

## **UC San Diego**

### **Spring 2022 - UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing: Pandemic Reflections**

#### **Title**

Creative Solutions to Supporting the Next Generation of Professional Nurses During a Pandemic

#### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/085548d5>

#### **Journal**

UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing, 15(1)

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#### **Publication Date**

2022-04-01

Peer reviewed

# Creative Solutions to Supporting the Next Generation of Professional Nurses During a Pandemic

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Warlan, PhD, RN, CPHQ

Student nurses were impacted and also an underutilized resource while working nurses faced numerous challenges during the pandemic. In San Diego, some nursing schools temporarily suspended their clinical placements, while other schools permitted them if hospitals were willing to accept students. Most hospitals were forced to close their doors to nursing students as they were faced with overwhelmed staff, logistical challenges, shortage of equipment, and restricting access to non-essential personnel. These changes within the nursing schools and hospitals were confusing, difficult to navigate, and caused a lot of uncertainty for nursing students and their futures.

In March 2020, the California Board of Registered Nurses (BRN), noting

these challenges and seeing the need to support these nursing students, granted schools a temporary waiver decreasing medical-surgical direct patient care hours to 25% simulation. In September 2020, Governor Newsom signed AB 2288 allowing this adjustment to continue through the academic year and providing a decrease to 50% direct patient care hours for psychiatry, obstetrics, and pediatric clinicals.

Some schools decreased their direct care clinical hours to these temporary minimums to ensure their students graduated on time and able to enter the workforce quickly. Other schools chose to maintain their usual requirements or slightly decrease them to ensure students received the entirety of their education. Schools also had to adjust



**Eileen Haley, MSN, RN, CNS, CCM** is the Director of Population Health. Her team consists of nurses, social workers, providers, care navigators and health coaches. Eileen has been with UCSDH for the past 5 years, helping to build a new team to support providers and patients to deliver high quality and high value care to our patients in the communities that they live. When she is not working, she can be found enjoying time with her family and hiking or playing tennis with friends.

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) | UCSD COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker

Vaccines: Total Doses Given  
Total through 5/21/2021

**483,129**

1,109 Given 5/21/2021

Vaccines: Total Individuals Vaccinate  
Total through 5/21/2021

**227,580**

1,109 Given 5/21/2021

## First Vaccine Superstation UCSD COVID-19 Vaccine totals

Vaccines: Total Doses Given  
Total through 5/21/2021

**225,260**

0 Given

Vaccines: Total Individuals Vaccinated  
Total through 5/21/2021

**110,626**

0 Given

## 6 BMT Supporting Scripps BMT during cyberattack

By Melissa Callahan

During Nurses' week in 2020, the dedication to creating a culture of community extended not to just our team's nurses, but those working at the Scripps BMT unit during the cyber security attack on their systems. Both Andrea and Jennifer spearheaded a unit donation fund for Scripps nurses, then purchased (a lot and a quite a variety) of



burritos, packaged them with kind messages, and delivered them to the nurses working at Scripps! The messages on the burritos were: "Hey Scripps. Our thoughts are with you... Happy Nurses Week. From UCSDH 6 BMT."

It was an incredible gesture of kindness and supporting

our neighbors. The Scripps nurses were shocked when they received the delivery and couldn't believe UCSDH was thinking of them. This is a true testimony to nurses' commitment to caring and thinking of others before themselves. I am proud to be on a team with nurses whose sincerity in caring for others is evident in all that they do.



**Heather Warlan, PhD, RN, CPHQ** is currently the Assistant Director of Magnet & Nursing Quality where she oversees both of those programs as well as several others related to nursing professional development, orientation, and students. Prior to this role Heather worked in Regulatory Affairs where she supported the organization through CDPH and Joint Commission investigations and surveys. Heather's clinical background is in critical care nursing, she worked in the CCU where she also served as a code nurse and precepted new graduate nurses and students. Heather received her masters of nursing and PhD in nursing from the University of San Diego, Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science, where she is also adjunct faculty.

**Kris Henderson BSN, RN, NE-BC** has been at UCSDH for the past 5 years and is the Senior Director of Ambulatory Nursing Operations. COVID has brought her the opportunity to broaden nursing infrastructure in Ambulatory Care and innovate with care delivery models for COVID testing, vaccination, and patient/staff education. Providing nursing students with more opportunities to be active in community care delivery is one of the wonderful highlights of the past two years.

curriculum and develop creative and unique ways to educate their students in a non-clinical setting. Many of the schools used simulation scenarios or developed case studies to evaluate students' critical thinking and clinical decision-making ability.

UC San Diego Health (UCSDH) was one of the few hospitals to remain open to nursing students. By working with the San Diego Nursing School Consortium, we were able to accommodate as many students as possible. Judy Fernandez, Nursing School Liaison, adjusted clinical rotation schedules with the support of the labor pool, inpatient managers, clinical nurses, APRNs, and nurse educators to ensure students in their last semester were able to meet their class objectives and requirements to graduate.

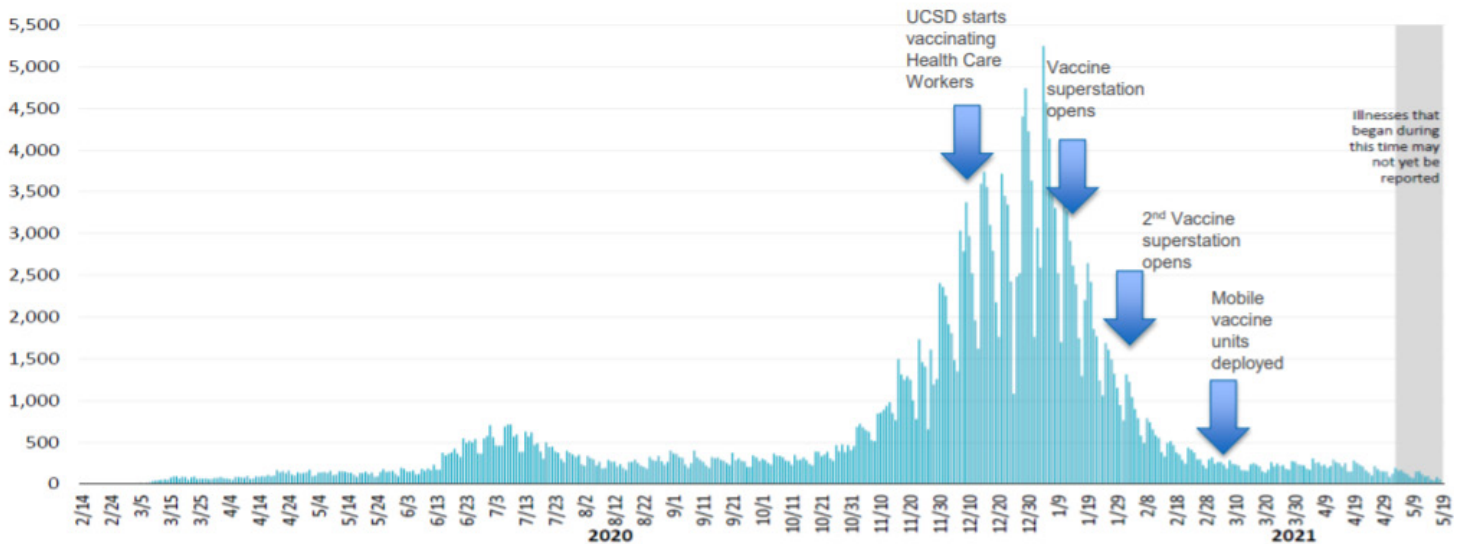
To ensure nursing students graduated

on time, UCSDH worked creatively with colleges to increase the number of students from one group (10 students) to allow two or three groups to share the semester. This adjustment allowed 20 to 30 additional students for each clinical rotation, per semester. Creating new opportunities for students such as placements with our Population Health team, Vaccination Stations, Simulation (at schools), were all part of the creative planning that allowed us to accommodate a greater number of students.

The other challenge was ensuring these opportunities would both support the hospital's needs during this crisis but also meet the student's learning objectives for their courses and clinical experiences. The goal was not only to ensure they graduate but also met as many of their learning objectives as possible.



## Confirmed COVID-19 Cases by Date of Illness Onset\* San Diego County Residents, N =279,489



Data are preliminary and subject to change; \*if case did not have symptoms or illness onset date is unavailable, the earliest of specimen collection date, date of death, or date reported is used instead. Prepared by County of San Diego, Emergency Operation Center, 5/20/2021

### New Opportunities in Ambulatory Population Health

UCSDH has a Population Health Services team that consists of nurses, social workers and nurse practitioners, who provide team based care for our primary care and certain specialty providers. This team is an innovative model that provides both telephonic outreach and home based care to holistically support our patient’s medical, social and physical needs to stay safe at home and prevent avoidable events. In April 2020, the Population Health team gained approval from the BRN to provide clinical placements to nursing students. This team developed an evidenced based wellness outreach module and utilized students to telephonically reach out to vulnerable, high-risk seniors. In this program there was a didactic portion that educated the students on population health, social determinants of health, the importance of medical management, evidence-based solutions, how to escalate concerns, and role-playing of motivational interviewing techniques. Samantha Madonis, MSN, RN, PHN and Lc

Russell, MSN, RN from Population Health and a school faculty member were onsite during these rotations to provide oversight, guidance, and education. All patient encounter were documented in the medical record and approximately 15% of the telephonic outreach resulted in escalations that required interventions with follow-up to help the vulnerable seniors be safe at home during the pandemic.

Students who participated in the program reported overwhelmingly positive feedback. 93.33% indicated the rotation was applicable to their current rotation/clinical practice and 91.11% felt more comfortable and better

prepared to converse with patients on a nursing level.

The Population Health team continues to utilize students to contact patients and creates further outreach programs that align with nursing school curriculum. Some additional programs in use today include engaging patients with poor diabetes and hypertension control, and enrolling them in programs to help them to better understand their condition. The team uses remote patient monitoring, community resource links to address social barriers to care and health coaching resources with a goal of improved self-care.

The future state includes adding

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to all nurses who have earned their degrees during the pandemic. If you are interested in pursuing your own academic journey, please reach out to Heather Warlan and Judy Fernandez for advice and guidance on obtaining clinical placements and scholarship opportunities.



student rotations to clinics and homes. The goals are to enhance nursing student clinical knowledge and interest in seeking employment in Population Health programs as this team-based care model becomes more widespread.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Super Station for San Diego County

On January 6th, 2021, the county officially tasked UC San Diego Health to start vaccinating 5,000 county residents per day within five days.

The Nursing Education Department developed orientation for staff to each site's processes, care of patients, and they evaluated competencies of community and UC San Diego Health volunteers. They increased the number of county vaccinators by doing vaccine administration training for over 200 EMTs as well as training UCSD Medical Students, Pharmacy Students, and area nursing students as vaccinators. They worked with Physician Leaders in creating standing orders for vaccinations as well as management of any side effect symptoms and arranged to have EMS on site at the superstations.

The superstations gave UCSDH another opportunity to support student nurses to meet their course learning objectives and gain hands-on experience with certain skills. Student nurses were trained to administer vaccinations as well as deliver patient education and assess for adverse reactions after the vaccination was administered.

On January 11th, 2021, the vaccination superstation opened, meeting the county's goal! A second vaccine superstation with walk-through capability was opened on the organization's university campus. This site allowed the team to vaccinate students, campus employees, and patients.

When the first superstation opened on January 11th, 2021, there were approximately 3,000 new COVID-19 cases a day in the county. Cases steadily declined while the second superstation and mobile units were deployed from January through March 2021. As of May 19, 2021, the daily case number in the county was below 50.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CARING

### Food Insecurity During the Pandemic

By Laura Rossi, BA & MJ David, MSN, RN-BC, PCCN, RN  
Nursing Community Involvement Committee Chair

The Transitional Telephonic Nursing Department regularly provides outreach calls for post-discharge follow-up, provide patient education and connect patients to resources to support their well-being. While checking in on patients



during the spring of 2020, Telephonic Nurse Specialists began to hear troubling concerns about patients experiencing increased food insecurity resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to HealthyPeople.gov, food insecurity is defined as, "The disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources." In other words, inconsistent access to sufficient, affordable, nutritious food. When food insecurity concerns are brought up, the nurses typically connect patients to their local food bank for help.

As the demand for San Diego Food Bank resources increased, MJ David, MSN,

RN-BC, PCCN, RN, a Telephonic Nurse Specialist, took action. She and her team saw an opportunity to serve the San Diego community and invited their nursing colleagues to volunteer at the food bank center. As the Co-chair of the Community Involvement Committee (a subcommittee of Image of Nursing Council), MJ promoted volunteering at the San Diego Food Bank by organizing a schedule with times to sign up, providing UCSDH branded volunteer t-shirts and encouraging wearing them to work.

The response was inspiring! Nurses from units all over UCSDH volunteered their time and had a blast while doing it. Nurses organized and packaged food that was distributed to hundreds of San Diego County families negatively impacted by the pandemic. The San Diego Food Bank was grateful for the support from our nurses who served as leaders for the San Diego community.

MJ said, "Small acts can make a significant difference during the pandemic, especially when patients sometimes must make difficult choices between paying for food or their medications." We are grateful for our nurses and their continued commitment to making a difference within our community.