

Awards

Silver Beacon Award Shines on STICU, MICU and NSICU Staff

MUSC's Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU), Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit (NSICU) and Surgical Trauma Intensive Care Unit (STICU) were recognized with the silver-level Beacon Award for Excellence by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN). This nationally recognized award honors critical-care units for achieving high quality outcomes in patient care, practices and processes.

This is the third consecutive Beacon Award presented to STICU & NSICU since 2008 and second award for the MICU. MUSC is South Carolina's major tertiary care academic medical center, designated as a Level 1 by the American College of Surgeons, the only such designation in South Carolina.

Evidence demonstrates patients admitted to Beacon units are more likely to receive a high level of patient care, develop fewer complications and report a greater overall satisfaction of care, according to AACN. Nurses who work on these units also reportedly experience greater collaboration between health care teams, higher morale and lower staff turnover.

The award is presented in three categories – bronze, silver and gold. The application requires comprehensive documentation of each unit's profile, leadership structures and systems, staffing and staff engagement processes, communication, professional development and evidence-based practices and clinical outcomes. The designation is active for three years.

"The NSICU sets its standard of care at the highest possible level in order to mirror the mission of the organization and to contribute to the goals set by the service line using a multidisciplinary, evidence-based approach in our practice to improve patient outcomes while providing patient centered care," said NSICU Nurse Manager Cheryl Holderfield, MSN, RN, CCRN, CNRN, CNS. The NSICU was the first ICU in S.C. to be recognized with the Beacon Award in the fall of 2008, followed immediately by the STICU & MICU in early 2009.

The 17-bed STICU serves adult patients diagnosed with life-threatening traumatic injuries and patients who are post-surgical. The STICU staff was recognized for establishing systems and processes through using evidence-based practices and creative efforts to improve patient care. Working with unit-based councils and committees, the STICU staff established hand hygiene and ICU mobility programs as well as improved multidisciplinary collaboration. The unit continues to approach and exceed industry benchmarks.

STICU Nurse Manager Cindy Little, MBA, MSN, RN, CCRN, NE-BC, also emphasized the unit's concentrated plans to increase nurses with adult critical care nursing certifications. The team works together to increase evidence-based practices to reduce catheter-associated urinary tract infections and improve movement of patients to the operating room.

"I'm proud of our team's continued level of excellence. Most of the STICU nurses simply say, 'This is what we do every day.' Our STICU councils and ad hoc committees research best practice and incorporate it into our routine," said Little.

MICU Nurse Manager Janet Byrne, MSN, RN, feels this award signifies a commitment to excellence in her unit's daily practices. Since winning the award in 2009, MICU's interdisciplinary team has focused more on outcomes and streamlining practices that are evidence-based.

"We have a team of some of the most intelligent, well-trained and highly professional nurses in the U.S. They are intelligent, selfless individuals who are always striving to improve care," said Byrne.