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In Her Own Words: Megan Mundy Shares How She Became an Experienced Nurse at 'Nurse-Forward' UVA Health

by Megan Mundy, RN, BSN, CCRN, Inpatient Charge Nurse
Photos by Liza Wayland, RN, BSN, CCRN

After graduating from nursing school, I applied to jobs up and down the East Coast. The period right after nursing school was very stressful. I was sending out numerous resumes, anxiously waiting for interviews, and wondering where I might end up working. My first interview was in 2016 with **Barb Trotter, RN**, **BSN, CMSRN**, for a position on 3 West Acute Care at UVA Health. I was nervous, but I connected instantly with Barb and subsequently had a great interview with her. I was offered the position, and of course I accepted, thrilled to begin my nursing career at UVA Health!

'Even As a Newbie, I Felt I Had a Voice!'



As a new nurse straight out of nursing school, the supportive culture on 3 West worked well for me. Though I felt somewhat prepared for my new role, I knew it could take five years before I would be considered an experienced nurse. I was fortunate to have encouraging team members and managers, including **Scott Austin**, **BSN,RN**, Nurse Manager, and **Leigh Gauvilloff**, **MSN, RN, CMSRN**, now our Medical Director. They were invested in creating opportunities for me to excel and succeed. I also developed a great relationship with our Associate Chief Nursing Officer **Veronica Brill**, **MSN, RN, NEA-BC**, who has an open door policy. I knew I could always come to her with questions or concerns.

Even as a newbie, I felt I had a voice! I was 100 percent supported by nursing leadership, which was crucial in my development as a confident and competent acute care nurse. UVA Health cultivates a "nurse-forward" environment — a work culture with strong leaders invested in our growth as nurses, allowing us to reach our fullest potential. I learned to be an experienced nurse on 3 West, and the path to advancing my career as a charge nurse was forged on this unit.

From Surviving COVID-19 — to Becoming a Nurse Leader



I only had a year of experience in the Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU) before COVID-19 hit in 2020. I transferred there in January 2019 to broaden my skill set. Working as a nurse during the first year of the pandemic was terrifying. The nurses depended on each other much more deeply than usual. At the time, many patients were dying alone in their hospital rooms, unable to be with family members or friends. We would join our teammates in hospital rooms — playing music and sharing the caretaking of each other's patients. This terrible, tragic time highlighted the power of teamwork and how critical it was to be there for each other.

I am thankful I experienced COVID-19 while part of the UVA Health family. Looking back on my experience, I realize I never felt unsafe. We always had PPE [personal protective equipment] and N95 masks. We had good nurse-to-patient ratios, infection control coaches, and stringent COVID-19 protocols. I became a charge nurse in December 2020 — one of the worst periods of the pandemic. There was a surge, hospitals were full, and resources were stretched, but I was excited to move into my new role and ready to make a difference.

'Hallmark of a Great Working Environment'



From left, Megan Mundy; her first UVA School of Nursing capstone student, Maithili Mody; and Stephanie Gilbert, RN.

I've been heavily involved in precepting students from **UVA School of Nursing**, especially when I worked on 3 West. I've learned to collaborate with residents, fellows, and attendings during my tenure as a charge nurse. I've enjoyed acting as the mediator between providers and nursing staff. I've learned that excellent communication is a hallmark of a great working environment for staff and for patients. I've identified that many problems stem from poor or inconsistent communication.



From left: Sarah Kaplan, Megan Mundy, Kris Blackstone, and Jessica McVey.

As a charge nurse, I've cultivated my mediation skills. I enjoy being a go-between and fostering collaboration between nurses and providers. I now work with Nurse Managers **Sarah Kaplan, BSN, RN, CCRN**; **Kris Blackstone**, **MSN, MHA, RN, CCRN**; and **Jessica McVey, RN, BSN,** who have all had significant experience on the front lines. I look forward to continuing to serve my MICU patients and staff. I probably will never leave UVA Health unless I decide to return to school. I am impressed by how we all survived this challenging time and continue to have each other's backs. It gives me goosebumps. I am so grateful to be part of the UVA Health team!

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LOVE THIS SO MUCH! Megan you are such a rockstar 😁
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