

# THE Importance of Caring

MAY 2018

## my journey into nursing



### Jennifer Swantek, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC NURSING EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Jennifer Swantek's role at Columbus Community Hospital (CCH) blends education and health care. As Nursing Education Director, Swantek facilitates the ongoing education of CCH's nurses.

Swantek, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, coordinates orientations for new nurses; oversees education on new hospital policies, procedures and regulations; and collaborates with nursing schools that use CCH as a clinical site. She also oversees the hospital's nursing education department.

The nursing education department plans and coordinates simulation, life support classes and continuing education classes to support the hospital staff.

Swantek became the nursing education director at CCH in February 2016. She came into the job with years of nursing education experience. Before joining CCH, Swantek was a nursing instructor for Central Community College-Columbus (CCC) and the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

While in her position as a nursing instructor, Swantek spent a lot of time at CCH. Her students would do their clinical hours there.

**"I had interaction with the hospital at the time, even though I wasn't an employee,"** Swantek said. **"And I liked it so much I went and worked there."**

An earlier experience at a hospital is what led Swantek to a career in health care.

When she was a senior in high school, Swantek was planning on going into accounting. But when her grandfather had a stroke and was sent to a hospital in Lincoln, Swantek decided to pursue a different career path – health care.

**"I just remember that the nurse who took care of my grandfather was so kind and compassionate,"** Swantek said. **"And that kind of molded me and I thought I would really like to emulate what she does... Nursing seemed to speak to me then."**

Swantek was particularly drawn to the area of nursing education. Her parents were both educators and the idea of teaching always appealed to Swantek.

**"I like helping people put the pieces together,"** she said. **"As an instructor, it's rewarding to be able to teach a concept and then see my students take it into clinical practice."**

One of the things Swantek enjoys about working at CCH, is that she has the opportunity to interact with many former students.

**"A lot of people who I taught through the years are working at the hospital and I can see them grow in their profession,"** she said. **"They've achieved great things and, to me, that's exciting and it feels good to know you've had an impact on someone's life."**

Swantek, who also works as a Family Nurse Practitioner in Otolaryngology, also enjoys working at CCH because

of the organization's commitment to education.

CCH is one of a few hospitals of its size to have a simulation lab without being tied to a university. This opens up a world of educational opportunities for incoming nursing staff, current CCH nurses and visiting nursing students.

The 2,000-square-foot simulation lab has four lifelike simulators which are programmed by simulation lab staff to breathe, blink, speak, cry and sweat, as well as display realistic symptoms and vital signs. Training through the simulation lab allows CCH medical staff to enhance their skills in a risk-free, yet realistic-seeming environment.

CCH leaders are also committed to their staff continuing their educations outside of the hospital. Through financial assistance, the hospital helps nurses complete their bachelor's degrees and nursing staff are encouraged to attend national conferences.

**"They want to have a well-educated, competent staff, so they put in the resources to allow that to happen,"** Swantek said. **"I just think we have a really good and supportive staff, so it makes it easy to come to work when you work with people who are there for the same reasons as you."**

**To learn more about Swantek, or the services offered through CCH's Nursing Education Department, visit [www.columbushosp.org](http://www.columbushosp.org).**