

# THE Importance of Caring

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## my journey into nursing



**Caleb Nicolay, RN, BSN**  
 INTENSIVE CARE UNIT/ACUTE CARE UNIT NURSE

Caleb Nicolay, RN, BSN, realized nursing was the career for him when he was just 16 years old.

That's when he started working in the dietary department at a nursing home in his hometown of Battle Creek, Nebraska. There, he saw certified nursing assistants (CNAs) having one-on-one interactions with residents and he decided that was something he would enjoy too.

Before his time at the nursing home, Nicolay had been considering a career in radiology or dentistry.

**“That was just in the beginning stages of deciding a college/career path and I kind of went down the road with nursing after I got a little taste of it at the nursing home,”** he said. **“I felt that it was a better fit for me.”**

From there, Nicolay talked to his high school guidance counselor who told him they had CNA classes at a local college, and Nicolay never looked back. He went on to get his CNA license and then continued working at the nursing home until he earned his bachelor's of nursing degree from University of Nebraska Medical Center in 2013.

That year, he started working at Columbus Community Hospital and he's been there ever since.

Nicolay primarily works as a nurse on the Intensive Care Unit but he occasionally works in the Acute Care Unit as well.

In his role as an ICU nurse, Nicolay starts most of his work days at 5:45 a.m. when his unit does a morning huddle where they receive updates on patients. Then he does a head to toe assessment of patients so that when doctors round he can provide them with an update on the patients' nights and their conditions. Later in the morning, the patients usually have their meetings with their doctors, therapists and social workers.

**“By then doctors have kind of adjusted their plan of care for that patient if they aren't going to be going home, so then you just adjust your day with what the doctor thinks is best for that patient,”** Nicolay said.

In many cases, that means Nicolay spends much of the rest of his shift helping patients with their activities of daily living such as personal care or helping them with their medications. It's this type of patient care that initially drew Nicolay to nursing and it's what he enjoys about his work.

**“I just like to make people feel better,”** he said. **“If you can make someone smile or make them feel better, even if it's just for a minute in the day, then you're doing your job.”**

Though Nicolay enjoys his work, he acknowledged that working in health care does come with its challenges.

**“You're going to have your good days. You're going to have your bad days. You're going to have your tired days. Hours get long, but in the end, it's worth it,”** he said.

**For more information on Nicolay, CCH's Intensive Care Unit or career opportunities at CCH, visit [www.columbushosp.org](http://www.columbushosp.org).**