

Top Arizona Nurse Leader Joins YRMC

Diane Drexler, RN, BSN, MBA, FACHE, Takes Chief Nursing Officer Post

Growing up, Diane Drexler considered the idea of a nursing career. However, it was while observing the nurses who cared for a critically ill high school classmate that she decided to pursue the profession.

“When I visited my friend,” she said, “I was always impressed by the nurses who cared for her. I thought, ‘That’s what I want to do with my life.’”

Drexler understood then that she wanted to help people through illness and provide support to their family members and friends. She’s been doing that for more than 20 years, first as a caregiver and then in management and executive-level positions. In April, Drexler joined Yavapai Regional Medical Center (YRMC) as its new Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), the hospital’s top nurse executive in charge of patient care services on both campuses.

“What has impressed me most is that everyone at YRMC—from staff members to board members—embraces the hospital’s mission,” Drexler said. “It’s more than a plaque on a wall; everyone is completely committed to it. I am thrilled and grateful for the opportunity to be part of this organization and community.”

Before joining YRMC, Drexler served as Vice President of Patient Care Services for Cancer Treatment Centers of America at Western Regional Medical Center (WRMC). She helped open the hospital, located in Goodyear, Arizona, in 2008. Drexler also launched WRMC’s “acuity adaptable unit,” the first such licensed unit in the state. The acuity adaptable unit design allows patients to remain in the same room throughout their hospitalization.

Drexler’s nursing experience also includes 15 years at Banner Health in the Phoenix area. In her most recent position at Banner, she was CNO of Banner Estrella Medical Center in Phoenix. Again, she undertook the job of opening the hospital, which in 2005 was among the nation’s first to introduce both an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) and Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE) system.

According to Tim Barnett, YRMC’s President and CEO, Drexler’s experience will be an asset to the hospital and community.

“She’s the right person at the right time,” Barnett said. “With the BreastCare Center at YRMC ready to open this fall and the transition to EMR that the federal government is requiring of hospitals, Diane’s knowledge and experience will be invaluable. Even more important, Diane is devoted to the nursing profession and a true advocate of patients. We are very fortunate to have her on our team.”

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Drexler also is pleased to be part of the YRMC team. A successful nurse leader, she said, listens and develops relationships throughout the organization. However, as a nurse, she never forgets the most important relationships are with patients.

“I enjoy listening and talking to patients. I love hearing how we as nurses make an impact on their lives and how we can improve,” she said.

Drexler is a firm believer in both lifelong learning and sharing her professional knowledge. She earned a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Nursing from the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque and a Master’s of Business Administration from Arizona State University West.

Drexler is a graduate of the Wharton Fellows Nurse Executive Leadership Program and she was also selected for the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation Executive Nurse Fellows program. Only 20 nurse leaders from throughout the country participate in this program each grant cycle. RWJ selects nurses who aspire to help lead and shape the U.S. healthcare system. Additionally, Drexler earned board certification in healthcare management as a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). She has published many articles in nursing journals.

“I believe that if I have done something from which others can learn, I want to share my lesson learned,” she said.

Drexler and her family—her husband and two children—are enjoying the people of Prescott and the beauty of the area.

“For the first time, I know my neighbors and they know me,” she said. “We love to hike and kayak so we feel like it’s all at our back door now. It’s the best of all worlds.”