Mass General Brigham
Spaulding Rehabilitation

Investing in
Nursing Excellence

We are committed to supporting our greatest champions of patient care—our extraordinary nurses.

"Nurses embody the importance of a holistic approach to healing and recovery, from our drive to empower patients and families to our passion to embrace innovation and discovery. Because our work is integral to every facet of care delivery, when you support nursing at Spaulding, you're advancing the field of rehabilitation as a whole."

—Dr. Judi Cullinane, Chief Nursing Officer

Nurses are the bedrock of clinical care at Spaulding Rehabilitation. They are an integral part of the multidisciplinary rehabilitation team and provide unwavering support to our patients as they overcome daunting challenges to make hard-won progress each and every day. Spaulding has a longstanding commitment to providing our nurses with meaningful opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Building on this solid foundation, we are moving into a new era of fostering nursing leadership and excellence through a range of boldly innovative programs in patient-centered care, career development and education; and research and quality improvement. With philanthropic support, Spaulding can continue to promote our nurses and become a model for transforming the rehabilitation nursing profession to benefit the health and recovery of patients everywhere.

DEI BEST PLACE TO WORK FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION
100% DISABILITY EQUALITY INDEX

MAGNET RECOGNIZED
AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL

Nursing at Spaulding Rehabilitation

Nursing has been an integral part of the rehabilitation specialty since its inception, and the complexity of the recovery process often necessitates that nurses have more exposure to patients on a daily basis than any other medical professional. As the nursing model has evolved, rehabilitation nurses have come to play many vital roles on the multidisciplinary healthcare team; in addition to being direct caregivers, they are collaborators, care coordinators, educators, investigators, and advocates. While nurses at other parts of the care continuum help save lives, rehabilitation nurses help shape and restore the quality and independence of those lives.

At Spaulding, our commitment to providing our nurses with meaningful opportunities for professional growth and advancement is nothing new—and philanthropic funding has been critical to ensuring we stay true to that commitment. In 2019, with a $500,000 seed gift from Janice and Ralph James, we established the network-wide Nurses as Leaders program as a coordinated hub for a range of career development initiatives. As a result, the number of Spaulding nurses seeking B.S and M.S. degrees and specialty certification has increased dramatically, and we have witnessed a marked rise in the development of major nurse-led clinical research projects. We have also invested in a comprehensive spectrum of training programs, from pipeline-building to advanced continuing education. All these innovative efforts have contributed to our aggressive goal of achieving Magnet status—the highest designation of nursing excellence of the American Nurses Credentialing Center—in all our inpatient facilities in the next five years (see sidebar).

Spaulding's Magnet Journey

Magnet status is awarded to healthcare organizations that demonstrate a culture of nursing excellence by the Magnet Recognition Program® of the American Nurses Credentialing Center. It is not simply a prestigious award; it is tangible recognition of institutions that build on a team-oriented environment where nurses flourish through leadership, scientific discovery, and dissemination and implementation of new knowledge. At Spaulding, we are committed to achieving this designation across our network of four inpatient facilities.

Earning Magnet designation is not a simple process, but it is an invaluable one both for our nurses and the patients and families we serve. In 2022, Spaulding Cape Cod became the first rehabilitation hospital in New England and fifth worldwide to earn this honor, joining a select group of just 9.4 percent of hospitals nationwide. In 2023, Spaulding Cambridge followed suit, becoming the first long-term acute care level hospital in New England to receive this accreditation, and in 2025, Spaulding Boston achieved Magnet status "with distinction" by exceeding all required benchmarks. In a thoughtful iterative process, Spaulding Brighton continues to work toward this ambitious goal. We are so proud of our entire nursing team who have made this well-deserved acknowledgement of our preeminence in patient care possible.

Investing in our nurses could not be more timely and imperative. Healthcare systems across the country are facing an unprecedented nursing shortage. It is projected the U.S. will need about one million more nurses by 2030 to meet healthcare demands, and the Institute of Medicine has called for increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in the workforce to at least 80 percent to ensure patient safety alone (currently, only 65 percent of the nursing workforce has baccalaureate or graduate-level training). Complicating an already challenging situation is the fact that a large number of nurses are leaving the profession for a range of reasons. More than one-fifth of all nurses reported they plan to retire from nursing over the next five years. Amplified by the COVID pandemic, nurses are also feeling increased levels of stress and burnout. A rising patient population and fewer nurses means added pressure on the nurses working today, which in turn perpetuates a painful cycle of departure from the field.

Recognizing that nurses are a unique component of superlative rehabilitation care, Spaulding has pledged to break this cycle. We believe the key to our success will be a transformational approach to elevating, educating, empowering, and encouraging our nurses so they can take pride in their profession and find fulfillment in their work. In turn, we will build a cadre of nurses with the expertise and passion to bring rehabilitation care to new heights for the benefit of patients and families here at Spaulding and beyond. This approach is the foundation of our proposed Center of Excellence in Nursing and Patient Care Services.

Center for Excellence in Nursing and Patient Care Services

Building on our proud tradition of supporting nursing professional advancement, Spaulding is proposing the establishment of a new Center for Excellence in Nursing and Patient Care Services under the leadership of our new Chief Nursing Officer Judi Cullinane, PhD, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, LSBBH, CCRN-K. Aimed at creating a unified hub for nursing leadership activities, the Center will foster strategies for nurses to actively contribute their expertise across the continuum of care, support educational pathways for nurses to grow professionally, and develop new opportunities for nurses to explore and innovate. Its ultimate goal will be to promote the significant role nurses play in the team-based approach of recovery and in shaping the future of rehabilitation care.

Spaulding Rehabilitation Nurses Excellence across the healthcare continuum

Passionate Nursing Leadership: Dr. Judi Cullinane

Dr. Cullinane became Spaulding's Chief Nursing Officer in the summer of 2023, following an intensive national search. With a long and varied career in nursing care and leadership, she came to Spaulding from Tufts Medical Center, where she was the Associate Chief Nursing Officer of the Robin and David Jaye Center for Nursing Excellence. Dr. Cullinane is widely recognized for her contributions to nurse-led research, exploring topics like the effects of bisphenol A exposure in neonates and pain management in the NICU; the nursing perspective on treating patients with opioid use disorder; and the implementation of a root-cause analysis curriculum in both an undergraduate nursing program and a hospital-based system. A passionate and driven advocate for advancing the nursing profession, Dr. Cullinane has been working from day one with her nursing colleagues at Spaulding on implementing her ambitious vision for transforming nursing practice in rehabilitation.

With the support of philanthropy, the Center will encompass four major areas of focus highlighted below:

Elevate…

our nurses as care experts to improve the patient experience and quality of care

Nurses are invaluable experts on the delivery and navigation of care at every step along the care continuum in rehabilitation, from their transition out of the acute care setting to their return to home and community. At Spaulding, we want to develop a range of opportunities for nurses to elevate their contributions beyond the provision of expert and compassionate clinical care to leading programs that actually improve the way that care is delivered. Donor support would help establish nurse-led consultancies as well as community-based offerings to build a culture of health beyond our hospital walls.

Educate…

our nurses—and those aspiring to become nurses—to expand their professional horizons

Spaulding has a longstanding tradition of championing the career advancement of our nurses, which has enabled them to grow and thrive both personally and professionally. The new Center will become the hub for these educational activities, supporting a variety of ways for nurses to pursue academic degrees, fellowships, and specialized curricula in leadership and research. The Center will also extend training opportunities to staff beyond the nursing circle, including scholarships to give those who wish to pursue nursing careers a seamless entrée into the profession. Donor support will uphold and enhance academic programs like the Nightingale Fellowship, the Spaulding Nurse and Patient Care Services Leadership Institute, the Seacole Scholars, and the Rising Star Program.

Empower…

our nurses to transform the field of rehabilitation through research and quality improvement

Spaulding is internationally recognized for its prowess in rehabilitation research from bench science to clinical studies. We firmly believe that nurses are invaluable partners in the research and quality improvement process, a sentiment endorsed by the National Institutes of Health, the American Nurses Association, the Joint Commission, and other notable healthcare organizations. Our goal is to ensure that nurses' voices are heard loud and clear in practice-based research and process improvement, and that they are engaged in transforming research priorities into achievable action items. Philanthropy will advance research and training programs designed to promote nurse equity and inclusion in the scientific process, such as a Nurse Specialty Research Program, a nursing research fellowship and mentorship activities, and a new interdisciplinary roaming simulation program to improve care quality and safety and promote team-building.

Encourage…

our nurses to be innovative and unconventional in their approach to care and collaboration

Some of the most creative and effective ideas for improving healthcare processes, systems, and technologies come from our nurses. Spaulding wants to promote and foster this type of ingenuity, which benefits our staff, our patients and families, and the institution as a whole. With donor support, we aim at establishing a new "InnoInitiative" at the Center, which will create a platform for nurses and other interprofessional staff to innovate freely. Philanthropy will support the activities of the new institute like design-a-thons and entrepreneurship training as well as a InnoRN fellowship for those who want to enhance their scientific and business acumen in this area.

"What we appreciate most about Spaulding is that it artfully balances its commitment to innovation and progress while never losing sight of the importance of patient care quality. Spaulding's nursing initiatives embody this dual mission, which was integral to why we felt strongly about supporting these efforts."

—David Fischer, Spaulding Trustee and generous supporter of nursing and other patient care programs with his wife, Carol O'Connor-Fischer

Thank you in advance for your consideration and generosity.

For more information on how you can support our Center for Excellence in Nursing and Patient Care Services, please contact **Steven Patrick** at 617-952-6892 or sapatrick@mgb.org.