

2018 NONL Distinguished Nurse Leader Mentor Award

Background: AONE and NONL's mission is to shape expert health care through innovative and expert nursing leadership. This professional organization is focused on nursing leadership and using our voice to advance the health of our patients, our organizations, our cities, our state and our country.

NONL members intuitively know the value of robust and diverse nursing workforce and nurses are integral to improving the health of our communities while simultaneously reducing costs. Nurses ensure health care is affordable, accessible and of the highest quality. Nurses improve patient outcomes by partnering with physicians, pharmacists, social workers, nutritionists, pastoral care and other professional partners.

We are the country's most trusted profession and we use our voice for positive change. Nursing leadership is hard work. AONE identified the following competencies as essential to effective leadership.

- *Communication and Relationship-Building*
 - Promotes and helps others learn by networking with other colleagues within and outside of the profession of nursing.
 - Promotes thinking and knowledge development in the areas of mentoring, coaching, dialogue, critical thinking and appreciative inquiry.
 - Makes a lasting impact on those formally being mentored and/or through collaborative and collegial interaction.
- *Knowledge of the Health Care Environment*
 - Encourages creativity, innovation, and use of collaborative thinking when problem-solving or designing the future.
- *Leadership*
 - Inspires leadership and serves as a role model to others
 - Lends informed advice to others in areas such as academic progression, research, career choices, career advancement, advocacy, and healthcare policy development.
- *Professionalism*
 - Maintains high professional and ethical standards within his/her discipline and encourages others to strive for the same.
 - Promotes the nursing profession through committee involvement, taking on leadership roles, sharing knowledge via presentations at the local and/or regional level.
- *Business Skills*
 - Coaches others to identify and leverage one's own strengths as well as to set stretch goals to encourage ongoing growth and development.

On behalf of NONL, we are pleased to recognize two of Nebraska's finest Nurse Leaders and their efforts to mentor professional colleagues.

RURAL AWARD WINNER

Nicole Thorell, MSN, RN CNE Lexington Regional Health Center

Great leaders don't set out to be a leader. They set out to make a difference. It's not about the role but about the goals.

Nicole has a passion for education and stays current on evidence based best practices. She excels at public speaking and does an outstanding job educating Lexington Regional employees on how we can implement these best practices for our patients close to home.

Nicole started as a nurse aide while in high school, went on to become an RN and obtained her Emergency Nurse certification in 2005. Nicole was promoted to Chief Nursing Officer in 2014 and participates in system wide strategic initiatives helping LRHC to achieve its mission.

Nicole is a certified TeamSTEPPS Master trainer and has achieved her LEAN Six Sigma Green Belt. Nicole uses these tools to constantly assess process throughout the organization, implementing process improvement projects creating cost savings.

Nicole has a sincere interest in seeing other succeed. She encourages others to pursue their passion whether that be an advanced degree, certification or a personal goal. She was selected to be a NRHA Fellow. Nicole is internally motivated to lead our organization, our state, our region and our country as we work to change the way we deliver care. Her legacy will show she has changed the way people think. Her influence will guide others to take an active part in transforming health care.

Nicole educated the organization on huddles and successfully implemented this strategy so a member from each department meets daily to discuss issues and offers solutions to staffing, safety policies and procedures. Departments have modeled this organizational wide practice into the specific departments. These "quick meetings" have been instrumental in breaking down barriers between departments and increasing teamwork throughout LRHC. Nicole listens to employees and is willing to try "out of the box" ideas to which lead to more efficient processes and a better patient experience.

Nicole is responsible for the management & coordination of staff, patient throughput, provider collaboration and transfers to secondary or tertiary regional medical centers. She is the first to volunteer to help cover a short staffed shift or to represent LRHC at a community event. Nicole is constantly educating the community on the services available right here, close to home. Nicole was featured as a female leader in the Healthier Nebraska Magazine in 2016, recognized as a RWJF Nursing Action Coalition 40 under 40, and named as a CNO to Know in 2017 by Becker's Hospital Review. She has been instrumental in advocating for rural health care by participating in the National Rural Health Association Fellow Program in 2018 and is involved in the Nebraska Hospital Association because she understand a strong hospital is essential to a community's economic e=well-being and the population's overall health.

In 2015, Nicole earned her Just Culture certification and works to see LRHC Virtuous Organization journey helps employees collectively behave in ways that are consistent with moral excellence.

Nicole has presented to numerous audiences with podium, poster, panel and podcast presentations, including Critical Access Hospital Quality Conference, American Hospital Association Rural Health Care Leadership Conference , Becker's Annual meeting , Nebraska Minority Health Conference on topics including Reduction of Harm Across the Board, Reducing CLABSI and CAUTI's "It's all about the C's-The C-Suite and Culture, Reducing readmissions improving frontline staff engagement using the HIIN Improvement Calculator , Improving diabetic outcomes in the Hispanic population, and elevating the patient experience & workforce strategies to drive clinical financial and operational outcomes. Recently, Nicole was a guest on the Rural Health Radio hosted by Bill Auxier this past August.

Nicole is very deserving of this recognition and has the respect and support of our leadership team, the board of directors, the nursing team and the community. She walks the talk and consequently has had strong retention rates-we have not had to use travelers and for a time we had to turn away nurses. Since our surgery department has grown, she had moved some of the floor staff to the OR. This growth has opened up a couple of positions on the Med-Surg floor. Nicole has accepted responsibility for three Rural Health Clinics and the Urgent Care. Volumes are increasing in these areas so it is likely that she will be adding positions as we reach capacity. Otherwise, she has no vacancies.

I share this retention and recruitment information because leadership is foundational to retention-people want to join and then remain on a team where there is strong leadership. Her success is retaining highly skilled, strong nurses who are committed to delivering compassionate, high quality care speaks to her leadership and mentoring skills. The nurses she leads are thought leaders themselves. Education is promoted and under Nicole's leadership the entire nursing division is centered on the coordinated care of the patients we serve.

"Excellence is never an accident; it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities."

Congratulations, Nicole, from all of NONL!

URBAN AWARD WINNER

Teri Tipton Bruening, MSN, RN, CNE, Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nurse Officer for Nebraska Methodist Hospital and Women's Hospital.

"This executive leader is an exceptional communicator, networker and relationship builder. Teri's networking ability is second to none and she always knows who to reach out to in order to seek opinions or collaboration. She has built key strategic partnerships with Home Health & Hospice, eight Skilled Nursing Facilities, Select Specialty Hospital to meet patient needs. Teri supported the development of three Patient and Family Advisory Councils and frequently attends these meetings. Her ability to influence practice and create a healthy culture where true interdisciplinary collaboration occurs enabling truly patient centered care to be delivered. Her work is rewarded by physician colleagues giving the nursing care under Teri's leadership a 98.6% excellent rating and a place to practice and excellent score of 96.8%. Mrs. Tipton-Bruening sits on the hospital-college council to ensure student's clinical practice is positive and prepares them for their professional careers and often has a student shadowing her. Teri takes the extra time & effort to provide the student with the necessary background to understand the situations. Teri then takes the next step in following up and summarizing what occurred so the student truly understands what happened. She also supported the development of three dedicated educational units within the hospital.

Teri's leadership serves as an inspiration. She serves as a role model. Teri promotes and challenges her team to "dream big" and encourages creativity and innovation. She has a knack for listening and then summarizing and articulating the next steps. With the increasing number of psychiatric inpatients, she supported the development of a Behavioral Health Rapid Response Team which resulted in improved patient placement and RN's reporting increased satisfaction after implementation. This data driven project was presented at the 2016 Magnet Conference. She championed Workplace Resiliency and Safety as a strategic initiative in response to the ever changing and challenging work place environment. Teri's work in palliative care has led to the creation of both an inpatient and outpatient palliative care medicine clinic, the first of its kind in the city of Omaha. Teri's passion for elder care led to the development of a Geriatric Service Line supporting key anchor services and operationalizes six models of care, Nurses Improving Care of Healthsystem Elders, (NICHE), Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN), AgeWISE Geropalliative Care, Acure Care for Elders Unit (ACE) Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) and Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) outpatient care clinic.

Teri led her NMH through its third and fourth ANCC Magnet Hospital re-designations which demonstrates her commitment to excellence in patient care. Her work with the college led to the creation of the RN-BSN Academy and more recently the BSN-MSN Academy. As a result, NMH can boast of having a BSN rate of 87%, exceeding the IOM Future of Nursing Report of having 80% BSN by 2020. Teri supports professional certification of her nursing staff, in fact 26% of her team are proud holders of professional certifications. Teri has supported two of her nurse leaders to enroll in the Advisory Board Fellowship 18 month leadership program. Listening to her leaders, who understand that bright future nurses may come from the ranks of

nursing assistants, Teri worked to develop the Nurse Assistant Scholarship program which will pay for tuition while working on the unit part time. Teri financially supports the Professional Advancement Clinical Excellence Reward (PACER) voluntary professional nursing achievement award. In addition, Teri supports nursing research through her work on the Research and Evidence Based Practice Council and is a member of the IRB. Teri became a certified gerontological nurse early in her career, and she has maintained this certification throughout this time. I would venture she is one of a handful of Chief Nursing Officers at large health systems who hold this distinction.

During all of these activities, Teri radiates professionalism and sets exemplar expectations for her and others. She conveys positivity and it is contagious. She desires to recognize staff for outstanding patient care with her support of the Daisy Award Program and personally attends each award ceremony. Teri was instrumental in leading the path to earning the American Association of Men in Nursing (AAMN) "Best Workplace For Male Nurses" award in 2017. She is a member and has been a strong advocate and personally invites male nurses to become members of AAMN. Teri serves as a member of the NAC Leadership team and is a member of NONL, AONE, NNA, ANA and STTI, where often she has chaired or served on committees.

Teri provides guidance in setting goals with employees and action plans to accomplish them. Her input is valued by her managers and directors. She freely shares examples from her own experiences. Her business skills are keen and she allows others to grow through one on one time with her. She commits great effort in this area as she is keenly aware how vital this is to not only the nurse leader but also to the organization. This year, she piloted a program with finance so nursing leaders have individual time with finance colleagues which has improved communications and enhanced understanding of the budgetary process.

Teri's talents are abundant. She handles complex and challenging situations with grace and ease. Her accomplishments have positively shaped and influenced patient care. She is a great example of a nurse leader who is making a tremendous impact now for our future.

Congratulations, Teri, from all of NONL!