

Nurse Leader



In the Spotlight

Joy Ortiz, BSN, RN, CCRN

As a nurse in the NICU, I find myself embracing the combined roles of supporting caregiver and patient advocate. I am called upon to comfort the most critically ill newborns, and become the champion of these tiny newborns in their quest to overcome often overwhelming medical challenges.

After graduation from nursing school, I received three years of nursing experience with older children before stepping into the NICU for the first time in 1994, at age 25. Inspiring me to this career path was the experience of my sister who gave birth to my niece prematurely years before. My little niece endured 18 months of challenges before finally succumbing to her illness.

That sad experience has made me feel kinship with the patients and families who come through the NICU doors. We were all just regular people with regular lives, struck suddenly with the awesome responsibility of caring for a seriously ill child. Some parents move smoothly into their challenging new role. Others need time and support to adjust. All are bound together

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## NICU Unit Forum- Direct Care Nurses Have a Voice in the NICU

By Joy Ortiz, BSN, RN, CCRN

The Nursing Forum was launched as an effort by the NICU leadership team for direct care nurses to have a voice in decisions that affect their work. NICU leadership recognized that direct care nurses are in an optimal position to impact professional practice through identification of evidence-based practices that positively benefit the nursing care environment.

The purpose of the unit Nursing Forum is multifaceted. It provides an opportunity for the participation of each direct-care nurse in the decision making and policy matters that in turn affect patient care. In addition, the forum provides a two-way exchange of ideas and information that enhance the quality of care in the NICU.

Each member of the forum is assigned a cluster of six to eight direct-care NICU staff nurses. Members are responsible for the communication and exchange of ideas and information between their assigned staff cluster and the unit forum. This affords each staff nurse a voice in the decision-making processes that directly impacts NICU professional practice as well as the overall work quality of the unit.

The forum sets quarterly goals based on feedback from direct care nursing staff. In the first year of launch, 2012, the forum met all four quarterly goals. These included surveying nurses for ideas, implementing meaningful protocols that would impact clinical practice, and continuously evaluating the effectiveness of the forum through surveys and questionnaires.

One of the suggestions nurses made to the forum was for improved processes in locating items at the bedside used for patient care. Supply waste was evidenced by nurses reporting multiple unnecessary items at the patient bedside, including several disposable thermometers, sets of scissors and multiple rolls of adhesive tape. The Unit Forum collaborated to develop a streamlined process for locating items at bedside for patient assessment, the Lean Box. The Lean Box provides nurses with

a handy bedside caddy containing items such as thermometer, measuring tape and adhesive tape.



The Lean Box was implemented during the last week of April 2012. A total of \$359 was saved in one month post implementation. At this same rate, a future average savings of \$1,080 per quarter is anticipated. This year, the Nursing Forum will be rolled out in NICU's sister unit, 2 North. The NICU nurses have remained optimistically engaged in voicing concerns, making suggestions and implementing changes. Several of the direct-care nurses had this to say regarding the Lean Box.

*"I like the Lean Box because it saved me time from looking for items needed for my assessment. You know where things are."*

- Joem DeLos Reyes, BSN, RN, CCRN

*"The box organized my supplies nicely. I really appreciated not having to dig through a bedside basin to find supplies."*

- Maria Bonilla, BSN, RN

*"They are awesome, because everything is there at your bedside"*

- Beatriz Herrera, BSN, RN

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by concern for their babies and a desire to do what is best for their struggling newborn.

As a nurse, I am in the unique position of being both a comforting shoulder to cry on and a teacher to help families adjust and prepare for the days ahead. Sometimes I am called upon to tell anxious parents that they can't hold a sick baby due to serious complications that could arise if a medical device is dislodged. Despite the limits we must impose for the safety of our little patients, we understand that babies need their parents and parents need their babies. I encourage parents to sit close and lean in to the isolette when possible so both parent and child can benefit from a caring touch.

Hardest of all is advising parents not to touch their infant at all. This is always difficult, but in some cases it is necessary for a fragile baby fighting for every breath. The tiniest and sickest babies rely on every second of sleep to help heal their tiny bodies. They receive so much touch from necessary monitoring and medical treatment that even a parent's gentle caress can deprive them of vital rest needed to survive. For children especially sensitive to touch, I usually suggest the parents arrange to visit during a baby's scheduled "touch time," a brief period in which the nurse will do any necessary handling of the baby quickly to minimize sleep loss. At this time, parents can touch or even hold their baby if tolerated before letting the infant rest for the next four to six hours before handling again.

One of the most rewarding aspects of NICU work is the special bond formed with families. Days, weeks, months and even years after taking their precious babies home, families return to this place again and again to thank the doctors and nurses for helping them through the challenging first days of their baby's life. Like proud parents, we enjoy hearing updates on the child's progress and successes. Through the shared challenges and camaraderie of those early days in the unit, we are linked together in a circle of caring that stands the test of time.



### From the Desk of Jackie Gonzalez

Dear Colleagues:

What a difference a year makes! It's been a year since our PEDS go live and the new system has become a way of life for our nursing care teams. I am endlessly proud of the way our nurses embraced and led the transition, serving as system design consultants and subject matter experts (SMEs) who educated new and existing staff on nuances of the new system and tackled challenges relentlessly until they were solved.

The MCH nursing team certainly loves a challenge, and the PEDS roll out was proof. What stays with me more than anything is that even as we wrestled as a team with a new electronic system for nearly all major care functions, we continued to shine in customer service, with patient satisfaction scores exceeding Top Box targets for most units and all major service areas during the year.

Also significant in the year gone by is the growth of our network of outpatient centers. Three new centers opened last year – the MCH Midtown Outpatient Center, MCH Miramar Outpatient Center and the MCH Nicklaus Outpatient Center in Palm Beach Gardens. With each expansion in our network, our nursing team grew in size and reach within the community. I am so proud that MCH nurses are now making a difference in children's lives daily from Palmetto Bay to Palm Beach Gardens and Loxahatchee.

Each new year brings with it special events and recognitions that present us with opportunities to pause and celebrate what it means to be an MCH nurse. We will celebrate Patient Safety Week in March. Our MCH nurses are leaders in safety, with laser focus on the child and family first and through participation in evidence-based practices and research that lead to better and safer care. During Patient Safety Week, we look forward to highlighting best practices that continue to make Miami Children's one of the best and safest children's hospitals in the nation. Then in May, we will celebrate Nurse's Week. Our committee is hard at work planning an array of activities that will be both fun and inspiring. We look forward to sharing details and schedules in the month ahead.

Thank you each and every one for your caring spirits, and commitment to medical excellence and safety. You are the faces of Miami Children's and you make us proud!

Sincerely,

**Jackie Gonzalez, MSN, ARNP, NEA-BC, FAAN**

Senior Vice President / Chief Nursing Officer / Patient Safety Officer



# Caring For The Community – Palmetto Bay Urgent Care Center

By Verna Haik, RN, BSN, CPN

**R**esponding to a need identified in the Perrine area, known today as Palmetto Bay, Miami Children’s Hospital decided to extend rapid care services to this community by setting up a clinic in a building already owned and operated by the hospital. Eleven years later the Palmetto Bay Urgent Care Center (UCC) is one of six urgent care centers currently serving children in three counties, with more on the horizon.

## How We Have Grown

On January 7, 2002, the South Dade Rapid Care opened with one each as the core interdisciplinary team: RN, EMT, pediatric trained physician, medical technologist, and radiology technologist.

The community quickly took notice and a strong partnership with the community emerged. Today Palmetto Bay’s clinical staff has quadrupled among the original

position roles and ARNPs and PAs have joined the team. Currently the center is seeing record volumes of an average 60 children from infants to young adults up to the age of 21 years.

Our UCC interdisciplinary team is family here in Palmetto Bay. Many of the team members have been here since day one and have watched the children of this community grow into adults. Today they are taking care of the next generation. Miami Children’s truly has a strong connection with this community, a bond that is palpable when you spend time in the center and talk with our families. Congratulations Palmetto Bay Urgent Care team, eleven years and counting!



*Founding Nurses: Verna Haik RN-CPN, BSN & Kathleen Williams-Atkinson RN, BSN*





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Articles accepted must be written by MCH nurses, previously unpublished and don't forget to include your full credentials for credit.

## 'To Be Where the Children Are'

By *Monica Ruiz-Valls, BSN, RN Nurse Manager, Midtown and Miramar Outpatient Centers*

**T**he year 2012 has been a memorable one for the Miami Children's Hospital outpatient center network. A total of three centers were launched and began providing care for children in the neighboring communities. The Nicklaus Outpatient Center located at 11310 Legacy Avenue in Palm Beach Gardens, held a Grand Opening Event on November 2. The Miramar Outpatient Center, located at 12246 Miramar Parkway, Miramar, celebrated a community Grand Opening on Nov 10 and the Midtown Outpatient Center, located at 3915 Biscayne Boulevard Miami, hosted its Grand Opening event on December 1. All three centers offer rehabilitative services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. The centers also offer urgent care services on weekdays from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. X-ray services are available on a walk-in basis, weekdays from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

As part of the urgent care departments, we are proud to have an incredible team of clinical coordinators, LPNs, radiology technicians and medical technologists. All disciplines work together with the physicians to provide exceptional pediatric urgent cares services for the Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties of South Florida.

These beautifully designed, state-of-the-art Urgent Care Centers have experienced a phenomenal start. Collectively, they have cared for over 900 patients since opening their doors in late 2012. And there's more to come. We anticipate the opening of the Miami Lakes Outpatient Center in May of 2013. We are dedicated to becoming an integral part of all these communities as we strive to fulfill MCH's vision, to "be where the children are"!

