Keeping It Clean & Safe

Hemostatic Agents in the OR

Celebrating Nurses in LA
A vice president and chief operating officer at St. Mary Medical Center in Long Beach, CA, Gail Daly’s main philosophy is that patients come first. Daly, RN, has built her dynamic career around this thought — from her early career as a bedside nurse to her current role as a hospital executive.

However, patient care has been an ongoing theme in Daly’s personal and professional life. As a 10-year-old, Daly cared for a wheelchair-bound neighbor who needed nursing care but lacked the finances to afford full-time care. Later in high school, Daly wanted to become a doctor, but she later decided to enter nursing school to avoid the burden of medical school loans.

“When I started to look at nurses versus physicians, I liked how nurses interacted with patients,” Daly explained. “It was more of a hand-to-heart approach. I felt that the impact I could have from a caring perspective was better served being a nurse.”

After graduating from nursing school, Daly worked for two organizations before embarking on a career as a traveling nurse. She landed a 3-month assignment at Olympia Medical Center in Los Angeles working as a night nurse in the HIV/AIDS unit. “At the time, no one wanted to care for those patients;” Daly said. “In my opinion, the nurses I worked with were a special group.” Daly stayed at the hospital for 14 years evolving into many different positions – from charge nurse to educator to an emergency room director to chief nursing officer (CNO).

In 2004, St. Mary Medical Center’s chief operating officer encouraged Daly to apply for the CNO position. In the midst of organizational transition, the hospital was in need of stability. Daly’s vast experience served her well in this new role, which eventually lead to her promotion as chief operating officer and vice president.

“I think the benefit of being a bedside nurse who evolves to a leadership position is that you see all aspects of care, including how systems work and how departments interface together,” Daly explained. “Once you’re at the CNO level, you understand what impacts the patient and the nurse, and what hinders the nurse from being able to perform nursing care.”

As a nurse executive, Daly has been an integral component to St. Mary Medical Center’s success. Crediting her early career, Daly said she has a better ability to see where systems and communications can be improved to streamline operations, so patient care comes first. A patient’s best interest is always at the core of every decision the hospital makes, she said.

In addition, she examines the hospital’s departmental relationships, so each supports the other, helping to prevent silos in the organization. Daly’s leadership agenda has helped earn St. Mary a reputation for helping all sectors of society while earning high marks and top metrics.

During her tenure, St. Mary instituted the Comprehensive AIDS Resource Education (C.A.R.E.) Program dedicated to taking care of patients with HIV/AIDS. Supported by a donation from the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, C.A.R.E. is one of the largest comprehensive care clinics in Southern California. “The program is instrumental to our mission,” said Daly, “and it also supports my philosophy of taking care of all patients — no matter what their background is.”

**Patient Support**

Oncology nurses witness patients through all stages of cancer — diagnosis, treatment and recovery. As Linda Nguyen-Flores, RN, said — it’s about “respecting humanity and helping others in need.”

For Nguyen-Flores, the oncology unit

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**Finding Balance**

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**Transplanting Hearts**

In 1994, Caron Burch, MSN, RN, FNP, CCTC, was hired as a heart and lung transplant coordinator at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Health System. It wasn't Burch's first foray into cardiac care; she previously held positions in Ohio, Texas and California caring for chronic heart patients.

In addition, to her duties as coordinator, Burch was also a graduate student at the University of Southern California working toward an MSN/family nurse practitioner certificate. Burch credits her fellow nurses for this successful venture. "I was fortunate to have a very supportive group of colleagues who helped me out," she explained. "I was able to get through my schooling because of them."

With the exception of a short stint as a cardiothoracic surgery nurse practitioner, Burch has remained in heart-lung transplant...
at UCLA. Currently, she is the nurse manager of the UCLA Heart and Lung Transplant program, the pre-pediatric heart transplant coordinator and the manager of the ventricular assist device (VAD) program. In addition, she works intermittently for the Joint Commission as a VAD reviewer.

Burch’s ambitious career has been in cardiac care with a focus on transplants. In her multiple roles, she works to maintain a balance that puts patients first while striving to maintain standards and rules, which include managed care processes, regulatory compliances, staffing issues and increased hospital costs.

As with her earlier schooling, she credits her team for her success. “I have a fantastic team, and I could not do what I do without the team that I have,” Burch said. Her current nursing team includes 10 heart and lung transplant coordinators, two VAD coordinators and eight administrative assistants. They manage approximately 30 heart and 60 lung transplant candidates on the waiting list and follow close to 200 adult heart, 120 pediatric heart and 300 adult lung post-transplant patients.

In fact, Burch is adding to her team. To allow her more time to manage, she is hiring someone to replace her as the pre-pediatric heart transplant coordinator. As a hiring manager, she looks for the same qualities that have been inherently part of the heart and lung transplant unit — enthusiasm, ambition and the love of learning. “There’s a lot of outpatient care,” she explained, “and a lot of responsibility when it comes to the [donor] call. You have to learn to step back and let people teach you.”

As a manager, Burch’s goal is to have an environment that is comfortable, effective and efficient. “These nurses work so hard. It’s a tough work environment. To me, it’s important to foster an environment that’s compassionate,” she explained.

Burch also is concerned about the patient environment. Although patients and their families are more educated and savvy about their health, it’s important they feel comfortable asking questions and voicing their concerns. They need to actively participate in decisions that affect their care, she explained. “We [at UCLA] are very sensitive to patient satisfaction,” Burch said. “Patients usually have a choice of where to go for their healthcare, and if they choose UCLA we strive to provide a positive experience each and every time.”

Alison DiPaolo is custom communications coordinator at ADVANCE. 

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A special message to our dedicated nurses

It’s Nurse Appreciation Week, and on behalf of the hospitals that make up HCA’s Far West Division, we would like to honor our nurses for their dedication and compassion they bring to each one of our facilities. Your continued quality and attention to patient care is so appreciated. We thank you!

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