COLUMBUS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The CCH professional practice team includes, from left: Narka Braun, professional practice technician; Alecia Neidig, RN, MSN, director of professional practice; Wendy Ramaekers, RN, MSN, nurse educator; Sharon Diersen, BSW, professional practice assistant; Alicia Mueller, MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC, CHSE, nurse educator; April Benson, RN, MSN, nurse eductor; and Chris Bartholomew, DNP, MSNEd, RN, nurse educator.

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

COLUMBUS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

WHERE YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

2024-25 THE FISCAL YEAR

"We recognize that continuous staff development is key to patient safety and clinical excellence. Through ongoing education, mentorship and support, our nurses are empowered to grow professionally and deliver the highest standard of care."

Alecia Neidig, MSN, RN
Professional practice director

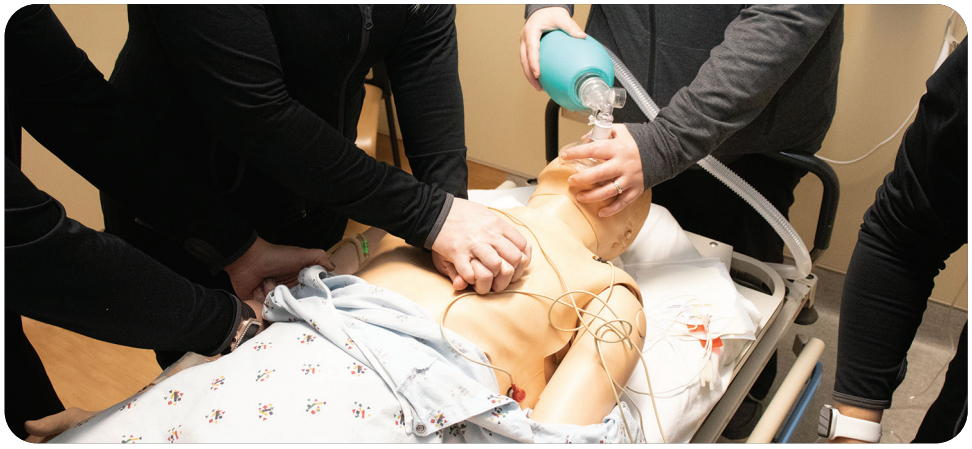
At Columbus Community Hospital, the nursing leadership has placed a particular focus on professional development. Nurses have continued access to advanced training, ongoing education and mentorship from seasoned health care providers. Whether they are training to be a nurse, new in their practice or a professional with decades of experience, they find a supportive environment where they can learn and grow. And, ultimately, their patients reap the benefits of having a caregiver who is highly trained and ready to face anything.

This annual report covers the professional practice milestones from the past fiscal year – May 1, 2024-April 30, 2025. Read on to learn how our nurses are learning, teaching and working toward continuous quality improvement.

SIMULATION LAB

The simulation lab at CCH includes several different mannequins that are implemented into training, including the newest one, Hal. This high-fidelity mannequin uses artificial intelligence (AI) to communicate with nurses as they are treating him, rather than needing someone to speak "for him" behind thetreating him, rather than needing someone to speak "for him" behind the scenes. Hal is the most advanced simulator on the market – he can experience seizures, move his arm and squeeze a caregiver's hand. Nurses began training on Hal in October 2024.

CCH, in partnership with Central Community College, received the funds for Hal through Nebraska Legislative Bill 227, which supported several different professional practice initiatives. In addition to Hal, the hospital also received two mid-fidelity mannequins, which gave it an opportunity to upgrade its older equipment.



Number of simulations performed

MAY 2024-APRIL 2025	
May	**11**
June	**24**
July	**33**
August	**70**
September	**33**
October	**10**
November	**17**
December	**0**
January	**25**
February	**35**
March	**42**
April	**74**
TOTAL	**374**

STUDENT NURSE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

7

Nurses graduated from the Registered Nurse Apprentice Program in May 2024

20

Nurses participated in the Student Nurse Internship Program during the 2024-25 fiscal year

The Student Nurse Internship Program, which launched in summer 2024, evolved out of Columbus Community Hospital's Registered Nurse Apprentice Program. CCH developed it to offer not only invaluable hands-on experience, but also significant financial support to aspiring nurses at various stages of their education.

The program features three distinct tracks, catering to a diverse range of students: those pursuing a Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) degree, those working toward an associate's degree in nursing (ADN), and certified nursing assistants (CNAs) seeking to advance their careers and become registered nurses. This tiered approach ensures that students receive tailored training and mentorship relevant to their specific educational goals.

A cornerstone of the CCH Student Nurse Internship Program is its commitment to helping relieve the financial burden often associated with pursuing a nursing degree. The hospital will cover up to 75% of tuition costs – as well as expenses for books and fees – for selected interns. This substantial financial assistance underscores CCH's dedication to investing in the future of health care, and in removing barriers to entry for promising nursing students. By providing this support, the hospital aims to attract and retain talented individuals within the local community, ensuring a strong pipeline of qualified nurses for years to come.

The internship program offers a unique opportunity for students to gain practical experience within a dynamic hospital setting, working alongside experienced nurses and health care professionals. Interns have the chance to apply their classroom knowledge in real-world scenarios, developing crucial clinical skills and building confidence in their abilities.

NURSE RESIDENCY PROGRAM (NRP)

13

Number of nurses in the NRP during the 2024-25 fiscal year

A nurse residency program provides new graduate nurses with extra support as they navigate their first year of practice. It helps them bridge the gap between being a student nurse to becoming a board-certified practicing nurse. Before fiscal year 2024-25, Columbus Community Hospital employed a "home-grown" nurse residency program to help nurses become accustomed to the hospital's climate and their new role as professionals.

Starting in September 2024, CCH began using the Vizient/AACN Nurse Residency Program™ (NRP), which supports newly licensed nurses transitioning into their first professional role (nurse residents). The program began in 2002 as a multi-site research study based on the need to support and retain nurses in the profession. Support for the NRP increased significantly after the National Council of State Boards of Nursing published a paper, and the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report, "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health," endorsed the implementation of a transition-to-practice model for all newly licensed nurses.

The program is a partnership between Vizient® and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The framework for the curriculum is built on the 10 domains found within the AACN's Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education, and developed by subject matter experts across the country.

Nurse residents meet monthly for 12 months. During this time, they learn from and network with content experts throughout the organization. They also participate in clinical reflection time, allowing them to connect with peers while developing critical thinking and decision-making skills.

The curriculum consists of the following critical domains: Development of the professional nurse, foundations of nursing quality and safety, interprofessional practice, knowledge for nursing practice, leadership and systems-based practice, person-centered care and scholarship for nursing practice.

THE PROGRAM AIMS TO HELP NURSE RESIDENTS:

- Make the transition from advanced beginner nurse toward competent nurse.
- Develop effective decision-making skills related to clinical judgement and safety in the health care environment.
- Provide clinical nursing leadership at the point of care in conjunction with the interprofessional team.
- Strengthen commitment to the profession of nursing.
- Increase engagement in the health care organization and profession.
- Integrate best evidence into nursing practice.

PRECEPTOR PROGRAM

Between May 1 and Dec. 31, 2024:

There were four preceptor classes for a total of 20 nurses. **4:20**

2:7 There were two preceptor classes for a total of seven non-nurse employees.

Between Jan. 1 and April 30, 2025:

There were two preceptor classes for a total of nine nurses. **2:9**

1:7 There was one preceptor class for a total of seven non-nurse employees.

A preceptor is an experienced licensed nurse who supervises new and less experienced nurses during their clinical rotation or initial training period. At CCH, preceptors work with nursing students and new employees, giving them the tools they need to learn about the nursing profession and successfully start their practice at the hospital. They create a safe and positive learning experience and workplace, and they help mold their new coworkers and develop their professional identity.

But before preceptors start becoming teachers, they need to first be learners. In 2024, all preceptor courses at CCH used curriculum from the Missouri Preceptor Academy. In January 2025, CCH updated its curriculum to align with the Vizient Preceptor Program (partnering with the same company as with the Nurse Residency Program). Research demonstrates that providing high-quality preceptor training in hospitals is associated with reduced employee turnover, greater engagement, improved confidence in applying evidence-based practice, and enhanced job satisfaction among new staff.

CCH's first one-day Vizient preceptor courses took place in March 2025, and the hospital plans to continue offering the course throughout the year.

SHARED CLINICAL MODEL

Columbus Community Hospital partners with both the University of Nebraska Medical Center-Norfolk and Central Community College-Columbus. During fiscal year 2024-25, four registered nurses at the hospital worked as clinical practice instructors for nursing students, including:

1 in acute care

1 in maternal child health

2 in surgical services

The Shared Clinical Model is an innovative partnership supported by the Nebraska Hospital Association and the Nebraska Center for Nursing through Legislative Bill 227. This program fosters collaboration between nursing programs and hospitals to expand clinical site rotations, helping to bridge the gap in Nebraska's nursing workforce.

The program's goals are to increase the overall number of clinical learning sites and nursing students in rural Nebraska. Subsequently, this will provide a boost to the number of nurses choosing to work in rural hospitals.

TOTAL NUMBER OF NURSING STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED THEIR CLINICALS UNDER THIS MODEL AT CCH

98

GENERAL NURSE & NURSE AIDE ORIENTATION

Number of nurses and nurse aides who completed orientation at CCH in fiscal year 2024-25:

40 Nurses

42 Nurse aides

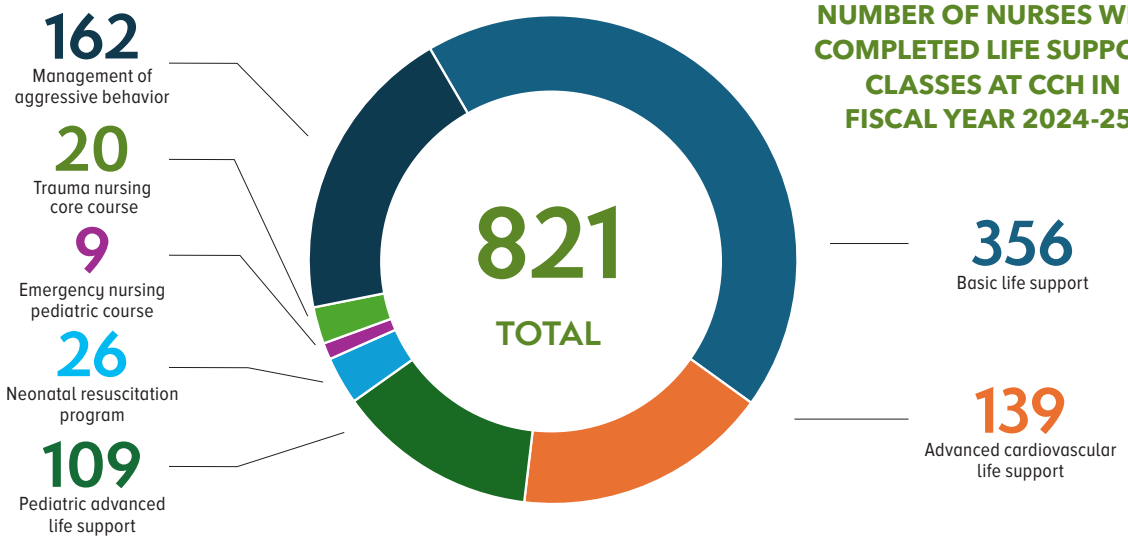
When new nurses and nurse aides start employment at Columbus Community Hospital, they have many questions – and they look to their orientation to answer those questions. Nurses undergo a two-day orientation, and nurse aides have a one-day orientation. These programs offer an overview of what it's like to be a nurse or nurse aide at CCH, and information on how they can find the support they need.

LIFE SUPPORT CLASSES

Almost everyone who serves in a nursing role at CCH is required to take regular life support classes – sometimes more than one, depending upon their role. The hospital plans and schedules all these classes, which include:

- **Basic life support (BLS) –** a set of emergency procedures used to sustain life until more advanced medical care can be provided. BLS includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and airway management.
- **Advanced cardiovascular life support (ACLS) –** a set of skills that provide more advanced interventions for cardiac emergencies and other life-threatening conditions.
- **Pediatric advanced life support (PALS) –** provides care for infants and children experiencing life-threatening emergencies.
- **Neonatal resuscitation program (NRP) –** a series of steps to restore proper breathing and circulation for newborns who have a heart rate below 60 beats per minute or difficulty breathing.
- **Emergency nursing pediatric course (ENPC) –** education on the early recognition and treatment of serious illness and injuries in children.
- **Trauma nursing core course (TNCC) –** provides education to highlight the assessment and management of patients with traumatic injuries to improve patient outcomes in trauma situations.
- **Management of aggressive behavior (MOAB) –** facilitation of a multifaced approach to prioritizing safety and de-escalation techniques.

NUMBER OF NURSES WHO COMPLETED LIFE SUPPORT CLASSES AT CCH IN FISCAL YEAR 2024-25:



ANNUAL COMPETENCIES

203

Number of RNs who completed their annual competencies during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Every spring, CCH plans and facilitates two 12-hour days during which registered nurses can complete their annual competencies – skills they need to refresh every year.

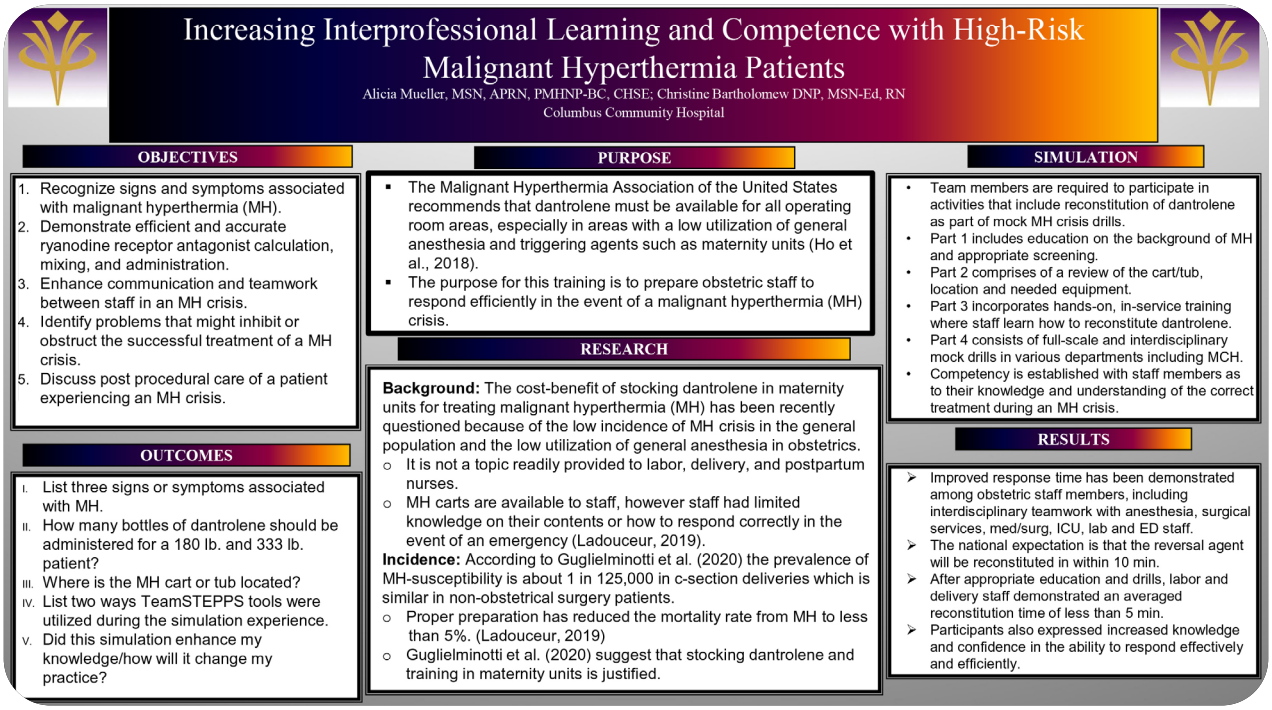
The 2025 annual competencies included sessions on:

- Restraints/suicide risk
- Wounds
- Wheelchair handling
- Central lines
- Respirator fit testing
- Fall risk
- IPASS handoff
- Pharmaceutical waste
- Pre-procedure checklist
- Self-care

RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Two CCH nurse educators, Alicia Mueller and Chris Bartholomew, presented during the 2024 Heartland Innovations in Interprofessional Practice and Education (HIIPE) Summit.

Mueller's and Bartholomew's presentation, "Increasing Interprofessional Learning and Competence with High-Risk Malignant Hyperthermia Patients Through Simulation," discussed the use of simulation to improve recognition of malignant hyperthermia (MH) symptoms. MH is a potentially fatal inherited condition triggered by certain anesthetics. This simulation ensures proper calculation, mixing and administration of a ryanodine receptor antagonist, and strengthens communication and teamwork during an MH crisis across many departments and disciplines. It focuses on identifying potential barriers to effective treatment and on reviewing appropriate post-procedural care for affected patients.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Columbus Firefighters joined CCH's simulation lab for a hands-on cardiac arrest training, which strengthened their sense of teamwork and real-world readiness.

Interdisciplinary training promotes better outcomes in our community.

The professional practice simulation lab, initiated by CHI, partnered with the Columbus Fire Department to conduct a real-time cardiac arrest simulation. The scenario took place in the clinic waiting room and involved full participation from nurses, doctors and office staff.

The simulation focused on early recognition of patient deterioration, activation of 911 and coordinated response efforts. Columbus Fire paramedics arrived and completed a realistic transfer of care. Using a mid-fidelity manikin, staff members performed emergency interventions as they would in a true event. The exercise highlighted strong communication and teamwork, leading to a successful simulated resuscitation. This interdisciplinary training promoted better outcomes in real emergencies and enhanced communication between health care providers.

COLUMBUS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
columbushosp.org

CONTACT US:

4600 38th St., P.O. Box 1800
Columbus, Nebraska 68602-1800
402-564-7118 • info@columbushosp.org