

THE Importance of Caring

JUNE 2021

my journey into nursing



Megan Vopalensky, RN, BSN, ICCE
 MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH NURSE

A sprained ankle helped lead Megan Vopalensky to a career in health care.

She was in first grade and visiting a close family friend when she stumbled and fell down the stairs. The friend, who was a nurse, sprang into action. **“She took care of my sprained ankle right in her kitchen,”** Vopalensky said. **“I thought to myself how cool she was because she knew how to do all this stuff and stay calm, which made me stay calm.”**

Vopalensky always thought highly of her friend, admiring her grace throughout her nursing career. **“The power of one nurse or health care professional can leave imprints on a person for their whole life,”** she said. **“It’s truly amazing.”**

Now, Vopalensky is in position to be the one having a positive influence on patients as a registered nurse in the maternal child health department at Columbus Community Hospital. She started working at CCH in 2016 after completing her bachelor’s degree in nursing in 2015 at Bryan College of Health Sciences.

Vopalensky said being able to help other people makes her happy, which is why she chose to go into nursing. She first considered becoming a nurse when she was a freshman in high school. Once she was old enough, she took certified nursing courses and then working in a nursing home.

“I never looked back,” she said. **“I worked in a memory care unit for six years and knew that my heart belonged in health care.”**

She worked for a short time in an Omaha postpartum and gynecology unit before returning to her hometown of Columbus to work at the hospital.

Most days, Vopalensky works in the labor and delivery side of the maternal child health department, caring for laboring mothers.

“I love providing support to moms and their support partners in every way possible,” she said.

That support could include offering labor education, teaching comfort techniques or simply retrieving a frozen Italian ice for a patient. Her primary role is to care for moms and newborns throughout pregnancy and delivery.

Vopalensky also has helped reintegrate prepared childbirth classes at the hospital. Along with nurses Heidi Abbott and Andrea Voss, she teaches Bump and Beyond Prepared Childbirth Classes, a six-hour series for expecting parents. The three take turns leading the classes, which are offered monthly at the hospital.

She feels returning to Columbus has been a good career move as she has continued growing in her profession.

“CCH has given me access to a multitude of educational opportunities that have led me to my current position,” she said. **“I received access and support throughout my two-year certification process with the International Childbirth Education Association. CCH provided everything I needed to complete this certification, which I am extremely grateful for.”**

There are multiple opportunities for students to explore health care as a career, Vopalensky said. **“You can begin working in health care at a young age and gain a ton of experience that will help you in the future,”** she said. **“There are programs through most high schools that will allow you to follow a health provider. The best way to gain insight is to get into that setting and meet the people who work there.”**

For more information about the maternal child health unit at CCH, visit our website at www.columbushosp.org.