

THE Importance of Caring

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Caring

my journey into nursing



Melissa Foltz, LPN/Unit Secretary
 EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

In high school, Melissa Foltz, LPN, saw herself going into the health care field. She just hadn't expected to become a nurse.

Instead, Foltz had planned to work at the front desk of a doctor's office and she did initially. After high school, Foltz received a medical secretary diploma from Mid-Plains Community College. She then worked as a receptionist at two local physician offices before taking a job working in a factory because it was a better fit for her family and her two young sons at the time.

Foltz worked in the factory for five years until – after some prompting from a co-worker – she decided to take classes at Central Community College to work toward becoming a licensed practical nurse (LPN).

She always thought her end goal would be to work in obstetrics, but the last week of classes there was a posting for an LPN/unit secretary job in the Columbus Community Hospital emergency department. Foltz applied, got the job and has been with the CCH ED ever since.

Foltz started with the ED in June 2007, but over the years, she has also filled in at the Humphrey Medical Clinic and worked for Occupational Health Services and the CCH Orthopedic Clinic.

In her current role as LPN/unit secretary in the emergency department, Foltz cleans patient rooms, stocks and reorders supplies, sets up transfer arrangements with other

facilities, requests records, makes appointments, troubleshoots equipment, reviews patient charts and gathers monthly statistics for the ED. She also helps the hospital's trauma coordinator with data collection on trauma charts and helps input data into the state database.

These duties provide plenty of variety – as does working in the emergency department.

“It is very hard to describe a typical day in the ER. You never know what you will be walking into,” Foltz said.

Though Foltz starts off each morning the same way by checking the supplies for the department and patient rooms, and updating the daily on-call board for local physicians, how of the rest of the day develops depends on the department's patients.

“As the day goes on, the duties vary based on the patients we have in the ER and the reason they are there,” she said.

Before becoming a nurse, Foltz was on the other side of an emergency department experience when her 4-year-old son had an ATV accident. He was seen at the CCH emergency department and then flown to an Omaha hospital where he spent four days.

“After that and to this day, I am really intrigued by trauma injuries and situations, because a person never realizes how life for the patient and their family can change in a matter of seconds,” she said.

Foltz is thankful that CCH supports its staff by giving them the tools they need to deal with these hard situations they may face as health care providers.

“Working in the ER, we see a wide variety of situations and not all of them have good outcomes,” she said. **“CCH wants to be sure we have the means to cope and move on.”**

Though the work is hard and comes with challenges, Foltz is glad that she ended up in health care and she encourages others to pursue a career in the field as well.

“Health care is a very wide field,” she said. **“Follow your dreams and goals. Even if you are not able to deal with needles, blood or other messes, there are many other positions where you can help people and find job satisfaction.”**

For more information on Melissa Foltz or CCH's emergency department, visit www.columbushosp.org.