# 2025 University of Houston-Downtown RN-BSN Newsletter

#### **UHD RN to BSN Program Earns 10-Year Accreditation from CCNE**

We are proud to announce that the University of Houston-Downtown 's RN to BSN Completion Program has been granted the maximum 10-year accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)-extending through June 30, 2035. This accreditation is effective as of November 18, 2024, the first day of our recent on-site evaluation.

This prestigious achievement reflects UHD 's unwavering commitment to excellence in nursing education. It is a testament to the strength of our program, the dedication of our faculty and staff, and the continued support of university leadership.

CCNE accreditation is a nationally recognized mark of quality, affirming that our program meets the highest standards in baccalaureate nursing education. It ensures our curriculum prepares graduates to meet the demands of modern healthcare with competence, confidence, and compassion.

As we celebrate this milestone, we also look forward to continuing our mission of developing highly qualified nursing professionals who are ready to serve and lead in a dynamic healthcare landscape.

Congratulations to the RN to BSN team and thank you to everyone across the university who played a role in this remarkable accomplishment!

## Partnership With Capital IDEA Houston to Financially Support UHD RN-BSN Students

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) RN-BSN program is thrilled to announce its partnership with Capital IDEA Houston, marking a significant milestone in expanding access to higher education for aspiring nurses. Through this collaboration, Capital IDEA Houston has selected UHD 's RN-BSN program as its first-ever supported Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) pathway. This initiative offers comprehensive financial support to qualified nursing students, including full tuition coverage and life support services such as parking reimbursement, textbook expenditure, childcare assistance, transportation stipends, and academic advising. By removing financial barriers, the program empowers students to fully dedicate themselves to advancing their education and careers in nursing. Currently, a total of 36 UHD nursing students have received funding from this program. Together, UHD and Capital IDEA Houston are paving the way for a stronger healthcare workforce-one that is better equipped to meet the growing needs of our communities.

### A New Home for the Nursing Education Resource Center: Expanding Our Vision for Clinical Excellence

The UHD RN to BSN Program is proud to announce that our Nursing Education Resource Center (NERC) is moving into a more permanent and purpose-driven space located in the One Main Building. 6th Floor, Room N605. This marks a significant step forward from our previous temporary home at the Willow Street Pump Station, as we continue to expand and enhance clinical learning opportunities for our nursing students. Work is actively underway, and we anticipate hosting a grand opening event in mid-to-late Fall 2025 to celebrate this exciting milestone.

The new NERC will serve as the foundation for our developing Clinical Simulation Lab, which will feature immersive environments designed to replicate real-world healthcare settings. These include simulations of community clinics, hospital units, long-term care facilities, and home health scenarios-offering students invaluable, hands-on opportunities to build and refine their clinical skills in realistic, supportive environments.



OMB N605 NURSING EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER (NERC)

Adding an artistic and interdisciplinary dimension to the space, we are thrilled to collaborate with Professor Beth Secor and her students from UHD 's Arts and Communications Department. Together, they will curate and install a series of large-scale murals showcasing themes in community health and the social determinants of health. These vibrant works will not only enhance the learning environment but also reflect the heart of our mission to prepare nurses who lead with compassion, knowledge, and cultural awareness.

We look forward to welcoming students, faculty, and community partners to this inspiring new space-one that blends clinical innovation with artistic expression and serves as a cornerstone of excellence for the UHD RN to BSN program.

# Spring 2025 Pinning Ceremony: Celebrating Spring 2025 UHD RN to BSN Graduates

UHD proudly congratulates the Spring 2025 RN-BSN graduates on reaching this significant milestone in their professional journey. These exceptional students have demonstrated commitment, resilience, and compassion throughout their academic experience-qualities that define the very best of the nursing profession.

This semester, we were honored to celebrate our graduates with the Nursing Pinning Ceremony, a meaningful tradition that marks the transition from student to professional nurse. More than just a symbol, the nursing pin represents a legacy of service, the values of nursing excellence, and a personal pledge to provide compassionate care to individuals, families, and communities. Receiving the nursing pin is both a celebration of academic achievement and a moment of reflection. It serves as a reminder of the knowledge gained, the lives impacted, and the vital role nurses play in promoting health and wellness.

We commend our graduates for their hard work and dedication. As they move forward in their careers, we know they will continue to uphold the highest standards of nursing and make a profound difference in the world around them. Congratulations, Spring 2025 RN-BSN Graduates-you make UHD proud!





## New Partnership with Texas Clinic Westview to Support Students ' Learning

UHD RN-BSN Program is proud to announce a new partnership with Texas Clinic Westview, a local addiction treatment center specializing in alcohol and opioid use disorders. This collaboration will provide nursing students with invaluable clinical experience in addressing substance use disorders, particularly opioid addiction, at a time when the opioid crisis continues to impact individuals, families, and communities across Houston and the nation.

Texas Clinic Westview employs a Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) model, integrating behavioral therapies with the expertise of physicians, nurses, technicians, and counselors. The clinic is accredited by the Joint Commission , the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Texas Department of State Health Services. An Affiliation Agreement is currently in progress to formalize this site as a clinical placement option for our students. Through this initiative, students will work alongside healthcare professionals to provide care, support, and education to individuals affected by substance use. They will gain hands-on experience in evidence-based treatment, harm reduction strategies, and community outreach-all while cultivating the empathy and clinical competence essential for addressing today 's most urgent public health challenges. This partnership underscores UHD 's commit ment to preparing nurses who are not only clinically proficient but also socially responsive and community focused. By engaging directly with those on the frontlines of the opioid epidemic, our students will actively contribute to improving health outcomes and advancing compassionate, equitable care throughout Houston.

## Thank You, Dr. Myra Michelle DeBose for Inspiring Our Future Nurses

UHD RN-BSN program extends its deepest gratitude to Dr. Myra Michelle DeBose, PhD, MSN, MSEd, CNEcl, for delivering an inspiring and thought-provoking address to our nursing students at our Fall 2024 Pinning Ceremony. Her powerful message provided a renewed vision of what it truly means to be a nurse and reminded us of the purpose and passion that fuel this noble profession.



Dr. DeBose 's four decades of leadership in nursing and nursing education brought depth and wisdom to her words, encouraging our future nurses to embrace their roles not just as clinicians, but as advocates, educators, and changemakers. Her insights into health disparities, community outreach, and the importance of culturally competent care left a lasting impression on our students, helping to shape their understanding of the nurse 's role in achieving equity and excellence in healthcare. As an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Education in the MSN program at Northwestern State University, Dr. DeBose continues to champion academic excellence and the development of future nurse scholars. Her ongoing research and leadership,

particularly her work in underserved communities and her recent participation in the AACN Diversity Leadership Institute and ELAN Fellowship, exemplify her commitment to advancing both nursing education and social justice.

We are grateful for Dr. DeBose 's presence, wisdom, and encouragement. Her visit reminded us of all of the sacred responsibility and opportunity that comes with the nursing profession. We look forward to building on the inspiration she shared as we continue to prepare the next generation of nursing leaders.

#### Honoring Compassion in Action: Thank You to Ms. Shea Peluso

The UHD RN to BSN Program extends its heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Shea Peluso, RN BSN, for serving as the distinguished speaker at our Spring 2025 Pinning Ceremony. Her words left a profound impact on our graduating class, reminding us all of the heart, humility, and humanity at the center of the nursing profession.

Ms. Peluso currently serves as a Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU) nurse at Memorial Hermann, where she provides expert critical care to patients recovering from complex procedures such as open-heart surgery and organ transplants. With over 11 years of nursing experience across diverse specialties-including urology, orthopedic trauma, trauma/surgical IMU, and anesthesia coordination-she exemplifies both clinical excellence and a steadfast commitment to patient care.

A graduate of the University of Texas Medical Branch, Ms. Peluso holds multiple certifications, including BLS, ACLS, Trauma Care Nursing, and Wound Treatment Associate (WTA). She is also a highly respected mentor and institutional leader, known for her involvement on various committees and for earning prestigious recognitions such as the Houston Good Samaritan Award and a DAISY Award nomination. What truly resonated with our students were Ms. Peluso 's reflections on the duty to be compassionate, present, and kind in the moments that matter most. Her presence at the ceremony reminded us that nursing is not just a career-it is a calling, one that demands both skill and heart. Her story is also personal to us. As a nurse who once cared for a loved one of our own faculty, Ms. Peluso offered not only clinical excellence but a grace and compassion that brought comfort during one of life 's most difficult moments. That level of impact is what we strive to teach, to model, and to inspire in our future nurses.

We are truly grateful for Ms. Peluso 's time, insight, and inspiration. Her message to our newest graduates echoed the very spirit of our program: lead with care, act with integrity, and never forget the power of presence. Thank you, Ms. Peluso, for reminding us what it truly means to be a nurse.



#### **Introducing Our Current Clinical Partnerships**

Currently, the UHD RN-BSN program utilizes two distinct and enriching clinical sites that offer diverse learning experiences: Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) Academy at Ryan Middle School and the University of Houston-Downtown Wellness & Success Center.

At BCM Academy at Ryan Middle School-an affiliate of the prestigious Baylor College of Medicine and the Houston Independent School District (HISD)-UHD nursing students serve as Nurse Coaches for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) members. They collaborate closely with the Magnet STEM Instructional Specialist from BCM during pre-briefing and debriefing sessions, enhancing the educational experience for both the middle school students and the UHD Nurse Coaches. These sessions cover a variety of health education topics such as food group identification, portion sizes, healthy eating habits, MyPlate guidelines, food tasting and critiquing, goal setting, and making health pledges. With 94% of the Ryan student population classified as minorities and 60% considered economically disadvantaged, this initiative plays a crucial role in promoting health equity and awareness. Additionally, UHD nursing students observe middle school teachers and STEM specialists, gaining valuable interprofessional experience that strengthens their skills in communication, leadership, behavior management, and adolescent health education. This collaboration not only supports the school community but also fosters professional growth and interdisciplinary teamwork.

Through these two community-based clinical experiences, students fulfill the requirements of the NURS 4595 Capstone course by identifying health priorities and challenges affecting each population. They then propose evidence-based, community-driven interventions during their final project presentations. These practicum opportunities ensure that UHD nursing students graduate with the critical thinking, clinical, and collaborative skills necessary to address complex healthcare needs across diverse community settings.

The second site, the UHD Wellness & Success Center, provides an innovative, on-campus environment focused on holistic health and wellness. Clinical practicum experiences here allow nursing students to deliver weekly educational sessions tailored to the interests of center participants, who comprise approximately 70% UHD students and 30% non-students. Topics have included nutrition, food insecurity, stress and time management, mental health (including stress and anxiety), sleep hygiene, and gym safety. In delivering these sessions, nursing students often collaborate with the UHD Fitness Coordinator, a certified fitness instructor, and a certified personal trainer. In addition to health education, nursing students assist Wellness Center staff in managing emergencies, including CPR and first aid, further enhancing their readiness to respond in real-world situations.

### UHD RN-BSN Partners with Student Health Services for First-Ever "Bring a Child to Work Day"

The UHD Nursing Program, in collaboration with the Student Health Services Center, proudly participated in the university 's first-ever "Bring a Child to Work Day" -an exciting and interactive event that brought families together and gave children a firsthand look into the professional world of nursing.

We welcomed a fantastic turnout of future Gators who accompanied their family members to campus for a day filled with fun, exploration, and learning. A highlight of the event was the opportunity for children to interact with Jimmy, our high-fidelity pediatric simulator. With guidance from our nursing faculty and health center staff-including Sandra Azekwoh, BSN, RN (a proud graduate of the UHD RN-BSN program), and Marlena Gonzales, Medical Assistant-the children learned how to listen to heart and lung sounds, sparking curiosity about the human body and the vital role of healthcare providers.

This meaningful collaboration offered many children their first glimpse into a healthcare setting and showcased the science, empathy, and problem-solving that define the nursing profession. It was a joy to see young minds inspired and engaged-perhaps even planting the seeds for future careers in healthcare.

For the first time ever, UHD 's future Gators had the chance to walk in your professional shoes, gaining an appreciation for the work their loved ones do each day. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this inaugural event such a memorable success!





#### UHD RN to BSN Program Participates in MD Anderson 's College Fair

The University of Houston-Downtown 's RN to BSN Program proudly participated in the MD Anderson College Fair on Tuesday, April 1, held at the Texas Medical Center 's Pickens Building. Sponsored as part of MD Anderson 's Employee Education Week, the fair provided an opportunity for healthcare professionals to explore advanced educational pathways in nursing, allied health, and other related fields. UHD 's presence at the event highlighted our commitment to supporting the educational and professional development of healthcare workers who are passionate about growing in their careers. Faculty and Staff from our nursing program were on hand to speak with MD Anderson employees interested in undergraduate and graduate nursing education, including registered nurses considering their BSN, as well as those exploring advanced practice nursing pathways. The fair brought together employees from various clinical and non-clinical areas, offering them the chance to learn more about flexible, affordable, and accredited programs like UHD 's RN to BSN, designed to meet the needs of working professionals.

We thank MD Anderson for the invitation to connect with their dedicated team and look forward to future collaborations that support the development of Houston 's healthcare workforce.

#### HD RN-BSN Program Strengthens Collaboration with Baylor College of Medicine Academy at Ryan Middle School



UHD RN-BSN Program continues to build impactful partnerships in the community through its ongoing collaboration with Baylor College of Medicine Academy at Ryan (BCMAR). This semester marked another exciting chapter as students enrolled in the Capstone course engaged directly with middle school students-and for the first time, their parents-on health promotion initiatives.

The Capstone course emphasizes collaborative care of patients, families, communities, and populations across the lifespan with complex healthcare needs. As part of the course, students apply knowledge from previous nursing coursework to develop and implement clinical projects that have real-world impact. This semester 's focus was particularly meaningful, as students extended their outreach beyond the middle schoolers to include their families. The inclusion of parents underscores the importance of whole-family engagement in health education, enhancing the potential for sustained healthy behaviors at home.

UHD nursing students also had the unique opportunity to collaborate with esteemed professionals such as Dr. Roberta H Anding, MS, RD/LD, CSSD, CDE, Assistant Professor of Corporate Programs, Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Beatriz Sweeney, a dedicated advocate for community health and longtime partner of our program. Their contributions helped bridge clinical knowledge with practical application, deepening the educational experience for both students and the community. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Klinger Casquete, Principal of BCMAR, whose visionary leadership continues to foster a rich learning environ ment. His commitment to preparing students for high school, university, and careers through an innovative health science program is instrumental to the success of this partnership.

This initiative is led by Dr. Tonye Cox-Miller, Associate Professor of Nursing at UHD, and Dr. Beatriz Perez-Sweeney, Assistant Professor (BCM). STEM Instructional Specialist of Baylor College of Medicine, whose leadership ensures these community collaborations remain meaningful and impactful.

We look forward to our continued work with Baylor College of Medicine Academy at Ryan as we prepare our future nurses to lead through education, compassion, and community engagement.



#### UHD RN to BSN Program Continues Valued Partnership with the Wellness and Success Center

The University of Houston-Downtown 's RN to BSN program is proud to continue its strong partnership with the UHD Wellness Center. This collaboration provides nursing students with opportunities to engage in wellnessfocused activities that enhance both their academic and clinical learning experiences.



We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Caleb Webb, Director of the Wellness Center, for his ongoing support and dedication. His commitment ensures that our students not only gain practical knowledge but also participate in meaningful, real-world initiatives that promote holistic health on campus.

Dr. Tonye Cox-Miller, Associate Professor and course faculty lead, plays a vital role in this experience by guiding and mentoring students throughout their participation. Her leadership and expertise help shape impactful learning that bridges classroom knowledge with community wellness practice. We look forward to continuing this impactful partnership and expanding opportunities that empower future nurses to promote wellness across diverse communities.

# Teaching Circle Activity Launched by Nursing Faculty to Enhance Teaching Pedagogy

In 2024, Dr. Ge, Dr. Durham, and Dr. Jose launched a teaching circle activity focused on incorporating inclusive teaching methods into NURS 4320: Community Care to enhance nursing students' cultural competence. Given the diverse patient populations that nurses serve, this initiative aimed to ensure that students develop the necessary skills to engage effectively with various communities. Without a strong foundation in inclusivity, nurses may struggle to establish trust, collaborate successfully, and provide equitable care, ultimately leading to poor patient outcomes. This Teaching Circle introduced case studies and structured group activities as key instructional strategies. Case studies helped students critically analyze real-world scenarios, applying weekly

course concepts to clinical situations. Structured group activities encouraged teamwork, collaboration, and communication, reinforcing the importance of inclusivity in patient care. By actively engaging in these exercises, students not only improved their critical thinking skills but also strengthened their ability to deliver culturally competent care, a fundamental expectation in nursing education and accreditation standards.

#### Introducing the 2025 Outstanding UHD RN-BSN Student Awardee

Jefferson Takara felt incredibly honored to be recognized as this year 's Outstanding RN-BSN Student. He was initially drawn to nursing by a desire to care for others during their most vulnerable moments, and that passion has only grown stronger throughout his career. His background includes experience in critical care and oncology nursing, where he has developed a strong commitment to providing compassionate, evidence-based care. During his time at UHD, he has maintained a 4.0 GPA and has been consistently named to the Dean 's List. One of the highlights of his academic experience was leading a community health project that focused on teaching middle school students about nutrition and healthy habits to promote long-term wellness. He is currently chemotherapy certified and working toward obtaining the OCN and PCCN certifications. Looking ahead, his goal is to return to

critical care and eventually become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). He is also passionate about mentoring new nurses and growing into leadership roles where he can support collaboration, learning, and professional development. He is incredibly grateful to the faculty and learning environment at UHD for supporting his growth and helping shape his path forward in nursing.



#### **UHD Nursing Community Launches on CampusGroups!**

We' re excited to announce that the UHD Nursing Program now has an official presence on CampusGroups-our platform to stay connected, engaged, and informed! Introducing "Gator Nurses on the Horizon" -the dedicated community space for all UHD nursing students, faculty, and supporters. This platform is your go-to hub where we will share: Academic and clinical resources, upcoming campus and nursing-related events, career and internship opportunities, program updates and announcements, opportunities to connect with peers and mentors. Stay in the know-anytime, anywhere! Simply scan the QR code to join and never miss out on what 's happening in our growing community of future nurse leaders. Let 's build, grow, and support each other-because Gator Nurses are on the horizon and ready to make an impact! https://uhd.campusgroups.com/GNH/club signup



#### Faculty Publications in 2024 and 2025

1. **Ge, S.,** Zhao, Q., Chen, H., Li, M., Zhang, Z., Qu, Z., ... & Standlee, C.R. (2024). Toxoplasma gondii seropositivity and cognitive functioning in older adults: an analysis of cross-sectional data of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2011 - 2014. BMJ open, 14(3), e071513.

2. **Ge, S.**, Dong, F., Tian, C., Yang, C.H., Liu, M., & Wei, J. (2024). Serum soluble alpha-klotho klotho and cognitive functioning in older adults aged 60 and 79: an analysis of cross-sectional data of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2011 to 2014. BMC geriatrics, 24(1), 1-9.

3. Li, C., Zhang, X., Zhuang, X., Zhang, K., Huang, Q., **Ge, S.**,... & Hu, R. The effectiveness of non - pharmacological interventions on reducing pain in patients undergoing bone marrow aspiration and biopsy: A systematic review and meta - analysis of randomized controlled trials. Journal of Clinical Nursing.

4. Liu, X., Fan, W., **Ge, S.**, Ma, L., Ping, Z., Zhang, Z., ... & Li, H. (2024). Relationship between benefit finding and volunteer motivation among nursing students: The mediating role of perceived social support. Nurse Education Today, 106193.

5. Nie, Z., Gao, S., **Ge, S.**, Jiang, Y., Liang, W., & Yang, R. (2024). Low adoption of mobility device in later life: Insights from the lens of intersectionality. Geriatric Nursing, 57, 140-146.

6. Xia, Q., Huang, Q., Li, J.. Xu, Y., **Ge, S.**, Zhang, X., Li, M., Yu, D., Tang, X., & Xia, Y. (2024). Evaluating the quality of home care in community health service centres: A machine learning approach. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 10.1111/jan.16234.

7. Zhang, Q., **Ge, S.**, Zhang, Z., Wang, W., Wang, S., Yoong, S. Q., ... & Mei, Y. (2024). The experience of mutual support during hospitalization of co-morbid couples with recurrent older stroke survivors-a descriptive phenomenological study. Geriatric Nursing, 59, 187-195.

8. Tian, C., **Ge**, **S.**, Ma, L., Xiao, Y., & Xu, F. (2024). Panoramic view of cognitive impairment: interdisciplinary cognitive research. Frontiers in Neuroscience, 18, 1453945.

9. Xia, Q., Zhou, T., Xu, H., **Ge, S.**, & Tang, X. (2024). The relationship between alcohol consumption and frailty among older adults in China: Results from the Chinese longitudinal healthy longevity survey. Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 35(5), 348 - 356.

10. Lu, M., Song, Y., Niu, Y., Liu, T., **Ge, S.**, Sun, Y., ... Yang, X. (2024). Effectiveness of virtual reality in the management of anxiety and pain peri-treatment for breast cancer: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Journal of Nursing Research, 32(4), e343.

11. Chen, H., Wang, Y., **Ge**, S., Li, W., Li, J., & Chen, W. (2024). The effects of major dietary patterns on patients with type 2 diabetes: protocol for a systematic review and network meta-analysis. Plos one, 19(6), e0306336

12. Wang, Y., Sun, H., Xu, S., Xia, Q., **Ge, S.**, Li, M., & Tang, X. (2024). Smart Home Technologies for Enhancing Independence of Living and Reducing Care Dependence in Older Adults: A Systematic Review. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 10.1111/jan.16569.

13. Song, W., Zhang, X., **Ge, S.**, Zhai, Q., Shan, Q., Li, X., ... & Zhang, Z. (2024). The Relationship Between Dyadic Coping and Mental Health in Stroke Survivors and Their Spouse Caregivers: An Actor-Partner Interdependence Model. Journal of Clinical Nursing.

14. Xu, L., Lin, X., Zhou, T., Liu, Y., & **Ge, S.** (2024). High Cotinine Levels as an Associated Factor with Frailty Status in Older Adults: Evidence from the NHANES Study. BMC Geriatrics, 24(1), 894.

15. Tang, X., Shen, D., Zhou, T., **Ge, S.**, Wu, X., Wang, A., ... & Xia, Y. (2024). Development of a Frailty Prediction Model among Older Adults in China: A Cross - Sectional Analysis Using the Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey. Nursing Open, 11 (11), e70070.

16. Xue, M., Wang, Q., Wang, J., Ge, S., Zhang, Z., & Mei, Y. E - health Literacy In Stroke Patients: Latent Profile Analysis And Influencing Factors. Journal of Advanced Nursing

17. Zhu, X., **Ge**, **S.**, Ma, W., Wu, L., Ma, H., Hu, J., ... & Lin, X. Frequency and Intensity of Depressive Symptoms and Frequency of Prescribed Opioid Use Among Older Adults in the United States: Results of a National Survey. Journal of Addictions Nursing, 10-1097.

18. Zhang, Q., Zhang, Z., **Ge, S.**, Xiang, D., Lin, B., Chen, S., ... & Mei, Y. (2025). Latent Profile Analysis Of Anxiety and Related Factors among Stroke Patients' Spouses. Psychology, Health & Medicine, 1-15.

19. Wang R, Gu Y, Yang H, **Ge S**, Cai Y, Wan X. (2025). Knowledge and Attitude of Nurses in Wuxi, China Towards Alzheimer's Disease: A Cross-Sectional Study. Nursing Open. 12(4):e70199.

20. .uang Q, Liu F, **Ge S**, Teng S, Wu X, Zhang X, Qu Z, Li Y, Wang A, Li M and Tang X (2025) The Smart Senior Care Demand In China In The Context Of Active Ageing: A Qualitative Study With Multiple Perspectives. Frontiers in Public Health. 13:1505180.