

The logo for the Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA) features the letters "NHA" in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a dark blue background.The logo for Nebraska Hospitals features the words "NEBRASKA" and "HOSPITALS" stacked vertically in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a dark blue background.

For Immediate Release

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NHA honors Nebraska health care heroes with “The Caring Kind” award

LINCOLN - The Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA) has recognized 83 Nebraska hospital employees for their exemplary service to health care by bestowing them with the organization’s prestigious The Caring Kind award.

For 43 years, The Caring Kind award has recognized Nebraska's most caring and compassionate health care heroes. This award honors outstanding health care employees who have demonstrated compassion for patients, cooperation with co-workers and dedication to excellence in their job responsibilities.

“This award demonstrates the kindness, caring, dedication and commitment these individuals make to their hospitals,” commented Jeremy Nordquist, President, NHA. “The Caring Kind award is a celebration of our Nebraska health care heroes and the extraordinary work they do each and every day to deliver top notch patient care in our hospitals.”

Hospitals across the state select one The Caring Kind award recipient from within their respective institutions to be recognized. Award winners were recognized at a special luncheon as part of the NHA Annual Convention this past Friday, October 21, at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in La Vista. More than 2,700 caring, skilled and dedicated health care professionals have received this award since its inception in 1979.

The NHA congratulates The Caring Kind award recipients for 2022:

(See following pages for list of recipients)

Chellie Autrey, RT
Kimball Health Services, Kimball

Bonnie Baum, Health Information Management
Boone County Health Center, Albion

Hanne Beldin, Stroke Program Coordinator
CHI Health St. Elizabeth, Lincoln

Justin Beller, Café Station Cook, Nutrition Services
Methodist Hospital, Omaha

Sherri Billinger, Admission Specialist
Webster County Community Hospital, Red Cloud

Katie Blackwell, RT(R)(N)(ARRT), Nuclear Medicine Technologist
Mary Lanning Healthcare, Hastings

Michelle Blair, Senior Patient Access Associate
Nebraska Medicine, Omaha

Kim Brennforder, RN, Rural Health Clinic Supervisor
Thayer County Health Services, Hebron

Katie Bruenig, RDCS, AE, Limited Radiographer
Saunders Medical Center, Wahoo

Deborah Burmester, RN
Franciscan Healthcare Clinic, West Point

Holly Caballero, MA, Medical Assistant
OrthoNebraska, Omaha

April Campbell, COVID-19 Screener
Memorial Community Health, Aurora

Jared Carter, Dietary Services Assistant Cook
Box Butte General Hospital, Alliance

Marcie Chinn, CEST, Environmental Services Specialist
Providence Medical Center, Wayne

Thea Cole, Bereavement & Volunteer Coordinator/Activities Director
Cozad Community Health System, Cozad

Danielle Cooper, MA, Long-Term Care Medication Aide
York General Hearthstone, York

Kelley Creek, Phlebotomist
CHI Health St. Mary's, Nebraska City

Angela Cunningham, LPN, Central Scheduler
Tri Valley Health System, Cambridge

Deborah Dahlke, Chaplain
CHI Health Nebraska Heart, Lincoln

Brooke Darby, RN, Progressive Care Unit
Kearney Regional Medical Center, Kearney

Larissa Diekmann, Respiratory Therapy Supervisor
CHI Health Immanuel Medical Center, Omaha

Jessica Douglas, Environmental Services Team Leader
West Holt Medical Services, Atkinson

Gloria Ferreira, Environmental Services Housekeeping Assistant
Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Omaha

Diane Fort, RT(R), Radiology Technologist
Fillmore County Hospital, Geneva

Casey Fowler, MPA-C, Physician Assistant, Orthopaedic
Great Plains Health, North Platte

Wayne Franzen, CNA/MA, Activities Coordinator
Jefferson Community Health & Life Gardenside, Fairbury

Deb Frederick, Administrative Assistant
Avera St. Anthony's Hospital, O'Neill

Betty Froehlich, RN, BSN, MS, Regulatory Compliance Coordinator
Faith Regional Health Services, Norfolk

Dejohn (DJ) Garrison, Respiratory Care Technician
CHI Health Lakeside, Omaha

Ryan Geiler, Director of Clinical Applications, Population Health, Data Analytics & Interim IT Director
Community Medical Center, Inc., Falls City

Jessie Gipfert, RT, Radiology CT Tech
Sidney Regional Medical Center, Sidney

Marisol Hackman, Coordinator, Clinic Operations
Boys Town National Research Hospital, Boys Town

Angela Hartley, Environmental Technician
Bryan Health, Lincoln

Jessica Hartman, RN, Quality Analyst
Chadron Community Hospital & Health Services, Chadron

Carmen Heller, RN, Oncology Navigator
Methodist Fremont Health, Fremont

Kevin Henning, Materials Management Assistant
Crete Area Medical Center, Crete

Eddie Hernandez, Patient Services
Howard County Medical Center, St. Paul

Hannah Hild, RN, BSN Director of Outpatient Services
Lexington Regional Health Center, Lexington

Jody Hoffart, Department Support Assistant
CHI Health Schuyler, Schuyler

Laura Huber, RN, Staff Nurse
Henderson Health Care Services, Henderson

Sandy Jacobson, CDM, CMFPP, Nutritional Services Director
Gothenburg Health, Gothenburg

Claudia Javier, RN, BSN, Nurse
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals, Omaha

Cassie Johnson, RN, Case Manager/Discharge Planner
Gordon Memorial Hospital District, Gordon

Mark Klabunde, PharmD, Director of Pharmacy
Kearney County Health Services, Minden

Josephine "Josie" Kopal, RN, Charge Nurse – ICU
CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center – Bergan Mercy, Omaha

Julie Krotzinger, RN, BSN, Director of Specialty Clinic
Brodstone Healthcare, Superior

Kayla Kusek, RN, House Supervisor
Jennie M. Melham Memorial Medical Center, Broken Bow

Candy Lussetto, RN, Specialty Clinic Director
Morrill County Community Hospital, Bridgeport

Charlotte Marks, RN, BSN, Transition of Care Nurse & Patient Educator
Community Hospital, McCook

Miranda Marlin, MSN, RN, Director of Quality Programs
Dundy County Hospital, Benkelman

Sally Marshall, Patient Access Representative
Memorial Community Hospital & Health System, Blair

Pam Meyer, RN, Medical Floor and ER
Avera Creighton Hospital, Creighton

Louis (Lou) Neujahr, Maintenance Mechanic
Annie Jeffrey Memorial County Health Center, Osceola

Tatum Pitkin, Physical Therapy Assistant
Pender Community Hospital, Pender

Stacy Polski, LPN, Specialty Clinic Nurse
Howard County Medical Center, St. Paul

Marvi Pruden, RN, Infection Control Director, Nursing Supervisor & Floor Nurse
Antelope Memorial Hospital, Neligh

Beau Rapien, RN, Charge Nurse
CHI Health St. Francis, Grand Island

Kristin Rasmussen, Registered Nurse
Columbus Community Hospital, Columbus

Kathryn Renning, RN, Director of Nursing
Cherry County Hospital & Clinic, Valentine

Sandra Rippe, Director of Community Outreach & Patient Relations
Syracuse Area Health, Syracuse

Israel Rodriguez, Phlebotomist III
Methodist Women's Hospital, Omaha

Vickie Runyon, RN, Safety Officer
Harlan County Health System, Alma

Melissa Rupp, Lead Occupational Health Nurse
Regional West Health Services, Scottsbluff

RaeAnn Schlenker, ARDMS (AB BR OB/GYN), RVT (VT), Multi-Modality Tech II
Ogallala Community Hospital, Ogallala

Carol Schnell, Human Resources Assistant/Payroll Specialist
Memorial Health Care Systems, Seward

Leah Schultz, Cook
Osmond General Hospital, Osmond

Sharon Schuster, Chaplain
Beatrice Community Hospital & Health Center, Beatrice

KarNel Schwartz, CMA, Clinical Coordinator
Regional West Garden County, Oshkosh

Becky Shafer, RN, Associate Director of Nursing
Friend Community Healthcare System, Friend

Lorrie Shaul, Housekeeper
Rock County Hospital, Bassett

Theresa Shelton, Executive Administrative Assistant
Nemaha County Hospital, Auburn

Diane Sowden, Hostess
Phelps Memorial Health Center, Holdrege

Judy Spath, RN, Night Shift Nurse
Twelve Clans Unity Hospital, Winnebago

Nathan Suehl, Lead Lab Technologist
Butler County Health Care Center, David City

Elizabeth (Betty) Sutton, Nuclear Med Tech
CHI Health Midlands Hospital, Papillion

Sasha Taylor, RN, Staff Nurse
Brown County Hospital, Ainsworth

Megan Trout, MLT (ASCP), Medical Laboratory Technician
Johnson County Hospital, Tecumseh

Sonja Ventura, Patient Care Technician
Grand Island Regional Medical Center, Grand Island

Cindy Walters, Dietary Manager
Pawnee County Memorial Hospital, Pawnee City

Julie Wells, LPN, Staff Nurse
CHI Health Plainview, Plainview

Erika White, DPT, Physical Therapist
Valley County Health System, Ord

Kassie Young, CNA, Certified Nursing Assistant
Merrick Medical Center, Central City

Paul Zapata, Maintenance Mechanic
CHI Health Good Samaritan, Kearney

The Nebraska Hospital Association's mission is to serve its members by being the trusted leader to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of all Nebraskans. Its vision is to be the state's most influential, trusted and respected voice in health care policy and advocacy, a valued resource for information and knowledge and a leader in patient safety.

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