

Shared Governance — *Autonomy, Empowerment, Collaboration*

The Collaborative Governance Council (CGC) empowers nurses to actively contribute in organizational decision-making, collaboration and leadership development. This shared leadership structure is designed to cultivate horizontal and vertical communication, inspire nursing excellence and promote autonomy and accountability among nurses throughout the organization.

In October 2019, Jennifer Bayer, MSN, RN, clinical nurse educator, was chosen as the chair of the newly formed CGC, and Melissa Ratzmer, BSN, RN, was chosen as co-chair.

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

— This quote by Henry Ford captures the essence of the first two years of the CGC.

From the Desk of Jen Bayer

As chair of the Collaborative Governance Council (CGC), with the support of nursing leadership, Melissa and I worked to engage, empower and honor the voice of the clinical nurses. We championed a culture of professional practice focused on evidence-based care and strong patient outcomes. Through the CGC structure, nurses were encouraged to strive for nursing excellence as professionals within the areas they practice and impact patient care delivery across the enterprise.

We promoted collaboration among nurses and across all disciplines to improve the health and well-being of the patients we serve. The CGC model empowered Melissa and me to provide direction, support and topics for dissemination to the appropriate Divisional Nursing Councils for action and change. Divisional Nursing Councils were empowered to make changes and develop and update standards of care and policies. As a collective team, we identified opportunities that influence nursing practice and made changes.

For me, it was a privilege to chair the CGC and partner with Melissa, nursing leadership, nursing educators and clinical nurses to successfully demonstrate “come together, keep together and work together” to advance nursing practice.

This leads to positive patient outcomes and supports an environment of vertical and horizontal communication to address nursing practice and create positive change.

The past two years have been a great opportunity for my own personal and professional growth, navigating a period of change and resilience as the nursing profession has been challenged with COVID-19 in ways no one ever could have expected. Despite these challenges, the voice and spirit of the clinical nurse remained strong during CGC meetings. Clinical nurses continued to come together to influence and improve nursing practice, with nursing leadership's support. I believe the CGC made a difference and have no doubt the CGC will continue to impact nursing practice in the future. I feel privileged to have led the CGC, fostering engagement within nursing practice and the exceptional care we provide all our patients.



Jennifer Bayer, MSN, RN
Clinical Educator
Collaborative Governance Council Chair

