

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



Sharon Ernst
 REGISTRATION CLERK

First impressions matter, and in many ways, Sharon Ernst is people's first impression of Columbus Community Hospital. As a registration clerk, she is often one of the first people community members interact with when they call or visit the hospital.

Along with the hospital's other registration clerks, Ernst answers direct calls to the hospital and calls that come into the switchboard. She and the other registration clerks also serve as an after-hours answering service for various CCH offices and register patients for hospital procedures and other services.

On any given day, Ernst registers patients in one of three areas: the registration area on the first floor of the main hospital, the emergency department or Suite 168 of the Healthpark Medical Office Building. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ernst and the other registration clerks also worked in temporary huts outside to help reduce the potential spread of the virus.

Since registration at the hospital is open 24/7, Ernst works various hours to help provide this coverage.

Ernst has been a registration clerk at the hospital since 2017. Before joining CCH, she had spent many years working in public and private laboratory settings.

Ernst has a bachelor's degree in life sciences and a master's degree in biochemistry. Her education led her to work in laboratory settings where she did research, quality control and quality assurance. This work has been helpful in her current role in hospital registration.

"The accuracy needed for these roles helped train me in acute attention to detail which is very important," she said. **"These jobs also taught me that procedures and policies must be followed to comply with regulations."**

In addition to her work in laboratory settings, Ernst also worked part-time for many years at her husband's periodontal practice. She learned to check-in patients, file insurance and perform other clerical tasks that help a medical office or hospital run smoothly. Ernst found she liked the work.

"I decided to pursue a career in health care after working at the dental

office," she said. **"It's very satisfying helping people."**

Though Ernst hadn't set out to work in health care, she encourages everyone to look into the field because she said it provides more variety than people realize.

For her part, Ernst is happy to have found a job in health care, and she's glad to work at CCH in particular. She said the hospital has been supportive – both professionally and personally.

The hospital offers various continuing education opportunities for professional development, and Ernst said the hospital was very supportive and flexible when she had an illness in her family.

She appreciates the opportunity to be part of the CCH team.

"It's satisfying to be just a small part of people's care here at CCH," Ernst said. **"Patients do remember us kindly and have nice words to say."**

For more information on Ernst or the variety of career options at CCH, visit columbushosp.org.