The Nursing Impact

emplify HEALTH by Gundersen











As leaders of the Nursing Professional Governance Council, we are proud to present this edition of The Nursing Impact. Across all roles and settings, our nurses' engagement in governance and quality improvement reflects a shared commitment to excellence and collaboration. We extend our sincere gratitude to each nurse for their ongoing dedication, resilience, and passion. Together, we are shaping the future of nursing at Emplify Health, ensuring the highest level of care for our patients and communities. We hope you enjoy these stories, aligned to our strategic plan and nursing vision.

Emplfy Health by Gundersen Nursing Professional Governance Council Chairs
Jordan Benedict, Chanda Humpal, Elise Schneeberger & Shannon Jibben

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Did you know we have 2,438 nurses in the Gundersen Region?

Each year, nurses play a vital role in educating and supporting the next generation of nurses



Over 700 RN and BSN students complete more than 1,100 clinical rotations annually

More than 35 master's and doctoral students complete over 60 advanced clinical rotations each year

In 2025, we hired 210 nurses across the region, strengthening our nursing workforce to meet the needs of our patients and communities.

REGISTERED NURSES
180

ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE PRESCRIBERS
21

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES
9

Our nursing workforce includes:

- 2,160 Registered Nurses
- 75 Licensed Practical Nurses
- 203 Advanced Practice Nurse Prescribers
- 512 Certified Nursing Assistants
- 412 Medical Assistants
- 438 Other nursing team members

Every day, patients share stories about the care they receive across our health system. Many of these comments highlight the empathy, compassion, and clinical excellence demonstrated by our nurses. The nursing impact extends far beyond a single interaction. Nurses play a critical role in recognizing clinical changes, developing individualized care plans and ensuring we understand what matters most to patients and families in their care journey.

The following pages highlight patient comments from across our region, along with the names of this year's Nurse Excellence Award nominees. These nurses were recognized by their colleagues for their outstanding contributions to caring for patients and for one another.

Voices from our patients in Iowa

Nurse Excellence Nominees in Iowa:
- Ashley Tangen
- Barbie Kossman
- Ben Pfile
- Marie Christianson

"The nurse I often speak with, is so kind and trustworthy. She asks great questions and seems to be on the same page as the provider. I can tell she really cares about making sure I get the care I need.

- Iowa Regional Clinics

"This was quite honestly the kindest staff I've ever experienced. Since we're from so far away, we had no idea what to expect. This facility did not disappoint. Special shout out to the nursing staff I had. They took great care of me and they were genuinely fun to chat with. I wasn't treated like just another patient, the staff truly went above and beyond to provide a great experience. They're amazing at what they do! Thank you for everything.

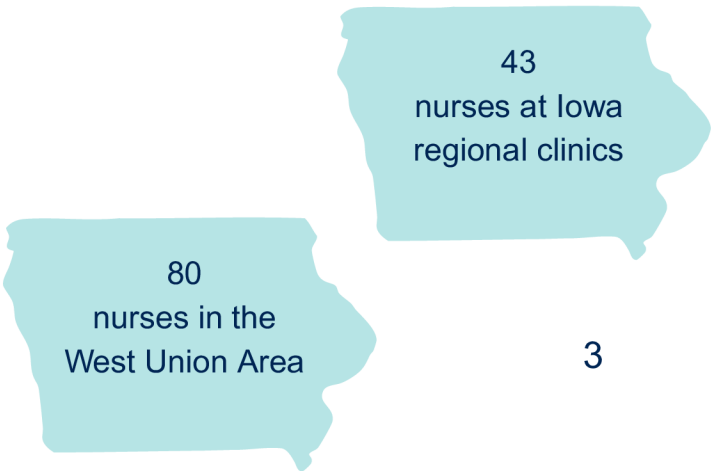
- West Union Area

"My nurses were amazing! Each of my nurses that were there that night were some of the best I have had.

-West Union Area

"The staff at your clinic is the best in the business and would recommend them to anyone and everyone. The nurses are fantastic and everyone there seem to always have a smile on their faces when I come in.

- Iowa Regional Clinics



Voices from our patients in Minnesota

Nurse Excellence Nominees in Minnesota:

Amy Stamschror	Kim Wolter
Char Westberg	Kristina Jensen
Christina Hoch	Madison Marien
Cindy Sheeley	Michelle Laurenson
Jeremy Waldo	Michelle Miller
Joan Willers	Monica Walters
Kayla Dascher	Rebecca Meinertz
Kelly Meinen	Tayler Burke

"I have NEVER been more pleased with a medical appointment than yesterday. The PA and his nurse were over the top, PHENOMENAL!!! I will recommend their services day in and day out.

-Winona Campus

"The nurses take the time to read up on my chart and track my medications and healthcare needs. The entire staff is excellent!

- Minnesota Regional Clinics

"After describing my problem on the phone, the nurse told me she thought I should come in. I was surprised she arranged to get me in the same afternoon and on the eve of a holiday weekend. I thought that was very thoughtful and empathetic of her.

- Wabasha Area

"The nurses are amazing. The experience of being treated so well when one is feeling miserable and anxious is invaluable. Thank you!

-Winona Campus

"The nurses were the best in being informative and listening to my needs. I trusted them with my life and they are the best!!!

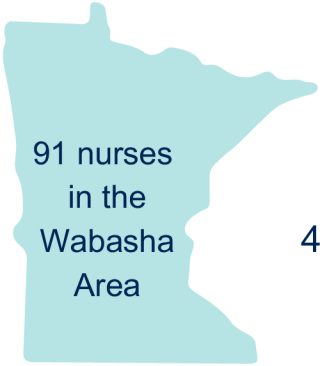
- Wabasha Area

"The nurses at the clinic are THE BEST- all are AMAZING. You are lucky to have them, and so are your patients!

- Minnesota Regional Clinics







Voices from our patients in Wisconsin

"The nurse who called me the day before, was excellent. She was very thoughtful and caring and asked me a lot of good questions. And so I'm very thankful.

- Onalaska Campus

Nurse Excellence Nominees at Onalaska Campus and Wisconsin regional clinics:

Brad Berger
Jennifer Lisowski
Kimberly Wichelt
Melissa Hazelton

"The nurses who came in to help with oxygen and keep me and my daughter calm during a scary situation were wonderful. I am so thankful for the care that we received. Thank you again for all of your fabulous care.

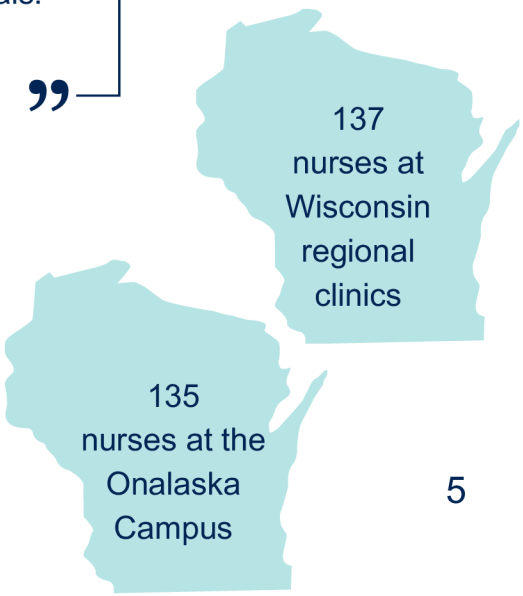
- Wisconsin Regional Clinics

"My nurse practitioner and nurse treated me with such personal care. I felt that they took the time to listen to my concerns and make the best diagnosis. I felt as if I was really a part of the process. The final words from my nurse practitioner are still repeating in my head, **"We've got you!"** I feel so fortunate to have access to such amazing healthcare and health professionals. Thank you!

- Onalaska Campus"

"She is an amazing nurse! Her attitude and professionalism are top notch. She made me feel valued and heard.

-Wisconsin Regional Clinics



Nurse Excellence Nominees from Wisconsin Critical Access Hospitals & Clinics:

Autum Nundahl
Bri Rotering
Brooke Bell
Jenna Pellowski
Kristi Kubarski
Thor Anderson

"I usually don't do these reviews, but the nurses I had were absolutely wonderful. I felt at ease the whole time. Please keep being the great team you are!

-Hillsboro Area

"The doctor and two nurses were absolutely brilliant with how they handled my emergency situation. They immediately started treatments on me, calmed me, stayed with me and made sure I was fully comfortable leaving the hospital.

-Friendship Area

"I was extremely pleased with my ER visit. I am petrified of hospitals and especially the ER. I had been needing to come for quite some time but kept pushing it off. Everyone was so wonderful. My nurse was so nice from the moment she greeted me in the lobby not even knowing my fears yet. My visit couldn't have gone better.

-Whitehall Area

"My nurse kept me informed and apprised me of what was going to be taking place, what tests were going to be done and was just all around, just very friendly, courteous and just very excellent in personal care.

- Boscobel Area

Both the nurses made me feel very comfortable the entire time I was there. They were funny, they were witty, they made me feel extremely at ease. Believe it or not, even though I received three stitches, It was an enjoyable experience.

- Whitehall Area

The nurses I work with, they're all very knowledgeable and very friendly and very easy to get along with. And they all explain everything really good to you, and they treat you really good. I guess you couldn't ask for nothing nicer than what I'm working with.

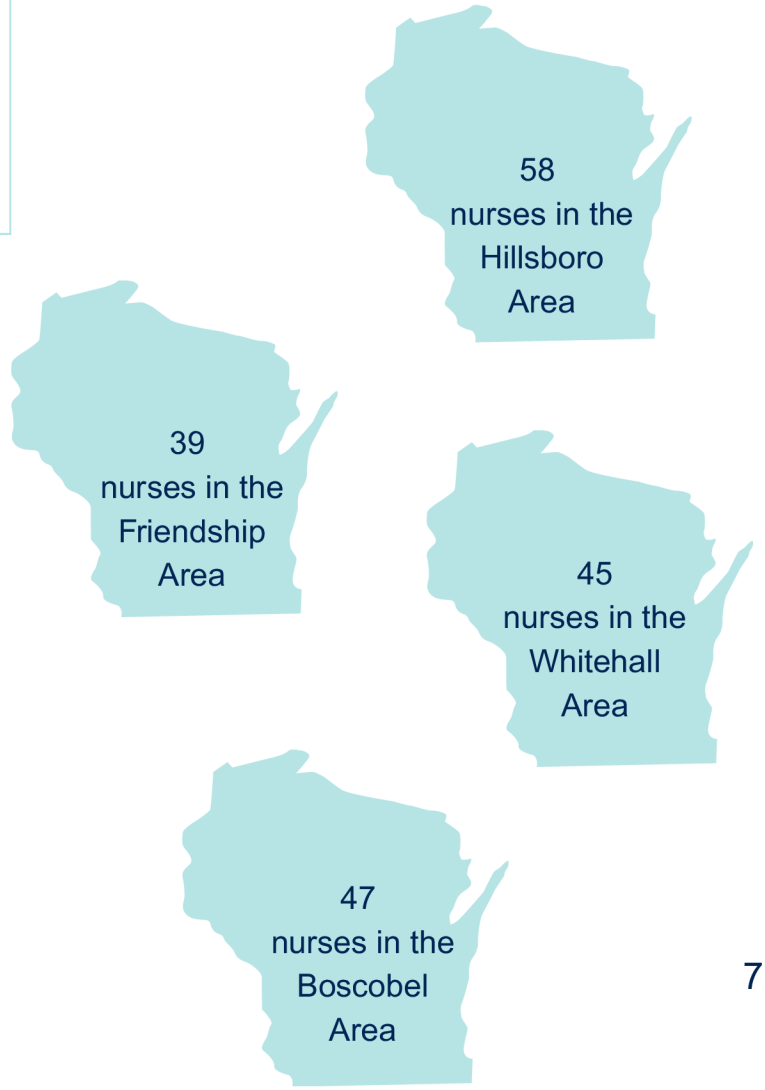
-Hillsboro Area

My nurse was the most amazing and special nurse I've ever had. She listened to everything I had to say and helped me deal with the death of a close family member. I felt much better after sharing that with her. This visit was a 10/10!

- Friendship Area

She was very nice, she was very calm, and I just thought she was the greatest nurse.

-Boscobel Area



Voices from our patients in La Crosse

I especially have to give my nurses a 10 out of 10 every one of them were amazing, I never felt unattended and they made sure I kept my dignity in situations that I couldn't control in caring for myself.

- La Crosse Hospital

Unbelievable care and info from my nurse before and after the procedure. He was so knowledgeable and made me feel so comfortable the whole time.

- La Crosse Clinic

I've had my nurse for two weeks in a row and she is amazing. I love the amazing charm and spirit that she brings to the job. I just got a port on Monday and she explained in easy terms that I could understand. All the nurses and staff I have worked with are amazing.

- La Crosse Clinic

The nurse was excellent! He was very calm, confident and knowledgeable. He eased my anxiety by talking and getting to know my wife and me. He explained things very well from what to expect with the procedure to how to care for myself after.

- La Crosse Hospital

1,426 nurses in La Crosse

Nurse Excellence Nominees in La Crosse:

Alexis Wang
Alicia Mueller
Allison Mattes
Amber Ideker
Amy Powers
Andrea Hauser
Anne Steers
Becky Kiesau
Beth Desrosiers
Brandon Swenson
Brittany Clements
Brooke Neumann
Carleen Poellinger
Caylee Ludwig
Charmaine Dee
Christa Sauer
Christina Flisram
Dani Draxler
Deanne Rochester
Deborah Baker
Emily Newbury
Erica Cook
Erin Heiderscheit
Haley Jackson
Heidi Roth
Heidi Weber
Herb Boisen
Hilary Dawson
Jacob Hawes
Jen Grasse
Jennifer Rogers
Joe Starks
Julia Binner
Juliene Sloane
Katelyn Murphy
Katie Christiansen
Kay Bell
Kaydee Zimmerman
Kelli Rickleff
Kimberly Beseler
Kim Kozelka
Lacey Fradette
Laura Blaken
Leslie Blaschuk
Lynne Douangdy
Lynnsey Olson
Madeline Langen
Marie Plowman
Mike Toale
Michelle Tilson
Mindy Binder
Miya Franken
Morgan Grabinoski
Nancy Burt
Olivia Manternach
Paige McKinnon
Quentin Lamers II
Rae Hanson
Reva Syverson
Shari Cavadini
Tammy Henderson
Taylor Buchanan
Taylor Sprague
Tyler McCoy

Nurse Excellence Award Recipients

For the past 26 years, nurses at Emplify Health by Gundersen have been recognized by their colleagues for exceptional contributions in practice and for exemplifying the Nursing Professional Framework, Caritas Processes and our mission, vision and values. This year, we received more than 140 nomination letters from over 50 departments. We also introduced the Rural Health Nursing Award—a special tribute to the more than 500 nurses who practice rural health nursing in our region. Congratulations to the 2026 recipients!



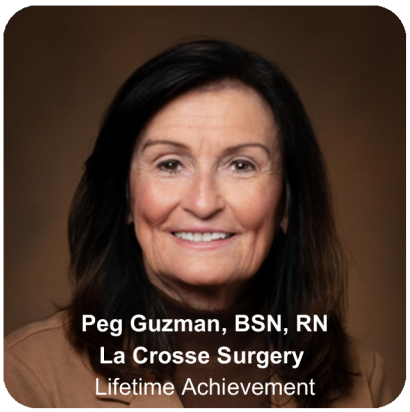
















The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses

We have a long history of recognizing excellence in nursing. Our Nurse Excellence Awards provide a meaningful way for staff to nominate nurses for their contributions to Emplify Health by Gundersen. Our **Grateful Patient Program** allows patients to recognize any staff member for the care they provide.

The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses

Over the years, we've heard from patients looking for a simple way to nominate nurses for the care they provide. Our Boscobel Area Hospital and Clinics have utilized the DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses for the past eight years for just this reason. This year, we are excited to share that all of Emplify Health by Gundersen will participate in the DAISY program.

What is the DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses?

The not-for-profit DAISY Foundation, based in Glen Ellen, California, was established by family members in memory of J. Patrick Barnes. Patrick died at the age of 33 in late 1999 from complications of idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), a little known but not uncommon auto-immune disease. The care Patrick and his family received from nurses while he was ill inspired this unique means of thanking nurses for making a profound difference in the lives of their patients and patient families.



Amy Mezera, RN
Boscobel Emergency Services
2025 DAISY Honoree

> *"When Patrick was critically ill, our family experienced first-hand the remarkable skill and care nurses provide patients every day and night. Yet these unsung heroes are seldom recognized for the super-human work they do. The kind of work the nurses at Emplify Health by Gundersen are called on to do every day epitomizes the purpose of The DAISY Award.*
> **-Bonnie Barnes, FAAN, CEO and Co-Founder of The DAISY Foundation**

How can patients and families nominate a nurse ?

Patients can fill out a simple form on the **Gundersen Health website** to nominate a nurse, or simply search "Gundersen DAISY" in your internet search engine.

Scan or click the QR code to nominate a nurse

Over the past two years, we've partnered with the Gundersen Medical Foundation with an ambitious goal: to offer ten new endowed scholarships to support our employees in nursing school. With eight new scholarships added, we offered a total of 17 scholarships this year, awarding $22,500. Learn about the stories of our newest scholarships below.

The Cindy R. Vieth Legacy of Nursing Scholarship

Cindy Vieth, BSN, RN, joined what was then Lutheran Hospital in 1978, working as a nurse in Medical/Oncology. Cindy was known for her skills as well as her personality. Many people who worked with her say they will always remember her laughter in the hallways and the special way she made patients feel at ease. When Cindy passed in October 2025, her sister Cheryl sat down with the Foundation to decide exactly how those gifts would help others.

To honor Cindy's 40-year nursing career, gifts were made to the Nursing Education Fund and to establish a new nursing scholarship in her memory. Cheryl says this was only fitting, adding that Cindy looked up to the other nurses named in the Legacy of Nursing Scholarship Program.



Cindy (right) with Cheryl in 2010

Scan or click the QR code to learn more about Cindy's legacy.

The Lori Pedretti Nursing Scholarship in Memory of Robyn Spencer



Lori Pedretti, RN with Dr. Bob Spencer

Sometimes it can be difficult to see the full impact nursing care has on a family. For nurse Lori Pedretti, that impact is clear. As a care coordinator, Lori supports patients with complex, chronic conditions, helping them navigate the healthcare system and bridging communication across providers. Robyn Spencer and her husband, Dr. Bob Spencer, experienced Lori's exceptional care when Robyn was referred to the Care Coordination team.

When Robyn passed away in 2022, Bob lost the love of his life. He remains certain that the care Robyn received at Emplify Health by Gundersen helped extend their time together. Moreover, he believes Lori's care may have added four meaningful years—time he and their sons will always treasure. In gratitude, and in memory of Robyn, Dr. Spencer established two nursing scholarships honoring Lori and the profound impact of nursing care.

> *We considered Lori to be our guardian angel. Any patient balancing multiple conditions would be blessed to have someone with Lori's heart, skill and personality to help them with their care.*
> **-Dr. Bob Spencer**

Scan or click the QR code to learn more about Dr. Spencer's gift.

Congratulations to our Scholarship Recipients

The Brigitta & William Gautsch Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Ann Mitoraj, BSN, RN, CEN, CHSE
Western Governors University
MSN: Leadership and Management



Olivia Schulz, BSN, RN
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
DNP: Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

The Marie Rick-Yost Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Sierra Jennings, RN
Grand Canyon University
BSN

The Lori Pedretti Legacy of Nursing Scholarship in Memory of Robyn Spencer



Brandon Busari-Okoro
Western Technical College
ADN



Katie Rackow
Viterbo University
Direct Entry MSN

The Cindy R. Vieth Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Samuel Coon
Viterbo University
BSN

Drs. Michael J. & Rosemary T. Hammes Porter Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Abby Fitzgerald
Western Technical College
ADN

The Barbara Kroner Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Sofia Vang, RN
Winona State University
BSN

The Julie MacDonald Memorial Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Cassandra Corona-Medina Hanson, RN
Viterbo University
BSN



Cassandra Hurley, RN
Western Governors University
MSN: Leadership and Management

The Dianna Myhre Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Nathan Fleming, BSN, RN
Viterbo University
DNP: Adult Gerontology
Acute Care Nurse Practitioner

The Karen Pretko-Arndt Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Samantha Kidd
Winona State University
BSN

The Wehrenberg Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Cassandra Anderson, BSN, RN
Edgewood College
MSN: Family Nurse Practitioner



Jennifer Gilbertson, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, RNC-IAP, C-EFM, RNC-MNN, C-ONQS, C-OBE
Western Governors University
Post-Master's Certificate: Nursing Leadership and Management



Zoe Dreckmann, BSN, RN
Western Governors University
MSN: Nurse Educator

The Heritage Legacy of Nursing Scholarship



Mackenzie Husted, BSN, RN
University of Mary
MSN: Nurse Educator



McKaylee Ferguson, MSN, RN
Viterbo University
DNP: Family Nurse Practitioner

ELEVATE: Strengthening excellence and humility in a destination workplace

On October 28, 2025, nurses from across the Gundersen Region came together for ELEVATE: Excellence & Humility in Nursing, a professional development day focused on learning, connection, and reflection. More than 150 nurses attended the event and even more watched on demand.

Sessions addressed topics central to modern nursing practice, including personal wellness and resilience, clear and respectful communication, urologic care, and the nurse's role in complex conversations such as goals-of-care discussions. Practical tools—communication quick guides, reflection worksheets, and shared resources—were intentionally paired with education to support immediate application in practice.

Nurses participated in live polling, interactive discussions, and reflection activities, creating space to learn from one another while reconnecting to shared purpose and professional values.



ELEVATE reflected Emplify Health's continued investment in nursing excellence—recognizing that supporting nurses' growth, communication, and well-being directly strengthens the care provided to patients and communities.

Watch the recordings from ELEVATE **here.**

Elevating the voice of the nurse through advocacy

Each year, nurses in Wisconsin are invited to a special advocacy day in Madison. This year, nurses Linda Bettesworth, Jenna Pellowski, Jennifer Cuff and Amy Barna attended. Reflecting on Nurses Day at the Capitol, Jennifer Cuff shared, "It allowed me to get involved with the Wisconsin Nurses Association, meet with legislators and advocate for both nurses and patients." She emphasized that nursing practice is shaped by laws and regulations, making nurse advocacy essential. "We need nurses sharing real-world experiences with legislators—if it's good for nursing, it's good for the patient," she noted.

Jennifer was surprised to learn that only one Wisconsin legislator has a healthcare background, reinforcing the need for nurses to speak up when legislation impacts practice or patient care. Advocacy Day offers nurses a direct opportunity to learn about the legislative process and the importance of sharing professional expertise. Civic engagement elevates the voice of nursing and strengthens patient outcomes.



Leading care delivery with top of licensure practice: Hillsboro Emergency Department launches Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program

On April 7, the Hillsboro Emergency Department launched the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program, a critical new service designed to provide expert, compassionate care to survivors of sexual assault in Vernon County. The SANE Program features four specially trained nurses who provide care within the Emergency Department, ensuring timely and specialized care for survivors.

Before the SANE program launched, Vernon County had no emergency rooms with SANE services, so patients had to travel for care. As part of program planning, nurses completed a week-long course to gain the specialized education required for the role. They also partnered with the Hillsboro Family Medicine Clinic to increase hands-on experience performing pelvic examinations.

The SANE program is one example of essential, top-of-license care nurses can provide through advanced training. As the program continues to take shape, the SANE committee, nurses and leaders meet regularly to refine workflows and strengthen processes.

The launch of the SANE program in Hillsboro reflects our mission to relentlessly care, learn, and innovate. By supporting patients with dignity and respect, our nurses embody the values of belonging, excellence, accountability, teamwork, and humility—ensuring compassionate care for every person, every time.

> *Our goal is to support patients with dignity and respect. We are committed to guiding them through a difficult time by providing the compassionate medical and emotional care they deserve.*
>
> **-Anna Heier, RN**
> **Hillsboro Emergency Department**



Innovating care through Project Fusion and beyond

In July 2025, Emplify Health went live with Project Fusion, the organization's largest Epic transformation since first adopting the platform—uniting both regions on a single Epic instance. More than a technology upgrade, Project Fusion was an effort to design workflows that better support patient care, communication, and safety. As the largest group of employees at Emplify Health, nurses played a key role in design and implementation.

From planning through go-live, frontline nurses partnered with informatics nurses and other clinical team members in task forces, workgroups and councils to shape Epic decisions based on real-world nursing practices. Nursing representation played a critical role in reviewing workflows, identifying risks, and informing training and go-live support across all settings. In preparation for go-live, more than 370 nurses were trained as Super Users and provided at-the-elbow support to their peers.

Following go-live, nursing informatics governance was intentionally reimagined. As the organization entered the post-Fusion era, former committee structures evolved to better support a shared Epic environment across regions. Today, frontline nurses and informatics nurses partners across the Gundersen and Bellin regions review enhancement intakes submitted by nurses, share best practices, and align workflows wherever possible.

That collaboration has already resulted in meaningful two-way learning. Nurses in the Bellin region adopted Gundersen's in-person continuous observation workflow and fall prevention bundle, while the Gundersen region adopted Bellin's virtual monitoring documentation and fall and injury risk assessment tools—strengthening patient safety across both regions.

Support did not stop at go-live. Nursing informatics committee members continue to provide stabilization support, education and workflow optimization, while collaborating on initiatives like in-basket clarity and documentation efficiency. Ambulatory nurses are now actively submitting and voting on enhancement requests, ensuring frontline voices continue to shape Epic's evolution.

Project Fusion demonstrated what is possible when nurses lead system design together—across units, specialties and regions—with a shared commitment to safer, smarter care.





Focused on quality and patient safety: Enhancing communication through care plan notes

A key part of the nursing process is developing the individualized care plan. In the hospital setting, nurses routinely document care plan notes to capture the patient's story and progress throughout their hospital course. With Project Fusion, care plan notes became more visible to care team members and families. These notes are intended to provide a concise summary of nursing interventions, patient response and recommended next steps, helping interdisciplinary team members stay informed and aligned in the care they provide. After Project Fusion go-live, nurses on the Cardiopulmonary Unit partnered with an Advanced Practice Clinician to take a closer look at the nursing care plan note, ensuring the distinct disciplines of medicine and nursing consistently shared relevant, meaningful information.

Through this collaboration, the team strengthened the care plan note template using the DAR framework (data, action, response). As a result, notes are more consistent and more effectively used by clinical teams, supporting clearer communication and stronger coordination of care. That clarity extends beyond the care team to shape the experience of patients and families while reinforcing the essential role nurses play in guiding the plan of care.

> *Accessing my mom's care plan notes through MyChart proxy access each morning gave me peace of mind and reduced the need for daily check-in calls.*
> **-Family member of a patient on the Cardiopulmonary Unit**

Working in Harmony: An engaged nursing workforce in action

It may be a small clinic, but the impact of nursing care in Harmony reaches far beyond its walls. Nurses Cheryl Hotvedt and Lori Pfremmer work in close partnership with Nurse Practitioner Melissa Fuhrmann to deliver care rooted in connection, communication and clinical excellence. With the nearest clinic more than 20 miles away, Harmony Family Medicine serves as a vital access point for patients in southeast Minnesota's bluff country.



This year, clinic provider Melissa Fuhrmann received the Nurse Excellence Award for Advanced Degree Nursing, marking an important milestone for the clinic. Cheryl Hotvedt and Lori Pfremmer have also been recognized with Nurse Excellence Awards in past years, making Harmony Family Medicine the first Emplify Health by Gundersen location where every member of the nursing care team has received this honor.

The team's success reflects a strong focus on quality outcomes paired with personalized, relationship-based care. The clinic consistently exceeds benchmarks for controlling high blood pressure and diabetes and maintains high patient satisfaction ratings.

Care close to home: Bringing chemotherapy to Wabasha



In January, Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital introduced outpatient chemotherapy and oncology services, bringing care closer to home for patients who previously traveled to La Crosse or Winona for infusions. For many, that travel came with a significant burden—often at least 40 minutes each way, with infusion days lasting up to six hours, along with time away from work, family and other responsibilities.

To prepare for chemotherapy services, nurses in the Wabasha Infusion Clinic completed both didactic and clinical training. Didactic education through the Oncology Nursing Society focused on chemotherapy principles, side effects and pharmacokinetics. Nurses then traveled to the Winona Infusion Center for hands-on training, where they validated competencies and built relationships with patients preparing to transition their care to Wabasha.

In a rural setting, shared nursing expertise plays a critical role in sustaining complex services. Wabasha Clinic nurse Katie Wright brings a background in intensive care and oncology nursing and serves as an on-site mentor for infusion nurses. While her primary responsibilities remain in the clinic, her presence supports high-acuity situations and reinforces confidence in chemotherapy administration within the team.

Together, this preparation and collaboration have enabled nurses to provide chemotherapy care close to home—reducing travel burden while maintaining the safety, expertise and personal connection patients rely on during treatment.

> *I feel called to walk alongside patients during this difficult time, providing care close to home means we can support them fully—not just medically, but emotionally and spiritually.*
> **-Makala Hansen, RN**
> **Wabasha Infusion Services**

Strive to Thrive: Exercising our way toward better mental health

Caring for patients with depression and anxiety is a daily reality in Emergency Services (ES). While medications and referrals are essential tools, ES providers often face a frustrating paradox: despite strong evidence that physical activity improves depression and anxiety, there has historically been no way to formally prescribe exercise as an evidence-based intervention in the same way we order medications or physical therapy.



The Strive to Thrive program was born out of that exact frustration and a bold idea.



The idea emerged from a lively discussion during an Emergency Services Providers' Journal Club. From there, Traci Segar, ES Clinical Nurse Leader, set out to explore the feasibility of creating an outpatient Epic order for exercise therapy—one that would be visible in the medical record, track completion, and allow providers to follow outcomes just as they would with medications or other interventions. What followed was true collaboration. Brainstorming and planning brought together partners from inside and outside Emplify Health by Gundersen.

What to know about the program:

- Eight-week exercise and wellness program at the Healthy Living Center
- Facilitated by the Emergency Services community health worker
- Designed for adults presenting to Emergency Services in La Crosse with concerns related to depression or anxiety
- Focuses on the whole person, recognizing that wellness is deeply individual
- Intentionally community-minded
- Early metrics show decreased Emergency and Urgent Care visits and improved quality-of-life indicators

What's on the horizon for Strive to Thrive? It is expanding to include patients cared for in the newly opened EmPATH (Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment, and Healing) unit.

Closing with Gratitude

One patient comment shared this year continues to resonate: “We’ve got you.” That simple message is reflected throughout these stories— through the compassionate care nurses provide for patients and families, the steadfast support they offer one another, and the collective dedication they demonstrate across our organization. At Emplify Health by Gundersen, we are committed to caring for each other and creating a workplace where nurses feel supported and equipped to make a meaningful difference every day.



Andrea Hauser, DNP, RN, CNL
Chief Nursing Officer
Interim Chief Operating Officer
Gundersen Region



Danielle Rathke, DNP, RN, CNL
Director of Nursing
Gundersen Region

This publication would not be possible without the many people who contributed—from our nurses and Nursing Council members to those who took the time to nominate colleagues for Nurse Excellence Awards, along with our Corporate Communications team and photographers. Thank you.