



# Bloom Where You Are Planted: The Heart and Hope of Oklahoma Nurses

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Every spring, Oklahoma awakens in radiant color. After the quiet stillness of winter, wildflowers push through the red earth—Indian blankets waving in the wind, black-eyed Susans lifting golden faces to the sun, and fields of bluebonnets paint vibrant strokes across our great state. These blooms don't wait for perfect conditions. They rise in the quietness of pastures, along dusty rural roads, and in pockets of soil that seem too rocky, too dry, or too overlooked. Yet they bloom anyway—bright, resilient, signs of life and hope.

Nurses, you reflect Oklahoma's living spring within healthcare in our state.

In acute care settings, you are the steady heartbeat of healing. You stand at the bedside through midnight crises, offering calm competence when families are shaken to their core. You are the first to notice the subtle change in a patient's breathing, the quiet advocate who ensures a worried mother's questions are answered. Like a single bloom budding as a promise of life and hope amidst a stark hospital setting, your mere presence turns sterile rooms into spaces of hope.

In academic settings, you nurture the seeds that become our nurses of tomorrow. You pour knowledge into the next generation, guiding nervous students through their first injections and toughest ethical dilemmas. You model compassion alongside clinical excellence, reminding every future nurse that healing is both an art and a science. Your influence doesn't end at graduation; it ripples outward like wildflower seeds carried across an urban garden or rural prairie.

In community settings and rural-town clinics, you bloom with quiet power. You may be the only healthcare provider some families see for miles. You deliver care and witness stories that no chart could ever

capture. Even when resources are thin and the needs feel endless, you show up. You bloom brightly—alone, yet never insignificant—because one caring nurse can change the trajectory of an entire community.

And when we come together, the beauty and impact are significant.

Picture the fields of wildflowers that stretch across Oklahoma's landscape each April and May—a tapestry of color so vivid it leaves a lasting impact. This is the profession of nursing: interdisciplinary teams in hospitals, faculty and students locking arms with community partners, bedside nurses collaborating with public health leaders. Together we create something greater than any one of us could alone. We are the vibrant garden that covers the state—red, gold, blue, and purple—signaling to every Oklahoman that we are vibrant and significant and that we will advocate for the health of all Oklahomans.

As the most trusted profession in America, we carry something sacred. Gallup polls have named nurses the most trusted for more than two decades, and in Oklahoma that trust runs especially deep. Patients confide in us what they tell no one else. Families lean on us when fear is palpable. Communities look to us for guidance through public health challenges. This trust is not a badge to wear lightly—it is a responsibility to cherish and a privilege to protect. Every act of kindness, every extra moment spent explaining a diagnosis, every time we choose empathy over exhaustion, we honor that sacred bond.

Yet even the hardiest wildflower cannot bloom without care.

Oklahoma nurses, this is your gentle reminder: you must tend to your own roots first. Just as flowers need sunlight, rainwater, and restful soil to thrive, you

need self-care, balance, and renewal. Take your breaks. Schedule that therapy appointment. Go for a walk on your day off. Say no when your cup is empty so you can say yes with a full heart tomorrow. Sleep. Laugh with your family. Rest, reflect, and remember why you answered this calling. When you care for yourself first, you don't diminish the care you give others—you multiply it. A well-tended nurse becomes an unstoppable force of healing for patients, clients, families, friends, and even strangers who cross our paths.

Oklahoma needs you blooming—brightly, boldly, and beautifully. Whether you stand alone in a rural clinic or stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a large acute care hospital, you and your impact are incredibly significant. Thank you for blooming brightly! ■