Connection Through Care

With the help of philanthropic support, patients find compassionate, personalized health care at Swedish.
At Swedish, we are committed to always providing the highest level of care to our community. Your support makes that possible, allowing us to invest in new ideas and technologies that will make a difference for our patients.

From immersive trainings and mental health support for nurses to new care strategies for our smallest patients in the neonatal intensive care unit, you are changing lives for the better.

Thank you.
Healing takes more than just the right treatment. It also takes compassion and understanding. Every day, nurses at Swedish work at the intersection of clinical expertise and compassionate care. They regularly go above and beyond to support patients and their loved ones in any way they can, accompanying families through the good days and the challenging ones.

Nurses bring their whole selves to the job, but the effort of caring so much and so diligently can take its toll. It’s no secret that the health care industry is experiencing a shortage of qualified nurses, and the challenges of the past few years have only intensified this concern.

Every year in May, we honor our dedicated colleagues during Nurses Week, May 6–12. But at Swedish we know that shining the spotlight on our nurses for one week is not nearly enough. We are committed to supporting nurses every day through the ups and downs of health care. Thanks to generous giving from community members like you, here are some of the ways we're supporting our nurses.

Nursing matters
How we’re supporting our hardworking nurses at every stage of their career
The good kind of mistakes

New nursing school graduates are entering a field changed by the hardships of the past few years, and due to the pandemic, many are graduating with less in-person training. Swedish is dedicated to ensuring that our nurses receive in-depth and complete training so they can best serve our patients and feel confident and supported as they begin their career. Those candidates entering our RN Residency Program receive specialized hands-on learning designed by Swedish nurses who know exactly what early-career nurses need.

At our Cherry Hill Simulation Center, mistakes are not just part of the learning experience, they’re encouraged. “They’re under so much academic pressure when they go through school,” says Program Manager Elisabeth Walton, MN, RN. “The need to prove themselves can make it hard to ask for help.” Mistakes made during simulations become lessons learned that could save a patient’s life down the line.

The 11,000 square foot space complete with fully stocked patient rooms, a nurses’ station and piped in hospital sounds and announcements makes it easy for nurse residents to fully immerse themselves in simulated scenarios. Simulation Center staff answer messages and phone calls as doctors and other clinicians so learners get the full hospital experience, while state-of-the-art manikins react like patients would.
Every day, nurses work at the intersection of clinical expertise and compassionate care.

One of the first scenarios starts off with a patient returning from surgery receiving narcotic pain relief from an IV, with the pump set too high. Only around 10% of residents catch the mistake before the patient begins to go into respiratory distress and interventions are needed. This exercise drills in the habit for nurse residents to always double-check medications.

While acting quickly is necessary when at the bedside, Elisabeth and her colleagues give residents the time they need to think through scenarios. “In real-life, you might only have seconds, but we’re able to string it out to give the learner time and space for critical thinking,” says Elisabeth. “We can tell when they’re almost there, and letting things click for them is critical in the learning process.”

Many of the scenarios include alarming situations with uncontrolled bleeding, cardiac arrest, or other life-threatening complications. And after a simulation is complete, residents spend the same amount of time in debrief as in the simulation, dissecting what they could have done differently both individually and as a team.

Elisabeth and her team have designed simulations for every specialty, including perinatal nurses who care for parents before, during and after birth. The top complication that leads to maternal death is severe bleeding, which can be incredibly scary for new nurses when the cause of the bleed is not immediately clear. A manikin designed to simulate labor can have a hemorrhage, preparing residents to think critically in the face of extensive bleeding.

More recently, perinatal nurses have also completed simulations where an expectant or postpartum mother has a cardiac arrest. The rise in fertility treatments means that some women who wouldn’t otherwise be pregnant are able to carry a child. “The added stress on the cardiovascular system can create a perfect storm,” says Elisabeth. “Statistically, we are likely to see one such cardiac arrest somewhere within our system each year.”

By practicing now, nurses will be in the best position to respond and save lives later.

Tending to trauma

A new program called Code Lilac offers nurses and other caregivers in-person support in the aftermath of emotionally charged, frightening or upsetting experiences. Hospitals have a variety of codes meant to get the right resources to the right patient when time is of the essence. A Code Lilac is not for patients and
is not broadcast across our intercom system, but the response is no less urgent.

Beginning at our First Hill and Cherry Hill campuses, a group of trained caregivers called the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) responds to Code Lilacs ready to listen and support. “In crisis situations, the right time to connect can vary person to person,” says Kelsey Smith, Senior Director of Care Management and Behavioral Health and co-chair of our Wellbeing Committee. Once a Code Lilac has been triggered by someone asking for help, Kelsey and her team check with the nurse for the best time to talk, which could be within minutes or the next day.

Depending on the situation, the CIRT can meet with individuals—or groups who went through the same experience. After an initial meeting, the team can also connect nurses with the many wellness resources offered by Swedish, including free talk therapy. Then, the team follows up within a few weeks to debrief after the nurse has had time to process the event and offer any additional support that may be needed.

It can be hard to ask for help, especially for nurses who frequently put others’ needs before their own. But our leadership team is committed to fostering a culture where the needs of caregivers are prioritized alongside the needs of patients. Information about the Code Lilac Program is being shared from the top down from executives to nurse managers. Taking care of each other is a key part of wellness, and that includes self-care.

To further support our nurses, philanthropy has helped us provide a dedicated place to put self-care strategies into practice. Peaceful respite rooms are available at First Hill to allow nurses space to step away and unwind from the busyness of the hospital. These respite spaces include comfortable couches and massages chairs, soothing colors and room for yoga, meditation and relaxation. The rooms are proving to be popular and effective—chalking up more than 800 visits since opening in May this year.

Support from our community will help us open more respite rooms across our five hospitals to better support all our nurses.
Together We Lead

Support for the Fund for Excellence (FFE) provides the flexible support we need to respond to our community. Increasing access to care, advancing technology and developing people are some ways these unrestricted donations give caregivers vital resources when and where they need them.

**Access**
The Providence Swedish Staffing, Transfer, & Operations Center (STOC) continues to streamline the patient experience thanks to philanthropic support. You’ve given our expert caregivers the tools they need to better coordinate care across our five hospitals and two free-standing emergency departments.

**Technology**
The flexible nature of the FFE allows us to upgrade technology where it’s needed to ensure we continue to provide the highest quality of care. That includes new surgical tools to help our surgeons better visualize minute details during complex procedures, as well as an expansion of our HUGS infant security system that ensures our youngest patients are right where they should be.

**Professional Development**
Philanthropy is providing caregivers with the networks and inspiration they need to strengthen their ability to persevere and grow. As health care providers have continued working with incredible stamina in challenging times, conferences offer time and space to recharge, connect and grow.
For women of all ages, it’s all too easy to prioritize other things before focusing on your own health. The Women’s Wellness and GYN Specialty Services clinic is working to change that. It’s now celebrating a year of serving patients thanks to generous community support.

“When you’re taking care of your teenagers and your elderly parents, and you’re working full-time, and you have a household and the dog, it’s a place to give yourself permission to get care for yourself in an environment that’s welcoming,” says Tanya Sorensen, M.D., executive medical director of the Women and Children’s Institute.

In addition to caring for women directly, this wellness-centered model educates women about their unique risk factors and connects them to specialists. As supporters like you know, the point is to help women to feel their best and prevent problems before they arise. Menopause care is another core component, helping women in navigating related health issues and putting resources toward increased understanding in medicine of this long-neglected life transition.

Increasing access
Our stellar clinic team saw more than 13,500 patients in 2022, performing nearly 2,500 in-office procedures. Given the wait time for appointments and essential surgeries, our caregivers know that many more women are waiting too long for these crucial options.
“There’s a tremendous sense of relief when women can access this care,” says Dr. Sorensen. “We’re educating about options for a better quality of life, and people are responding. It’s heartening and a little overwhelming.”

Increasing physical space offers one way to serve more patients and create a community of support. A potential adjacent office space would more than double the center’s size and add more exam and procedure rooms. It also would increase capacity with dedicated options for virtual visits and education.

Connecting women with key specialties is another way to close gaps in care. Brain health and risk factors for dementia and heart health are all critical areas that need attention. “When we look at studies applying to men, we see that we’re missing out on important issues for women,” says Dr. Sorensen. “For example, some of the complications we see in childbirth increase the risk of cardiac disease in women in the following years.” With additional support, the center will further women’s overall wellness by increasing collaborative care for both brain and heart health.

Growing provider capacity and knowledge
Other ways to extend the center’s reach involve continuing to advance diversity, equity and inclusion practices to better serve the health and cultural needs of the region’s diverse communities. For example, there are ethnic and cultural differences to how women experience menopause. Also, fibroid disease disproportionately affects Black and African American women along with challenges in getting care.

One major bottleneck in all this good work is having enough people power. “It’s hard to recruit urogynecologists, and there aren’t many menopause specialists out there,” says Dr. Sorensen. Last June, we launched a brand-new OB/GYN residency to train new physicians in holistic, woman-centered care. As these residents progress in their program, they will begin to do research and, as they enter practice, add to the number of much-needed providers.

“What we’re doing is way more than a clinic,” says Dr. Sorensen. She stresses the gratitude she feels for the community feedback and support, including the sensing sessions that explored how to nurture women’s wellness and served as a catalyst to this visionary model. She invites continued engagement as this work grows to better care for more women juggling so much to take care of others.

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Women’s Wellness by the numbers

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<th>Visits</th>
<th>13,632</th>
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<td>Procedures</td>
<td>2,495</td>
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Most common procedures
Colposcopy
IUD insertion
Urodynamic study (new this year)

Most common diagnoses
Abnormal bleeding
Menopause issues
Darker rooms, brighter futures
A new program within the NICU is helping our smallest patients thrive

Babies born as early as 22 or 23 weeks require around the clock care including help breathing through a ventilator and other supports as many organs are still developing. At our level IV neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Swedish First Hill, we are equipped to offer extremely premature babies the highest level of care.

While these interventions can be lifesaving, disturbing such a premature baby too much can also have consequences. “Every sort of stimulus—noise, light, pain—significantly impacts the long-term development of these babies,” says neonatologist Andrew Beckstrom, M.D.

Launched in October 2022 with philanthropic support, the small baby unit within our NICU provides life-giving care while keeping disruptions to a minimum for our most vulnerable patients and involving parents as much as possible. This highly focused unit incorporates specialized lighting and a quieter environment, with discussions about care happening outside patient rooms. The goal is to create a comforting, womb-like environment that supports brain development and other critical milestones for long-term health. Recent research published in Nature shows these small baby units increase infant survival as well as improve developmental outcomes.

Generous support from donors helped us train 14 caregivers as small baby specialists to make this unit possible. Thank you for giving the gift of a brighter future to premature babies—and their families—for generations to come.
Thank you for investing in the health and well-being of our community.

To learn more about your impact on Swedish priorities, please contact:

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