



Medicine Specialties Nursing

A Rewarding Place to Start... A Wonderful Place to Stay...

A Medicine Specialties Career



“The more you give, the more you get back.”

Robin Bawden, Clinical Nurse II in Medicine Specialties at UNC Hospitals, has always known she wanted to be at the bedside with her patients.

She first realized this as a teen, when she worked as a Candy Stripper at Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro where she grew up and, later, at a camp for children with Muscular Dystrophy – offering daily doses of care, enthusiasm and encouragement to a camper, one-on-one. “My first camper was a nine-year-old boy,” says Robin, “and I took him home with me to visit so that he could have the experience of a family other than his own.”

When she received a nursing scholarship from the Wesley Long Women’s Auxiliary, she used it to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing. Graduating in 1984 she took the Med-Surg, or Medicine Specialties, track in the Nurse Extern Program at Moses Cone, knowing that this would provide her close association with patients and good general experience that would always benefit her, no matter what specialty area she might decide to pursue later.

After her marriage in 1986, she moved to her husband’s hometown of Chapel Hill and found her perfect career match – in Medicine Specialties at UNC Hospitals, which includes Renal, Gastrointestinal (GI) and Family Medicine. “UNC Hospitals is such a great place to learn. The environment promotes teaching and collaboration among nurses and physicians and other specialties. It is a team effort. I also enjoy working with new nurses. They graduate from school with more clinical and practical experience than ever before and are a huge asset to our workplace.”

When her first child was born, Robin signed on with “the weekend plan” – working only on the night shifts on weekends. That was 14 and a half years ago. “There are four of us who work every weekend,” she says, “You always know they’ll be there for you.” Robin and her husband now have two children, 14 and 12, and have had no childcare or teacher workday challenges to contend with. To Robin, this is the best of both worlds – a perfect balance between work and family.

In Medicine Specialties, she works with a “good mix of all kinds of patients.” Last year one of the patients in GI was her husband. After his colon was removed, she gained firsthand knowledge of the process experience and the impact on lives that some of her patients were also going through.

This experience was put to good use one month later, when Robin was specially assigned to a young man about her husband’s age who had had the same diagnosis. “I was able to relate to him and to talk to his wife on the phone and then bring my husband to the hospital to show them in person a positive outcome.”

Robin summarizes her career path best: “I see patients that I’ve known for the 17 years that I’ve been at UNC Hospitals and others that are new to me. I truly feel that it is an honor and a privilege to care for these patients. I hope I make a difference – giving them some comfort and the best nursing care that I can give. I find my satisfaction at the bedside – talking, touching, helping – that is my reward.”

Choosing a career in medicine specialties nursing means that you have chosen to care about people.

You will be the closest professional to your patient’s care and their strongest advocate. You’ll learn the real world of nursing in a way that can make you a better person, because you see first-hand the needs of those around you, and you choose to help. You will be part of the solution.

“Medicine specialties service is challenging, creative and stimulating,” says Priscilla Merryman, RN, MSN, MBA, Clinical Director of Medicine Specialties at UNC Hospitals. “Our nurses are vital members of the interdisciplinary health care team, and have the decision-making autonomy to participate fully in managing patient care.”

Because of the diversity of medical problems and patient care needs within the medical service, there are opportunities for nurses to gain a wide array of professional experiences. At UNC Hospitals, there are multiple specialty units within the service, ranging from six to 28 beds, including:

- **Renal, Gastrointestinal and Family Practice**
Excellent learning opportunities for new nurses and fast-paced challenges for experienced nurses to work shoulder-to-shoulder with an experienced nursing staff.
- **Pulmonary and Infectious Diseases**
Patients that are HIV positive, have respiratory diseases, as well as adults with cystic fibrosis. At UNC Hospitals, approximately 50% of the staff in this unit have five years or more experience on the unit.
- **Gerontology**
Equipped to meet the needs of the general medicine and geriatric population, including physical therapy and occupational therapy, private counseling areas as well as arts and crafts for diversion therapy.
- **Respiratory ICU**
Specialists in pulmonary care for patients with a variety of pulmonary diseases and medical diagnoses. A team approach provides opportunities for nurses to grow in skills and abilities.
- **Medicine ICU**
For critically-ill patients with a wide range of medical and pulmonary diagnoses. Nurses provide quality, compassionate care in a supportive setting.
- **Medicine Step-Down**
An intermediate care unit providing a slightly lower level of care than an intensive care unit. This provides the opportunity to learn essential nursing skills, while learning the basics of critical care nursing for a variety of medical diagnoses. Patients are accepted from oncology, renal, gastrointestinal, family practice and pulmonary services.
- **IV Therapy**
Provides specialized care in the assessment of venous access requirements and timely placement of appropriate vascular devices using state-of-the-art means, in both adults and children.

EDUCATION

Registered nurses must graduate from a state-approved school of nursing and pass a national licensing exam. Entry-level nurses may earn bachelor’s degrees, offered by four-year colleges and universities; associate degrees that are offered by community colleges (and take about two years); or diplomas that are offered by hospital-based programs.

SKILLS REQUIRED

A strong background in mathematics and science, critical thinking, problem solving and leadership skills, resource management, strong interpersonal and communication skills, and flexibility.

RECOMMENDED HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

- Math (three courses in math – algebra I, algebra II, and geometry or a higher level math course)
- Science (three science courses – one biological science, one physical science and one lab course)
- English (four English units)
- Social Studies (two units – at least one U.S. History)
- Foreign Language (two years, Spanish preferred)

FINANCIAL AID

A variety of grants, scholarships, loans and work/study programs are available for college students. North Carolina has two state-funded financial assistance programs, especially for nursing students. One is the Nurse Scholars Program, which is a scholarship-based grant program and the other is the Nurse Education Scholarship Loan Program, which is based on

financial need. To learn more about both options, visit the N.C.



State Education Assistance Authority web site (www.ncseaa.edu) and click on nursing programs.

UNC-CHAPEL HILL SCHOOL OF NURSING

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing is a state-approved school of nursing and has been the leader in nursing education in North Carolina throughout its history. Established in 1950, the School is renowned for its academic programs, its research and commitment to clinical and community service within state, national and global communities. Programs include:

- Traditional Bachelor of Science (BS) in nursing
- Accelerated BS in nursing option for individuals who already hold baccalaureate degrees in non-nursing fields
- RN-BSN option for associate degree and diploma program graduates
- Carolina Online: RN to BSN option offered totally online
- RN-Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN)
- MSN degree in a variety of advanced practice nursing and health care systems specialties
- Post-MSN options in advanced practice specialties
- PhD program in nursing science
- Pre- and post-doctoral fellowships

RANKINGS

UNC School of Nursing ranks 5th in the nation among nursing school programs in annual research funding from the National Institutes of Health; 5th among 200 U.S. nursing school graduate programs by U.S. News and World Report, and 9th among 647 U.S. nursing baccalaureate programs by a Nursing Deans/Leader’s Survey published in Nurse Educator.

FROM NURSING SCHOOL TO NURSING CAREER

When the time comes, the Graduate Nursing Residency Program at UNC Hospitals trains you for the new job you’re about to begin.

“Pathways to the Future” is the multi-phased residency program for nurses new to medicine specialties. It will guide you through your first few months and first year of nursing at UNC Hospitals, offering orientations, collaborative and independent preceptorships, monthly continuing education and peer gatherings, and a staff of expert, caring, and knowledgeable teachers and mentors.

Along the way, you’ll learn practical solutions to dilemmas new nurses face, and gain self-confidence as you move from novice to seasoned caregiver.

FINANCIAL AID FOR GRADUATING SENIOR NURSING STUDENTS

UNC School of Nursing also offers a Graduating Senior Scholarship Program for Senior nursing students. A tiered scholarship program is awarded to the earliest qualifying candidates. This program provides loans forgiven through work commitment (you choose the level of commitment and funding). Call for details on how to apply! Want to know more? Visit www.unc.edu/dept/nursing or call 919-966-4260. UNC Chapel Hill School of Nursing, Office of Admissions, CB 7460, Carrington Hall, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7460.

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If you would like to make a statement about your business’ commitment to education, call Sheila Gould at 829-4639 or email sgould@newsobserver.com



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