

Nursing is often described as both an art and a science.



Lainie Ward, MBA, BSN, RN

I've spent my career leading nursing teams across health systems of all sizes. But I've never seen that idea brought to life as powerfully as I have in my time at Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA).

Following Nurse's Week, when we celebrated the extraordinary nurses that call CHA their health care home, I found myself reflecting on what truly sets our nurses apart. It's not just what they do—it's how they shape the patient experience.

Nursing is a science.

At CHA, nursing is grounded in discipline, expertise and accountability. Our nurses are highly skilled professionals who deliver care backed by evidence, training and constant measurement. Through national nursing quality benchmarking, we know our outcomes don't just look strong internally, they hold up against top-performing health systems across the country.

And we do this as a smaller system, where even a single event can shift data. That makes our performance even more meaningful. It reflects not only clinical competence, but a relentless commitment to improvement.

Nursing is an art.

Metrics and scorecards alone do not define the experience we create. Our nurses at CHA never lose sight of the human connection at the heart of care—and that is our superpower. They take the time to see the person behind the patient, build trust in the small moments and create an environment where people feel safe and known.

Care doesn't start inside hospital walls; it starts the moment a patient decides where they trust to go to receive care. And time and time again, patients choose CHA because of the compassion and connection they associate with our nurses. This doesn't happen by accident; it happens because our nurses are deeply connected to our mission.

How did we get here?

CHA is built strategically and intentionally, from services to infrastructure to culture. At CHA, culture doesn't exist behind the scenes, it shows up in every interaction.

At CHA, we built a culture like this by:

- Hiring people who are deeply aligned with our mission
- Modeling personal connection at the leadership level

- Embedding micro-behaviors into daily expectations that reinforce respect and safety
- Creating formal structures that ensure frontline voices are heard
- Aligning operations with what's best for patients

This is something we reinforce every day by how we lead, how we work and how we show up for our patients and one another.

I am incredibly proud of the nurses at CHA and what we've built together. Thank you for the way you bring both art and science to life for our patients and our community.

Lanie Ward, MBA, BSN, RN

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