Going above and beyond

Like snowflakes in a blizzard, stories are swirling throughout The University of Kansas Hospital of employees going above and beyond to provide the best patient care possible during our one-two punch of winter storms. Below are just a few accounts of these exceptional efforts (see more on 24/7).

SHELLY CARNEY and Eric Dooley are transportation virtuosos. Carney, security identification coordinator, worked 19 hours straight. She supported Central Transport’s Dooley and his team as we received hundreds of calls asking for rides to and from the hospital. Some of Carney’s workload included helping build the spreadsheet, taking requests, finding addresses, dispatching drivers, updating staff and training volunteers.

Dooley, with his EMS background, was able to quickly route drivers to contiguous locations, organize department volunteers and serve as liaison between the command center and hospital leaders. He rested briefly in the wee hours of the night so he could relieve Carney in the morning.

Contributed by Marta Lawson, RN, Nursing Education nurse manager

DOUG PETERSON, RN, Medical ICU nurse manager, spent almost 24 hours driving around the metro to shuttle nurses to and from the hospital. I don’t know how many rides he provided, but I do know his efforts were heroic. Many of our dialysis nurses could not make it in as the snow started to fall. Therefore, the nurses who did make it assumed extra workload throughout the day.

After finding out the dialysis nurse on call Thursday night was snowed in, Christina Waggoner, RN, volunteered to stay at the hospital for 36 hours (sleeping in the unit) in order to work Thursday, Friday and cover the call schedule Thursday night for emergencies.

Contributed by Chris Nedbalek, RN, Renal Dialysis nurse manager

Left, in the Department of Nursing, coordinating lodging for hundreds of caregivers required long hours for Support Specialist Christine Waters, (from left), Jill Hagel, RN; Britnee Moore, administrative project coordinator; and Dawn Walters, RN.

Below, Central Transport’s Rob Adkins and Shelly Carney, security identification coordinator, organized drivers for employees who could not make it to the hospital.

OUR VOLUNTEER drivers were really impressive. In the middle of all the weather they offered to drive all over the city just to bring people here and take them home. Tim O’Connell, hospital security manager, stopped for only a few hours in the night for rest and returned early the next morning.

These drivers made it happen. They rocked! Tim Kistner, RN, Perioperative Services nurse manager; facilities director Gayln Gorup and Cris Pritchard, RN, Surgical ICU nurse manager, were a few of the other road warriors. Bob Page, hospital president and CEO, and Chris Ruder, RN, vice president of Patient Care Services, were out collecting staff as well.

Contributed by Shelly Carney, security identification coordinator
BILLLANEisasotech onCardiovacular ProgressCareUnit, and his wife, Anne Lane, RN, is a quality outcomes coordinator. Bill was sitting with a constant observation (CO) patient when the weather became very bad. Anne, upon being released from her duties, came to sit with the CO patient so Bill could take their four-wheel-drive vehicle to pick up nurses for work that night. Huge dedication from the Lane family!

Contributed by Rebecca Moburg, RN, CVPCU nurse manager

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT'S Theresa Holliger, RN, and Audit and Compliance's Anna Adams, RN, shoveled snow for almost two hours on the campus, assisting coworkers trying to get in and out. The people they were helping often were unaware of the assistance. They even helped shovel a sidewalk across Rainbow Boulevard, between the Goodcents restaurant and the bank:

Employees were not able to leave the parking lot below because the plow had not been through.

The afternoon “shoveling party” also included Organizational Improvement’s Chris Wittkopp as well as myself. Wittkopp then helped shovel someone out as she left for the day, and I went out in the evening to dig out some random cars.

Contributed by Cathy Gardner, Organizational Improvement senior director

DUSTIN PIERCE, RN, clinical surveillance and triage nurse, really went above and beyond Thursday and was still out and about Friday. I called him on a whim after the leadership meeting, knowing he had a vehicle that could handle it — but I had no real expectation he would be willing to assist on his day off.

To my surprise, he jumped at the opportunity and within 30 minutes he had an assignment to pick up five folks to bring to work. He took a group home as well, and while he was taking an employee home he just happened to assist a carload of people get their car unstuck.

Back on campus, he helped free employees’ cars by shoveling around them. Starting around 6 a.m. Friday, he began bringing people to work. He also took about six more people home — finishing up his last stop around 11 a.m. Friday.

While he was waiting for his car to load up Friday morning, I saw him shoveling the parking lot — he truly is unstoppable! I believe he traveled the majority of the metro area, and was still asking what he could do next to help out.

Contributed by Amanda Gartner, RN, Nursing Quality and Research nurse manager

IN STERILE PROCESSING, we had a large number of call-ins for the evening. Only two employees, Mike Hurd and Laura Pew, managed to make it in. Four dayshift workers, Tamara Grim, Patty Fuller, Keya Vann and Janet McCon, volunteered to work a double to help make up for absences.

The Operating Room provided 13 surgical techs to assist to process instruments needed for the next day’s surgeries. Nightshift had only one call-in and other dayshift workers, Stacey Smith and Lesley Sellors, returned during the late hours of night shift to make sure the morning rush would go smoothly.

Without this group effort, it would have been almost impossible to keep up with the demand of the ORs. Instead, it was like a normal day with full staffing. It was a true team effort, with everyone pulling together to make sure the instrumentation needed for Friday’s surgeries was prepared safely for the patients.

Contributed by Mark Walterbach, RN, Sterile Processing nurse manager