

FOCUS ON FIRST STATE NURSING INNOVATION

Advancing Nurse Wellbeing Through Innovation: Inside ChristianaCare's New Wellbeing Steer and Council

Stacy Noel MSN, FNP-BC, HWNC-BC, HTCP/I, Jana N. Dean, MSN, RN, CCRN, Kathryn Godfrey, PhD, Jessica Belmar, MSN, RN, CCRN

At ChristianaCare, nurse wellbeing is more than an initiative—it's a strategic priority. Recognizing that a thriving nursing workforce is essential for delivering exceptional care, two innovative structures were launched in 2025: the Nurse Wellbeing Council and the Nursing Wellbeing Steer. In collaboration with the Center for WorkLife Wellbeing, these workgroups provide opportunities for clinical nurses and nurse leaders to come together to focus on wellbeing. Together, these groups are shaping a culture that prioritizes wellbeing, professional fulfillment, and systemic change.

The Nurse Wellbeing Council: Elevating the Voice of Nursing

Established in January 2025, the Nurse Wellbeing Council is a multidisciplinary team inclusive of clinical nurses, nurse managers, advanced practice nurses, and unlicensed assistive personnel. During each monthly meeting, the council ensures that initiatives reflect real-world challenges and solutions related to wellbeing. The council defines wellbeing as:

"The balance of mind, body, and spirit, fostering joy, peace, and a sense of belonging. It empowers caregivers to cope with challenges, experience safety, and thrive within an inclusive community." Goals and Focus Areas of the Nurse Wellbeing Council:

- **Mental Health & Emotional Resilience**
Provide practical tools and resources to help nurses manage stress, build resilience, and prevent burnout.
- **Physical Wellbeing**

Create healthy work environments and promoting access to fitness and nutrition resources that support energy, vitality, and overall physical health.

- **Professional Fulfillment**

Foster a culture of recognition, autonomy, and growth opportunities to enhance job satisfaction and career development.

In January 2026, we will launch an exciting initiative: the Three Good Things (3GT) huddle pilot in 11 nursing units and areas. This evidence-based practice encourages nurses to share positive experiences during shift huddles—a simple habit proven to reduce stress and foster gratitude. As a newly formed council, the Nurse Wellbeing Council is excited to continue to shape their vision—establishing meaningful goals and initiatives; fostering collaboration with departments, leaders, and nurses; and making a lasting difference in the wellbeing of all our nurses. Council work is communicated in a virtual monthly "NURSE Newsletter" and quarterly to all practice council chairs and facilitators across the organization.

Nursing Wellbeing Steer: Driving System-Level Change

Introduced in September 2025, the Nursing Wellbeing Steer focuses on organizational strategies to enhance the work environment. This cross-functional committee includes senior organizational leadership, nursing leaders, clinical nurses, wellbeing experts, and human resources employees. The Nurse Wellbeing Steer's mission is to

address burnout and promote professional fulfillment through organizational changes in policies, procedures, culture, leadership, and operations.

To maintain momentum and foster collaboration, the Nursing Wellbeing Steer meets twice a month. These meetings focus on discussing identified gaps, recognizing organizational strengths, and reviewing best practices in literature. This cadence ensures the team remains aligned, informed, and proactive in developing strategies that support nurse wellbeing and professional fulfillment.

Recognizing the importance of clear and consistent communication, the Steer has established a Communications Subcommittee. This group is dedicated to maintaining transparency and engagement across the organization by sharing updates, highlighting progress, and ensuring nurses feel informed and involved. The subcommittee plays a vital role in reinforcing the initiative's goals and celebrating successes, helping to build trust and enthusiasm among nursing caregivers.

Why It Matters

Both the Nurse Wellbeing Council and the Nurse Wellbeing Steer represent a shift from reactive to proactive strategies. By combining clinical nurse insights with system-level action, ChristianaCare is creating sustainable solutions that empower nurses to thrive personally and professionally. When nurses flourish, patient care improves—and that's the ultimate goal. ■