



## MAKING THE TRANSITION CONVERSATIONS WITH RECENT NURSING GRADS

A conversation with  
**Stephanie Andrade, RN**  
Bridgeport Hospital Emergency Department

### Q: Why did you decide to go into nursing?

I chose nursing because I love medicine and the constant challenges and learning you experience in the medical science arena. Becoming a nurse has allowed me to give people a sense of hope and security—I love being the human contact that supports both the patients and their loved ones. It also lets me think critically in terms of my patients and use my medical knowledge and rigorous education.

### Q: What first drew you here?

I wanted to be part of Yale New Haven Health System because I intend on furthering my education and medical knowledge—and they really support that. The emergency department was my main interest, and they were offering an amazing orientation process, which you really need for a specialty field. During the six-month orientation, I was set up with a great preceptor and took a telemetry course and a critical care setting class. It was an excellent experience that enabled me to launch my career as a nurse at Bridgeport Hospital to the best of my ability. You start off with your support system—a preceptor—by your side, and end with being able to walk into a room independently, assess and intervene. But throughout the whole process you're never alone... you're always aware that we're all part of a great, dynamic team.

### Q: What are some of the best aspects of your daily work routine?

The fast pace and critical thinking. It's a high-energy work environment, and you're always working side by side with the physicians who respect your knowledge and value your input. I love going to work every day and not knowing what challenges are ahead.

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### Q: How is your work experience different from your experience as a student?

As a professional nurse you are allowed to be more hands-on with patients, and therefore learn more than what a classroom can teach. As a student, you learn your assessments, procedures, labs, disease process and more. A student nurse is more limited in the extent of patient care they can deliver. When you are on the job, it's up to you to draw from your experience and training and apply it in a real situation.

### Q: How is your relationship with your colleagues?

My relationship with my preceptor was one of trust and support. That same support system extends to everyone I work with in the ED. I never feel as though I can't ask for help if I need it, even from fellow new grads. We all began our nursing careers together, and we all understand it's a constant growth process.

### Q: What advice would you give to nursing students and new grads?

The best advice I can give is take in everything and always ask questions. Every person you work with can teach you something, so it's important to listen as well as to contribute—that goes for new grads and experienced nurses as well. Remember that every time you voice a question, others around you can be learning something from it too.



BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL GREENWICH HOSPITAL YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL



# TRANSITIONS

A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDENT NURSES | FALL 2008



## TELEMETRY AND ICU NURSING

A CAREER TRACK FOR NEW RNS  
AT GREENWICH HOSPITAL

As a state-of-the-art, 174-bed regional provider of care, **Greenwich Hospital** offers new RNs the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of a unique culture where listening and responding to the input of nurses is a tradition—one that actively helps to define the way care is delivered. “Our physicians truly respect the contributions of our nursing team,” says **Jacqueline McClenachan, an RN in Greenwich Hospital's Med/Surg ICU**. “And that respect fosters an atmosphere where everyone is relied upon, trusted and able to contribute in a very important way.”

The interaction between the Telemetry and Intensive Care Units at Greenwich Hospital testifies to this supportive and collaborative nature. These departments are essentially sister units, sharing the same Manager and providing new graduate RNs with an innovative cross training program. New grads begin in the Telemetry Unit, and then progress to the ICU when they're fully prepared to take on the high acuity challenges of that environment.

“Telemetry is great for an energetic nurse seeking a challenge,” says McClenachan. “It's an extremely fast-paced and diverse environment. In the morning you could have four patients and by the afternoon you might have an entirely new group of patients to provide care for.”

She also notes that on the Telemetry unit, new nurses are able to experience a wide variety of patients that they might not otherwise see on the floor. “On the floor, a patient is routinely well-stabilized when a new nurse has the opportunity to treat him or her. In Telemetry or ICU, it's a more hands-on experience where the nursing staff is able to provide care when the patient needs it most—either being extremely ill or even close to being in the ICU. That's the real experience of an ICU step-down.”

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—Jacqueline McClenachan, RN—  
Greenwich Hospital Med/Surg ICU

Questions or Comments?

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# A Letter from the Publisher

Dear Nursing Students,



I hope you enjoyed a spectacular summer and that you are looking forward to a rewarding and challenging fall semester.

This is our sixth edition of the *Transitions* newsletter, and as always, we appreciate the feedback we have received to date from both nursing students and faculty alike.

The hospitals of Yale New Haven Health System—Bridgeport Hospital, Greenwich Hospital and Yale-New Haven Hospital—each offer exciting and challenging opportunities for student and new graduate nurses. In this edition, we'll showcase a specific department at each of our hospitals, give you updates on activities, and include our standard tips for your first job search.

For more information throughout the year, please be sure to visit the College Relations web site at [www.collegerelations.ynhhs.careers.com](http://www.collegerelations.ynhhs.careers.com). On behalf of the entire Yale New Haven Health System, I wish you the best of luck for an outstanding academic year, and a rewarding journey into your professional nursing experience!

Sincerely,

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## NEUROSCIENCE NURSING

• AT YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL



Of all the reasons **Yale-New Haven Hospital** is such a popular destination for student nurses and new graduates—from its longstanding affiliation with Yale University Schools of Nursing and Medicine to its international reputation for excellence and leadership in patient care and research—few are more persuasive than the extraordinary range of opportunities that only a 944-bed academic medical center can deliver.

The acclaimed Neurosciences Program offers one compelling example. Yale-New Haven Hospital is one of only a few health care facilities in the Northeast offering new grads a fast-track from nursing on the Neuro Step-Down Unit to opportunities in its specialized 14-bed Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit and Neuroscience Acute Care Floor, which includes a robust Epilepsy Program.

According to Kathleen Wallack, RN, Neurosciences Patient Services Manager at Yale-New Haven Hospital, “Working with the neurosciences patient population is challenging, yet gratifying. Often these patients have experienced both physical and cognitive deficits with life-altering implications. As part of our multidisciplinary team approach, our RNs work closely with both patients and families to achieve maximum recovery. Many of our patients will stop by for a visit months after discharge, and it’s extremely rewarding for staff to see their progress.”

New graduates begin their Neurosciences career with an extensive, competency-based 1:1 orientation process in which orientees have regular meetings with Preceptors, Clinical Nurse Specialists and Patient Services Managers to discuss the process and ensure that new RNs have the skills necessary to succeed in this challenging setting. “Yale-New Haven Hospital has the reputation for being an outstanding teaching hospital,” says Wallack, “and we are passionate about teaching new RNs to provide highly specialized, quality and safe care.”

**The Neuro ICU and Neuroscience Acute Care Units at Yale-New Haven Hospital provide state-of-the-art services to patients with a wide range of disorders, including:**

- Epilepsy
- Subarachnoid hemorrhage
- Stroke
- Brain tumors
- Spinal cord injuries
- Trauma
- Myasthenia gravis
- Multiple sclerosis
- Guillain-Barré Syndrome
- Neurodegenerative disorders
- Seizure disorders

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—Kathleen Wallack, BSN, RN, Patient Services Manager—Yale-New Haven Hospital Neurosciences

## ED PROGRAM FOR NEW GRADS

AT BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL

Each time a nursing student or new graduate initiates their first RN job search, they must determine the qualities that will define—for them—an exciting and rewarding career. For many, the answer is **Bridgeport Hospital**: a private, not-for-profit, 425-bed facility that is home to 2,600 employees and one of the most close-knit and supportive health care communities in the region.

Bridgeport Hospital’s commitment to providing new graduate RNs with access to compelling career paths in a wide range of practice settings extends to the Emergency Department. It’s a process that begins with a specialized 6-month orientation in which the extensive training program and preceptors are chosen to specifically match each new RN.

According to Ken Forte, RN and Nurse Educator for Bridgeport Hospital’s ED, “We pride ourselves on being able to handle anything that comes through our doors—and our excellent orientation process ensures that new grads will be able to handle anything that comes their way, too. If the new hire doesn’t feel that he or she is ready at the end of the 6 months, they are always allowed the opportunity to take extra time and fully adapt

to the routine. This is extremely important, even more so in a specialized field such as the Emergency Department.”

The ED at Bridgeport Hospital is a particularly challenging and exciting department for new nurses, with as many as 265 patients coming through the doors on a daily basis—approximately 70,000 patients per year. To handle this heavy patient flow and high turnover rate, the ED is now undergoing an exciting new expansion/renovation. The first phase of this 15 million dollar project was recently completed, and features an 11,000 square foot addition that houses adult and children’s treat-and-release services, including the Elizabeth M. Pfriem Children’s Emergency Center. The addition also includes drop-off, reception and waiting areas, nine new exam rooms and extra parking.

Although this fast-paced department can be both physically and emotionally challenging, the support system within the ER staff is phenomenal. “Our ER is a very close knit crew,” says Forte. “Teamwork is essential here, and you can always rely on your colleagues to pull you through if you’re having a difficult day.”

## TRICKS OF THE TRADE

HELPFUL HINTS FOR RECENT GRADUATES

Determine exactly what you’re looking for, including the type of facility, the unit, and even the work hours you would prefer.

Make sure to explore the facility in person before applying.

Be sure to leave accurate contact information.

When you’ve decided on an area, apply as soon as possible—don’t wait until late Spring!

Always have a voicemail that is clear, pleasant and professional.



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—Ken Forte, RN, BS, Nurse Educator—Bridgeport Hospital Emergency Department