

THE Lamp LIGHTER

Methodist Hospitals Nurse Newsletter • May 2026

Methodist Nurses: Compassion Meets Clinical Strength



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Each May, Nurses Week offers us a meaningful opportunity to pause and recognize the extraordinary impact nurses have on our patients, our organization, and our community. At Methodist Hospitals, this celebration is more than a tradition. It is a reflection of who we are and the essential role you play every day.

This year's theme, The Power of Nurses, continues to resonate deeply. That power is evident in your clinical expertise, your compassion, and

your unwavering commitment to those in your care. It is present in the way you advocate for patients, support families, collaborate with colleagues, and lead through both challenges and triumphs. Your work shapes outcomes, elevates experiences, and strengthens our culture of excellence.

In moments of uncertainty, patients and families look to you for reassurance and guidance. You meet those moments with calm confidence, critical thinking, and genuine empathy. You adapt quickly to changing needs, embrace new technologies and practices, and remain focused on delivering the highest standards of safe, high-quality care. The trust you build each day is the foundation of healing and the reason our community continues to rely on Methodist Hospitals.

We are proud of the difference you make—at the bedside, in leadership, and in every role across our system. During Nurses Week, we celebrate not only what you do, but who you are.

A variety of events have been planned to recognize your hard work, passion, and professionalism. You'll find a full schedule in this edition of the Lamplighter. These activities are intended not only to express our gratitude, but also to energize, connect, and celebrate the strong sense of teamwork that defines our nursing staff.

Thank you
*for your dedication, your professionalism,
and the heart you bring to your work.*

Thank you
*for choosing nursing—and for choosing
Methodist Hospitals.*





Nurses Week 2026

**Celebrating the
Power of Nurses
May 4–8, 2026**




<p>Mon., May 4</p>	<p>1:30pm & 7:30pm NLC <i>Ice Cream Social</i> On-unit rounding</p>	
<p>Tues., May 5</p>	<p>7am-5pm NLC Auditorium <i>Massage Therapy</i> <i>Relax and recharge with complimentary chair massages</i> (Requires preregistration on the Nursing Activities Calendar)</p>	<p>1:30pm & 7:30pm SLC <i>Ice Cream Social</i> On-unit rounding</p>
<p>Wed., May 6</p>	<p>11am NLC Cafeteria <i>Nursing Awards Presentations</i> • Nursing Excellence Award • Outstanding Caregiver Award • Friend of Nursing Award</p>	
<p>Thurs., May 7</p>	<p>2pm SLC Cafeteria <i>Nursing Awards Presentations</i> • Nursing Excellence Award • Outstanding Caregiver Award • Friend of Nursing Award</p>	<p>NLC & SLC <i>Blessing of the Hands</i> Chaplains will round on the floors Time TBD</p>
<p>Fri., May 8</p>	<p>7am-5pm SLC Auditorium <i>Massage Therapy</i> <i>Relax and recharge with complimentary chair massages</i> (Requires preregistration on the Nursing Activities Calendar)</p>	

CLINICAL LADDER IN ACTION: Spotlight on 2025 Exemplar Submissions

At Methodist Hospitals, the Clinical Ladder program is more than a professional development pathway. It's a reflection of who we are as nurses. It highlights leadership at the bedside, engagement in the community, commitment to evidence-based practice and dedication to advancing our profession.

In this Lamplighter feature series, we're spotlighting select Clinical Ladder exemplars submitted in 2025. These narratives demonstrate how Methodist nurses extend their impact beyond daily patient care to promote health, education, safety and connection throughout Northwest Indiana.

This month, we feature Deena M. Pidrak, MSN, RN, CNOR, of the Southlake Ambulatory Surgery Center. Her exemplar captures the spirit of community-based nursing and health promotion:



Deena's work is a powerful example of how Clinical Ladder participation recognizes professional growth, initiative, and leadership in action. Whether you are mentoring colleagues, leading quality improvements, participating in community outreach, or advancing your education, your contributions matter.

*The Methodist Hospitals Clinical Ladder program offers monetary awards ranging from **\$1,500 to \$3,500**, along with the professional distinction of demonstrating excellence in nursing practice.*

If you're ready to advance your career and make an impact, contact Mary Jo Valentine for more information at mvalentine@methodisthospitals.org. Don't miss this chance to grow professionally and contribute to our mission of excellence.

Safety First: Safety in the OR

*By Deena M. Pidrak, MSN, RN, CNOR
Southlake Ambulatory Surgery Center*

Safety is a priority in healthcare. However, in the operating room (OR) there are several safety concerns that are addressed when patients undergo surgical procedures. One of those safety concerns is equipment safety. Defective equipment can lead to serious patient injury or even death.

Wednesdays are high volume cataract surgery days. Cataract cases are quick, and the surgical team works swiftly to move the patients in and out of the OR. During these quick cases, defective equipment can be overlooked and can lead to problems. On one such Wednesday, I was working in one of the cataract rooms. There were 12 cataract cases scheduled that day. For cataract cases, the patients are placed on an eye cart in the pre-op area and then rolled into surgery for the procedure and stay on the cart in the recovery area.

As I brought in the first patient in and tried to position her, the head rest would not lower into position for surgery. I notified the surgeon, and he tried to adjust the head rest, and it would not move into the position either. As the surgeon kept struggling with the head rest, I proposed an idea that I would get another eye cart, and we would move the patient over in the OR. As we moved the patient to the second eye cart, the head rest from the first cart just dropped and was broken from sudden fall. The surgeon made a comment that it was a wise move to switch carts and asked that the cart be taken out of service. The cart was removed and labeled as broken and incident report was made.

Due to the high volume of cataract cases and the small number of eye carts, patients were encouraged to move from the cart to a chair for recovery. The patients voiced that they did not mind the chairs, since they were more comfortable than the eye carts. Staff were educated to evaluate eye carts for safety when prepping the rooms on Tuesday afternoons.

IT UPDATE:

Epic On-Site Visit on June 10

Methodist Hospitals will welcome an Epic Systems Nurse Well-Being team for an onsite visit on Wednesday, June 10, with rounding scheduled at both Northlake and Southlake campuses.

The visit is designed to provide valuable insight into the nursing experience, with a focus on identifying opportunities to enhance workflows, improve system efficiency, and better support frontline staff.

During rounding, Epic representatives will engage directly with nurses to observe daily practices and discuss both accomplishments and challenges associated with bedside care. Key focus areas will include flowsheet documentation, medication administration and barcode scanning, patient lists, clinical review processes, and patient education.

Northlake rounding will take place from 6:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., followed by Southlake rounding from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

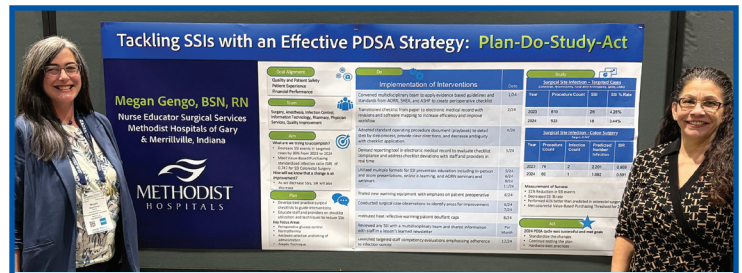
This visit also offers an opportunity to highlight ongoing initiatives and share feedback that may influence future training and system enhancements. Methodist nurses are encouraged to engage openly with the Epic team, because your input plays a critical role in shaping improvements that support efficiency, safety, and quality patient care.

Deb VanWoerden Retires After 35 Years of Service at Methodist

Colleagues recently gathered to celebrate Deb VanWoerden, Nurse Manager of 3W2 – Med/Surg/ Orthopedic Unit, on her retirement after 35 years of dedicated service to Methodist Hospitals. Deb spent her entire nursing career at Methodist, including more than two decades leading the 3W2 team with commitment and compassion.



The April 14 celebration in the Southlake Auditorium brought together coworkers to honor her lasting impact on patients, staff and the organization. As Deb begins this new chapter—focused on family, gardening and travel—we extend our heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for a well-earned and fulfilling retirement.



Representing Methodist with Excellence at AORN

Megan Gengo, BSN, RN, Nurse Educator (left), recently presented at the AORN Global Surgical Conference & Expo, where professionals connect to advance leadership, learning, and growth in perioperative care. Her poster focused on reducing surgical site infections. Kim Serrano, MSN, FNP, CPAN, Executive Director of Surgical Services (right), joined her at the conference. Congratulations, Megan, on this outstanding achievement and for representing Methodist Hospitals with excellence.

Creatively Raising Cancer Awareness



Tomorrah Riddle, a Certified Nursing Assistant on Southlake 4W-3, brings compassion and creativity to her unit through a thoughtfully designed cancer awareness boards. Each month, she spotlights a different cancer, sharing educational insights and offering personalized ribbons for staff and visitors. As chair of her unit's decorating committee, Tomorrah's dedication continues to inspire and uplift her team.