

PeriOperative Services

PeriOp
Quality,
Safety,
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>>> Nineteen HUP PeriOp OR Nurses Played Role in Trial

First Uterus Transplant Delivers Baby



Jennifer and Drew Gobrecht admire their son, Benjamin Thomas Gobrecht, who was born in November 2019, at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Their baby is the first baby born at Penn that grew inside the first uterus transplanted as part of an organ transplant research trial.

The uterus transplant and the birth were performed in the ORs at HUP.

Jennifer and Drew Gobrecht and their 2-month-old baby boy were the stars of a national news conference January 9 held in the airy 5th floor atrium of Perelman South Tower where the world learned of a first for Penn Medicine.



Dr. Kathleen O'Neill, at the microphone, and a panel of experts who are invested in the Uterus Transplantation for Uterine Factor Infertility (UNTIL) trial, take turns at the podium to tell the national press about the milestone achieved at Penn with the birth following uterine transplant.

"Investigators at the Penn Transplant Institute have been able to demonstrate the potential for undergoing transplantation not just for saving lives, but for creating lives," said HUP CEO Regina Cunningham, who led off the press event, adding that a hospital-wide collaboration made it possible. "I would like to thank the Gobrecht family who are here with us today for trusting Penn with your care and helping you fulfill your dream of becoming parents."



A group of PeriOperative Services' nurses, who participated in the first and second uterine transplant surgeries at HUP, pose with two of the lead researchers following a national press conference January 9, 2020, to announce the first birth from the first uterus transplant for Penn Medicine. Left to right: Lidia Wilczynska, Dr. Paige Porrett, Taneka Curtis, Dr. Nawar Latif, Marisa Codi, Christina Garbarino, Caroline Annunziata, Dr. Kristen Burton, and Daniel Wilson.

Jennifer, who was born without a uterus, is the first patient at Penn to have a uterus transplanted. That transplantation led to the birth of a healthy baby in November.

Six of the PeriOperative Services' nurses who were along for the journey (in the OR with her during her transplant) and who participated in the two-year build up to this historic day were in the

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Students Explore Potential Careers in Perioperative Nursing

A group of eight seniors from Widener University School of Nursing will spend six Tuesdays their last semester, gaining clinical experience in Perioperative Nursing at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. The program is part of a new cooperative with Widener to give nursing students exposure to OR nursing, a specialty that is not offered in a typical four-year baccalaureate curriculum. The addition of this program run by two seasoned Periop nursing educators aims to create a new pipeline of potential future OR nurses.

Rose McGrath, Nursing Professional Development Specialist, and Joyce Stengel, PeriOp Coordinator Quality and Education, have in recent years expanded their roles and their educational outreach to local nursing schools to draw students to the specialty, in the hopes of widening the pool of candidates for future openings and funneling prospective nurses into the specialty.



Rose McGrath (right) Nursing Professional Development Specialist, and Joyce Stengel (left) PeriOp Coordinator Quality and Education, meet Tuesday, January 21, 2020, with the first four of eight Widener University nursing students who will gain clinical experience in Perioperative Nursing for six hours each Tuesday for six weeks. The pictured students, left to right, include: Sarah Black, Kelcey Stanton, Victoria Cocco, and Dominique Knox.

"Succession planning wasn't something ever discussed or thought about until a few years ago when we looked at the large numbers of people retiring," said McGrath, who onboards all new nurses through the PeriOp Gateway-to-Nursing Program. "Because undergraduate education in perioperative nursing is currently not a part of nursing curriculum, we think creating these opportunities for nursing students will help in our recruitment efforts."

Widener is the latest on their radar. But a few years ago they started hosting a week-long program twice a year (June and December) that gives Drexel University Accelerated Career Entry BSN students exposure to OR nursing. In addition, they developed a hybrid Perioperative I and II course that they teach to Drexel BSN students. And now, for the first time, they have enough interest that they expect those Drexel students to advance to a Perioperative III-level course.

"It's very exciting because we've never had enough interest to go forward to a second semester," McGrath said. "So just starting the third consecutive trimester is exciting."

Stengel said she thought they finally hit on

the right combination to keep the momentum building: "I'm sure a lot of the interest has spread by word of mouth. We've been pretty consistent in the last two years with the amount of students we have. They realize it is such an interesting experience for them. A lot of them who come into it say, 'I never realized this type of nursing existed.' They fall in love with it and then they want to work here in the operating room."

The training period for a PeriOp Nurse, because it is a specialty, is much more involved and lengthy. The Drexel students who finish the third trimester will earn a minor in Perioperative nursing because they have taken nine credits of a subspecialty. Those candidates, if hired to the Gateway program, will be on an accelerated track.

"A new nurse on the floor spends 12 weeks with a preceptor and they are good to go," McGrath said. "In the operating room, it is a minimum of seven months of training before they are good to go on their own."

McGrath and Stengel were recently asked by Widener Nursing leadership to create the curriculum, objectives and goals for a traditional perioperative class to be offered in the

fall.

"We are waiting to hear," Stengel said.

They have thought about expanding their focus to Villanova University School of Nursing next.

"We are just getting our feet in the door at Widener so one thing at a time," Stengel said. "Widener is all new. We really want to see how it goes. If it goes well, we will have a Widener student class and a Drexel class."

Whatever happens, McGrath and Stengel say they are happy to share their expertise with the next generation of Periop nurses:

"I have always liked orienting new nurses," McGrath said. "I like sharing the knowledge and my passion for the profession with them."

Stengel agreed: "It's exciting to bring our energy to those student nurses because they are so curious. When you bring them in and teach them something so new or show them something that they've never seen before it's just an exciting opportunity for them to learn."