

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



Jennifer Dotson-Monroe
 SURGICAL SERVICES SECRETARY

After the COVID-19 pandemic began, Jennifer Dotson-Monroe stayed home to care for her children. However, in January 2021, she felt an urge to go back to work and had a calling to help others. After researching nearby hospitals, she decided to pursue a job as a surgical services secretary with Columbus Community Hospital.

Dotson-Monroe grew up in the heart of the Ozarks in the small town of Marionville, Missouri, watching her mother care for others as a nurse. Her spirit of adventure and willingness to serve others led her to enlist in the United States Navy when she was 19 years old. She served as a hospital corpsman for two years before being medically separated from her enlistment during her service.

“After I left the Navy, I thought I wanted to be a nurse,” she said. “But after starting that path, I decided it wasn’t my true passion. I knew I enjoyed the medical field and playing an active role in helping others, but ultimately, nursing wasn’t my passion.”

Following this revelation, Dotson-Monroe enrolled in the criminal justice program

at Central Community College in Columbus to receive her associate’s degree. During that time, she accepted a clerical position with the state’s probation system — and that is when it clicked! Dotson-Monroe knew her calling was performing clerical work in the medical field. She is currently working on her Bachelor of Science degree in community health at Clarkson College in Omaha, Nebraska, and will graduate in 2024.

As the secretary for the hospital’s surgical services department, every day is different for Dotson-Monroe. However, many of her daily tasks include scheduling surgeries and ensuring patients receive accurate billing for their surgery.

While Dotson-Monroe didn’t grow up planning to be in her current position, she knows she is where she is meant to be.

“I always thought I would enjoy being in the medical field,” she said. “I have the medical background knowledge and a passion for caring for others and being able to quickly and efficiently complete clerical work. But it wasn’t

until I received my current position at the hospital that I knew I would be here until retirement.”

Dotson-Monroe said she is thankful for the support she has received from the hospital and her co-workers and supervisors who encouraged her to continue her education.

“The hospital is a great place to work,” she said. “It has a friendly atmosphere, and we have staff who feel like family. They are there to support me no matter what, and it is a nice feeling to have someone encouraging your journey.”

To learn more about the hospital’s surgical services department, visit columbushosp.org.