

**2024**

# **NURSES WEEK**

***Celebrating  
our nurses and  
health care  
providers***





## Happy Nurses Week to our health care HEROES.

Our nurses are valued team members dedicated to helping patients and families live their healthiest lives. Their compassion and commitment to our community remind us that, by working together, we can create a healthier Hawai'i.

**HAWAII  
PACIFIC  
HEALTH**

KAPI'OLANI  
PALI MOMI  
STRAUB  
WILCOX

CREATING A HEALTHIER HAWAII

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**DENNIS FRANCIS**  
President and publisher,  
Oahu Publications Inc.

Aloha friends,

Nurses are essential to our well-being, so much so that they are often the ones who we reach out to if the doctor is not available.

They are often by our sides when there is no one else — they give hugs and share kind words, all to reassure us that things will get better. Nurses are our unsung heroes in times of sickness and sadness.

These extraordinary people with their learned skills can provide a quick diagnosis in times of need. They try to give us our shots without pain, take our temperature and check our blood pressure, making our visit to the doctor or to the hospital easier and less painful.

As we celebrate Nurses Week, we should appreciate them beyond a week. We should never forget their tireless efforts to ensure the health and well-being of our community throughout the pandemic, as we know their dedication will remain for many years to come.

To all the nurses in Hawaii, we say “mahalo” for treating us as members of your own family, and we deeply appreciate the aloha you give to us, always.

Mahalo nui loa,



**DR. JOSH GREEN**  
Governor, state of Hawaii

Nurses are the bedrock of patient care, and I am honored to acknowledge their indispensable contributions to our communities. Last year, amid various challenges, including the Lahaina fires, nurses played a crucial role in caring for our people.

In Hawaii, we are fortunate to have more than 1,600 licensed practical nurses, 16,000 registered nurses and 1,200 advanced practice registered nurses. These dedicated professionals operate across various health care settings, providing primary, specialty and emergency care to our residents. Beyond their clinical duties, nurses lead initiatives to address social determinants of health, enhance health care accessibility, and promote safety and wellness for all. They offer quality and empathetic care to vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and those facing homelessness, disabilities, or addiction.

The demand for nurses continues to rise due to various factors, including population aging, advancements in medical technologies and the preference for home-based care. Despite these challenges, nurses remain beacons of compassion, offering hope, understanding, and healing to their patients and families.

As we reflect on the invaluable contributions of nurses, I urge all residents of Hawaii to join me in honoring their dedication, professionalism and resilience. Let us express our gratitude for their tireless efforts in meeting the medical and emotional needs of our keiki, kupuna, ohana and communities. Together, let's celebrate and support our nurses as they continue to make a difference in the lives of those they serve.

# What is Nurses Week?

BY KYLE GALDERIA

Florence Nightingale is known as the founder of professional nursing and became an industry pioneer after her work during the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856. Nightingale's habit of making rounds at night led to her being known as "The Lady with the Lamp," and, appropriately, National Nurses Week shines a light on the current crop of dedicated nurses.

National Nurses Week is May 6-12 each year — May 6 being Nightingale's birthday. The nursing profession has been supported and promoted by American Nurses Association since 1896. Each of ANA's state and territorial nurses' associations promotes the nursing profession at the state and regional levels, and conducts celebrations to recognize the con-

tributions that nurses make to the community.

"As the largest group of health care professionals in the U.S. and the most trusted profession, nurses are with patients 24/7 and from the beginning of life to the end. Nurses practice in all health care settings and are filling new roles to meet the ever-growing demand for health and health care services," states former ANA president Ernest Grant, Ph.D., RN, FAAN. "Despite the major role nurses play in health care delivery and community outreach, there are opportunities to increase understanding of the value of nursing in order to expand investment in education, practice and research, as well as increase the number of nurses who serve in leadership positions."



# CARING AND GUIDING PATIENTS OF ALL AGES

Queen Kapiolani established the Kapiolani Maternity Home in 1890 to ensure the women and children of Hawaii had access to quality health care. More than 130 years later, her vision continues to inspire the nurses today at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children.

“We are all so proud of our nurses here at Kapiolani,” says Joan Kanemori, vice president of patient services and chief nurse executive. “More than 75% of our nurses have been with Kapiolani for more than five years. Their specialized training and commitment to Hawaii’s women and children brings life-changing care to families.”

Kapiolani is more than 2,500 miles from the next children’s hospital. As the state’s only maternity, newborn and pediatric specialty hospital, families depend on and trust Kapiolani for the world-class and heartfelt care it provides 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This includes the emergency department, which is the only specialized pediatric ED in Hawaii and the Pacific. Kapiolani’s experienced emergency medicine physicians and teams were involved in nearly 50,000 emergency visits in 2023. Kapiolani’s ED sees everything from bumps, bruises and broken bones to acute respiratory, trauma and critical care needs.

In a state separated by water, Kapiolani’s Neonatal Pediatric Critical Care Transport Team is ready to bring keiki who need help from every



island to Kapiolani, or take them to and from the mainland when necessary. Traveling can be very stressful for medically fragile kids. The specially trained nurses and respiratory therapists ensure lifesaving care continues while on the road or in the air for about 450 children and babies every year.

Kapiolani is also continuously working to bring in the latest technology and treatments so patients can receive it in Hawaii. The recent Mitsui Family Heart Center includes Hawaii’s first pediatric cardiac catheterization laboratory that allows Kapiolani’s medical teams to perform critical heart procedures for children who are born with congenital heart defects.

“Our community has entrusted us with their care. Our nurses are dedicated to making a difference in people’s lives,” Kanemori says.

Everyone from nurses to physicians, psychologists to child life specialists and dietitians share the same focus that drove Queen Kapiolani more than a century ago — to provide the best care for Hawaii’s women and kids.



## TERESA BRINK-WONG, RN

*A Sweeter Choice program, which works with high-risk pregnant women to help reduce gestational and pre-gestational diabetes*

### How long have you been a nurse?

For 45 years. I have worked in many Kapiolani units, including the nursery, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), pediatric ICU, pediatric ambulatory care unit and more before joining A Sweeter Choice.

### What do you love most about being a nurse?

Both my granddads were doctors, my mom is a retired nurse and my daughter, who was born at Kapiolani, is now also a nurse. My favorite part of being a nurse are the friendships I have developed over the years. Several nurses are like family, the physicians and staff in the Fetal Diagnostic Center are great, and I have learned so much from the patients I have met and worked with during their time at A Sweeter Choice.



PALI MOMI MEDICAL CENTER

# TAKING CARE OF YOU LIKE FAMILY

When families in Central and West Oahu need medical care, Pali Momi Medical Center is there for them.

The medical center's legacy of care began when young physician Dr. Joseph "Joe" Nishimoto opened his practice in Pearl City in 1957. He envisioned a state-of-the-art hospital where people could seek the care they needed close to home. Since Pali Momi opened its doors in 1989, nurses have been an integral part of the patient experience.

"Nurses make up the foundation of our team at Pali Momi Medical Center. Their dedication, compassion and care for our patients and community continues to inspire and humble me," says Robyn Kalahiki, Pali Momi's vice president of patient services and chief nurse executive. "Even during the most challenging times, our nurses provide high-quality care while working closely together to ensure the well-being of patients. They are steadfast and selfless in their mission to promote health, provide emotional support and alleviate suffering."

Almost 40% of the registered nurses at Pali Momi have been working directly with patients and their families for 10 years or more. That level of commitment to their community is reflected in the many accolades given to Pali Momi. It received Healthgrades' Outstanding Patient Experience award for six years in a row. This places Pali Momi among the top 15% of hospitals nationwide for patient experience, which is a testament to the team's amazing nursing care and customer service.

"Our nursing staff continues to provide award-winning, patient-centered care at every touch point, sincerely treating each patient like a member of their family," Kalahiki says.

Nurses efficiently and empathetically assist patients through their



medical journey, which can involve services and programs that can only be found in Central and West Oahu at Pali Momi. This includes the region's only Interventional Cardiac Catheterization Unit as well as comprehensive cancer care and women's centers.

"We are so proud to honor our nurses for all that they do," Kalahiki says. "Nursing is not for the faint of heart. It requires a special someone to answer the calling. At Pali Momi, we are proud to say that our nurses are the best and we are so grateful for all they do every day!"



## CHRISTOPHER WATKINS, RN

*Pali Momi Medical Center  
Resource Team  
Nurse for 27 years*

### What is your favorite thing about being a nurse?

As a nurse, I'm in the ultimate position to pay it forward. I deeply value the idea of karma. I always want to do the right thing for my community. When I put my scrubs on, slip my stethoscope around my neck and join forces with my fabulous team of co-workers, I feel like a superhero who is ready to assist people through what is sometimes the most difficult time of their lives.

# A CENTURY OF COMPASSIONATE CARE

**S**traub Benioff Medical Center has been setting the standard for medical care in Hawaii since 1921. That is when renowned physician Dr. George F. Straub opened “The Clinic” with a vision to provide top-quality, convenient, patient-centered and specialized care for the whole family under one roof.

Today, that patient-centered care means primary care physicians, specialists, clinic and hospital nurses, clinicians and staff work together to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time, in the right place.

From the beginning, nurses have been a key part of upholding Straub Benioff’s legacy of outstanding patient care and

servicing the community.

“Straub Benioff nurses embody a unique blend of expertise and compassion that sets them apart,” says Andrew Moats, Straub Benioff vice president of patient services and chief nurse executive. “They continuously engage in innovative practices and utilize cutting-edge technology. This ensures that they are equipped with the latest tools and techniques so they can provide top-tier care.”

Their commitment is reflected in Straub Benioff’s recent national awards. Healthgrades has recognized Straub Benioff with the Outstanding Patient Experience Award for 14 years. In 2022, the medical center was named one of Amer-

ica’s 250 Best Hospitals, placing it in the top 5% of nearly 4,500 hospitals assessed by Healthgrades. It was the third year in a row that Straub Benioff was the only medical center in Hawai’i to earn this distinction.

“Our nurses are dedicated to giving each patient top-quality care. From offering emotional support during challenging times to customizing treatment plans, Straub Benioff nurses ensure that every interaction is characterized by compassion, understanding and respect,” Moats says. “Their dedication to providing personalized care not only enhances patient outcomes but also fosters lasting connections built on trust and mutual respect.”



**TARA VAUGHN, RN**

*Nurse educator  
at Straub Benioff  
Medical Center  
Nurse for 15 years*

## **What do you love most about your job?**

I find great joy in sharing knowledge and experiences with others and helping them grow in their careers. Additionally, being able to provide patients and their families with a better experience during difficult times is incredibly fulfilling. Being able to offer support, comfort, and guidance brings a sense of purpose and satisfaction to my role as a nurse.

WILCOX HEALTH

# CARING FOR OUR ISLAND COMMUNITY

**F**ounded in 1938, Wilcox Medical Center is a not-for-profit organization offering state-of-the-art facilities for families across the island. Today, Wilcox Health comprises Wilcox Medical Center and Kauai Medical Clinic, but the focus remains the same as it was more than 85 years ago — to provide quality care for its community.

Wilcox is the largest medical center on Kauai, offering more than 30 specialties and programs. Its 18-bed emergency department serves as the island's primary stroke center. Wilcox is the only Level III Trauma Center on Kauai and the first neighbor island medical center to earn that designation.

Kauai Medical Clinic is the island's largest multispecialty medical group, offering primary and specialty care at clinics in

Eleele, Kapaa, Koloa and Lihue, and an urgent care clinic in Lihue.

At every location, patients receive excellent health care with a personal touch through its caring staff.

“Wilcox Health has such an incredible team of nurses and I am so blessed to work alongside them,” says Darla Sabry, vice president of patient services and chief nurse executive for Wilcox. Sabry began her career as a nurse in intensive care units and knows the challenges



and joys that come with the job.

“Kauai is a close-knit community where everyone treats and cares for each other like family, and we take this same approach to patient care,” Sabry adds. “Our nurses at Wilcox Medical Center and Kauai Medical Clinic represent our island. They are dedicated, innovative, compassionate and resilient in finding ways to provide exceptional care every day for patients and for each other.”

That passion for people can be felt throughout the system from those working in the medical center, the clinics in the community and Kauai Urgent Care.

“Our nurses get to know everything about their patients,” Sabry continues. “They hold their hands, act as sounding boards through difficult times, teach patients and their families how to care for themselves when they return home, and encourage and cheer them throughout their health care journey. They are partners in creating a healthier Hawaii.”



## MARY TAIARIAL, RN

*Intensive Care Unit*

### **How long have you been a nurse?**

15 years. I was born and raised on Kauai, earned my nursing degree in Oregon, then worked as a nurse in Oregon and California before returning home.

### **What is your favorite thing about being a nurse?**

Being able to provide a sense of comfort and peace for patients in situations that can be uncertain and challenging. It has been so gratifying to utilize my education and experience to care for the community that cared for me growing up.