

July 23, 2024

Dear PCICS Nursing Award Committee:

It is with much enthusiasm that I provide a nomination for Christine Placidi for the Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Society Critical Care Nursing Service Award. Christine began her career as a Staff nurse I in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit in 2000, and quickly advanced up the clinical ladder to Staff Nurse II. She established herself as a leader in the CICU participating in precepting nurses and teaching orientation classes. She has developed her cardiac critical care skills and practices at an expert level. Christine is often educating and sharing her knowledge with her peers and less experience nurses in her role as a resource nurse. The CICU resource nurse does not have a patient assignment but is a resource to all staff. As the resource nurse, Christine may be assist a nurse as they receive a patient from the cardiac OR, help a new nurse understand a patient's anatomy, or be part of the resuscitation team during an emergency. She now co-chairs the resource nurse committee, planning and leading bi-monthly meetings as well as mentoring new nurses to the resource team. She is respected by her peers as well as her patients. She often participates as a primary nurse for long-term patient teams. With the chronic nature of many congenital heart disease diagnoses, she maintains therapeutic relationships with families throughout multiple hospitalizations. Christine is a skilled communicator, excels at talking to providers and families in challenging or difficult situations. Her passion and love CHD patients and families is evident in all her interactions. She has helped families and patients feels comfortable, educated, and supported. I have seen her blowing bubbles with an 8 y.o, helping a toddler take a first walk down the hall after surgery, or drawing a heart diagram to teach a mother about her child's surgery. A few of her recent accolades include a publication in the Journal of Clinical Ethics and has co-authored on two posters for Nurses week in separate years.

One of the most impressive parts of Christine's nursing practice is her passion for global health that impacts outcomes for children with congenital heart disease in low and middle-income countries. Christine has been an integral member of the partnership, which delivers training, education and mentorship to Ghanaian healthcare providers with the goal of creating a sustainable pediatric heart surgery center at Komfo Anyoke Teaching Hospital in Kumasi, Ghana. Surgery for CHD was not available in Ghana prior to this partnership. During these annual visits, over 150 cardiac surgical repairs have been performed on children from all over Africa. Additionally, the team has seen more than 800 children in an outpatient cardiac clinic setting. Christine is the coordinator for the post-op phase of patient care that includes setting up the intensive care unit, organizing and storing supplies, ensuring the functioning of the equipment, education with the nursing staff, schedules for nursing staff and recruitment of staff to participate and learn. She continues the nursing education in between visits sharing educational material, answering questions, and maintaining the momentum achieved during visits via

WhatsApp communication and zoom meetings with the nursing staff. She is now replicating this work at Tenwek Hospital in Bomet Kenya. She has again collaborated with the local clinicians to identify their learning needs, modeling postoperative care and hand-on learning as the U.S. team has performed cardiac surgery with the local surgical team. She continues to meet monthly with the nursing team in both these centers, continuing the education and leadership training to help those teams achieve their goal of an independent congenital heart program. My favorite photo of Christine is the day a mom showed her how to wrap a baby (doll) onto her back in the traditional Ghanaian manner. It demonstrated the rapport and acceptance she was able to develop with the clinicians and families. Another image is a smiling, young girl hugging Christine as she was leaving the hospital after recovering from surgery. A favorite of event of the annual trip is when the previous year's patients return for a postoperative visit. One such patient was shy, quiet teenager who came and happily told Christine how she was now able to attend school like her friends. This is the goal of Christine and the team. Provide children with congenital heart disease the opportunity to have life changing surgery, no matter where there are born.

We are very proud of Christine as she shares one of her most valuable commodities, her nursing expertise, with the world. Christine would be an ideal recipient of the inaugural PCICS Critical Care Nursing Service Award.