

## Mildred Kowalski PhD, RN

Six years ago, the posting of a position at Morristown Medical Center (MMC) in a dedicated research department for the nursing staff caught the eye of Mildred Kowalski. With both clinical nursing experience and a PhD in Nursing Theory in Research from New York University, Milli was eager to join the team at MMC. At the time she was hired, she made a decision to also join the Women's Association (WAMMC), which she recognized as a long-standing organization that did wonderful work to benefit the Medical Center. Little did she realize that a few years later, her department would be designated as the Cause for WAMMC's 2017 Mansion in May. The Center for Nursing Innovation and Research at MMC opened the doors of their new facility in March, made possible by the \$1.5 million donation from WAMMC as a result of this very successful fundraiser.

Milli is excited as she shares news of the work the Center is already doing. Located at 95 Madison Avenue, this is a place where nurses can suggest, brainstorm, and research ideas that will increase the clinical bedside nurse's ability to provide the best current care for patients. A dedicated space, referred to as the "Innovation Station," will be used to teach research related topics, and to brainstorm and collaborate on new ideas with like-minded professionals.

We are all aware of the changes technology has brought to our lives. One example of an idea that began as collaboration in the Center is a new device used by nurses to measure wounds. The nurse can take pictures of the wound at exactly the same distance each day. The photos are added to the patient's file and the healing process is then documented in a precise way.

Another Center initiative grew from the trend that novice nurses get more classroom education with less time spent developing clinical skills. Thus, the Night Education Team was formed to provide support and help night nurses build confidence in emergency situations. Findings from this quality improvement initiative show an increase in confidence of night nurses.

An observed trend is the shorter length of hospital stays. Nurses are doing research to ensure that patients and caregivers receive the tools they need to stay healthy when discharged. Staying strong and healthy in mind and body is also important for the nurses themselves. A recently completed study supports the value of Jin Shin Jyutsu to reduce stress in nurses through this ancient art of gentle touch.

These are just a few examples of what is happening in the Center for Nursing Innovation and Research. Milli Kowalski has the perfect combination of expertise and enthusiasm to help build this Center into a renowned facility. As a Women's Association member, Milli and many of the MMC nurses volunteered at The Abbey during May of 2017. Milli enjoyed that experience and promises to be a volunteer at future Mansions. We are thrilled to have Milli as a WAMMC member and as the Nurse Researcher for the Center and advocate for nurses and patients at MMC.