is I love this nursing team. They have inspired me and have become my role models.” –Jessica Johnson, RN, Tower 6, professional development specialist



## The Golden Urinal Awards

In 2020, the Emergency Department Retention & Recognition Committee introduced “The Golden Urinal Awards” as a fun and creative way to recognize people for their unique talents and contributions to teamwork. The concept was initiated by Nina Rodriguez, RN, who brought the idea home from the Magnet Conference. In October 2021, the second annual Golden Urinal Awards celebration took place, complete with decorations, a slide show, and raffles (held in small group and virtual formats, due to COVID restrictions). Seeing the positive energy generated from events held in the ED, Ashley O’Bara, RN, assistant nursing director in the ICU, carried the idea of superlative awards over to the ICU. During Nurses Week, a series of “Golden Propofol Awards” were presented in the ICU—offering a humorous “nod” to a sedative commonly seen on medication profiles on the unit.

“I did this so staff had something fun to look forward to, that is specific to the ICU,” explained Ashley. “We came up with a list of superlative categories to highlight strengths at work as well as what people are known for outside of the hospital. It was a lot of fun to present the awards with gifts during Nurses Week.”



## Wellness Matters

In the midst of the COVID pandemic, Reverend Cherie Smith, director of pastoral care at MedStar Franklin Square, and Chaplain Charline Berry knew that some simple “pick-me-ups” could make a positive difference for clinical teams around the hospital, who were working harder than ever, day-in and day-out. The chaplains filled a wellness wagon with treats and goodies and used it to respond when units were experiencing challenging days.

“It was just a wagon filled with candy, but it was meaningful and had a powerful impact,” said Reverend Smith. “It was a way of showing the nurses that we cared about them and appreciated their good work.”

The MedStar Franklin Square Wellness Team is led by Reverend Smith and Demetrie Gardner, and partnered with MedStar Baltimore Region Resilience Coach Danni Davis to implement this initiative. The wellness cart is stocked with evidence-based grounding tools, stress reduction and first aid tools, and information about the many wellness resources provided by MedStar Health. The cart includes journals, pencils, pens, acupressure stress rings, grounding rocks, essential oils, fidget spinners, tissues, and chapstick. Healthy snacks such as granola bars and almonds were also made available.

In addition to responding when units were in distress, the Wellness Team used the cart proactively, scheduling Wellness Rounds on the nursing units. There was an overwhelmingly positive response and a second cart was created for night shift.

“We knew we were doing something special when unit managers started calling and requesting if we could come over with the cart,” said Reverend Smith. “When we were on the units, nurses would approach us and thank us for recognizing they were feeling stressed, and for responding in a positive way.”

Additionally, the Wellness Team worked to position “recharge rooms” close to Tower 6, Tower 3, the ICU, the ED, and Labor and Delivery. Rooms are equipped with massage chairs, special lighting,



sound machines, power drinks, and granola bars. Another important priority was planning and facilitation of a Wellness Fair, in conjunction with Hospital Week in May. Mental wellness and stress first aid resources were key priorities.

“A lot of our focus as a committee this year has been on making sure people know about the wealth of wellness resources available to them – both existing and new,” said Reverend Smith. “The work we are doing has gone a long way in not only making associates feel supported, but also reducing stress-related injuries in the workplace.”



## With Sights Set on Magnet Designation #4



In August 2018, MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center had a big reason to celebrate. The hospital's leadership team received a much-anticipated call from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) – MedStar Franklin Square had earned its third consecutive Magnet® designation. It was an exciting and memorable moment for many.

“There is so much time, energy, and commitment that goes into the process of applying for Magnet designation and when that call finally comes, the feeling is a bit surreal,” said Debbie Kisner, RN, vice president and chief nursing officer at MedStar Franklin Square. “There was a lot of excitement, a lot of cheering, and a lot of tears of happiness. There is so much pride in that moment.”

Literally, the next day, Debbie and her team of nursing leaders shifted their focus to Magnet designation number four, and began mapping out plans for their application.

“They say Magnet designation is a journey that has no start and stop dates and that definitely rings true at this hospital,” said Gina Shelley, RN, nursing practice innovation and Magnet program director. “We are focused on the steps we need to take to not only maintain our Magnet

### Magnet Myth Versus Magnet Fact

**Myth: Magnet designation takes place every four years.**

**Fact:** Magnet designation is renewed every four years, but the re-designation process takes much longer. ANCC and Magnet appraisers review our submitted document, provide feedback if additional documentation is needed, set a date for site visit, then contact the CNO to schedule a call to announce re-designation. This is why re-designation tends to take five years with a year from documentation submission to the call for re-designation.

**Myth: Group photos count as evidence in a Magnet story.**

**Fact:** When MedStar Franklin Square submitted its first document submission in 2007, we could submit everything. The document was assessed based on its height, with each page printed and added to the pile. Each subsequent Magnet re-designation process becomes more challenging, requiring specific evidence and data. Today, photos can be included as evidence if they are part of an email or meeting minutes, but not as stand-alone pieces.

**Myth: Magnet designation only recognizes nurses.**

**Fact:** Magnet designation showcases nursing excellence, but designation cannot be achieved without a commitment from the entire nursing department (nurses, techs, unit secretaries, etc.) and the interdisciplinary departments that collaborate with nurses on a daily basis. It takes a village to achieve Magnet designation and we need the continued support of all associates to achieve this goal.



designation but also to function as a cohesive team that optimizes patient outcomes, streamlines unit workflows, and creates a true culture of excellence our nurses build themselves and are proud to be part of.”

Since that day of celebration nearly four years ago, MedStar Franklin Square’s leadership team has had its sights set on Magnet designation number four. The team has worked diligently to compile 90 Magnet stories, each of which exemplifies what makes the hospital’s practice of nursing outstanding - some through narrative and others through putting the spotlight on quality and outcomes data.

“Our process of collecting and writing stories reminds nurses that everything they do on their units links back to Magnet,” said Gina. “When

a new initiative is deployed, when an award is presented, when an individual nurse or team of nurses accomplishes a great feat, when we learn something new, and when we see a great safety catch ... these are the things that become our Magnet stories and lead to our ability to earn consecutive designations.”

MedStar Franklin Square submitted its interim third year report to the ANCC in August 2021 and completed document in August 2022.

“We know that consecutive designation requires more; it gets tougher each time,” said Gina. “But we know we have what it takes.”

## Magnet Story Contributors

The process of collecting, writing, and refining Magnet stories for submission to the ANCC requires significant time, energy, and resources. Prior to submission, all stories are reviewed by Debbie Kisner, RN, Gina Shelley, RN, and Kristin Cammarata, RN. Kudos and special thanks to the following members of our team who have contributed to this important process:

Anya Abashian, Infection Control  
Erin Ament, RN  
Angie Amig, RN  
Patty Armijo, RN  
Jeanne Arseneau, RN  
Grace Aureus, RN  
Natasha Belanger, RN  
Carletta Betz, RN  
Sharon Bonner, RN  
Joe Bunker, RN  
Karen Corson, RN  
Heather Cox, RN  
Sharon Cox, RN  
Megan Cullum, RN  
Carol Delacruz, RN  
Neil Delimont, RN  
Grace De Torres, RN  
Kathy Ellis, RN  
Veronica Falcone, RN

Michael Feist, Operations  
Marge Flannery, RN  
Jennifer Free, RN  
Josie Gorman, RN  
Mary Gruver-Byers, Quality  
Alexius Hall, RN  
Debbie Heaps, RN  
Nadine Henry-Thomas, RN  
Christina Hughes, RN  
Tricia Isenock, RN  
Jessica Johnson, RN  
Samantha Keithley, RN  
Rebecca Landreth, RN  
Colleen Lindo, RN  
Heather Lyon, RN  
Natasha Maith, RN  
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Nina Prestileo, RN  
Mary Ridenour, RN  
Kaylene Ross, RN  
Josh Ryan, Pharmacy  
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Tim Saunders, Case Management  
Courtney Schappell, RN  
Debra Schindler, Marketing  
Monica Sears, RN  
Sean Squires, RN  
Jennifer Stephenson Zipp, RN  
Joe Vichot, Peri-Operative Services  
Beth Weed, RN  
Anna Wilsman, RN



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## Leadership News & Notes

### Nurse Leadership Team Expands to Include Two New Roles

Having a team of strong, experienced, and supportive nurse leaders is important at every hospital. This year, a decision was made to add a few critically important nurse leader roles at MedStar Franklin Square.

"We are constantly looking at our operations, resources, and needs, and identifying new ways to get work done efficiently, and in line with our principles of nursing excellence," said Debbie Kisner, RN, vice president and chief nursing officer at MedStar Franklin Square. "The time was right to expand our leadership team. We were successful in recruiting and placing two outstanding nurse leaders into new positions that are essential for our growth and long-term success."



**Kimberly Schwenk, RN**  
Assistant Vice President of  
Nursing Operations and  
Patient Care Services

As assistant vice president of nursing operations and patient care services, Kim holds administrative and leadership responsibilities

for a broad scope of clinical care programs, in alignment with the vision, mission, and strategic goals of MedStar Franklin Square's department of nursing. She oversees the operational and financial activities of the department, collaborating with clinical and administrative leaders to nurture a supportive and participative learning environment, centered around collaborative governance and shared decision-making.

"MedStar Franklin Square is a very large hospital with academic, teaching, and community-based care all part of our operations," said Debbie. "As a result of that diversity, we take part in a number of extended projects that require leadership expertise, knowledge, and support. We are thrilled that Kim is now part of our team, in this succession planning role as we think about the future of nurse leadership."



**Becky Grant, RN**  
Director of Capacity  
Management

Becky is responsible for planning and coordinating capacity management tasks, working collaboratively with the MedStar Health

Capacity Management and Transfer Office. Prior to joining MedStar Franklin Square, Becky served as a nursing supervisor at MedStar Harbor Hospital.

"Becky is a key liaison between staff, nursing supervisors, hospital leadership, and the capacity management team at the system level, which coordinates the movement of patients between MedStar hospitals based on their scope of clinical need and bed capacities," said Debbie. "She brings a tremendous amount of patient throughput experience to MedStar Franklin Square, which is especially important based on our location. We sit in a really unique spot, with many other hospitals nearby. Many utilize MedStar Franklin Square as a resource for overflow when they are at or over capacity. Becky manages this for us. Her role is crucial as we work to assure that every patient who turns to us for care has a place to go."





## Nurse Leadership Development Program

Each year, MedStar Health facilitates a Nurse Leadership Development Program (NLDP) to unite nurses from across the system, and provide training and growth opportunities for those who are viewed as the organization's "next generation of core nurse leaders." This year, Rebecca Landreth, RN, patient care director, behavioral health services, was invited to take part in the program. She appreciated the opportunity to network with other nurse leaders from around the country, work on group projects, and tackle new challenges outside of her normal, everyday work environment.

"Being part of this program allowed me to get out of my comfort zone," said Rebecca. "It was very eye opening, and helped me build confidence in my ability to shift to a different kind of nursing role."

One of the core components of the NLDP is that participants get to identify a "stretch goal"—where exposure to a different type of clinical environment, or a unique set of challenges, is the priority. Rebecca opted to collaborate with the bed capacity management team at MedStar Washington Hospital Center for her special project, where she also had the opportunity to shadow a senior nursing director.

"Rebecca has been a very strong nursing leader at MedStar Franklin Square for a number of years, and she was ready for a growth experience in areas outside of behavioral health," said Debbie. "You learn a lot by connecting with people at other hospitals, and this program truly does pave the way for leaders of the future at MedStar Health. Rebecca earned this opportunity, and I am proud of her."

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## Growing From Within Highlighting career advancement opportunities for nurses

Mary Rice, RN, would be among the first to say that sometimes, opportunity knocks when you least expect it. In the 15 years since Mary first joined MedStar Franklin Square, she's worked on just about every unit across the hospital, which prepared her well to eventually take on a leadership role. In December 2021, that opportunity presented when Mary was asked to fill in temporarily as float pool

manager, as the existing leader, Courtney Schappell, RN, began her transition to the IMC unit. A few months later, Mary was asked to fill the patient care director role, permanently.

"At first, I wasn't interested in the position; truthfully, I lacked the confidence to make the transition to the patient care director role," said Mary. "But Lynn Petty encouraged me and offered to be my mentor. I accepted the position and we met weekly, which helped me greatly as new challenges presented and I gained exposure to what happens within the organization away from the bedside and behind the scenes."

Mary says that her personal story of growth may inspire other nurses with a desire to advance in their careers and eventually move into leadership.

"It is important for nurses to let their managers know if they are interested in leadership and want to be considered for future opportunities," said Mary. "I can promise you - if you are willing to put yourself out there, get out of your comfort zone, and take on new challenges, you will be supported at MedStar Franklin Square. I wasn't looking for a promotion, but now that I have made the transition, I am confident, comfortable, and so thankful for the opportunity I was given."

# Nursing Education News



MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center's nursing education team is achieving great things, with the majority of their priorities centered around training, professional development, and the ongoing achievement of clinical competencies.

The Nurse Residency Program has continued to grow and thrive, giving new-to-practice nurses invaluable support and guidance as each makes the transition from nursing student to bedside nurse. This year, the program earned a five-year accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The accreditation is effective until June 30, 2027.

"CCNE accreditation confirms that our Nurse Residency Program is a stellar resource to give new-to-practice nurses the tools they need to be successful and retain knowledge and skills," said Debbie Kisner, RN, vice president and chief nursing officer. "We have continued to build and evolve this program because we see how much it benefits our new hires as they make the transition from student to bedside nurse."



## Clinical Advancement Program

Congratulations to the following nurses, appointed to MedStar Franklin Square's Clinical Advancement Program (CAP), this year:

- **Heather Lyon, RN** (Tower 5)
- **Jordan Manry, RN** (ED)
- **Nicole Nida, RN** (ICU)
- **Debbie Rouse, RN** (Vascular Access)
- **Lyndsay Rehak, RN** (Tower 5)

In addition to supporting onboarding and orientation procedures, nurse residency guides new nurses on clinical competency achievement and retention. This year's residents met virtually for a series of key clinical training sessions. Discussion and activity topics ranged from patient experience and stress management, to first aid and clinical response when a patient codes.

Additionally, MedStar Franklin Square's Nurse Extern Program has steadily grown. This program brings students into the hospital during their last year of nursing school, pairing each up with an experienced nurse for shadowing over a period of four weeks in the winter or eight weeks over the summer. Following completion of the program, externs are encouraged to continue picking up shifts on a PRN basis.

"Our nursing education team plays such a crucial role as MedStar Franklin Square recruits and trains new nurses, and provides ongoing education to our most tenured team members," said Beth Kilmoyer, RN, director of nursing professional development and education. "We arm our team with information, resources and tools, and experiences, that will help them not only do their jobs well, but also make them feel supported and confident."



# Advancing Technology in Meaningful Ways

## Anatomic Pathology Specimen Collection Project



Historically, specimens collected in the operating room that required lab analysis were documented on paper. The process was manual, time consuming, and inefficient. Recognizing the opportunity to standardize and automate this process, the Anatomic Pathology Specimen Collection Project was implemented at MedStar Franklin Square in spring 2022.

Following the lead of MedStar Georgetown, where the new process was piloted and deemed successful, new equipment and procedures were put in place to streamline and safeguard the collection and transport of specimens. Now, the surgeon verbally states what the specimen is. The information is pointed to MedConnect and a special label with a QR code is generated and printed. Nurses double check the order, verify it's accurate, and collect a signature from the surgeon before the specimen leaves the room.

"Critical diagnoses are made based on tissue samples collected in the operating room so we have a responsibility to safeguard them, assure they get to the lab safely, and that they are labeled accurately for testing," said Sharon Bonner, RN, director of clinical informatics at

MedStar Franklin Square. "This is an important quality and safety initiative, with clear benefits."

The new process has also been implemented in endoscopy, the cardiac catheterization lab, and labor and delivery.

"The implementation of this project has been a game changer," said Claudette Benson, RN, informatics nurse specialist. "Electronic specimen orders are easily validated between the nurse, tech, and physician in real-time and have made lost pathology sheets and illegible handwriting a thing of the past. Digital capture by QR code scanning removes the guesswork and ensures the correct specimen gets to the proper destination. It's a true team effort and streamlined process."

Pathology leaders at MedStar Franklin Square can attest to that statement. Specimens now arrive in their department correctly labeled, with all necessary details documented, and without the need to transcribe manual notes.

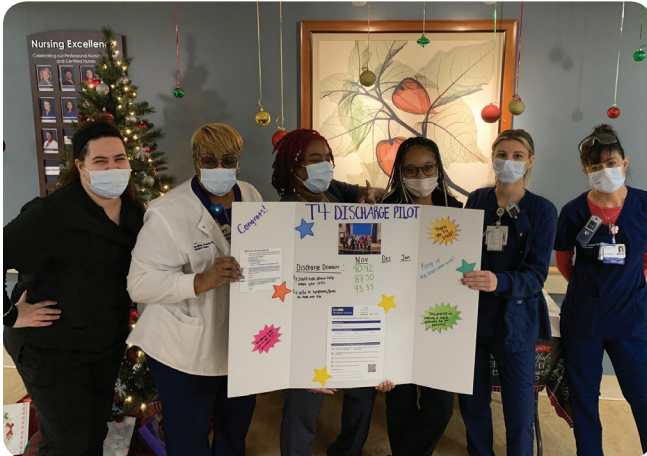
"Anatomic pathology specimen collection results in a significant reduction in errors, which allows us to work much more efficiently in the lab," said Deborah Duckworth, HTL (ASCP), regional anatomic pathology manager. "It creates a direct pathway to the correct physician or provider who ordered the test."

Kelli Hall-Manning, BS, HT (ASCP), regional anatomic pathology supervisor, says the new process also facilitates a better tracking system.

"The new procedures streamline our production process and create a pipeline of what's coming in that day," she said. "The benefits are tremendous—for us, the surgeons and nurses, and our patients."



## Building a Better Process for Patient Discharge



Shortly after patients are discharged from MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, they are asked to provide perspective and input on their experience, using a survey from Press Ganey. The feedback submitted is valuable and is taken to heart; it provides direction on how and where the hospital can improve, and continue making strides toward excellence in patient care and experience.

This year, based on recent survey responses, the hospital prioritized patient discharge as a key process improvement initiative. In November 2021, under the leadership of Rachael Akshar, director of patient experience, and in partnership with the corporate performance improvement team, a Rapid Performance Improvement Workshop (RPIW) was held. The workshop brought a multidisciplinary team of care providers together for in-depth discussion about how to streamline and optimize the process when the time comes for a patient to go home. The group began with an assessment of current state, reviewing processes and patient satisfaction scores, and confirming what works well versus what does not. They also discussed process adjustments that could boost efficiency – from tasks that can be done prior to discharge to better systems to organize and summarize information on discharge paperwork, to make it easier for patients to digest and understand.

“The patient discharge project is a great example of collaboration between multidisciplinary teams,” said Rachael. “It has helped increase awareness and understanding of patient experience and HCAHPS scores, while also ensuring our patients are fully prepared to care for themselves at home once they leave the hospital.”

An important outcome of the November workshop was development of an official “discharge checklist,” created to promote patient engagement and dialogue, opposed to a nurse reading off a list of instructions. It was created, and revised many times, with input from nurses. Once finalized, the document was piloted on T4 and has been well received by nurses and patients alike.



“The discharge checklist has allowed us to perform a more organized discharge process for the patient,” said Hailey Meyer, RN, Tower 4 clinical nurse. “The patient leaves the hospital with information organized and available for their reference, or to share with their primary care physician.”

Use of the discharge checklist is being gradually rolled out to units across the hospital, and will be fully implemented by the end of calendar year 2022.

“Early indicators of improvement have motivated the team to continue and sustain our new discharge processes,” said Rachael. “We are seeing the impact of a successful improvement project generated from the front line.”



# The Purple Ribbon Initiative

*Delivering socially-sensitive care for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking*



The unfortunate reality is there has been an increase in the number of patients presenting in MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center's emergency department following incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. As a result, the hospital has implemented the Purple Ribbon Initiative, with a goal to provide ED staff with education and guidance on how to deliver socially-sensitive care to these patients. The program centers around assuring patient safety and confidentiality while also facilitating a thorough process

to keep patient belongings secure, streamline transport processes, and document communication between patients and their visitors (which in some cases, can be their abusers).

MedStar Franklin Square implemented the Purple Ribbon Initiative with guidance from Nina Rodriguez, RN, and Catherine Michaelis, RN, who joined the Baltimore City Human Trafficking Medical Subcommittee in early 2021, and Amanda Woodward, RN, and Jennifer DiNoto, RN, who joined the group a few months later. Together, this dedicated group of nurses have made it a priority to educate their colleagues on signals and red flags to look for, common chief complaints, and algorithms for care delivery, as victims of these unfortunate circumstances present for care in the ED.

"The Purple Ribbon Initiative is important. We know we have a population of patients who experience these tragic events, and we have put the right resources in place so they have a place to turn for help and protection," said Debbie Kisner, RN, vice president and chief nursing officer at MedStar Franklin Square.

## Nursing by the Numbers

**959**

nurses are part of our team

**832**

nurses have earned a bachelor of science in nursing, or higher

**276**

nurses are certified

**50**

new-to-practice nurses joined our team this year

**\$550,598**

grant dollars were awarded this year to support nursing education

**.087**

Overall CAUTI rate (goal <.90)

**.073**

Overall CLABSI rate (goal <.90)

**3.54**

C.diff rate (goal <7.00)



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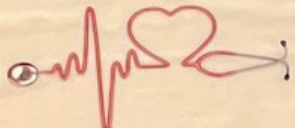
MedStar Frank  
Medical Center

MedStar Franklin Square  
Medical Center

NUR

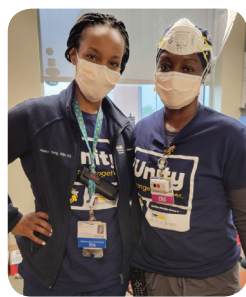
It's a beautiful thing when a career and passion come together.  
**NURSES**  
Thank you!

**WE**  
  
**NURSES!**  
Thank You for All You Do

**HAPPY NURSES WEEK!**  
  
**THANK YOU NURSES**



# Achieving Nursing Excellence Through Culture and Connectivity





# Celebrating Our Nurse of the Year

## Lyndsay Rehak, RN



It's been just a few years since Lyndsay Rehak, RN, graduated from nursing school and officially joined the MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center nursing team. But in that time, her impact on her unit, the hospital, and the profession of

nursing at large, has been significant. Lyndsay is recognized as a true "transformational nurse" by her colleagues; one who is incredibly skilled from a clinical standpoint, is an invaluable contributor when the day calls for immense collaboration and teamwork, and who also has a sincere passion for education and mentorship.

For all of these reasons and more, Lyndsay was named the annual medicine service line award winner and ultimately, MedStar Franklin Square's 2022 Nurse of the Year.

"When my name was announced as the winner of this award, I was completely blown away to the point of tears," recalls Lyndsay. "It affirms that I am doing what I am meant to do, and how grateful I am for where I have landed in life."

Lyndsay's experience at MedStar Franklin Square began during her time as a nursing student at the Notre Dame of Maryland University. She served as a nurse extern, eventually accepting an offer for full-time employment on Tower 5 upon graduation. As a new clinical nurse, she took part in the hospital's Nurse Residency Program. A short while later, the COVID pandemic began, and life as a nurse took a turn in unexpected directions.

"COVID added a whole new layer of complexity for new nurses. You had to come into work with a flexible mindset and be okay with the fact that you didn't know exactly how your day would go," said Lyndsay. "It wasn't what I signed up for, but I was absolutely honored to be able to do it."

Even on the toughest of days, when a co-worker asks Lyndsay how her day is going, her standard response is "living the dream!" Her love for the profession of nursing is so profound that she has recognized and pursued a calling as an educator, serving as a clinical instructor and assistant professor at her alma mater, within the School of Nursing. In the fall of 2022, Lyndsay will transition to a role as a full-time faculty member at Notre Dame of Maryland University. She will continue to work at MedStar Franklin Square in a PRN capacity.

"I credit my mom for my success," said Lyndsay, who graduated with her master's degree in nursing education in May. "She worked so hard to make it possible for me



to pursue my career and life goals. The fact that I have made her proud is the greatest award of all."

When Lyndsay is not working, she enjoys camping, beach trips, and exercising. She advocates strongly for self-care and wellness, and encourages everyone around her to take much-needed and well-deserved breaks. She is engaged to be married to Michael Wright, and is planning for her June 2023 wedding.



## Service Line Awards

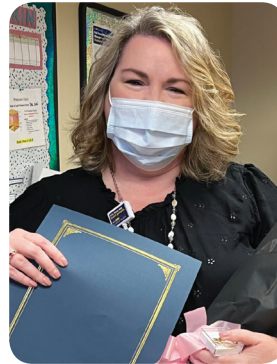
During Nurses Week each year, MedStar Franklin Square presents a series of service line awards to nurses who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to their unit or department, team, and their personal practice of nursing excellence. These are the nurses who are recognized as true role models within their service lines, and who we are proud to call our own. Congratulations to our 2022 award recipients!



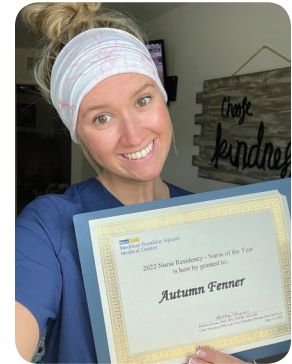
**Gjeela Rosenberger, RN**  
Behavioral Health Award



**Susan Cottrill, RN**  
Critical Care Award



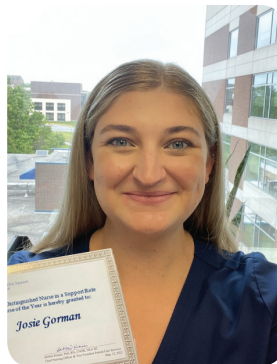
**Susan Pribyl, RN**  
Leadership Award



**Autumn Fenner, RN**  
Nurse Residency Award



**Suzy Gerchalk, RN**  
Oncology Award



**Josie Gorman, RN**  
Support Award



**Ruby Alimon, RN**  
Surgical Services Award



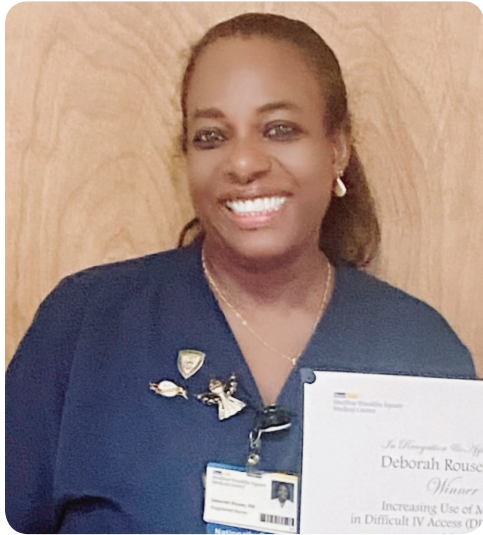
**Joy Geary, RN**  
Women's & Children's Award

## Podium Presentations

Schappell, C. (2022, May). Going with the flow. Retaining float pool nurses with stay conversations. Podium Presentation at 2022 MDAC Virtual Leadership Summit.

Shelley, G., Ellis, K. (2021, October). Innovations in a COVID vaccine center: Implementation of a lead nurse vaccinator role. Virtual podium session presented at the Maryland Nurses Association 118th Convention, Baltimore, MD.

## The Carol Anne Esche Practice Improvement Award



For some patients, IV access can be difficult, and placement of a midline catheter is a suitable alternative, opposed to a central line. In 2019, Debbie Rouse, RN, from MedStar Franklin Square's vascular access service department recognized an opportunity to increase utilization of midline catheters on acute care units, and embraced the chance to lead.

"I knew our nurses had the skills. We also had the equipment. Why not use it? I saw an opportunity to implement a tool that could help us streamline the process of care for both ourselves, as nurses, and our patients," said Debbie.

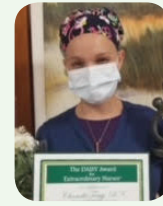
Midline catheters are placed using ultrasound guidance and can remain in place up to 29 days, or until treatment is no longer needed and/or clinically indicated. It's an ideal option for patients with difficult access, those who will remain hospitalized for more than four to five days, and those who are expected to be discharged from the hospital with a need for continued intravenous medications.

"The use of midlines has had a significant positive impact on patient experience and satisfaction on acute care units because it's eliminated the need for some patient to be stuck for peripheral IVs multiple times," explained Debbie. "There has been a marked increase in the utilization of midlines and a longer dwell time of this type of vascular access device. On average, we are now placing approximately 200 midlines per month."

Debbie is truly honored to win the Carol Anne Esche Award, in recognition of her leadership on this important project and in memory of her former colleague and mentor.

"I feel a lot of pride as the winner for this award because Carol Anne was very dear to me," said Debbie. "She guided me in so many ways and showed me how important research and evidence is, in the practice of nursing. I am the nurse I am today because of Carol Anne."

## DAISY Award



**Chanelle Tang, RN**  
(October 2021)

Tower 6 became known as the dedicated COVID unit, and charge nurse Chanelle Tang, RN, was recognized as the backbone of the floor. She often came in on her days off to support the team, organize meetings with leadership, and take part in discussions about challenges, policies, and procedures.



**Paulette Zelinsky, RN**  
(April 2022)

Paulette Zelinsky, RN, has demonstrated what it really means to remain committed to your patients, under all circumstances. A colleague witnessed her respond immediately to a patient's call button, within minutes of receiving difficult personal news. In the midst of managing her own emotions, Paulette continued bonding with her patients, and remained focused while providing lengthy discharge instructions.



## Nursing Impact Award



MedStar Health's Nursing Impact Award recognizes a nurse who is successful in communicating and implementing system nursing goals and processes at their respective hospital. Winners have demonstrated

a commitment to quality improvement and safety measures, the achievement of national nursing recognitions, and optimization of patient satisfaction scores. This year, Alexius Hall, RN, patient care director in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, was named as a recipient of this prestigious award, following implementation of a new process to reduce pressure injuries.

"Newborns, and especially babies born prematurely, are at high-risk for skin breakdowns,

but at the same time many of them need a CPAP mask that covers their entire nose, to support respiratory development," said Alexius. "The skin around a newborn's nose and mouth is so thin, and when a pressure injury occurs, in some cases, it won't heal properly. We needed a solution."

Alexius took the lead in working with the respiratory therapy team in researching and exploring options. Ultimately, the solution was placement of a very thin piece of foam across the bridge of patient's noses for added protection. Since implementation, the number of pressure ulcers that have developed under masks has been zero. This successful implementation led to Alexius' selection as a Nursing Impact Award winner.

"It is nice to be recognized for my work, and I think this award demonstrates to staff that the small things can make a big difference," said Alexius. "It is important that we take extra steps to dive into problems and find solutions, when doing so can impact our patients positively."

## Baltimore Magazine Names Top Nurses

### Four Named from MedStar Franklin Square

Congratulations to the four nurses from MedStar Franklin Square who were named Top Nurses by *Baltimore* magazine in 2022!



Gina Shelley, RN



Karen Corson, RN



Colleen Lindo, RN



Jennifer Rodriguez, RN

# Nursing and Environmental Services **Team Up** on **Research Project**



Across MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, standardized communications are in place to educate patients about the role of the environmental services department (EVS) and the steps taken to keep patient care areas and the hospital as a whole—clean. This year, an important question was raised, prompting nursing and environmental services teams to collaborate in a research-based project: how would perceptions about cleanliness change, if patients were read a script upon admission?

To find the answer, with approval from the MedStar Health Research Institute's (MHRI) Institutional Review Board (IRB), a study was deployed titled "Nurse and EVS Scripting to Improve Patient Perceptions of Cleanliness." During the month of April 2022, nursing and EVS staff assigned to Tower 1 utilized a script when speaking with patients about daily cleaning procedures. At the same time, standard communications regarding daily cleaning were shared with patients on Tower 5—a comparison that makes sense with both units having similar patient populations and number of beds. As patients were discharged from both units, they were asked to complete a brief six-question survey, focused on opinions and perceptions about room cleanliness.

"Our data analysis indicated a high correlation that nursing and EVS scripting can positively

## The Research Team

- **Michael Feist, FACHE, CHEP, AVP**, integrated support services, *primary investigator*
- **Sean Squires, RN**, Tower 1 nurse manager, *primary investigator*
- **Gina Shelley, RN**, nursing practice innovation and Magnet director, *secondary investigator*
- **Rachael Akshar, MS**, patient experience director, *surveyor*
- **Miranda Shaner**, hospitality services manager, *surveyor*
- **Renee Loftus, RN**, Tower 1 clinical nurse, *research champion*

impact patient perceptions about cleanliness," said Gina Shelley, RN, nursing practice innovation and Magnet director, and secondary investigator for the research study. "It was clear that patients who were read the script appreciated that our team was taking the time to talk with them about EVS services and the role cleanliness plays in their healing process."

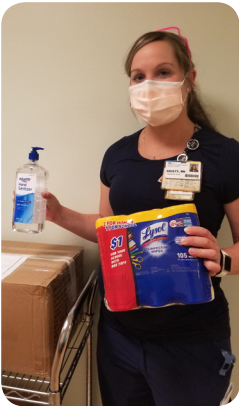
Aside from creating positive synergy between the nursing and EVS teams, Gina says the research process confirms how vital communications are as MedStar Franklin Square works to increase Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores. Optimizing patient perception, during and following the process of hospitalization, can go a long way.

"Patient perception of cleanliness is a core element of patient experience, and ultimately, patient satisfaction," said Gina. "We know we have an opportunity to better explain the importance of cleanliness, and all the steps our team takes to assure it. Our research was intended to look at alternative ways to share information and proved that scripting can have a positive impact."



# Snapshots from Our Work in the Community

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center’s nursing team is committed to giving back to the community it serves. Once again this year, the nurses held a backpack drive to benefit Martin Boulevard Elementary School in Middle River, and a toiletry drive to support the Eastern Resource Center, located just a few steps away from the hospital on Franklin Square Drive. The Magnet Ambassadors led these efforts and rallied nurses from across the hospital to participate in both events. The result: delivery of 302 backpacks filled with supplies and ten full boxes of toiletry items for local citizens in need.



# Nurse Leadership Directory

## Senior Nursing Leadership



**Debbie Kisner, PhD,  
RN, CNOR, NEA-BC**  
Vice President, Chief  
Nursing Officer



**Kimberly Schwenk,  
MSN, RN**  
Assistant Vice  
President, Nursing  
Operations & Patient  
Care Services  
Interim: Women & Infant  
Services



**Kathy Grzeskiewicz,  
MBA-HCM, BSN RN,  
NEA-BC**  
Senior Director, Critical  
Care, Emergency,  
Stroke Response



**Lynn Petty, MA, RN,  
NE-BC**  
Administrative  
Director, Nursing  
Administration,  
Behavioral Health,  
Women's and  
Children's



**Cindy Roles, MSN,  
RN, CNML**  
Senior Director, Med/  
Surg, Oncology  
Interim: Agency



**Kaylene Ross, MS,  
BSN, CNOR**  
Senior Director,  
Perioperative

## Inpatient Directors



**Sharon Bonner, MS,  
RN-BC**  
Multisite Director,  
Clinical Informatics  
Interim: Payroll Specialists  
& ClarVia



**Beth Kilmoyer, DNP,  
MS, RN-BC, NPJ-BC**  
Multisite Director  
Professional Dev.  
Interim: NSP Grants & NPJ  
Council



**Gina Shelley MS,  
BSN, RN, CENP,  
NPJ-BC**  
Director, Nursing  
Practice Innovation &  
Magnet  
Interim: Float Pool

## Outpatient Directors



**Erika Akers,  
MSN, RN**  
Director, Ambulatory  
Oncology



**Patricia Isenock, MS,  
BSN, RN, NEA-BC,  
MCHES**  
RN Regional Director,  
Population &  
Community Health

## Patient Care Managers

### Med/Surg and Critical Care



**Gail Zephyr, MSN,  
RN, OCN**  
T1 Med/Surg/3SB  
Oncology



**Nathaniel Woods,  
BSN, RN, CCRN**  
T2 ICU



**Courtney Schappell,  
MSN, RN**  
T3 IMC



**Shawna White, BSN,  
RN**  
T4 Acute Cardiac



**Heather Lyon, BSN,  
RN, CMSRN**  
T5 Neuro-Tele/Med/  
Surg



**Susan Pribyl, MSN,  
RN, CMSRN**  
T6 Med/Surg/Renal

### Women's & Children's Services



**Torie Williams, MSN,  
RN, C-EFM**  
Mother/Baby  
Interim: Labor & Delivery



**Alexius Hall, MSN,  
BSN, RNC-NIC**  
NICU  
Interim: Labor & Delivery



**Grace De Torres, MS,  
BSN, RN**  
ASC, PACU



**Liz Ibhaze, MSN, RN**  
Operating Room,  
Endoscopy



**Kerry Haley-West,  
MSN, RN, CEN**  
ED & Stroke Response



**Rebecca Landreth,  
MS, BSN, RN**  
2SB, CAPS, CIS

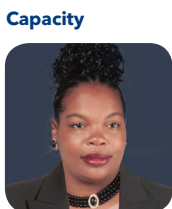
### Perioperative Services

### ED & Stroke Response Behavioral Health

### Float Pool



**Mary Rice, BSN, RN**  
Float Pool



**Becky Grant, MSN, RN**  
Director, Capacity Mgmt  
Interim: Nursing Specialists



# At a glance.

## MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center

MedStar Franklin Square provides comprehensive, technology-based surgical services, offering the latest, most innovative treatment for patients with a wide range of medical conditions. Our distinguished specialty service lines include: medicine, oncology, cardiology, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, orthopaedics, neonatal intensive care, behavioral health, neurosurgery, and ambulatory services.

The Baltimore community was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. MedStar Franklin Square treated the most number of COVID patients in Baltimore County. In fact, many patients throughout the MedStar Health system were transferred to MedStar Franklin Square due to our reputation and ability to care for these patients safely. By the end of Fiscal Year 2021, MedStar Franklin Square cared for over 4,000 COVID-positive patients and discharged over 2,300 COVID-positive patients. MedStar Franklin Square also developed a wellness center for our associates and created a COVID-19 clinic where the team administered over 33,000 COVID vaccines to the community.

Throughout the pandemic, the entire healthcare market lost patient volumes for many reasons, including the delay of elective procedures, reduction of cancer screenings, and cancellation of physician office visits. Thankfully, our community continued to trust MedStar Franklin Square for many of their non-COVID-related services and treatments. By the end of Fiscal Year 2021, many of our patient volumes were higher than before the pandemic started.

MedStar Health invested heavily in MedStar Franklin Square throughout this period. We recruited experts in gastroenterology, neurology, and other integrated services. We opened our surgical pavilion, neurovascular center, stroke care center, and Neurocare ICU. We also constructed a helipad on our roof to help our patients receive more efficient care.

Accredited by the Joint Commission, MedStar Franklin Square is proud to have earned some of the region and nation's most prestigious honors and accolades, including:

- Magnet Designation by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) for excellence in nursing.
- The American Heart Association's "Mission: Lifeline® - STEMI Receiving Center" Gold Award.
- The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's "Get with the Guidelines®" Stroke Gold Plus Achievement Award.
- The Cribs for Kids® National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification.
- Baltimore magazine recognized 87 MedStar Health physicians as "Top Doctors" in November 2020
- Baltimore magazine recognized 5 MedStar Franklin Square nurses for Excellence in Nursing
- Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation certified by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Maryland Patient Safety Center's Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Center of Excellence Award.
- Nurse Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) Senior Friendly

MedStar Franklin Square is recognized as one of the largest employers in Baltimore County. We also continually invest in community health and wellness initiatives. In 2020, more than \$48.3 million was allocated to community benefit programs.

It's how we treat people.

9000 Franklin Square Dr.  
Baltimore, MD 21237  
p 443-777-7000  
MedStarFranklin.org

### MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center Facts

#### Fiscal Year 2021 Statistics

Number of licensed beds.....	338
Total number of physicians.....	827
(Employed/Affiliated).....	610/217
Number of associates.....	3,792
(Number of nurses).....	2,706
Annual Emergency Department visits.....	64,247
Annual admissions.....	19,557
Annual observations.....	8,567
Annual surgeries (excluding clinical).....	18,993
Annual baby deliveries.....	2,261

#### Clinical Specialties

- Angelos Center for Lung Diseases
- Bariatric Surgery Center
- Bloodless Medicine and Surgery Program
- The Breast Center
- Center for Digestive Disease
- Center for Gynecologic Oncology
- Center for Neurology
- Center for Neurosurgery
- The CyberKnife® Center
- Diabetes & Nutrition Education Center
- Family Health Center
- Liver Evaluation Clinic -  
MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute
- The Maryland Melanoma Center
- The Maternal-Fetal Medicine Center
- MedStar Health Cancer Network
- MedStar Orthopaedics Institute
- The National Center for  
Bone & Soft Tissue Tumors
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
- Primary Stroke Center
- Women's Health Center

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MedStar Health