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Alumni Profile: For the Love of Nursing

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For the love of nursing

Lisa Shipley Hulstrom '88 may spend her days in front of a computer instead of working directly with patients, but she still puts all of her nursing skills to work, helping patients and staff in the Legacy Health System.

Shipley Hulstrom is director of Strategic Business Systems and Services for Information Services at Legacy Health, but the truth is she is still a nurse and incredibly proud of it.

Shipley Hulstrom knew early on that she wanted to be in the fast-paced, intense world of the Intensive Care Unit. She took extra rotations there as a student and was even accepted into an ICU internship at Good Samaritan Hospital as a new graduate.

"It's hectic and intense, but I loved it because I felt I could make the biggest difference there," she said. "You see instantaneously when you start a dopamine drip what it does to the cardiac output and it was amazing."

She also worked part time in the Emergency Room, which honed her rapid assessment skills. And she loved the autonomy of both the ER and ICU, which were places of collaboration that fostered a partnership between nurses and doctors. She still considers the staff family.

"Working under fire like that, you bond with people in such a way," she said. "We still have a bond of friendship and lifelong connections. I've not felt that in any other job."

As the work began taking its toll physically, Shipley Hulstrom became involved in other aspects of health care. She was on the design committee to build the new Kern Critical Care Unit at Good Samaritan Hospital, and later appointed to a committee charged with designing a new team-centered approach to deliver patient care.

As a result of her increasing involvement in the development of clinical information systems, she became the first nurse hired as an analyst in the IT department.

"We (she and IT) didn't know what to make of each other," Shipley Hulstrom said with a laugh. "It was a steep learning curve, but gradually over the next couple of years, more nurses came and we built the team that designed our first electronic health records system."

One of the first things she learned is that her nursing skills are put to work every day.

"You discover a problem, assess it, put together a plan, enact it and then assess it to see if it was the right thing to do," she said.

She helped select, design, build and implement the first electronic health record for Legacy, along with systems for the ICU, obstetrics units and the first electronic nurse staffing system. She was also very involved with designing, building and implementing the second electronic health record put in the new Legacy hospital at Salmon Creek as well as the third EHR system, Epic, (and hopefully Legacy's last, she said with a smile) at all



Lisa Shipley Hulstrom '88 said she was one of those lucky people who knew from the time she was a child that she wanted to be in health care. When her mother had pneumonia when Shipley Hulstrom was 5, she raced home from school to give her medicine, and make sure she had water and a snack. Her mother gave her a nurse's kit, which she still has and keeps on display in her office.

Legacy hospitals and clinics. Along the way she developed a new Project Management Office for Information Services and picked up Information Security as well.

But despite the fact that she is helping improve patient care every day, she still misses the hands-on work.

"That is my love," she said. "I still feel like I'm making a difference for patients. What we do here is try to supply those who are providing the care with good tools that help them give better patient care."

She said her Linfield degree made her more aware of leadership potential in the profession, but more importantly, what nurses can do beyond taking care of patients in the hospital. Faculty such as Professor Emerita Wilma Pope '56 had a profound effect on her.

"I am so proud to be an RN and that will be part of my identity until I die, whether I put my hands on a patient or not," she said. "Nurses are vital to this world. Nurses can do anything anywhere."

– Mardi Mileham