

News @ Fairfield



Three Nursing Students Participate in Oncology Fellowship

Fairfield senior nursing students Jennifer Patten, Danielle Brouillard, and Julie Earls spent their summer working as paid Fellows in the oncology units of Stamford and Wentworth Douglass

(New Hampshire) hospitals, thanks to a generous gift from Fred Flynn of Stamford.

Flynn endowed the Susan D. Flynn Oncology Nursing Fellowship Program in memory of his late wife, Susan, who succumbed to ovarian cancer in 2013. The Fellowship will focus on the education and professional development of oncology nurses using practice-based experience, under the guidance of a registered nurse. Each student will be required to complete and present an evidence-based research project at the program's conclusion.

This is the first year of an ongoing and growing program; nursing students from Fairfield University and Boston College about to enter their senior year are eligible. Upon completion of the Fellowship program, the student will receive priority consideration for employment in Stamford Hospital's oncology department.

“The Fairfield students are incredibly well prepared, and I couldn’t help notice how passionate they are about learning and their real desire to make a difference in their patients’ lives,” said Mary McKiernan, director of professional development at Stamford Hospital.

Flynn was determined to channel his grief over his wife’s death into something “impactful.” A graduate of Boston College, he initially intended to limit the applicants at Stamford Hospital to students from Boston College, “but the staff at Stamford Hospital spoke so highly about their alliance with Fairfield University and the quality of students in that nursing program,” he says, that he decided to broaden the scope of admission.

“It was so helpful to be paired with a preceptor and work her schedule. By being assigned her patients, I established a relationship with Jackie [preceptor] and our patients through seeing them and caring for them,” said Jennifer Patten, one of the three Fairfield Fellows. “I learned so much about how many things nurses do in a day, and how they really have a lot of autonomy and advocate for the patients.” Patten also became aware of opportunities for nurse practitioners with advanced degrees, such as palliative care nursing or practitioners specializing in oncology.

“I’ve seen some of these students do amazing presentations on complex subjects like palliative care, dignity therapy, and cancer survivorship plans. Its really gratifying that virtually every one of them has committed themselves to a career in oncology nursing,” says Flynn. “I’m just the enabler. The fabulous student fellows and the wonderful staff at Stamford Hospital deserve all the credit making this program such a success.”

[More "Top Stories"](#)