

Kay Herndon, RN, MSN, CCRN, CEN

Wyoming Medical Center Nominee for the Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence

The profession of nursing is blessed with many whose influence on nursing practice deserves to be acknowledged as the best. Allow me to share why Kay Herndon is exceptional in her field.

Kay has been a dedicated nurse at Wyoming Medical Center (WMC) for 37 years. She started her nursing career as an ADN, and has gone on to achieve her BSN, followed by her MSN. She has influenced patient care in our organization through her dedication as an Intensive Care Nurse, a Life Flight Nurse, an Emergency Department Nurse, and is a passionate educator for all employees in our organization and at Casper College where she teaches as an adjunct instructor.

Kay has improved her skills and knowledge throughout her career. She holds two critical care certifications, and is course coordinator for the Trauma Nursing Core Course and Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course. Not only does Kay educate the critical care nurses at our organization, she travels the state to provide this vital education to our more rural areas. At WMC, Kay teaches a variety of classes including ACLS, BLS, PALS, ENPC, TNCC, and ABLIS. Kay has done more for critical care education in our state than any other employee. Excellence in patient care is always her top priority. Through collaboration with leadership, Kay has influenced process improvements in areas such as difficult airway management and malignant hypothermia.

Kay's dedication to providing the highest quality of care is demonstrated by the numerous committees and process improvement teams she is on. Those include Code Blue, Suicide Prevention, Clinical Ladder, Difficult Airway, Sepsis, Stroke Steering, and Door to Balloon times. On these committees she influences the quality of critical care at Wyoming Medical Center on a continuous basis. Additionally, Kay serves on the board of the Emergency Nursing Association and has worked diligently to provide education and testing opportunities state-wide for nurses to become Emergency Certified.

One example of Kay's creativity and innovation in nursing care is her instrumental work in reviewing code blue situations at WMC. During those reviews, she teaches and offers validation of the care provided as well as process improvement interventions needed in a kind and caring way so nurses learn and get better every day. Her continued focus on the patient is at the core of her drive to make all nurses better critical thinkers and providers.

Kay's compassion for patients and family members stands out as one of the best. She cares for patients from cradle to grave. We have seen her hold the hand of the patient who is taking his last breath, while coaching the next patient through a crisis. Kay has a 6th sense that not many people have. One instance was when she was standing with her team talking to a patient in the

emergency department. Kay suddenly said “this patient is going to go into a dysrhythmia...” That is exactly what happened. Because Kay was able to recognize this before it happened, the team was ready to intervene immediately. In all situations, Kay calmly and competently leads her team in the right direction and prevent catastrophe and save lives.

Kay’s positive approach to superiors, peers and subordinates knows no bounds. In the words of our Emergency Medical Director: “Kay Herndon has been one of the most reliable dedicated nurses at WMC. She works long hours taking care of patients, but she is also the driver behind much of the education at WMC. She has done more for education at WMC than any other employee. She has taught BLS, ACLS and PALS for decades. She and I have collaborated on numerous projects, including Emergency Airway Management. Kay continues to be responsive to the needs of other departments through innovation and collaboration in the treatment of malignant hyperthermia.”

Another Emergency Department physician wrote: “Kay is an excellent, dedicated nurse that I have known for over 25 years. Always patient and family care oriented. In addition Kay has been an “Educator of Many,” and this alone speaks volumes as to the type of person and healthcare professional she truly represents. I am, and will always be proud to consider Kay an integral part of our family of healthcare providers. She would be a superb choice for the Norman S. Holt Award for Excellence in Nursing.”

Kay has made tremendous contributions to the nursing profession throughout her 37 years as a nurse. She will be humbled and honored when she finds that she has been nominated for this prestigious award. Thank you for considering Kay Herndon for the Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence.

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