

## **GUH Nurses, Staff Honored With Prestigious “Magnet Status” Award**

Georgetown University Hospital is the first hospital in the District to be awarded “Magnet Status” by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). This coveted international award earned by health care organizations providing the best nursing care and practices has only been achieved by fewer than 2% of hospitals nationwide.

In recognition of the GUH earning Magnet Status, DC’s mayor Anthony Williams proclaimed Jan. 22, 2004 as “Georgetown University Hospital Magnet Recognition Day.” The proclamation was announced during a recent press conference that featured GUH president Joy Drass, MD; Joyce Johnson, RN, senior vice president of Operations; and Mark Smith, American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Deputy Executive Director.

The one-page proclamation celebrated Georgetown’s nurses for their “innovations in professional practice, performance improvement and research, and commitment to continuing education,” in addition to the “more than 100 years, the nurses of Georgetown University Hospital have cared for their patients and [the DC] community with unparalleled care, compassion and love.”

During the press conference, Dr. Drass praised the nurses and GUH staff and physicians for all they have done to bring Magnet Status to Georgetown and to Georgetown’s patients. “This designation is particularly a celebration for our patients,” she said. “Magnet Status assures our patients that they are getting the very best in care.”

Smith praised GUH for joining the ranks of hospitals “changing the way health care is delivered around the world.” “Magnet Status provides consumers with the ultimate benchmark to measure quality patient care,” he said. “Georgetown University Hospital, you have the ‘best of the best’ in nursing. That is why you have become the first Magnet-designated organization in our nation’s capital.”

Magnet recognition puts GUH in the top-tier of acute care institutions. Research has shown that Magnet hospitals tend to experience stronger growth in market share, higher levels of patient satisfaction, better patient outcomes, increased nursing satisfaction and enhanced recruiting efforts for registered nurses. Because of these advantages, in its September 2003 article “Condition: Critical,” *Reader Digest* advised consumers to locate their nearest Magnet hospital before seeking care. “If you can easily check into a Magnet hospital, you’d be foolish not to,” it reported.

In addition, nurses are often drawn to these hospitals “like magnets,” a boon for Georgetown in an era of nursing shortages. Research has shown Magnet hospitals have significantly lower vacancy rates.

GUH is on the heels of its most successful nurse recruitment season ever. Since July 2002, the three-member staff has hired 344 registered nurses, including 120 in the first 2 months of FY2004. Of the latest hires, 84 were new graduates—twice as many as ever hired at Georgetown. The list of vacancies has decreased from 140 to less than 40, with

several units even boasting waiting lists for employment. This has dramatically reduced GUH's dependence on temporary nursing and bolstered projected budget savings of up to \$8 million. Much of GUH's success is due to the hospital's drive to gain Magnet Status.

"One of the first questions our new graduate candidates ask about is our Magnet Status," said Eileen Ferrell, RN, Nurse Recruitment director. "Magnet Status enhances our reputation as a world-class environment where nurses and all staff want to work. It's a wonderful recruitment tool."

As reported in the *Georgetown Star* over the last year, GUH's Magnet journey began in July 2000 under the leadership of Johnson, chief nursing officer. Criteria for the Magnet designation include nursing standards for improving the quality of patient care, strong nursing leadership, support for continuing education and development, and recognition and understanding of ethnic diversity among patients, families and fellow health care workers. After three years of collecting documentation and exemplars, Georgetown's nurses and nursing administrators submitted a 2,700-page, five-volume application to ANCC in June 2003. ANCC representatives then conducted an on-site visit in early November 2003, which provided inspectors the chance to observe and interview GUH nurses. In mid-January, Johnson received the call from ANCC that GUH had earned Magnet Status.

"Magnet Status reaffirms that our nurses not only practice at an exceptional level as they define the art and science of nursing in their work, but also underscores the importance Georgetown places on our RNs," Johnson said. "Quality care, however, can not be achieved without the outstanding contributions and support from colleagues in all hospital departments. Working together helps secure exceptional patient outcomes."

GUH nurses have received a Magnet ribbon designating them as Magnet nurses and will receive their official ANCC Magnet pins during special pinning ceremonies in February.-  
Y.J.T.