



# THE lamp LIGHTER

Methodist Hospitals Nurse Newsletter • November 2024

## Welcoming Vikas George: Our New Director of Patient Experience



Vikas George  
Director of Patient  
Experience

With a rich and diverse professional background spanning more than two decades, Vikas George brings a unique perspective that bridges the airline and healthcare industries to his new position as Methodist Hospitals' Director of Patient Experience.

Originally from India, Vikas migrated to the United States with his family where he eventually earned

his college degree, laying the foundation for a distinguished career.

"Before pursuing my healthcare career, I spent 12 years in the airline industry as an Inflight Service Manager with Delta Airlines, where I managed a large team of flight attendants," Vikas said.

While there, Vikas honed his skills in hospitality and customer service, which he seamlessly transitioned into healthcare, where he has held patient experience leadership positions at east coast institutions since 2018 – consistently demonstrating his dedication to improving patient interactions and satisfaction.

"It's all about hospitality," he said. "Whether we're caring for patients in a hospital room or passengers on an aircraft, the core principle is the same: treating everyone with kindness, respect and clear communication."

Vikas' philosophy is deeply rooted in the belief that patients often find themselves in unfamiliar and stressful situations.

"Patients come to us in moments of joy, like welcoming a new life, and in times of anxiety, such as unexpected medical concerns or farewells," Vikas said. "Our responsibility is to ensure they feel safe and comfortable, no matter the circumstances."

Coming on board in late September, Vikas was drawn to Methodist's steadfast commitment to the community, highlighted by our recent centennial celebration.

"Methodist stands strong, holding onto its I CARE values even during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic," Vikas said. "Methodist's vision to be Northwest Indiana's leading healthcare provider and its dedication to the communities it serves inspired me to join this remarkable team."

As Director of Patient Experience, Vikas is eager to build strong relationships with our nursing staff.

"My goal is to be visible and accessible, attending staff meetings, celebrating achievements, and recognizing the incredible work our nurses do every day," Vikas said. "I want to streamline processes to make them simpler and more effective, ensuring that our people find value and satisfaction in their roles."

Vikas envisions a collaborative environment where every team member feels supported and empowered.

"We are all one team, dedicated to being patient experience advocates," Vikas said. "I'm excited to work with each of you, learn from your experiences, and together, continue delivering exceptional care."

## Message from the CNO

### Conservation Tips for IV Fluid Shortage

The nationwide shortage of essential intravenous (IV) fluids, including 0.9% Sodium Chloride, 0.45% Sodium Chloride, Lactated Ringer's, and 5% Dextrose, particularly in large-volume (1000 mL) bags, persists.

This shortage, which is due to the closure of Baxter's North Cove facility following Hurricane Helene, is expected to continue for up to four more months.

To maintain quality care, we must ask Methodist Hospitals nurses to work with our medical staff to help conserve supplies:

- Discontinue infusions promptly when no longer necessary
- Reduce IV fluid rates as clinically appropriate
- Reevaluate fluid needs for surgeries
- Use alternative methods, such as intravenous push and oral hydration
- Limit "keep vein open" orders
- Reserve small-volume bags for medications

We recognize that this shortage poses challenges to patient care, but with your cooperation and adherence to these conservation measures, we are confident we can navigate this period without compromising the quality of care.

Thank you for your vigilance in managing these critical resources during this shortage.



Marla Hoyer-Lareau, RN, BSN, MHA, Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing and Operations Officer

## IT UPDATE

### MyChart Bedside is Coming

MyChart Bedside is a patient-facing application that gives patients and their loved ones more information about their hospital stays. The goal of MyChart Bedside is to keep patients engaged and to empower them with education. Patients can make non-emergent requests to their treatment teams via secure chat as well as see their results in real time. On admission they can complete their SDOH questionnaire, which eases the on-boarding process for our nurses.

By helping patients to engage in their care, MyChart Bedside has helped institutions to improve their HCAHPS patient satisfaction scores.

MyChart Bedside is now live on the Northlake and Southlake Labor & Delivery units. Plans are in place to go live on Southlake patient units on November 5, and on Northlake patient units on December 3. More information about this launch will be forthcoming.

## October 2024

### DAISY Award Recipient

### Dorothy Tolbert, RN

Congratulations to Dorothy Tolbert, RN, from the Med/Surg Unit on 2 West at our Northlake Campus, for being named the October DAISY Award

recipient! Dorothy was nominated by a grateful patient's wife who recognized her outstanding dedication and compassion. "Mrs. Tolbert was professional at all times. She went above and beyond to help my family during a very difficult time. She not only took care of my husband but also me, making sure I had tea, honey, linens, and pillows for my overnight stays," she shared. Dorothy's commitment to compassionate care exemplifies the values we strive to bring to our community every day. Thank you, Dorothy, for making such a positive impact!



## EMAIL OR TEXT? Sign up today and stay connected!

Our recent survey of Methodist Hospitals nurses revealed that many of you would like to receive Nursing Department Communications via text or to your personal email address. So, we created a secure, online way for interested nurses to provide that information.

**Just scan this QR Code to fill out our simple sign-up form online.** Rest assured that your privacy and security are our top priorities, and your information will only be used for official departmental communications and will not be shared with anyone.





We are well on our way on our Pathway to Excellence journey, which provides a framework for fostering a healthy and supportive workplace for Methodist Hospitals nurses.

There are six Pathway to Excellence standards, including Shared Decision-Making, Leadership, Safety, Quality, Well-being, and Professional Development. These pillars guide our efforts to enhance the nursing environment and elevate care quality. That's why we'll spotlight one standard in the next six issues of *The Lamplighter*...

## LEADERSHIP

In Pathway organizations, leadership creates a strong foundation for staff collaboration and supports a Shared Governance environment. This commitment is reflected in the active engagement of the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Associate Vice Presidents (AVPs), Directors, and Managers with direct care nurses, seeking their input on resource allocation and cost management.

Nursing leaders play a critical role in promoting and maintaining a positive practice environment, supporting leadership development through role-specific orientation and training for new managers. They are also committed to fostering staff growth through succession planning, ensuring that team members develop the knowledge and skills needed for future leadership roles.

The evaluation process includes feedback from staff and managerial peers, enhancing growth and accountability. Moreover, nursing leadership is consistently accessible to support and engage with direct care nurses, strengthening the collaborative culture.

Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved as we work toward achieving excellence. And look for details on another standard in the next issue of *The Lamplighter*.

## Meet Our Shared Governance Committee Chair, Ruben Martinez, RN

Ruben Martinez, RN, currently leads the Shared Governance Committee at Methodist Hospitals as its chairman with a commitment to positive change.



Motivated by his desire to improve workplace processes, Ruben joined the Shared Governance Committee earlier this year although he was discouraged by some colleagues who doubted its impact. Since its formation, however, the committee has spearheaded key initiatives that impact our entire nursing community.

One its major accomplishments has been optimizing patient flow from the ER to receiving units, creating a more efficient system that Methodist nurses can see each day. Ruben's priority, however, remains staff safety, inspired by his background in OSHA certifications and emergency response. He advocates for a culture where employees feel supported, especially following incidents that could impact their wellbeing.

Ruben encourages fellow nurses to join the Shared Governance Committee, inviting them to contribute solutions and be part of ongoing improvements. "When everyone has a hand on the load, the work becomes lighter," he emphasizes. Nurses interested in bringing change and supporting each other are encouraged to reach out to join this impactful committee by emailing Mary Jo Valentine at [mvalentine@methodisthospitals.org](mailto:mvalentine@methodisthospitals.org).



### Northlake Campus

600 Grant St., Gary, IN 46402 | 219-886-4000

### Midlake Campus

2269 W. 25th Ave., Gary, IN 46407 | 219-944-4160

### Southlake Campus

8701 Broadway, Merrillville, IN 46410 | 219-738-5500

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