

2026 Service Excellence honorees

The following stories highlight our Service Excellence honorees. They were edited from nominations submitted to the Star Award Committee.

Kevin Anderson, Emergency Department

Nominated by Peter Ashton, BSN RN, ED

For 10 years, Kevin has come to work each day in the ED with a smile and words of encouragement to the team. Sometimes he brings cookies or a treat to share. During the shifts when cases are stressful and emotional, he adjusts his work so others get a break. Throughout trauma cases, pediatric deaths, psychiatric emergencies, and the multiple other emergency cases, Kevin is a leader and technician who really knows his duties and is highly proficient. He takes a keen interest in the culture and well-being of Salem Health and the ED. He encourages department cooperation and always puts the patient first. Kevin has assisted with interviews. He precepts new technicians. He holds the bar high for quality and patient satisfaction. His personal engagement and involvement, time and attendance, communication and professionalism, and as already stated, his commitment to safe, quality care, is second to none. I know that I am the better person for having known and worked with Kevin.

George Blair, WVH Medical Services

Nominated by Trent Dunlop, WVH Rehabilitation Services supervisor

George is a Clinical Tech on our Swingbed Unit and he is amazing. He consistently provides outstanding care to the patients he serves. He knows them as people, who their families are, their likes and dislikes, the reason for rehab, their goals and dreams. He does this while also helping the rest of the team manage their patients and coordinate their day. He often anticipates the needs of others (patients and staff) and helps out before being asked. He does all this with a smile, great sense of humor and never a harsh word. George embodies “Care with Respect” and is a role model for “Professional Expectations of Healthcare Team Members”. Here is a list of comments from the West Valley Therapy Team:

- George offers assistance before I even ask, even when it’s not his patient.
- George helps make routine mobility a standard, getting even patients needing mechanical lift out of bed routinely without complaint.
- He builds strong rapport with patients.
- He is always so helpful and such a wonderful person to work with. When I see that he is working I’m like “yes, George is here today!” ?? YES TO THIS ONE!!!
- He is so attentive to patient’s needs, getting them up and moving for the day, showered. Always so willing to jump in and assist when needed and coordinating with therapies for best patient care.
- I always see how positively patients respond to him and just how great he is with them as well.
- He makes an amazing impression on all of his patients. All of his patients, even the most confused, remember who he is and ask about him when he’s not working
- George is constantly coordinating with me regarding our shared patients to problem solve transfers, shower schedules, up/down schedules, and other cares. Despite working so hard all the time he is somehow always available to help me with whatever I need. If I give a shower to one of his patients he is checking in, getting fresh linens, and cleaning up the shower room when I am finished
- All of his patients love him! They always seem to remember his name and talk about what a great person he is.
- George cares about every aspect of his patients’ lives. He gets to know them and their families. Is interested in their cleanliness, how they are feeling each day and always celebrating their progress along the way with them.
- The thing about George that sets him apart is how he treats everyone like a close friend with respect and admiration.
- George encourages his patients to participate as much as they safely can while he helps them with showering, dressing, toileting, grooming, and other cares.

Kimberly Campbell, Clinical Decision Unit

Nominated by Erica Alvarez, ANM on SH B5 N

Kimberly came to our unit as a clinical nurse just over two years ago with a wealth of knowledge and experience as a nurse. She immediately stepped up to be a charge nurse on a unit with very few RNs. Kim is also our representative on the housewide staffing council and evidence-based practice team. She is a Magnet champion and fulfills many other unofficial roles on the unit. She advocates for her patients as the bedside nurse and helps the nurses on the floor during care progression huddles as charge RN to advocate for their patients as well. She is constantly coming up with lean projects to help improve our unit and our patient care, she must have about four or five for this last year! Kim is also a wonderful advocate and role model for her fellow nurses. We pride ourselves on the culture we are building on this new unit of teamwork, safety, inclusion and respect. Kim shows this regularly but a couple weekends ago she took this to a new level. One of our new nurses was working with one of her patients to remove an IV when he unexpectedly struck her with his fist. She called for help and Kim quickly took charge of the situation. She kept the patient safe and treated them and the family with respect while simultaneously taking care of the nurse who was injured. She followed all the standard pathways to maintain safety for all individuals, she worked as a team with this patient's care team to continue providing care, and she made sure the nurse was able to get home and take care of her mental and physical health. Kim continually goes above and beyond for her team and our unit. She is an incredible example of knowledge, leadership, teamwork, advocacy and kindness.

Michele Chiu, WVH Inpatient Therapy

Nominated by Trent Dunlop, WVH Rehabilitation Services supervisor

Michele is relatively new PT with WV inpatient therapy but has often demonstrated that we are lucky to have her. A couple examples: 1) Michele was treating a patient who was discharging to a new apartment on the ground floor. He had been ambulatory but now needed a power wheelchair. The problem was the patient had not seen his new apartment and was not sure if his new wheelchair would fit through the front door or if he would be able to access the bathroom. Michele took the initiative to drive by the apartment and take measurements to ensure he could enter the home. While she was there, the patient's nephew arrived and provided her access to measure the interior doors to verify the apartment was wheelchair accessible. This provided the patient peace of mind and confirmed for the interdisciplinary team that the discharge plan was appropriate. 2) Michele was the primary therapist for a Vietnamese patient who was having a difficult time eating. She did not like the food resulting in very poor intake. Michele took the time to consider the patient's cultural difference and work with leadership to find option to meet the patient's nutritional needs. She ultimately provided the Nutrition Services a list of foods that she would eat. 3) Finally, Michele completed an evaluation on a patient who is a new paraplegic due to metastatic prostate CA which had spread to the spine. The patient had a pathologic thoracic compression fracture resulting in severe spinal cord compression and had to undergo a laminectomy and fusion. On evaluation, Michele was concerned about the stability of the patient's spine and why there was not an order for a brace to be worn when out of bed. She reached out to the Neurosurgeon on call to ensure nothing was missed. Sure enough, the surgeon DID want the patient in a brace. Michele was able to place the order and facilitate the fitting.

Rick L. Dezsofi, Psychiatric Patient Services

Nominated by Mandi Dix, Nursing Administration

As director of the Emergency and Psychiatric Division the past six months, I've had the privilege of working closely with Rick. I am continually impressed by his dedication, expertise and quiet leadership. Rick would never boast about his contributions, but his impact on our team and the organization is immeasurable. He is a true wealth of knowledge, not only when it comes to all things PMC, but in areas such as mental health, relevant legislation affecting our patients — even historical details about the PMC building itself. He is, without a doubt, the backbone of PMC. Rick is always present, deeply involved in decision-making and tirelessly ensures that all required forms and paperwork are submitted to the county to maintain compliance. His confidence and expertise are especially evident during regulatory surveys, where he is the voice of reassurance, helping guide our team with clear, concise responses. I was particularly impressed when he recently advocated for Salem Health and our psychiatric population in front of community leaders, speaking passionately and knowledgeably on their behalf. One of Rick's most recent and significant contributions occurred when he noticed a potential security concern with the ongoing construction in our building. Rick immediately recognized that the construction might compromise the security of certain doors, putting our patients at risk. Without hesitation, he quickly made sure the doors were properly secured, notified the appropriate parties, and guaranteed that our patients remained safe. Rick is an invaluable member of the team, and I hope he knows how much he is appreciated. His humility, expertise, and dedication to our patients make him an irreplaceable asset to PMC and Salem Health as a whole.

Tifani E. Erpelding, Psychiatric Patient Services

Nominated by Kristen Redwine, PMC nurse manager

It is difficult to pick out specific examples of how Tifani demonstrates excellence because it's simply something she does every single day. But here we go! Quick general background: Tifani is a social worker/care manager at the Psychiatric Medicine Center (PMC, an inpatient psychiatric unit at SH). She came to PMC from the main hospital care management team where she continues to pick up shifts to keep her CM skills current. Our PMC social work team is housed at the PMC and works shoulder-to-shoulder with our attending providers, nursing staff, therapy services, admission coordinator, discharge coordinator, EVS, nutrition services, and leadership. And I mean this literally because we don't have a lot of space! An example of how Tifani goes above and beyond for her patients: Our mental health patient population is prone to struggles with identifying, securing and actually completing and maintaining follow-up and outpatient care in the community after discharge. Among numerous other tasks, Tifani and other members of the PMC social work team collaborate with our interdisciplinary team to facilitate transitions from acute inpatient crisis stabilization to a successful discharge back to the community. Last Friday Tifani was talking to me about a patient needing prenatal care, yet the patient's current level of disorganization was impeding her ability to complete the required paperwork and scheduling. Tifani had determined she would print out the needed paperwork, sit with the patient to complete it and then deliver it herself to the correct department to help her get registered and appointments set up as soon as possible. In speaking with prenatal providers, she advocated that they needed to meet with this patient in person (versus virtually) to understand her ability to function and adequately care for herself during pregnancy. Tifani shows constant engagement in promoting continuous improvement and success of our patients, our PMC team, and the organization as a whole. She joined our PMC Unit Council and has become co-chair. She quickly got involved with Professional Growth and Development Council and now co-chairs that council as well. She is the creator of a new Wellness Committee at the PMC which includes all frontline PMC staff to focus on Stress First Aid. She creates activities for staff to connect with one another. She attended the 2024 Magnet Conference in New Orleans and guided our Magnet mock surveyors through the PMC unit, introducing them to various frontline staff and shared what we do for patients, staff, organization and community. I could go on ... like the research she will do on her own time, ideas and questions she shares with leadership ... all of which she does every single day.

Tristan J. George, IS Revenue Cycle

Nominated by Sabra Silva, SHMG Administration

Tristan has consistently gone above and beyond to support high-priority initiatives, including critical PTC and RIE projects. Despite being pulled in many directions and often working under tight timelines, he manages to complete every task with excellence — all while maintaining a positive attitude. Recently, Tristan was asked to pause his regular work and pivot to RIE efforts at SHMG. In just two weeks, he balanced competing demands across four major areas — Primary Care, Specialty Clinics, the Emergency Department, and Imaging. As the primary builder for this work, he navigated countless questions, shifting priorities and tight deadlines with remarkable focus. His leadership and technical expertise were instrumental to the project's success. It truly could not have happened without his dedication. Tristan also supports SHMG with both large-scale projects and everyday improvements that enhance the experience for patients and staff. He consistently brings innovative ideas to the table, challenges outdated processes, and embodies the spirit of continuous improvement that drives Salem Health forward. Tristan's professionalism, teamwork and unwavering commitment make him an outstanding example of what the Star Award represents.

Lauren J. Gutierrez, Kaizen Promotion Office

Nominated by Laura Aspinwall, IP Rehab Therapies

Lauren works in the KPO office, but I want to recognize her for her work on the STAR recognition team. Last year, Lauren updated the voting platform for our Service Excellence award winners to use in selecting last year's recipients. She facilitated the review meetings for past award winners. She sent out all the emails to organize the meetings, voting, as well as the emails that went out to recipients and their leaders to announce the awards. In 2025 she updated the Service Excellence Award (SEA) standard work to reflect our current processes and is again a key player in the SEA process, facilitating communication, meetings and emails. She does this out of dedication to the process and the integrity of the award. She has also done this in addition to her work in KPO. Each month, Lauren helps to hold our recognition group accountable to our STAR selection process by asking challenging questions and facilitating discussion. She does all of this because she believes in the program and yet, she has never received a Star Award herself! This year, I think we should surprise her with a well-deserved Service Excellence award.

Jason Kintz, Operating Room

Nominated by Jeffrey Rebo, OR surgical technologist

Jason is an operating room nurse whose exceptional professionalism, compassion and dedication to both his colleagues and patients set him apart as an outstanding member of our healthcare team. His warmth and empathy shine through in every interaction. Whether it's with patients, their families, or his colleagues, he always makes those around him feel heard, valued, and supported. Patients, in particular, often comment on how his calming presence puts them at ease, even in the most stressful or uncertain moments. As a preceptor, Jason goes beyond teaching clinical skills; he instills in those he mentors the importance of compassion and patient-centered care. His calm, composed demeanor and expert guidance make him a natural mentor. New nurses thrive under his mentorship, learning not only the technical aspects of the job but also the human side of nursing — the ability to comfort, listen and advocate for patients. Whether faced with a difficult case or a high-pressure situation, Jason's deep knowledge and steady presence offer assurance and clarity. When Jason serves as a circulating nurse, his impact on patients is particularly remarkable. Patients often comment on how much more relaxed they feel when he is in the room. His gentle demeanor, clear communication and ability to explain every step of the process offer comfort and reduces anxiety. In the operating room, where patients are often nervous or frightened, Jason's presence creates an atmosphere of trust and calm. People look up to Jason, both for his clinical expertise

and in how he carries himself with grace and kindness. His work inspires others to strive for excellence in their own practice, and he has a lasting positive impact on everyone he works with. He truly exemplifies the highest standards of nursing, making a profound difference in the lives of both patients and healthcare professionals.

Bethany Kleiber, WVH Inpatient Therapy

Nominated by Trent Dunlop, WVH Inpatient Therapy supervisor

Bethany exemplifies excellence in everything she does for WV IP Therapy. She is an outstanding clinician and has received her Neurologic Clinical Specialist certification. She is a clinical leader in our department and a go-to resource for all members of the interdisciplinary team. She collaborates with her teammates and provides the advice they need to manage difficult cases. But that only tells part of the story. Bethany is also amazing with our patients. She accepts some of our most challenging patients due to either physical deficits, behavioral problems, mental health issues or all of the above. She has a unique way of engaging them to determine their goals and develop plans to achieve them. Her approach is firm, honest and compassionate. One patient she helped was homeless, severely morbidly obese, actively using drugs, and required total assistance for all mobility on admission. He was not interested in being at West Valley or participating with therapy. He had significant behaviors that interfered with our staffs' ability to manage his care. Bethany was able to connect with him about his past, his love of rap music, and goals for the future to encourage him to engage in therapy. Which he did! After 33 days, he was able to walk with assistance and discharge to a facility that could manage his care. I don't believe this would have been possible without Bethany! This is one of many examples. Bethany has also done a significant amount of work outside of patient care to help streamline our documentation process. Specifically, she developed templates to justify the need for custom wheelchairs that include all the insurance required elements. This entailed a significant amount of work and focus on details — and has saved our Team an exorbitant amount of time to ensure we get authorization. She accepts this extra work without hesitation. Bethany is a mentor for our team, and a strong advocate for clinical education. She has volunteered to help coordinate Professional Therapy Student Clinical Rotation for WVH. She has done an excellent job of identifying clinical instructors for students as well as supports them during the teaching process. She is the preceptor for our preceptors!

Marc C. Maalouf, MD, SHMG Cardiology Clinic

Nominated by Chief Vice President of Operations Leah Mitchell

Dr. Maalouf is not only a brilliant cardiologist, he's also a leader committed to fostering a learning environment that improves care quality and patient outcomes. One example of his dedication: He organized our Mock STEMI (ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction) Night, an educational event that brought together many key stakeholders. These included members of the Cath Lab, the Cardiovascular Service Line, the Emergency Department and EMS. By involving all these crucial players, Dr. Maalouf ensured that the entire team was aligned and prepared to respond to heart attack patients with the highest level of care. The Mock STEMI Night wasn't just a routine training; it was a comprehensive learning experience. Dr. Maalouf created an immersive opportunity for the team, including the review of films and specific equipment used during angiograms. This hands-on approach gave the team a deep understanding of procedures and equipment in a real-world environment. His tireless commitment to continuous improvement ensures that everyone is prepared to deliver top-tier care. Dr. Maalouf is also a constant advocate for building strong relationships across departments and specialties, recognizing that collaboration is key to advancing patient care. He is dedicated to improving not just his own practice but the entire cardiovascular care process, driving innovations and improvements that directly benefit patients. What truly sets Dr. Maalouf apart is his alignment with the organization's larger goals, particularly in supporting the Board's vision that no patient, staff, or provider harm is acceptable to us. He is deeply involved in efforts to reduce mortality from acute myocardial infarction (AMI) and has been a driving force in the hospital's work to achieve CMS 5-star ratings. His initiatives are closely tied to the hospital's A3 strategy for continuous improvement, always with the goal of advancing the quality of care and reducing harm. His work not only advances the skill and preparedness of the medical team but ensures that patients receive the best possible outcomes.

Bryn M. Martinez, IP Rehabilitation Services

Nominated by Laura Aspinwall, IP Rehab Services

Bryn is a long-time physical therapist in our inpatient rehab unit. She easily builds rapport with her patients and their families as she guides them to recovery from an often-devastating life event such as a stroke or other neurologic or traumatic event. That is her “base” job. But Bryn does more than is expected: She has served on many rehab councils over the years including our quality practice and outreach councils. She routinely participates in our volunteer activities including our rehab booth at the Awesome 3000, helping at the National Wheelchair Tennis Tournament and our organized giving activities such as Rehab’s Family Building Blocks Hope for the Holidays. Bryn volunteered almost yearly to provide balance assessments at the hospital-sponsored Fall Prevention Fair. Currently, Bryn is on our IPR unit council. She advocates for our therapy profession, acting as a clinical instructor to at least one PT student each year. Inpatient Rehab has seen a lot of growth in the past two years. We have had ongoing needs to cross-train therapists from other departments as well as contract therapists. Bryn has helped in training and provided ongoing support to floating or covering therapists who need assistance with less familiar things such as ordering equipment or scheduling. She also covers when the therapy supervisor is on vacation. Often, these things need to be done in addition to Bryn doing her regular job as the primary PT for a team of patients. She manages these things with apparent ease, flexing to assist others and always with a smile on her face.

Leah M. Mitchell, Executive Offices

Nominated by Amber L. Aguinaga, SH Executive Offices

Leah is an extraordinary leader whose impact on our organization is truly indescribable. She combines intelligence, talent and thoughtfulness with an unwavering loyalty to her team, her peers, and the organization as a whole. Her work ethic is unmatched. She is incredibly hardworking, rolling up her sleeves and working at the elbow to ensure that whatever needs to get done, gets done. No task is beneath her when it comes to supporting the success of our patients and staff. Her leadership goes far beyond operational excellence. She is a mentor and role model, with people across the organization looking to her for guidance, wisdom and direction. She leads by example, balancing kindness with accountability, and always keeping a strategic lens on the future. She has a remarkable ability to blend process orientation with vision, ensuring that we not only move forward but do so in a thoughtful, sustainable way. Often, people in executive positions are not nominated for awards like this, but Leah is so deserving. She has dedicated more than 20 years to this organization, and her influence has shaped both our culture and our success. She remembers the little things about people, the details that make each individual feel seen, valued and respected. This ability to connect on a personal level while simultaneously driving organizational strategy is what makes her leadership so unique and impactful. Our organization is stronger because of her presence, her influence, and her relentless commitment to excellence.

Melody R. Molina, SHMG Woodburn Clinic

Nominated by Toni Bassetti, SHMG Primary Care Director

Melody consistently goes above and beyond with a level of commitment and leadership that sets her apart. As clinic manager, she has shown remarkable initiative in addressing challenges head-on. Whether streamlining clinic operations, mentoring staff, or ensuring the highest level of patient care, Melody maintains a positive attitude and tireless work ethic. She willingly takes on extra responsibilities and always leads by example, creating a supportive environment for staff, patients, and providers alike. One of Melody’s standout qualities is her servant leadership style, always remaining calm and focused, even in the most stressful situations, consistently placing the team’s success first. Melody excels at finding creative solutions to challenges, demonstrating a proactive approach and exceptional attention to detail. Her contributions have significantly improved clinic efficiency, including the development of system-level processes for inclement weather, enhancing

quality and outreach, and improving patient satisfaction scores. Melody is leading strategic efforts to improve recruitment and retention, with a focus on refining onboarding and offboarding processes, as well as advancing PCPCH initiatives. She is always available to support other leaders as needed. Her approachability, combined with her unwavering commitment to going the extra mile for patient care, staff, and providers, makes her an invaluable asset to the Medical Group. Melody drives the clinic toward greater success while ensuring every team member feels supported and valued.

Colleen Moosman, WVH Inpatient Rehab

Nominated by Trent Dunlop, WVH Rehabilitation Services supervisor

Colleen has seen our inpatient rehab program grow from 6 to 25 beds, while maneuvering many moves to accommodate construction. She helped onboard contract and permanent staff as the department increased in size from a 3 to 22 members. She's helped develop policies and standards to set baselines in the Salem Health Continuum. She exemplifies our vision: "Working together, we will reimagine care." Colleen is an outstanding therapy representative on the Unit Based Council. Her knowledge guides the council in prioritizing work to improve care and patient experience. She does this with a confident and collaborative approach with the IDT while keeping our patients at the core. She has a strong moral compass to guide the work with a dedication to WV Swingbed and the success of our program. She readily volunteers for additional work when the need arises. Colleen also excels in patient care and demonstrates "Care with Respect." There are many examples but two stand out. Colleen was working with an 88-year-old homeless female who fell and suffered a femur fracture. She had resources, but chose to live out of her car because she "prefers to camp." Colleen provided all the appropriate patient education but did so in a way that allowed the patient to retain her autonomy and dignity. In the end the patient chose to return to her car. Colleen used some of her treatment time to help the patient reorganize her car to allow access to all necessary items and create a space for the newly needed walker. This patient contacts Colleen each day to stay connected. The other example: A patient with a lower extremity weight bearing restriction lived in a second-floor apartment. He couldn't climb the steps while maintaining his restriction. Insurance had declined any further rehab and his discharge date fast approached. Colleen devised an ingenious device the patient could kneel on with his restricted leg. This allowed him to safely climb the stairs to his apartment. The patient was able to safely return home with caregiver support on time! Colleen went above and beyond to meet the needs of the patient and provide a safe d/c plan in a very difficult situation.

Alexis M. Moren, MD, Salem Health Medical Group Trauma Surgery

Nominated by Leah Mitchell

Dr. Moren has been instrumental in leading the trauma program to new heights, playing a key role in the program's successful recertification for another three years without a single deficiency. Her commitment to excellence and patient care has earned our program the respect and admiration of external surveyors, who were amazed by the quality of our team and operations. During the recertification process, the surveyors made it clear that our trauma program operates at an extraordinary level, surpassing most Level 1 trauma centers in terms of efficiency, coordination, and patient outcomes. They went so far as to say that our program is one of the best, if not the best, Level 2 trauma centers they have evaluated. This recognition would not have been possible without Dr. Moren's leadership, vision, and her ability to bring together a multidisciplinary team to achieve such impressive results. One of the most notable aspects of Dr. Moren's work is her focus on collaboration and continuous improvement. The surveyors praised our trauma program for its cohesive approach, noting that every part of the care spectrum—from pre-hospital coordination to clinical care, administration, and injury prevention—works together like a well-oiled machine. This alignment is a direct result of Dr. Moren's leadership, where she encourages open communication. Dr. Moren has been a driving force behind some of the most innovative advances in trauma care. Her efforts in introducing fresh whole blood and integrating the Quantra machine into

our practice have been game-changers for patient outcomes. The surveyors were particularly impressed by these developments, noting that they are resources they can only hope to see in their own institutions in the future. Dr. Moren's forward-thinking approach has placed our program at the cutting edge of trauma care. Another key example of Dr. Moren's impact is the development of the Oregon Trauma Registrar group, a problem-solving initiative that the surveyors highlighted as an area of excellence. This initiative exemplifies Dr. Moren's dedication to finding creative solutions and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement within our team. Dr. Moren's work also stands out because of her unwavering focus on patient outcomes. The surveyors pointed out that we consistently save patients who would not survive elsewhere, a reflection of the high standards of care and the innovative processes Dr. Moren has helped to implement. The surveyors were so impressed by our program that they encouraged us to apply for ACS verification, a testament to the incredible progress made under Dr. Moren's leadership.

Gabriel J. Piccirilli, Neuro Trauma Care Unit

Nominated by Chris Lentz, NTCU ANM

Gabriel joined NTCU as a new graduate RN about five years ago. In that time, he has taken on several different roles while remaining bedside. He became an avid preceptor as our unit went through a major turnover. He took on new hires and grads with eagerness to help them be the best they can be and helped build their critical thinking foundations. He then became a resource nurse on the unit, which pushed his interest into taking on the charge role. He has been an active, and primary charge for over two years. He stepped up to help Leadership this last winter and took on various leadership tasks when one of the dayshifts ANMs was out on maternity leave. He performed audits, attended non-confidential meetings, completed numerous projects thrown his way, took weekend call in rotation with the leadership team, and is willing to do anything we ask. He loves a challenge! He worked in the stroke navigator position as interim, and learned a lot, which he shared with staff. He is quick to coach in the moment. Gabriel remains a primary resource for many staff on the unit, especially those he precepted over the past several years, as they feel comfortable going to him with any questions. He spends extra time to help build the critical thinking with detailed explanations and in-the-moment teaching scenarios. He remains calm in emergencies, which calms everyone around him. He's been known to sit with patients for extended periods of time to monitor for further acute deterioration. One day while working as break lunch RN, he took a distressed patient to imaging for CT head and LP with plan for conscious sedation. When he came back, he provided support to bedside RN while sacrificing his own breaks to ensure that the patient and staff came first. NTCU is very lucky to have him.

Katelin L. Pippert, Contracts and Value Analysis

Nominated by Matt Hunt, Contracts and Value Analysis

Katelin has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership in the Contracts and Value Analysis Department and across the organization. Her calm and composed demeanor fosters thoughtful decision-making that supports our strategic goals. She approaches every challenge with clarity and confidence, ensuring that her guidance is well-prepared, organized, collaborative and insightful. As the coordinator of RFPs, she's been a key stakeholder in saving more than \$6 million for FY25 — a testament to her ability to deliver measurable results. During the CrowdStrike situation, she quickly assessed organizational needs, directed logistics, operations, and mobilized resources to address the challenge efficiently. She remained calm under pressure and provided decisive leadership during critical moments, which sets her apart as a trusted leader. Beyond her technical expertise, Katelin cultivates a strong team culture rooted in work ethic, collaboration and camaraderie. She thoughtfully redirects responsibilities to ensure the best fit for each team member. Her innovative thinking makes her a catalyst for positive change. What truly distinguishes Katelin is her genuine care for people. She regularly checks in with her team, encourages a healthy work-life balance, and demonstrates empathy during personal or family

challenges—always with respect for privacy. Katelin is not only a leader in the workplace but also a mentor and role model, providing guidance that empowers others to grow; her approachable communication style makes her a trusted resource for colleagues. She actively seeks opportunities to collaborate with other departments, ensuring alignment and fostering relationships that strengthen the entire organization. The same attentiveness, encouragement, and integrity she shows at work are reflected in her personal life, reinforcing the values she embodies—growth, respect, and success for those around her. She not only shapes the success of her department but leaves a lasting impact on our entire organization.

Lisa A. Rice, MD, SHMG Administration

Nominated by Christine Clarke, MD and Molly Rom, SHMG Administration

(From Molly Rom) — Dr. Lisa Rice is a force of nature! She’s the kind of leader who makes you want to be better because she expects the best, not just from herself, but from all of us. And she leads by example every single day. She’s not only an outstanding OB/GYN, she’s also the Associate Chief Medical Officer overseeing a staggering number of specialties — anesthesia, general surgery, vascular, bariatrics, orthopedics, cardiology, CT surgery, plastics, trauma — and still finds time to captain the PAT clinic, Anesthesia, Model Clinic, PTC, and Refine Care Model Strategy work. When our Pre-Anesthesia Testing clinic was short a provider, Dr. Rice didn’t wait for someone else to solve the problem. She volunteered to cover clinic two days a week until the new APP could start, on top of her other responsibilities. Dr. Rice holds herself to incredibly high standards, and she holds all of us to those same standards—not out of pressure, but out of purpose. She reminds us that the work we do matters, and that doing the right work for the patient is non-negotiable. Her accountability is not just professional. It’s deeply personal. We are better because of her. Our patients are safer because of her. And our organization is stronger because of her leadership.

(From Dr. Chris Clarke) — While Dr. Rice is an excellent, sought-after OB/Gyn and is instrumental in the successful operations of surgical and interventional services within Salem Health Medical Group, her outstanding work prompts this nomination — also, her contributions to the Procedural Throughput Capacity strategy work that began in FY 2025 and is continuing through FY 2026. Dr. Rice has demonstrated a commitment to learning about the clinical needs of patients and providers across a variety of specialties as well as growing as a Lean leader in helping to understand barriers to patients needing surgical and interventional services. She has committed countless extra hours to understanding clinic and hospital processes and forging a culture of shared support, commitment and accountability, from the first touch of a referral through postoperative therapies and aftercare. Most exceptionally, Dr. Rice championed a series of Four Step Problem Solving projects resulting in the launch of the Preanesthesia Testing Clinic, which closes an important gap to preoperative assessment for patients. Dr. Rice’s dedication to her teams and patients, and commitment to the relentless pursuit of continuous improvement advances the quality, safety and experience of patients receiving care at Salem Health.

Megan Schwabauer, Discharge Ready Unit

Nominated by Clinical Excellence Team, Nursing Administration (names below)

The Clinical Excellence team is in a unique position to see how Megan consistently steps up beyond what’s expected. She has been active in Professional Governance for many years as a staff nurse, chairing her unit department council (UDC) on A5E prior to single-handedly forming a new UDC upon transferring to DRU as a new ANM. As the chair of the Quality, Safety, and Patient Experience (QSPE) Council, Megan is a dedicated leader, proactive in directing continuous improvement. Her work with Harmful Words and Actions has improved staff and patient safety; for example new staff safety banners in patient charts. She helped bring the Purple Hands Pledge to Salem Health for a special event, bringing civic leaders here to reinforce the value of this work. The Purple Hands Pledge perfectly exemplifies Salem Health’s commitment to no tolerance for harmful actions and words.

Megan is also instrumental in our Magnet designation efforts as staff co-chair of the Magnet Steering Committee and Magnet Champions, both of which were instrumental in securing our fourth Magnet designation. She coached the most engaged, enthusiastic group of Champions we've ever seen. She dazzled the Magnet appraisers with her enthusiasm and passion for our Magnet culture, volunteering as a scribe and escort throughout the site visit. Long before the site visit could occur, the organization had to prepare over one hundred narratives to document evidence of our Magnet culture. Megan volunteered to personally write or support a great deal of those narratives, a lengthy, tedious process. These additional tasks coincided with Megan's onboarding as a new ANM, but she was unwavering in her commitment to supporting Magnet. She just keeps upsizing her bucket. Our Magnet and Clinical Excellence Director had this to say about Megan: Megan's unwavering dedication and leadership have been a driving force in our Magnet journey. She inspired and co-led our Magnet Steering Committee and Champion teams with passion, purpose, and grace — leading us through the preparation and celebration of our fourth Magnet designation ... It is my hope that these examples demonstrate the ways in which Megan consistently goes above and beyond her role of DRU ANM, as she routinely supports efforts and spearheads initiatives that make Salem Health a better place for staff to work and for the community to seek care.

Nominators: Brianna Revard, MBA, BS Clinical Practice System Supervisor Nursing Administration T. Boone Richardson, MSN, RN, CCRN Clinical Excellence Coordinator, Salem Hospital Nursing Administration Tia Rodriguez, MSN, RN WVH Clinical Excellence Coordinator Professional Governance and Pathways to Excellence Nursing Administration Kelly Bodnarchuk, MBA, BSN, CENP Director Clinical Practice Support, Magnet & Pathways Nursing Administration.

Tricia Shoun, Emergency Department

Nominated by Mandi Dix, Nursing Administration

Recently Tricia was asked to step outside her comfort zone and cover for a manager who was unexpectedly absent. She immediately rose to the challenge, immersing herself in a department outside of her usual scope and quickly earning the trust and respect of the team. She not only helped them meet their responsibilities but did so with an impressive level of grace and effectiveness. Tricia's flexibility is a hallmark of her work ethic. She frequently adjusts her schedule to ensure she can connect with night shift staff and be present when needed. She is a constant advocate for the SERA team, ensuring they have what they need to succeed. Her commitment to supporting the Salem Health and West Valley teams has been instrumental in ensuring their data is accurate and meaningful. What truly sets Tricia apart is her attentiveness to the needs of others. She always follows up when staff or charge nurses have questions or concerns, and she ensures that the frontline team is included in decisions affecting their work. Her hard work, leadership, and positive attitude make her an invaluable asset to our organization.

Julie Solomon, SHMG Neurology Clinic

Nominated by Michelle Rasmussen, MD, SHMG assoc. Chief Medical Officer

Julie typically serves in Neurology at 0.75 FTE, with a long-standing commitment to provide one day per month of coverage for the Pain Clinic to support PTO needs. When the Pain Clinic unexpectedly lost its primary physician in mid-July, Julie immediately stepped in and assumed full clinical coverage through the clinic's permanent closure on Sept. 30, 2025. During this time, she managed a high volume of complex patients with exceptional clinical expertise. She ensured that urine drug screenings were current for all patients and proactively addressed any discrepancies — often making the difficult but necessary decision to discontinue opioids when results were not aligned with safe prescribing standards.

As the clinic prepared to close, patients were transitioned to their primary care providers for ongoing management. Julie's leadership and diligence were essential to ensure that every patient had an appropriate

plan of care and that primary care teams had the information needed for a safe handoff. Her work supported the patients, clinic leadership, and the organization as a whole during a challenging period of change. Her commitment, professionalism and patient-centered approach embody excellence in practice and represent the very best of our values.

Pamela D. White, SHMG Administration

Nominated by Elisa Bledsoe, SHMG Administration

If you know Pam White you may wonder, how does she do it all? She's been the director of almost all SHMG specialty groups, coordinated model clinic standards and data across all surgical clinics, created a sustainable job breakdown analysis system for the medical group, and been instrumental in the organization's procedural traffic control A3 work — developing huddles, dashboards and standard work. Pam's work in standardizing surgical workflows led to significant efficiency gains. This is just a small list of all that she has recently accomplished. It is not only the breadth of her impact on the hospital that sets her apart, but the way she leads with vision and inspires excellence in others. These initiatives sustain because she collaborates with the team. Through her example, she creates a legacy of lasting difference that extends beyond her own contributions. Her work has enhanced coordination across departments and created a more seamless process that benefits both patients and care teams alike. Pam leads with kindness, integrity, and a steadfast commitment to putting patients first. Every decision she makes is guided by the question, "What's best for the patient?" — a mindset that inspires those around her and strengthens the culture of patient-centered care. Pam also takes the time to understand the ripple effects of new processes and works collaboratively to ensure smooth transitions. Her ability to listen, engage and bring people together has earned her the respect and trust of colleagues across multiple disciplines. Equally impressive is Pam's openness to feedback and her continuous drive for improvement. She actively seeks input from her teams and frontline staff, recognizing that their insights are vital to advancing patient care. When she identifies an opportunity to improve clinic flow or enhance operational processes, she approaches it with curiosity, creativity, and a genuine desire to make things better. Through her leadership, thoughtfulness, and unwavering dedication, Pam has made a profound and lasting impact on the quality of care, the patient experience, and the culture of collaboration within her teams.

Libby M. Windell, MD, Salem Health Medical Group Trauma Surgery

Nominated by Chief Medical Officer Christine Clarke, MD; and Vice President Leah Mitchell

Under "Libby's" guidance, our trauma program has achieved astonishing success — including a flawless three-year trauma recertification with no deficiencies. This achievement is a testament to Dr. Windell's dedication to excellence and the incredible strength of the entire trauma team. During the recertification process, the surveyors were more than impressed. They were astounded by the quality of care and collaboration within our program. They stated that our team operates at a level better than most Level 1 trauma centers and described us as one of the best, if not the best, Level 2 trauma centers they've seen. The most impactful comment from the surveyors was their assertion that we rescue people who would not survive at other facilities. This speaks volumes about the life-saving work being done under Dr. Windell's leadership. What truly sets Dr. Windell apart is her ability to foster a culture of collaboration and excellence across all aspects of trauma care. The surveyors highlighted the strength of our organizational culture, noting that everyone involved — from pre-hospital teams to clinical staff to administrators—works together seamlessly. This unity is driven by Dr. Windell's commitment to best practices and continuous improvement that results in every trauma patient getting the best care. One standout example: her multidisciplinary work that introduced fresh whole blood and the Quantra machine, innovative resources the surveyors noted would be invaluable at their own institutions. These advancements have significantly enhanced our ability to provide cutting-edge trauma care, and they are a direct result of Dr. Windell's forward-thinking approach. Also, the trauma registrars' initiative in forming the Oregon Trauma Registrar group was singled

out as another example excellence. This problem-solving spirit and commitment to continuous improvement are hallmarks of the culture that Dr. Windell has helped create. No other program in Oregon is doing what we do—managing the volume of trauma patients while maintaining such a high level of care. The surveyors even encouraged us to apply for ACS verification, further demonstrating the impact of Dr. Windell’s leadership. Through her dedication, vision, and commitment to Lean processes, Dr. Windell has led a trauma program that saves lives in ways that other institutions aspire to.

Kayla Yost, Discharge Ready Unit

Nominated by Rolanda Davis, Discharge Ready Unit

Kayla Yost exudes a calm, composed, unselfish and unflappable confidence in everything she does. She is a valuable resource to her co-workers and her patients. As an LPN, she’s in nursing school, she unmistakably and foreseeably demonstrates transformational and visionary leadership qualities in her young career. She is often sought out from nursing leadership and the unit council for her feedback and opinions on clinical practice decisions, changes, etc ... She is also a Falls Champion for our unit and is very engaged with our falls scores and commits to being a resource in providing feedback on our policies, prevention and interventions recommendations. When she is on the floor, she identifies when a need exists and jumps in to help without being asked. Providers on our unit have the highest respect for her. She creates a positive environment every day she is there. She is inspiring to be around. Patients and their families are always happy with her and the care she provides, when management round on patients to ask about the care they are receiving, Kayla is often mentioned. One of her co-workers recently recognized her in a “You Make a Difference” submission. I asked this nurse if I could quote her in a letter of recognition for Kayla. She wrote: “Kayla is always willing to step in and help co-workers. You were a lifesaver in my last shift, you helped pass meds, waste meds, and was second nurse for foley placement. I appreciate you so much!” This is what she does every day, and it was so wonderful to see one of our co-workers call it out. Kayla started working as CNA in IMCU, she is currently an LPN in DRU and is now aspiring to become an RN while providing excellent care to our patients.