

## News Briefs

### Nurses top the charts for honesty and ethics

A 1999 annual Gallup poll on Honesty and Ethics found nearly three-quarters of Americans deem nurses' honesty and ethics as either very high or high. This ranking puts nurses at the top of the list of 45 jobs and occupations. The top five professions rated for honesty include: nurses (75 percent), pharmacists (69 percent), veterinarians (63 percent), medical doctors (58 percent) and K-12 teachers (57 percent).

### 2000 Media Kits

For copies of the 2000 Sigma Theta Tau media kit, please contact Andrea McDonald at 1.888.634.7575 toll free or e-mail: [mcdonald@stti.iupui.edu](mailto:mcdonald@stti.iupui.edu). This kit includes background on the society and its officers, the 2000 Fact Sheet and the 2000 Media Guide to Health Care Experts. You can access the kit online at [nursingsociety.org/media](http://nursingsociety.org/media).

### 2001 Media Guide

Beginning in May you can apply for the 2001 Media Guide to Health Care Experts. The guide is distributed annually to trade and consumer media and includes experts in a variety of health care areas. To apply online visit [nursingsociety.org/media](http://nursingsociety.org/media). Or to receive a submission form contact Andrea McDonald at 1.888.634.7575 or e-mail: [mcdonald@stti.iupui.edu](mailto:mcdonald@stti.iupui.edu). Submission deadline is August 31.

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Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

# EXCELLENCE

*in Clinical Practice*

Second Quarter 2000 Volume 1, Number 2

[nursingsociety.org](http://nursingsociety.org)

## Fixing the operating room nursing shortage



Medical centers and universities are partnering in innovative programs designed to prevent a shortage of operating room nurses.

by Marlene Ruiz

"Successful candidates will have one year OR experience circulating and scrubbing." – Good Samaritan Hospital

"A \$5,000 sign-on bonus for full-time 12- or 8-hour shifts, requires two plus years of experience scrubbing and circulating." – Saint John's Health Center

"Full time opening in a multi-specialty outpatient surgery center. Minimum one year experience to apply." – Healthsouth Surgery Center

In any city's newspaper or nursing journal you are likely to see ads like these from a San Diego, Calif., newspaper. These classifieds for operating room (OR) nurses reveal employer efforts to recruit and retain registered nurses (RNs) with OR training. Many consider the OR to be one area with a significant nursing shortage.

In the 1970s most schools of nursing cut the students' experience in the OR from three or more months to as little as a single observation. The schools' position was that OR nursing was a technical skill that did not require in-depth exposure. The result is a shortage of new nurses prepared to replace older nurses ready to retire.

OR NURSES, PAGE 3 ►

## Hospital discovers pets are a patient's best friend

by Elaine Bloniasz

Our staff believes in the importance of emotional support and its role in the healing process. There is a growing body of scientific evidence suggesting that pets are often an important source of support to their owners, especially in times of stress and illness. Because some patients share a special bond with their pets and may find a pet visit comforting, we developed the pet visitation program in the Intensive Care Unit of Baystate Medical Center, a 600-bed level 1 trauma center in Springfield, Mass.

The program has been in place for about three years, with more than 30 pet visits to the hospital's ICU. As a form of animal companionship

therapy, patients spend time with their own dogs, cats or other pets, or schedule visits with prescreened animals provided by community volunteers.

Although we have no quantitative research data to document that these visits are helpful to patients in any measurable way, observations of staff and feedback from participants and their families have been positive. The success of visits to the ICU has opened the program to all other nursing units at Baystate.

In order to assure the visits run smoothly and that the privacy, safety and comfort of all patients is

PET THERAPY, PAGE 4 ►



Photo: Baystate Medical Center

The companionship experienced through pet therapy helps patients at Baystate Medical Center recover from illness and surgery.

## Ruiz named advisor

With 40 years of nursing practice in and beyond the U.S., Marlene Ruiz, RN, BSN, MA, has been named the editorial advisor of *Excellence in Clinical Practice*.

In this role, Ruiz will author guest articles on issues and trends in nursing clinical practice and help to shape the overall content of the publication. She is one of three advisors working with the customized versions of *Excellence*.

Ruiz is director of education and consulting services at Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, Calif. In this position, she is responsible for the orientation, inservice and continuing education of 6,500 employees and directs a staff of 17. Her nursing experience has extended beyond the U.S. through teaching leadership programs in Latvia with an International Relief Teams program.

Working with Project Concern International in Romania, she taught leadership content and assisted nurses and physicians in drafting bylaws for their

newly formed perinatal association. She has been an invited speaker at the Russian American Nursing Conference in Russia and at a leadership program in St. Petersburg, Russia. She has toured several European countries, looking at the health care delivery system and nursing roles, and teaches an introductory course on culture diversity at California State University, Dominguez Hills.



Marlene Ruiz

Ruiz's nursing career has included clinical positions in labor and delivery, operating room and medical nursing service. She has worked with Kaiser Permanente for more than 30 years and is an active community member in numerous civic organizations including the San Diego County Nursing Program Advisory Board.

To read more of Ruiz's contributions, look for future issues of *Excellence in Clinical Practice*. For feedback on this issue, please e-mail: [mcdonald@stti.iupui.edu](mailto:mcdonald@stti.iupui.edu).

### E-mail service interrupted

If you sent e-mail to Sigma Theta Tau headquarters between January 19 and March 3, please resend your message. Our e-mail system was temporarily out of service the first week of March, and messages may have been lost including your selection of a version of *Excellence*. We apologize for this inconvenience.



Sigma Theta Tau International  
Honor Society of Nursing

# Chiron: developing leaders

by Teila Higgins

Sigma Theta Tau's International Leadership Institute offers leadership development opportunities to nurse clinicians at every stage in their career. One choice is Chiron: The Mentor-Fellow



Andrea W. Koepke

Forum. This unique program provides opportunities for nurses to develop individualized leadership plans, acquire specific skills and meet goals.

You can participate in Chiron in three ways: as a fellow or mentor within the mentor-fellow option or as a senior fellow within the senior fellow option. A fellow is a nurse early in the profession who desires skill development with a designated mentor. During a 12-month program, the mentor guides the fellow to carry out an individualized plan and

participate in group activities. Mentors and fellows are encouraged to seek out potential partners and apply as a pair to the Chiron 2001 program.

The senior fellow option is for the more experienced professional who wants to expand current skills or develop new ones. Senior fellows are selected according to the strength of a well-developed plan focusing on leadership and scholarship. A potential plan could include a sabbatical, an agreement for a clinician to work with an expert in the field or an outlet for a retired nurse to pursue new career opportunities.

Chiron 2000 participants are: Fellow Kandy K. Smith, Mississippi and Mentor Janis P. Bellack, South Carolina; Fellow Julie A. Olson, Wisconsin and Mentor Melanie C. Dreher, Iowa; Fellow Monica L. Tenhunen, California and Mentor Lois Evans, Pennsylvania.

"The experience and further education will prepare me to become more skilled at providing leadership to other geriatric nurses," says Tenhunen. "Having a mentor will provide support as I advance toward and achieve my

goals."

Senior Fellow Andrea W. Koepke was one of the initial participants to complete Chiron in the fall of 1999 as part of a sabbatical leave. Prior to her fellowship, she had led six groups of nursing students to a Korean orphanage for children with disabilities. Koepke's plan included teaching at Seoul National University in South Korea, presenting continuing education workshops and consulting with the Lambda Alpha-at-Large Chapter. She taught graduate students about many facets of nursing, consulted on curriculum development and participated in a community project identifying children with developmental delays.

The opportunity offered through Chiron enabled Koepke to experience nursing philosophies of the eastern world and expanded her knowledge of teaching styles learned from her Korean colleagues. This experience strengthened her role as a leader within the School of

Nursing at Anderson University, Anderson, Ind., where she is a faculty member. During her time in South Korea, Koepke took on another endeavor. She assisted

Lambda Alpha-at-Large Chapter officers with chapter enhancement strategies and presented a continuing education workshop.

"My work with the Sigma Theta Tau chapter in Korea allowed me to function in the role of a leader," she says. "I feel renewed and capable of taking on new and exciting challenges. It will remain as one of the highlights of my life."

The deadline for Chiron 2001 applications is June 30, 2000.

For additional information visit [nursingsociety.org/leadership/chiron.html](http://nursingsociety.org/leadership/chiron.html) or call 1.317.634.8171.

*Teila Higgins is a journalism intern from Butler University, Indianapolis, Ind., working with the International Leadership Institute at Sigma Theta Tau International.*



## Earn CEUs through online case studies

An innovative resource for providing a top quality, peer-reviewed continuing education model is available through Sigma Theta Tau International's Online Case Studies for Nursing.

You can complete courses for further education or meeting licensing or certification requirements in specialty areas at your own level or learning pace, and at the convenience of your professional and personal schedules. There are even opportunities to retake courses if you aren't satisfied with your original score. Or you can participate in the program by writing case studies or serving as a peer reviewer for submissions.

"Nurses by nature are lifelong learners and this program helps to support them in their career and personal goals," says Patricia E. Thompson, RN, EdD, president of Sigma Theta Tau. "Because nurses have busy lives with a variety of professional demands, it's exciting to offer a continuing education opportunity that can be completed at their convenience and from the privacy of their own homes."

Registered nurses at any professional

level or job responsibility who take the courses will gain point-of-care knowledge to make informed decisions about health including problem assessment, needs analysis, application of interventions and planning, managing client/community health programs and evaluations.

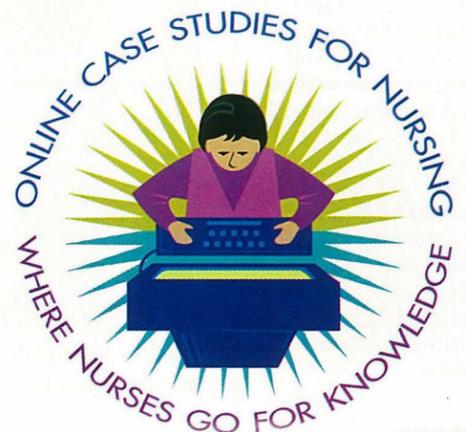
The program is unique in that it's interactive, offers participation in chat room forums, and links to additional nursing resources for users to access in real time. Currently, no other comparable program exists. Nurses worldwide may read case studies, answer examination questions, and contact the experts, authors and colleagues through the virtual community chat rooms. Those seeking contact hours will pay a nominal fee for service. Following the launch of the program this summer, new case studies and topics will continually be added to the site.

Those who wish to author or review case studies also have an opportunity for participation. Submissions are being sought from members for case studies in more than 20 topics that will be published online. A template is available for writing the studies, which should take

about three hours to prepare. There is also a need for members to serve as peer review panels in their areas of expertise and provide evaluations of submitted case studies and feedback to the authors.

Authors and reviewers are needed in the following areas:

- End of life care
- Ethics
- Fraud and compliance in health care
- Electrocardiogram interpretation update
- Forensic nursing
- Pain management - Non-pharmacological interventions
- Pain management - Pharmacological update
- The advance practice nurse's role in case management
- Infectious diseases update
- Parish nursing
- Organ transplantation issues
- Pediatric update
- Obstetrical care update
- Genetics
- Delegation and clinical decision making
- Menopause
- Post-menopausal chronic health issues
- Osteoporosis in women



[www.nursingsociety.org](http://www.nursingsociety.org)

- Depression in women
- Breastfeeding

The Online Case Studies for Nursing is funded by the Joan K. Stout, RN, Continuing Education Series on Nursing Practice and the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation.

For more information or to receive an application to be an author or reviewer, please contact Sue Wheeler, RN, toll free at 1.888.634.7575 toll free or e-mail: [onlinece@stti.iupui.edu](mailto:onlinece@stti.iupui.edu)

## Nursing coalition launches Web site

by Jama Pryor

A coalition of 17 nursing and health care organizations working to recruit more nurses through a national public relations and advertising campaign will take the campaign's message to the Internet via a new Web site. Sigma Theta Tau International is a charter member of the coalition and serves as its fiscal agent.

The Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow (NHT) site, to be launched in May during Nurses Week (May 6 - 12), will feature information about the campaign, coalition members, and sponsorship and volunteer opportunities. The site's address is [nursesource.org](http://nursesource.org).

Medical Recruitment Network, an Internet company focused on career content for health care employers and professionals, has signed on as a major financial and in-kind sponsor for the NHT campaign and will develop the Web site.

"When fully functional, it will include career opportunities related to nursing," explains Jay Kleinman, vice president, sales and business development of Medical Recruitment Network. "It's going to be a great tool not only to attract new nurses, but also to provide health care content and career options based on personal and professional needs."

The NHT coalition was formed to proactively address the country's nursing shortage with a national media campaign. The group has sent information to health care and advertising companies to explain the national campaign and ask for support.

"Now that Medical Recruitment Network is involved,

companies can see that this thing is really coming together," says Bruce Hetrick, president of Hetrick Communications, the coalition's PR firm based out of Indianapolis. "We're now hoping to land a sponsor at the \$500,000 to \$1 million level, which will position that company with the most highly respected professionals in health care through repeated exposure to consumers and professionals alike."

Such exposure will result from a series of high-quality, attention-getting television, print and radio advertisements broadcast nationally.

The new Web site will showcase the Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow ads. Professionals will be able to go to the site for nursing career profiles, speaking tips, mentor program information and the latest on what coalition members are doing to promote nursing within their organizations.

While coalition members are searching for major corporate support, individual contributions are also needed for the campaign. Donors will be recognized on the coalition Web site. If you'd like to contribute, please make your check payable to "Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow/STTI," and send to Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, 550 West North Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202. For more information contact Jama Pryor at 317.262.8080 or e-mail: [jama@hetcom.com](mailto:jama@hetcom.com).

*Jama Pryor is an account manager at Hetrick Communications, the public relations firm for Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow.*

# Renew your membership today!

Here are three easy ways to keep your Sigma Theta Tau membership active:

- 1) log onto [www.nursingsociety.org](http://www.nursingsociety.org)
- 2) call using the toll free number
- 3) send renewal form by mail or fax



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VISA / MASTERCARD ACCEPTED

# Career profiles in clinical practice

**Name:** Maureen T. Greene, RN, MS, CS

**Title:** Clinical Nurse IV

**Employer:** St. Joseph Hospital, Milwaukee

**Years in Current Position:** 20



#### Three favorite aspects of job:

- Diagnostics/treatment
- Collaboration
- Teaching/consultation

#### Three challenging aspects of job:

- Advanced practice recognition
- Varying entry level for RN education
- Valuing nursing through staffing patterns

#### Job description:

Currently I am an ICU RN who functions at the bedside. With advanced education and 18+ years of experience as a medical-surgical clinical specialist and an acute care nurse practitioner, I have the ability to diagnose, treat, direct and care for complex patient problems.

Through a collaborative process with physicians and other health disciplines, I give hands-on care to the complex heart surgery, septic, respiratory distressed, and medical/surgical clients with comorbidities that need attention in the ICU setting. Through instruction and collaboration with the other intensive care nurses, they seek quality patient care and expedited discharge of a stable client to the inpatient unit. Attention to cost containment mechanisms while providing comprehensive, diligent care using critical care pathways makes their ICU special in these changing times.

#### Education:

- BS, 1981, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Nursing
- MS, 1991, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI, Nursing
- ACNP, 1999, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

#### Sigma Theta Tau Chapter:

Delta Gamma

#### Best advice:

"Lifelong learning should be the goal of all registered nurses. An advanced degree gives you vision and position for success."

#### How Sigma Theta Tau has shaped her career:

"Sigma Theta Tau has provided an arena to stay connected with my academic university. The networking provided by the four meetings a year allows me time to meet friends and talk about professional issues and changes in health care delivery in this large metropolitan city. The honor society has provided leadership opportunities to strengthen my management, research and creative skills to enhance involvement of professional peers. Sigma Theta Tau membership started as a method of recognition but has become a way to be recognized as a leader, manager, educator and clinical expert in the nursing profession."

Maureen Greene is one member whose career is profiled on our new Web site, Career Profiles in Nursing, at [nursingsociety.org/career](http://nursingsociety.org/career). This site offers society members, students and others interested in a nursing career insight into the many career opportunities – administration, clinical practice, pediatric nursing, research, education and more. It links you directly with each person and leads to the universities from which they graduated. Visit the site today to ask these nurses questions through e-mail and explore the world of nursing.

## OR NURSES

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The average age of the OR RN nationally is 47, and in San Diego it is more than 50.

By not being exposed to the challenge and excitement of this nursing opportunity, students are not encouraged to pursue this avenue for lifelong careers. By observing no more than a case or two, they are ill prepared for OR nursing. The circulating roles in the OR require advanced critical thinking skills to serve as the patient advocate and risk management controller, and to supply the medical team with all necessary resources. The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) recommends those in circulating roles in the OR be RNs.

#### Finding OR nurses in work/school programs

San Diego has eight large medical centers and many free-standing outpatient surgical centers. At any given time you can find vacant OR RN positions posted in half of them. Early in 1999 the OR department administrators and the nursing education community assessed the problem and created two initiatives. The University of California San Diego (UCSD), Children's, Alvarado Hospital Medical Center, Palomar Pomerado Health Care System, Scripps Health Care and the Sharp Health Care System formed one program. "It was time to put competition aside and work together to achieve a positive outcome for all," says Suzanne Anderson, RN, director of surgical services, UCSD.

The program was organized under the UCSD's extension program with options for continuing education credit. Each participating medical center contributed \$5,000 for curriculum design and contracted with Mary Lou Blacharski, RN, to develop program content. One center donated unused space for an OR lab. All of the centers hired their own students for the course which resulted in 15 enrollments. Costs to students totaled a nominal \$600 for books and materials. Many physicians volunteered lecture time for sessions about OR specialties, while Blacharski shaped course content about perioperative nursing, OR fundamentals, scrubbing, circulating and an overview of all OR specialties. After 12 weeks, 15 new OR nurses assumed viable roles in the participating medical centers. Earning as they were learning, the nurses were able to devote the needed time for a career change.

#### Program revamped for working nurses

The second program was a partnership between the San Diego Veterans Administration Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente and the Regional Health Occupations Resource

Center (RHORC). Southwestern College had an existing eight-month long OR RN program, but it was time consuming for the working RN to complete without a source of income or a job guarantee upon completion. A group of OR administrators and educators met with campus faculty and Marlies Vandenburg, RN, director of RHORC, based at Southwestern College. The group was able to use the existing course, already approved by the curriculum committee and following AORN guidelines, and modify it to be more user friendly for students. The curriculum was changed from eight months to two modules of two months each.

Beverly Roling, RN, director of perioperative services at Kaiser Permanente, says the best program outcomes were filling long-standing vacancies and relieving the overtime burden from other nurses. An additional benefit was Roling's opportunity to help shape the course content by contributing key staff, and herself, as guest lecturers.

Students in the course include new nursing graduates and experienced nurses. Associate degree college units and continuing education credit were awarded upon completion of the course, which cost students \$500 for tuition and books. Of the 15 students, 13 were quickly employed by their supporting hospital or in an OR in the community. The two experienced post-surgical staff nurses in the course chose to return to their previous positions reporting they had a better understanding of many aspects of patient care needs from the program content.

Anticipating the retirement of some long-term employees, the OR directors of the participating medical centers say these two programs will be repeated in 2000. Work is already underway to offer an elective study in OR for senior-year nurses at San Diego State University, according to Dr. Pat Wahl, RN, director of the school of nursing. The past year was a good one for OR nursing in San Diego. Now OR directors and faculty can share their progress with their peers nationally.

For more information on these programs, e-mail: [marlene.s.ruiz@kp.org](mailto:marlene.s.ruiz@kp.org)

Marlene Ruiz, RN, BSN, MA, is director of education and consulting services at Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, Calif.

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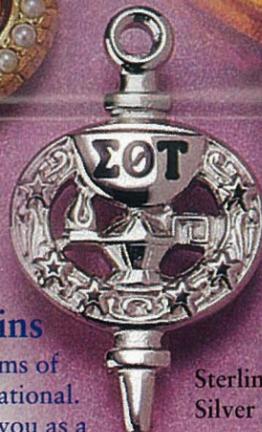


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# National Nurses Week honors past and future

by Jeanne M. Floyd

The celebration of Nurses Week, beginning each year on Florence Nightingale's birthday, is a time for reflecting on the rich sense of community that draws us into the profession and sustains us as we move from novices to experts in the practice of nursing. When nursing colleagues meet, there is an implicit understanding that we are drawn together in a common bond of service to others. Nurses Week events provide us with opportunities to make explicit how the community of nursing improves the health of the world's people. As Sigma Theta Tau International members are living out this legacy, May 6 - 12 is an opportune time to inform the broader community of the public good performed by nurses in a variety of roles.

From its earliest beginnings, nursing has been concerned with the human condition. In addition to caring for the sick, nurses assumed the social dimension of addressing problems associated with conditions that affect the health and welfare of society. Concern for overall health has linked nursing closely with social efforts of communities to provide practical and effective measures to preserve health. As a result, nurses are trusted by the public to know how to care for persons who experience suffering and distress, and they are expected to partner with others to promote health and prevent disease under varying and complex conditions. The public trust is rooted in a distinguished tradition.

The work of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, provides testimony to nursing's mission of service to humanity over a lifetime. As perhaps the greatest war nurse in history, she overcame obstacles to make significant contributions to the military health care system and hospital reform. She pioneered the use of social statistics and their graphical representation. She masterfully consulted with others to persuade governmental leaders to support large-scale reforms in public health practices. Using newly developed technology, she dramatically illustrated how death rates decreased when the spread of infection across populations was controlled through sanitation measures.

The Nightingale vision of service to community was validated recently by society members who guided the development of its newly crafted organizational vision. Our aim is "to create a global community of nurses who lead in using scholarship, knowledge and technology to improve the health of the world's people." As we collaborate with individuals and groups in the broader community to carry out this mandate, members are urged to tell their inspiring stories. As full partners, the public deserves to know of nursing's contributions to society and to engage in dialogues about the ways in which the work of nursing might be supported now and in the future. Nurses Week provides the entrée for nurturing relationships among nursing colleagues and our local communities.



Florence Nightingale, the mother of modern nursing, is commemorated through international Nurses Week, beginning each year on her birthday, May 6.

#### Article resource/suggested reading

M. Patricia Donahue, (1996), *Nursing: The finest art*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), St. Louis: Mosby.

Jeanne M. Floyd, RN, PhD, CAE, is director of research and evaluation at Sigma Theta Tau International.

## PET THERAPY

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

maintained, we follow certain guidelines. Written consent must be obtained from the patient and family. The patient's own pet can visit or we can arrange for a visit from one of our pet companion dogs, which have been immunized and behaviorally screened using guidelines established by the Delta Society, a national group specializing in animal-assisted therapy. Small pets are transported in carriers while larger animals must be leashed.

Our first pet visitor in the ICU was Ellie, a regal greyhound whose owner was a critically ill young man. The patient had been unresponsive to the staff, and to our dismay, was unresponsive to Ellie on her first visit. On her next visit Ellie was able to coax a smile from the man, and each visit was followed by a period of increased cognitive awareness. Ellie became a frequent visitor throughout his recovery and played a pivotal role in paving the way for our future pet visitors.

Daisy, one of the pet companion dogs, was owned by a man with a terminal illness. He knew first-hand the power of his little dog. He explained, "I would come home from my treatments and cuddle up with Daisy. She was the best medicine." A pet team that included Daisy visited many of our patients. A long-haired dachshund, Daisy

was small enough to be placed on the bed of a young trauma victim. She settled herself alongside the patient and allowed him to pet her. The young man's face lit up with joy as he visibly relaxed and told us proudly about his own dog, a rottweiler.

Because our patients are in physiologic crisis, they are deprived of some basic needs. They experience loneliness, isolation, and often, depression. Pets can sometimes break through the walls of isolation when humans cannot.

In addition to our own evaluation, we ask participants to complete a questionnaire. From this evaluation we learned about the impact of the visitation on patients' family members and on the pets themselves. One patient's

wife described the visit as "a real gift" to the whole family. Another patient's wife reported the family cat would not eat or sleep in the usual place at the foot of the bed when her husband became hospitalized. After a visit with her owner, the cat returned to her normal routine.

Although establishing the program has been labor intensive, it has been well worth the effort. The result is a unique therapeutic intervention that at once touches everyone involved.

Elaine Bloniasz, RN, BSN, is a staff nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at Baystate Medical Center, Springfield, Mass.

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- Fixing the operating room nursing shortage
- Hospital discovers pets are a patient's best friend

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- Creating excellence in online education
- School nurses: counselors, educators, advocates and caregivers

If you did not select one of these three versions, you automatically received *Excellence in Clinical Practice*. You can still select a customized version of the July issue by calling our Member Service Center at 1.888.634.7575 or e-mailing: [marketing@stti.iupui.edu](mailto:marketing@stti.iupui.edu). Select only one version to receive in the mail and please include your member number in your response.

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