



YEAR OF THE NURSE AWARDS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 | 7 PM

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About the VNF 2020 Year of the Nurse Awards

These awards are an extension of our annual VNF Leadership Excellence awards, which were created to honor outstanding nurses throughout the commonwealth who have made exceptional contributions to the nursing profession.

During 2020 - the Year of the Nurse - nurses have been essential to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in so many ways. They have not only been on the frontline of providing care to the sick, but also working to keep their communities and patients safe, and providing support with innovative ideas and compassion.

Our 2020 Year of the Nurse Awards recognize the contributions of 20 registered nurses from throughout Virginia during the COVID-19 pandemic.



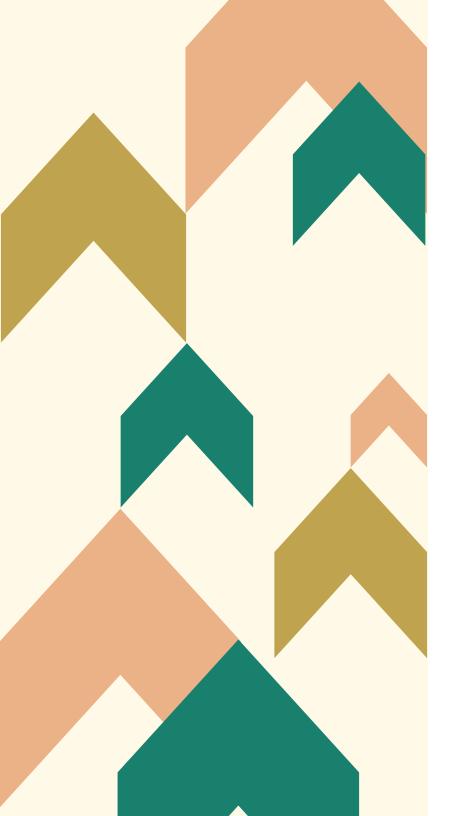
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virginianurses.com/page/NurseLeadershipAcademy

Nurse Leadership Academy

The Nurse Leadership Academy will be a year-long leadership development program for new and emerging nurse leaders across all healthcare settings. Fellows will learn foundational leadership skills and demonstrate these skills through an applied leadership project within their organization. As a result of the pandemic, the program has been delayed. This program is expected to launch in Fall 2021!

nurses change lives license plate

The Virginia Nurses Foundation's license plate honoring and supporting the important work of nurses in our commonwealth makes the perfect gift for the nurse in your life. More than 2,300 of the license plates are currently on Virginia's roads.

PURCHASE

Plates can be purchased at this link: https://tinyurl.com/yb2wsd7e

Anyone can purchase the license plate. You do not need to be a nurse to purchase the license plate. The nursing license plate renders no liability to a nurse in any circumstance. If a nurse has a nurse's license plate, the nurse is not obligated to stop.

FUNDING

The Virginia Nurses Foundation will receive \$15 dollars from each plate fee. This funding will support our scholarships and nursing education initiatives.

COST

The cost is \$25 for regular plates and \$35 for personalized plates.



WAYS TO DONATE

The Virginia Nurses Foundation relies on your donations to support our continuing work providing nursing professional development and scholarships, recognition programs, development intensives, and mental health initiatives.

The Virginia Nurses Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Financial support can come in many forms.



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2020 Year of the Nurse Award Winner Narratives

Ben Clines, BSN, RN, CCRN VCU Health

Clines joined VCU Medical Center as a new graduate nurse in 2018 in the 28-bed medical respiratory intensive care unit (MRICU). Clines is a positive, calm force on the unit and has rapidly become an expert nurse. He is a preceptor and instructor for complex pulmonary concepts, is active in the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, and is a critical care certified registered nurse. When he is not at work giving compassionate care to patients, Clines volunteers to help the greater Richmond community. He gives his time to collect and distribute meals and clothing to those who need it. Additionally, he has volunteered in a local retirement home, aiding elderly residents in their activities of daily living.

When the first COVID-19 patient was admitted to VCU Medical Center, Clines immediately stepped up as a role model for his peers. He willingly shaved his beard so that he could wear a respiratory mask to care for the patient. For the past six months, he has shown compassion, patience, leadership and positivity. Clines has advocated for COVID-19 patients for extended weaning from the ventilator in lieu of a tracheostomy tube, recognizing the long term implications for these otherwise healthy patients. Due in large part to his advocacy, extended ventilator weaning has been successful in multiple patients who have been safely discharged home. Clines is a true hero, providing exemplary care on the front lines of COVID-19.

Nominated by: Deb Zimmermann

Karen Drenkard, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN

George Washington University

Dr. Drenkard's leadership has spanned many fronts, including serving as system chief nursing officer for 10 years, serving as executive director of the ANCC/National Magnet® Recognition Program, and as a chief nurse for a technology company. During these challenging COVID times, her service in her current role as the associate dean for clinical practice/community engagement at George Washington University (GW) has had an incredible impact on the safety and ability to keep the nursing academic community safe in the northern Virginia region.

Dr. Drenkard was asked in spring 2020 to serve as the GW nursing school representative for the University Pandemic Planning Team, and quickly rose to a leadership role as cochair of the Health & Wellness team. The team planned from April through July, and it was August when a final decision was made that GW was going to start up a weekly COVID surveillance testing effort to safely bring students back to campus for the fall. Dr. Drenkard was tapped to stand up a testing site in Ashburn, Virginia to test 550 people weekly, including the 430 nursing students, faculty and staff. A key decision was that the testing center would be an excellent opportunity to have a nurse-led center, and would provide clinical hours for BSN nursing students.

Dr. Drenkard was given a two week planning window to determine resource needs and staffing plans, hire staff, determine faculty needs with the dean, assure a student nursing education and training plan, and also integrate the testing center processes with the student nurse experience. This plan involved having BSN students experiencing clinical placements in the asymptomatic testing center and assuring their testing competence prior to their clinical experience. Every two weeks, a cohort of 8 students are educated, provide return demonstrations, and administer 5 anterior nasal swab tests under observation. They conduct 550 specimen collections each week. The highest level of accuracy and quality control has been reached, with 6 weeks of specimen quality assurance monitoring showing outstanding student collected specimen collection accuracy.

Nominated by: Patricia Deyo

Lori Holleman, MSN, RNC

Sentara Princess Anne Hospital

A first-time mother and her deaf husband were able to work together as a team with the Sentara Princess Anne Hospital (SPAH) staff to secure services for a Cued Speech Transliterator during important portions of their birth process. Over the unexpected 38 hour journey of bringing their baby into the world, the staff at SPAH became family, they greeted them at the door, they made the couple feel safe and took care of them with such passion. The amount of seamless collaboration exhibited was a true testament for the love and camaraderie they have for one another. The couple named one nurse in particular that truly went above and beyond the call of duty and that was Holleman.

Soon after the couple arrived at the hospital, it became clear it was difficult for the husband to communicate due to the mandated masks. The team of nurses sprung into action, identifying a problem that needed to be solved, led by crafty Holleman and her trusty sewing machine. This group of innovative women designed and produced prototypes of see through masks for the husband to be able to read her lips. When their nurse came in with the first mask, the couple was taken aback and the husband began to cry. He mentioned that often in his life people don't take the time to try and communicate with him or dismiss him because they don't understand. Each prototype that arrived via a new nurse, the husband would discuss ways it could be improved and as a collective team they arrived at the mask we now know as 'Will's View.' Without Holleman's quick, out of the box thinking to take the time to go above and beyond and use her creativity, this couple's story would have been much different

Nominated by: Kelly Winslow

Adena Mahini, BSN, RN

Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mahini immediately volunteered to work the drive thru clinic (DTC) serving the veteran population. She did not hesitate to put herself at risk when COVID struck her city and facility; she was one of the first volunteers.

Mahini also volunteered to respond to the COVID-19 crisis outside of the Richmond area. She deployed to Spring City, Pennsylvania where she selflessly served at a veteran's skilled nursing community living center for five weeks in conjunction with the Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System (DEMPS). She was assigned to the COVID floor along with one other RN. They cared for 25 COVID positive patients, most of which required skilled care for complex and chronic conditions. Mahini was dedicated to her patients and functioned as not only their nurse, but also their nursing assistant, social worker, companion, and hospice nurse. She cared for patients in whatever role was needed without fear or hesitation. Upon her return from serving with DEMPS, she continued to serve her local community in the DTC at the Richmond VAMC.

Nominated by: Chante' Logan



Elisa Mangosing-Lemmon, MSN, RN, CMSRN

Riverside Doctors' Hospital Williamsburg

During the initial COVID-19 quarantine, Mangosing-Lemmon took two college students into her home and cared for them like her own. Mangosing-Lemmon provided shelter and food for everyone under her roof even after long days of working as a nurse educator at Riverside Doctors' Hospital. She worked on the frontline with nurses to help train them in infection control measures to ensure safety in the hospital environment. Behind the scenes, Mangosing-Lemmon would practice these techniques at home before teaching the skill in the hospital. And while she was helping hospital staff learn these infection prevention techniques, she was also teaching those at the house and the neighbors next door.

One example of her dedication is the time all power was lost to her hospital facility. Upon hearing of the outage, her first thought was on how she could help the nurses that were working. She got dressed and came into work to provide support, encouragement and relief for her team. She does not shy away from challenges and hard work. She has been asked to step into a patient care role during peak patient care times. She provided support to graduate nurses as they transitioned into the nursing role during this time. She provided encouragement as they encountered circumstances never before seen: team members testing positive, emotional impact on patients as visitation was curtailed, etc.

In the community, Mangosing-Lemmon made sure that masks were provided to everyone she met if she saw they did not have one. Her compassion and kindness and caring manner really sets her apart, and this was very evident with dedicating her time to keep patients, family, friends and even strangers around her safe during the pandemic.

In May, in preparation for Nurses Week, Mangosing-Lemmon created more than 100 hand-made Nurses Day cards for the nursing staff at her hospital.

Nominated by: Faith Fielder



Heather Mayberry, MSN, RN-BC, CNS, ACNS-BC, CCRN, RCIS

Centra

Mayberry is the clinical nurse specialist for MICU, STICU, and IMU and pulmonary hypertension clinical coordinator at Centra in Lynchburg, Virginia. During the pandemic, she took on the role of our lead COVID clinical nurse specialist with the infection control teams, and she developed policy and procedure for how to care for patients and frontline workers. Currently her role is developing a hybrid unit that will facilitate an ICU, PCU and M/S for COVID patients run by specially trained nurses who can smoothly facilitate changing needs. The unit was built with attention to airborne precautions and healthcare workers' protection, in addition to patient's safety. With Mayberry's guidance, construction of this unit allows healthcare providers to access pumps from the outside of the room so caring for patients is not delayed by donning gear to change a pump setting.

Many of us receive praise for being front-line nurses, but we stand confidently on the shoulders of our CNS and Infection Control teams. I know going into this dangerous war with Covid and even on days when we are combatting our more familiar disease processes, that both the patient and I can take comfort in the fact that we have leaders like Mayberry who have paved the way for us to take on this fight. She has given us the honor of her ingenuity and hard-work which gave us confidence and direction in time when there was none.

Nominated by: Tiffany Lyttle





Vivienne Pierce McDaniel, DNP, MSN, RN

Aspen University

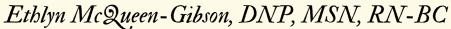
Dr. McDaniel has been an invaluable resource during COVID-19 to the many frontline nurses she works with. She is easily the kind of person who goes out of her way to help people in underserved populations. Dr. McDaniel is the epitome of a nurse leader: caring, warm, empathetic, selfless, and always fair. She is knowledgeable and is always willing to share her research and knowledge with others.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic Dr. McDaniel, has reached out to countless individuals with a primary focus on wives of deceased spouses who lived alone to provide comfort and education about the pandemic. In addition, in March 2020 after standing with the Virginia Governor during the first COVID-19 press conference, she started providing clergy and parishioners of African American churches with up-to-date data retrieved from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that may have prevented the spread of the virus. Dr. Pierce McDaniel also kept her frontline nursing colleagues abreast of current data related to the pandemic, often calling them to infuse joy knowing the stresses of direct care.

Dr. McDaniel's service goes beyond her employment obligations. She serves on the Virginia Governor's COVID-19 Long Term Care Task Force, the Virginia Assisted Living Visitation Workgroup, the LTC Wellness Advisory Committee, and on the 932 2020 Acts of Assembly Work Group which is tasked with increasing the nursing workforce in nursing homes for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Dr. McDaniel is also an online professor at Aspen University and mentors doctoral students in Virginia and other states.

Nominated by: Dian Dayalsingh





Hampton University School of Nursing

Dr. McQueen-Gibson serves as an associate professor at Hampton University's School of Nursing in Hampton, Virginia and is a core leader for the undergraduate minor in gerontology. She also serves as the inaugural Director for the Center for Geriatric Excellence and Minority Aging, which promotes pathways to healthy aging. Dr. McQueen-Gibson's doctor of nursing practice project, Supporting the Health of Custodial African-American Grandmothers: Community-Based Intervention in the School Clinic, continues to increase access to care for African American custodial grandparents while decreasing trauma to vulnerable children in marginalized populations.

Her clinical research focuses on social, ethical, and behavioral implications (SEBI), COVID-19 testing among underserved and/or vulnerable populations, addresses the mistrust of public health messaging, and the impacts of COVID-19 testing outcomes in communities of color. Dr. McQueen-Gibson is also involved in communityengaged research to review COVID-19 testing protocols within public housing in southern Virginia, and how these protocols can be adapted and responsive to the needs of residents. She was recently appointed as co-chair for the Hampton University's COVID-19 Research Task Force to serve in a role to help address the impact of this pandemic on vulnerable communities. She also serves on the Virginia governor's COVID-19 Long Term Care Task Force. This task force is charged to address and develop protocols to improve delivery of care for older adults in the state of Virginia.

Throughout Dr. McQueen-Gibson's 35 years of nursing, she has engaged in advocacy and public service for older adults. She volunteers at the Community Free Clinic of Newport News and serves on the healthcare ministry for her church, New Hope Baptist in Hampton, Virginia. Not only is Dr. McQueen-Gibson an avid contributor to her community, she is also a wellness ambassador for the aging population. Her commitment to public service is not new to her; she is a veteran, having served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Nurse Corp on active and reserve duty.

Nominated by: Vivienne Pierce McDaniel

Zara Morgan, MSN, RN-BC

CrossOver Healthcare Ministry

Morgan has served as CrossOver Healthcare Ministry's director of nursing and operations for close to three years. During the pandemic, Morgan has demonstrated an above and beyond commitment to the patients, employed staff, volunteers, and the community. CrossOver operates two charitable clinics — one in Henrico County and one in the City of Richmond — providing a health home to uninsured and medically underserved neighbors. These are the individuals who have been hit hardest by the pandemic.

Relying on her 25 years of nursing experience, Morgan developed innovative solutions to addressing the health needs of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, including: identifying a telehealth vendor implementing telehealth at CrossOver's two clinics, and at home care for volunteer providers sheltering in place; leading the development of grant-funded at home patient self-monitoring kits; creating a strategy for successful implementation of drive-up COVID-19 testing; working with the health department and other suppliers to ensure we have adequate PPE; developing an outreach strategy to conduct outreach and health education calls to high risk patients; and working with CrossOver's medical director to develop employee health protocols to ensure our employees and volunteers remain safe during the pandemic.

As a result of the pandemic, CrossOver has experienced a reduction in capacity as some volunteers have elected to remain at home. Morgan does not hesitate to support her team by working the clinical floor, providing COVID-19 drive-up testing in all types of weather, and providing our patients with the highest quality of care.

Nominated by: Julie Bilodeau

Johnathan Phillips, MSN, MSEd, RN, NPD-BC

Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital

After 25 years of nursing practice consisting mostly of administration and academia, Phillips returned to the bedside in 2017. He chose palliative medicine and drives over an hour to work because the specialty is not offered locally. Initially during the COVID-19 pandemic, no visitors were allowed, leaving patients alone at the endof-life or with life-limiting illnesses. He stretched himself further to provide more human interaction for the patients. He held more hands. He sat with more patients making the transition. He used more technology to connect patients and families. He listened to more families and provided more updates on the telephone. He provides care without the advantage of responsive facial expressions due to personal protective equipment. He then comes home, praying that he does not bring COVID-19 to his wife and children.

Phillips initiated the Palliative Care PRN Medication Assessment and Reassessment Project in 2019. Even with COVID-19, he continues to collect, analyze, and present data. The project's purpose is to monitor patients' assessment prior to and reassessment following pro re nata (PRN) medication administration of laxatives, sedatives, antiemetics, antipsychotics, anxiolytics, and hypnotics. After three interventions of education, awareness, and aggregate and individual compliance, compliance increased from 54.78% to 91.45% for assessment prior to administration and from 44.62% to 91.45% for reassessment following administration.

Nominated by: Kelli Dorsey

Julie Pierantoni, MSN, RN, CDCES, BC-ADM

Sentara RMH Medical Center

Pierantoni is amazingly efficient, detail-oriented, and visionary. To keep her patients safe, yet support them in their diabetes management during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pierantoni was able to very quickly revise the program to accommodate virtual education. She continues to diligently research and implement new quidelines for ways to safely "see" her clients, ensuring that she is still able to deliver quality teaching and support them remotely. She has become the telehealth expert, working with IS to have Zoom apps installed on all computers. Afterward, she sent links to everyone on the team instructing how to use this new technology. Pierantoni also arranged simulations to ensure staff were comfortable with the platform and pushed them to become more proficient. Many of the computers did not have cameras and, upon discovering the shortages of these from the IS department, she personally purchased more cameras for the computers thus further advancing the quality of telehealth teaching.

In addition to her own program, Pierantoni mentors program coordinators around the state, freely sharing all of her expertise and tips for running a successful program in education materials. She is also an auditor for the ADCES program, ensuring programs meet the standards of evidence based delivery of DSMES.

Pierantoni cares very much, not only about her clients, but her co-workers as well. Despite how busy she is, she is quick to lend her expert advice toward any problem brought to her. She puts 150% into her job and is more than willing to go the extra mile. She frequently organizes diabetes information sessions after work hours to learn more about the products available and their usefulness to her clients.

Nominated by: Susan Clark

Akosua Poku, RN

Kaiser Permanente

Poku receives numerous compliments from members, accolades from her peers, and high praise for the physicians she supports. Kids and parents know her by name; and she treats everyone as if they are part of the family. She goes out of her way to make sure everyone — not just the member — has their needs addressed and consistently delivers top—notch service.

Poku strives for excellence; not only for herself but her team and, ultimately, the organization. If you looked for a definition of "One Kaiser Permanente," it would likely be a picture of Poku with her infectious smile. She cares about her team and takes the time to mentor others by not simply stating facts but ensuring that they understand the "why" across a multidisciplinary process. She runs huddles, reviews performance improvement initiatives and is always looking for a way to improve. She is one of those rare individuals that finds the good in things when challenges arise and always has a smile on her face.

Poku is a steady force within her unit. She is dependable, reliable, and stays until the job is done. Her bubbly, welcoming, and warm personality is at the core of the strong customer service at Fair Oaks and her name is synonymous with 5-star Google reviews. In a time where tensions are high and patience is short, she stands above her peers in her effort and dedication to the success of our team and organization.

Nominated by: Mary Shivar



Aaron Ross, RN

Riverside Health System

Ross was an early adopter and facilitator of tools like video chats and/or Facetime to make important connections with patients and their families, which have been a vital component in caring for the whole person including the family unit in this difficult time.

Ross' facility had a patient come to the ER post-arrest from a nursing home. She was resuscitated and brought to the ICU, but with a very grim prognosis. Her only family was her niece. Ross arranged to meet the niece outside, both masked and appropriately distanced but still "connected" as he briefed her on the situation. described the status and provided anticipatory guidance regarding her course. Ross laid the groundwork and rapport to begin the difficult goals of care discussions. Once back upstairs in the MICU, attempts were made to video chat. There were some technical difficulties on both sides and a learning curve with the family. Ross spent extra time trying to coach over the phone and he didn't give up. Allowing this family member to "see" and hear and "be with" her aunt helped her grasp the unfortunate situation, and allowed her to have a better understanding of her clinical course.

Ross took it upon himself to go above and beyond the call of duty to facilitate communication, and showed great empathy in doing so. Ross' actions that day reminded others how important it is to take a step back, even when everyone is very busy, to make sure staff carries his facility's mission: To care for others as we would care for those we love.

Nominated by: John Waite





Eileen Talamante, Esquire, RN

Goodman Allen Donnelly PLLC

Talamante's internal passion for her fellow nurses, combined with more than 20 years of nursing and legal experience has made her an incredible champion for nurses all over the state of Virginia. Whether it is dealing with the incredibly complicated mental health issues of a nurse client, or defending nurses, Talamante approaches every case as if it is the most important one, because it certainly is to that nurse client.

Among all her other activities this year, Talamante wrote an article about the "haunting irony" of 2020 being the "Year of the Nurse" and COVID-19. The many days she spent writing (and re-writing) the article was an emotional and cathartic journey and she did her best to honor the hundreds of nurses she has represented over the years as well as their unique stories and struggles that only she was privy to in her trusted role as legal counsel.

Talamante has remained un-wavered in her determination to be a relied upon advocate and resource for Virginia's nurses through these difficult times. Her article received high reviews and was picked up for publishing in May of 2020 in both of the primary medical/legal publications in Virginia, Virginia Lawyers Weekly and the Virginia Medical Law Report. The words in her article speak volumes about who Talamante is and her devotion to Virginia's nurses and their struggles, which are now in many ways so much more pronounced and complicated during 2020 and COVID-19.

Nominated by: Michael Goodman

Maria Tuason, BSN, RN, CCRN

VCU Health

Tuason has a big heart and a lot of talent. Aside from being a good and dedicated nurse to patients at VCU where she works, she has extended her wings to help her nursing college batch mates and nurse-coworkers stay fit and healthy during these challenging times. Since the beginning of March, she has been teaching virtual zoom exercise classes twice a week without miss and has asked nothing in return. She's very talented, passionate and dedicated about what she does with just one goal for everyone to be physically and mentally healthy.

Aside from her virtual piloxing classes, she has also formed a dance group among her college batch mates and practices twice a week in order to present a dance for a fundraising event for the less fortunate nursing students in the Philippines. Tuason has been doing all of these in between her work schedule. She's a true example of a nurse deserving to be recognized and awarded.

Nominated by: Josephine Abalos, Faina Acob, Rowena Jumamoy, Divina Paquiz, Honey Lyn Savage, and Jessica Savage

Michelle Vaughan, BSN, RN

Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital

Vaughan works on an intensive care unit at St. Mary's Hospital and is always looking for ways to brighten her patients' days. She developed a creative way to allow patients on a mechanical ventilator to hear their loved ones' voices. Family members would call and record messages to send their loved ones then Vaughan and the rest of the team would place the recorders in a stuffed animal that is kept with the patient at all times. Nurses would then play the recording for patients any time they were in their room.

In March, a patient arrived in the ICU and was immediately intubated due to respiratory failure. The patient's lungs soon began to fail even with the ventilator.

A staff member noted, "The whole time the patient was in the ICU, the team kept in contact with their spouse and young daughter. We recorded the daughter's voice onto one of Vaughan's first 'Be There Bears" and played it for them every time a nurse went into the room. Upon waking from the medically induced coma, the patient said they remembered hearing the voices of their spouse and daughter. The team can't help but believe it was the patient's ability to hear their loved ones that played a role in their recovery."

Nominated by: Mary Manning



Rachael Weller, BSN, CMSRN, CLIN III VCU Health

Weller has shown exemplary leadership, critical thinking, flexibility and most importantly, compassion during the COVID-19 pandemic. Weller works on Acute Care Medicine, a 28 bed general and progressive Med/Surg unit. At the advent of the pandemic, it quickly became apparent that due to the all-private negative pressure rooms, Acute Care Medicine would become a primary COVID location. Rachael's contribution during that time has been nothing short of phenomenal.

Weller quickly adapted to the new COVID care guidelines and became a resource for her peers. She often offered to take the all COVID assignments, and continued to provide compassionate, evidence based, holistic care, even while hampered by a change in normal practices.

Weller was particularly invaluable in working with the Research unit to ensure the safe and timely administration of COVID-19 research drugs. The various trials were extensive and often involved getting consents with non-English speakers and multiple conversations with interdisciplinary team members across the continuum and the nurse was at the center of each conversation. Rachael did not miss a beat in managing these complex situations while also continuing to provide excellent care and be a resource for her peers.

Nominated by: Heather Cooper

Mary Beth White-Comstock, DNP, RN, CIC

Virginia Department of Health

White-Comstock is licensed as a registered nurse in Virginia and holds certification from the Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology. She has professional affiliations with VNA, APHA and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. White-Comstock works as a full time contractor reporting to the USDHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Healthcare Quality and Promotion team as a nurse epidemiologist and serves in a senior leadership capacity on the CDC's COVID-19 response team nationwide.

White-Comstock also serves locally as a contractor to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) supporting health departments and field teams responding to outbreaks in nursing homes and other healthcare facilities throughout the commonwealth.

Since the first cases of COVID-19 were suspected in the U.S., she has helped prepare and respond to the epidemic through consultations, inquiry responses, written guidance, developed tools, and training materials. At VDH, she supports the HAI team and cochairs the Long-Term Care (LTC) Workforce Advisory Committee, improving the quality of care in LTC facilities by strengthening and supporting the LTC workforce, a caregiver group hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. White-Comstock is a highly valued member of interdisciplinary teams addressing public health challenges both nationally and regionally. She consistently makes a difference every day in her unique and exceptional public health and nurse epidemiologist practice.

Nominated by: Elizabeth Friberg

Emily Willard, BSN, RN, CCRN VCU Health

Willard is a clinical nurse in the medical respiratory intensive care unit (MRICU) and an expert in the care of ICU patients with medical and respiratory disorders. She has been a member of the MRICU since graduating from nursing school almost four years ago. Since that time, Willard has honed her clinical expertise and has become certified in her specialty, inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society and won the 2019 Week of the Nurse Community Leadership Award. Willard is an informal leader on the unit as a resource nurse and a preceptor. She is active in shared governance, contributing to the culture of inquiry on the unit. Willard is also currently working on translating evidence to the bedside related to terminal patients and palliative care, having recognized an opportunity to enhance the end of life experience for patients and their families.

Willard quickly emerged as a leader in the care for COVID-19 patients. She assisted in the development of the COVID-19 resource nurse role and created many processes for admission, transportation, and care of the patient with COVID-19. She stayed abreast of the rapidly changing literature and guidelines and assisted the team in the MRICU in both understanding and translation. Her passion for palliative and supportive care for COVID-19 patients translated into strong advocacy for changes in the visitation policy and she wholeheartedly embraced bringing visitors back into the patient care environment. Willard displays resilience, leadership and strength during the toughest times. She is a rock for the patients, families and team members in the MRICU and beyond.

Nominated by: Deb Zimmermann

Donna Wilmoth, MSN, RN, CIC

Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center

Wilmoth is a true example of a nurse who leads with grace, forethought, and resourcefulness through the ongoing journey with COVID-19 at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center. At the beginning of the pandemic, Williamsburg was notable as an initial hotspot in the US and had the first death in Virginia due to COVID-19. Wilmoth was one of the three executives who manned the incident command center on a daily basis. She worked about 17 days straight during this time to assure nursing staff was informed and prepared as they started caring for patients with the virus. She helped to initiate incident command setting up telephones, workstations, eventually developing tracking methods for COVID positive patients' outcomes and those waiting for test results, and created a daily communication newsletter for the entire hospital to keep everyone involved in the rapid changes and newest information. No job was too small or too big for Wilmoth to tackle.

She worked directly with PPE distribution at a time when they were struggling to maintain PPE levels within the hospital. Wilmoth led a distribution project to centralize the PPE disbursement, regulating access, and analyzing the burn rate of use, while keeping the overall burn rate of PPE at the lowest in the healthcare system. Anticipating a surge creating a need to accommodate hundreds of patients beyond licensed hospital capacity, Wilmoth also advocated for training clinical staff to be able to work "up" to the next level of care.

She has the remarkable capability to absorb and filter information for messaging, keeping her staff from undue anxiety, yet informed and engaged. She consistently focused on positive outcomes and solutions to challenges. Additionally, Wilmoth's work throughout the pandemic was recognized in an article in Virginia Business in July. She is one of a kind, and that kind is spectacular.

Nominated by: Katherine Sheppard

2020 Year of the Nurse Award





Honorable Mentions

Michele Davidson, PhD, PMHNP, CNM, MSN,

RN

Leva Psychiatry
Nominated by: Mary Crutchfield

Jan Kirby, BSN, RN

VCU Health

Nominated by: Diane Hanson-Johnson

Allison Knapstein, MSN, RN, CNS, ACNS-BC, CHFN

VCU Health

Nominated by: Deb Zimmermann

Monique Lowry, BSN, RN

Sentara Obici Hospital

Nominated by: Amy Taylor

Alison Montpetit, PhD, RN, NPD-BC

VCU Health

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Nominated by: Liza Clark

Sarah Nowell, MS, RN, NE-BC

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Nominated by: Jonathan Clark

Kathleen Russell-Babin, PhD, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, ACNS-BC

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Nominated by: Rosa Rousseau

Bonnie Workman, MSN, RN, CIC

Riverside Regional Medical Center

Nominated by: Sadie Thurman



