

## **2020 Rising Star in Clinical Practice Award**

**Sarah Walker, RN BSN CCRN**

**Nominated by Susan Fowler**



### **Commitment to neuroscience nursing as evidenced by 1) membership and contribution to AANN and 2) high standard of practice and professionalism**

X is working with a past president of AANN and a recent BOD member in starting a chapter of AANN in the area, collaborating with neuroscience nurses from another hospital system. She has expressed interest in being a chapter leader. Although new to AANN, she is a committed neuroscience nurse.

Within two years of practicing as a bedside critical care nurse, X has become a certified Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN). She is also in the process of studying for her Certified Neuroscience Registered Nurse (CNRN) certification.

As a full time critical care neurosurgical nurse, it is evident that this individual has a passion for leadership and evidence-based practice/research. In her Neurosurgical ICU unit, she is the Co-chair of her Unit Nurse Practice Council. This individual is also currently working on a unit project to decrease ICU delirium in patients who suffer from aneurysmal subarachnoid hemorrhages. She also attends monthly neuro triads where she contributes to improving patient care and policy. Additionally, she serves as a co-investigator on a research project that is researching the sleep stages in aneurysmal subarachnoid hemorrhage patients during critical and acute care. She embraces the leadership role with organization, thoroughness, respect, and enthusiasm.

### **Knowledge of neuroscience and neuroscience patient**

From the start of her nursing career, she has been a high performer. From starting as a new nurse in the neurosurgical intensive care unit (ICU) environment to now being a

preceptor to nurses on her unit. For example, X demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of cerebral hemodynamics in the care of aneurysm and subarachnoid patients, eloquently managing prevention and treatment of increased intracranial pressure. Recently, she was able to attend the national critical care conference and soak in as much neuro critical care as she could. She subsequently has shared her learning with others at the unit practice council. X is a true team player, who seeks to grow herself as well as her colleagues.

Outside of performance and aptitude, this individual holds a high degree of compassion for the patients and families that she cares for. Being an neuro critical care nurse requires patience and the ability to clearly communicate to patients and families through their difficult and vulnerable moments. From her continued education and personal development, she provides education and support to patients and families. Her tone is comforting as well as her smile and sense of humor.

Neuroscience knowledge, advocacy, and the nursing process are demonstrated in the following example. A young woman from Italy was visiting our city on her honeymoon. She sustained a cerebellar hemorrhage. Early in her admission, she was able to maintain her mentation but, unfortunately, several hours after being admitted to the ICU, she began to decline, displaying clinical signs of herniation (bradycardia, hypertension, and bradypnea). Although she maintained a Glasgow Coma Score of 13 to 14, X recognized that subtle clinical changes were indicative of a possible life threatening situation. X quickly communicated her findings to Neurosurgery and the critical care team. Despite the use of medical treatment to prevent herniation, the young woman continued to decline. Within a few short hours, the neurosurgery team decided it would benefit the patient to undergo an emergent craniotomy with evacuation of the hematoma. X exemplified a competent, caring nurse who used knowledge of evidence-based practice, astute assessment skills, and collaborative decision-making. Her contribution to care resulted in an excellent outcome for this Italian woman who was able to return to her home country with her husband in just a few weeks.

In another instance, X, was able to bring harmony and understanding between a patient, the patient's family member, and the neurosurgical nursing team. Prior to X beginning her shift, there had been miscommunication amongst the patient's family and the associated nursing team, in regards to the patient's condition. The patient had undergone a ventriculoperitoneal shunt placement and due to difficulty with a complicated airway, the patient remained intubated post-operatively. The patient had a baseline history of a Chiari malformation and deafness. X was able to bring her clinical knowledge and compassion to the situation from the start of her shift. X communicated effectively, using a certified sign language video interpreter. By the end of the shift, not only were the family members at peace through their gained understanding, the patient remained calm and alert, and was successfully extubated. The patient and the family were both very thankful, and so was X! X eloquently demonstrated the art and science of nursing.

### **Recognition by peers/supervisor as a rising star**

A rising star is a person that is growing quickly in a particular field. As a nurse with only two years of experience X has grown professionally and personally, as demonstrated by her certification, continuing education, and unit leadership. According to her supervisor, 'X is amazing!' She is described as energetic, engaged, and upbeat. X is serving as a preceptor and her supervisor notes that she is positive and nurturing. Our team members send Kudos to other team members. X has received many for your helpfulness, teamwork, and mindfulness. X exemplifies what it means to be true team member, giving unselfishly with her time, knowledge, and skill. X has risen to a competent neuroscience critical care nurse!