HEROES 2020
In a year that needed HEROES more than ever, Washington Regional was here for you.

While the global coronavirus pandemic slowed growth for many organizations in 2020, it sparked a year of innovation for Washington Regional. By operationalizing a COVID-19 hotline, testing platforms, screening clinics, inpatient units and vaccine clinics, Washington Regional led efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in Northwest Arkansas while simultaneously expanding services, adding new providers and investing in technology to help us fulfill our mission of improving the health of the communities we serve. Being a community-owned and locally governed non-profit health care system, Washington Regional was able to quickly implement a COVID-19 preparedness plan, enhancing our responsiveness and ability to pivot to meet the needs of our community.
Our team members – no matter their job title – have always been heroes in my eyes, and this past year they displayed true heroism for the entire community to see as they stepped up to face the COVID-19 pandemic with great courage. But courage is just one part of what defines heroism. Compassion, empathy, determination and grit are also necessary elements. Washington Regional team members displayed grit by putting in long days caring for critically ill patients. Team members relied on their determination to resolve myriad challenges presented by the pandemic, whether it was implementing new procedures to safely care for patients or finding ways to procure necessary personal protective equipment. And empathy and compassion were essential as they supported their teammates and patients during some dark days.

While we have seen arduous days, the pandemic shone a light on the best in all of us. One constant this past year has been the resolve, determination and leadership Washington Regional has demonstrated in response to this public health emergency. It is impossible to look back on 2020 without noting the impact the pandemic has had on our health system and what we have achieved.

The pandemic created a surge of transformation and collaboration at Washington Regional. Our position as a locally owned and governed non-profit health care system means we are able to innovate and quickly find solutions to meet the needs of our community. This flexibility proved invaluable as we established the area’s first coronavirus hotline and screening clinic, a dedicated respiratory illness clinic and operationalized multiple testing platforms. We collaborated with other area health care providers to balance the load of patients and available resources. And we actively worked to educate our neighbors to prevent the spread of the virus and protect our community.

Despite its many challenges, 2020 served to renew our dedication to our purpose. We strive to learn and grow from the past year so that we can better provide high quality, compassionate care to improve the health of the communities we serve. Now more than ever, Washington Regional’s health care heroes stand united in purpose, committed to our mission and each other.

J. Larry Shackelford
President and CEO
Washington Regional

We never stopped working, caring and growing to meet the health care needs of our community.
COVID-19 Response

On January 21, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the United States, and Washington Regional Medical System began preparing for potential spread of the virus to the Northwest Arkansas region. Following Governor Asa Hutchinson’s declaration of a state of emergency on March 11, 2020, Washington Regional immediately implemented its COVID-19 Response Plan, which included establishing Northwest Arkansas’ first coronavirus hotline and screening clinic. Action taken in the early weeks of the pandemic ensured that Washington Regional was able to provide personal protective equipment, testing supplies, capacity to care for critically ill patients and vaccination services as needed throughout the course of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Stats
(March 2020 – April 2021)

+ Hotline Calls: 122,263
+ COVID-19 Tests: 64,540
+ COVID-19 Inpatients: 1,156
+ Telehealth Visits: 84,722
+ Video Visits for Inpatients: 3,134
+ Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine: 32,571

We never stopped being here for you.
COVID-19 Timeline

2020

- Launched telehealth (4/1)
- Implemented universal masking policy for all staff, patients and visitors (4/3)
- Implemented labor cost reduction initiatives (4/16)
- Opened second COVID-19 unit (6/8)
- Launched online scheduling tool for COVID-19 vaccination appointments (3/8)
- Began vaccinating people in Arkansas Department of Health priority group 1C (3/16)
- Began vaccinating people 16+ (3/30)

2021

- Updated visitor policy (3/12)
- Closed Center for Exercise (3/13)
- Opened first COVID-19 unit (3/13)
- Suspended Volunteer Services Program (3/14)
- Opened Washington Regional Coronavirus Screening Clinics in Fayetteville and Eureka Springs (3/16)
- Governor Hutchinson held press conference at Washington Regional, the first outside of Little Rock, to recognize Washington Regional’s off site testing center and hotline (3/16)
- Launched Washington Regional Coronavirus Hotline (3/17)
- Implemented COVID-19 screening for all staff, patients and visitors (3/18)
- Paused non-urgent surgeries, procedures and diagnostic testing (3/21)
- Opened Washington Regional Respiratory Illness Clinic in previous Washington Regional Urgent Care location in Fayetteville (3/24)

March

+ Began pre-surgical COVID-19 testing (5/1)
+ Resumed outpatient elective surgeries (5/4)
+ Resumed surgical procedures with less than 48 hour length of stay (5/18)
+ Resumed all procedures (5/21)
+ Opened third COVID-19 unit (7/14)
+ National Guard arrived to provide assistance in call center (7/20)
+ Governor Hutchinson visited Washington Regional to talk with team members on the front lines and hold his daily press conference (7/22)
+ Implemented modified visitor policy to allow one visitor per patient (10/12)

April

+ Began offering monoclonal antibody treatment to COVID-positive patients (12/1)
+ Operationalized Phase 1 of the COVID-19 surge plan (12/11)
+ Received first allotment of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (12/19)
+ Held first vaccination clinic for frontline team members (12/16)
+ Announced one-time COVID-19 bonus for employees (12/18)
+ Stepped back to Phase 1B of COVID-19 surge plan (2/2)
+ Stepped back to Phase 1 of COVID-19 surge plan (2/16)
+ Consolidated Fayetteville COVID-19 testing clinics (April)
+ Updated visitor policy to allow for additional hours of visitation (4/15)
+ Updated visitor policy to allow for additional visitors for patients (4/23)
+ Reopened Fayetteville Urgent Care to all patients (4/29)
Centers of Excellence

In a year when achieving and maintaining good health was more important than ever, Washington Regional’s Centers of Excellence provided world-class care both in person and virtually.

J.B. Hunt Transport Services Neuroscience Institute

The J.B. Hunt Transport Services Neuroscience Institute, previously the Northwest Arkansas Neuroscience Institute, provides the region’s most comprehensive care for disorders of the brain and spine. The institute was renamed in 2020 in honor of a $1 million gift from J.B. Hunt Transport Services, which provided funding for research, an expanded stroke program, facility updates, new technology, and specialized physicians and nurses. The institute offers Northwest Arkansas’ only neurosurgical intensive care unit, the region’s leading stroke program, and multiple clinic locations with experts in stroke, interventional neuroradiology, neurosurgery, conservative spine care, total spine physical therapy and interventional pain management.
At the end of 2019, Washington Regional became the first hospital in Northwest Arkansas and only the second hospital in the state to earn certification as a Comprehensive Stroke Center by The Joint Commission. This prestigious designation is given to hospitals that have capabilities to treat the most complex stroke cases. Washington Regional is the only hospital in the region to offer 24/7 in-person care with stroke specialists, minimally invasive stroke treatment options, advanced neurosurgical care, state-of-the-art imaging and a dedicated neurosurgical intensive care unit. As the area’s stroke care leader, Washington Regional provided care to 787 stroke patients in 2020 with nearly 40% of those patients being transferred from other hospitals.

The J.B. Hunt Transport Services Neuroscience Institute continues to grow to meet the region’s health care needs. Washington Regional Neurology Clinic welcomed two new physicians, Steven Graham, MD and Michael Morse, MD. Dr. Graham specializes in electromyography and adult neurology. Dr. Morse specializes in multiple sclerosis, migraine headaches and using Botox therapies.

Walker Heart Institute

With the largest team of interventional cardiologists, electrophysiologists and cardiovascular and thoracic surgeons, as well as a 76-bed cardiology unit, Walker Heart Institute provides the most comprehensive cardiovascular care in the region.

Last year, Washington Regional became the first hospital in Northwest Arkansas to offer an alternative to general anesthesia for patients having transcatheter aortic valve replacement, or TAVR. Monitored anesthesia care (MAC) allows patients to remain conscious during the TAVR procedure and offers similar clinical outcomes to general anesthesia with reduced postoperative complications and a shorter hospital stay. TAVR is a minimally invasive valve replacement technique that uses a catheter inserted in the leg to replace the aortic valve without opening the chest. Since first offering TAVR in 2018, Washington Regional has performed more than 280 TAVR procedures.

Washington Regional was also the first hospital in the region to offer the latest version of optical coherence tomography (OCT), which allows cardiologists to look inside the heart’s coronary arteries during a heart catheterization – a procedure used to diagnose and treat blockages in arteries. OCT provides 20 times the resolution of traditional angiography, allowing the artery to be viewed in 3D from the inside out. It can even be used to determine what size stent is needed by measuring the artery, helping improve patient outcomes.

Walker Heart Institute Cardiovascular Clinic welcomed a new physician, Garrett B. Sanford, MD, FACC, and three advanced practice providers in the past year. Washington Regional Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery Clinic also welcomed an advanced practice provider.

Washington Regional has performed more than 280 TAVR procedures.
As the only Arkansas Department of Health designated Level II Trauma Center in Northwest Arkansas, Washington Regional provides the highest level of emergency care available in the region. In 2020, we cared for 1,184 trauma patients, with nearly 20% of those being transferred from other facilities throughout Northwest Arkansas, the River Valley and areas of Oklahoma and Missouri. Washington Regional continues to meet rigorous requirements from the Arkansas Department of Health to maintain its Level II Trauma Center designation and is prepared with the staff and equipment needed to evaluate, stabilize and provide advanced care to patients with limb- and life-threatening conditions, including 24/7 dedicated surgicalist care throughout the hospital.

Women and Infants Center

The Women and Infants Center helped area families welcome 2,361 babies in 2020, and its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit provided more than 300 fragile newborns with the highest level of care available in Northwest Arkansas. Leading women’s health providers at HerHealth Clinic and Parkhill Clinic for Women continued to provide high-quality gynecology and obstetrics services during the pandemic.

Washington Regional partnered with Oklahoma Mothers’ Milk Bank to create the first human milk depot in Northwest Arkansas. Nursing women who are pre-approved by Oklahoma Mothers’ Milk Bank can donate their extra breast milk at the Women and Infants Center, where it is stored until it is picked up and processed by the milk bank. In 2020, Washington Regional’s Infant Nutrition Lab provided 8,100 ounces of donor milk for infants, and our depot site shipped 12,042 ounces of donated milk to Oklahoma Mothers’ Milk Bank.

The Ronald McDonald House located in the Women and Infants Center offers a place of rest and relaxation for families of infants who are receiving medical treatment. Last year, it provided 983 overnight stays for 225 families.

Level II Trauma Center

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Total Joint Center

Accredited by The Joint Commission, the Washington Regional Total Joint Center includes a team of surgeons and staff focused exclusively on the education, recovery and rehabilitation of joint replacement patients. Last year, 675 patients were cared for in the 18-bed Total Joint Center.

In 2020, Washington Regional became the first hospital in Northwest Arkansas to offer Zimmer Biomet’s ROSA® Knee System, state-of-the-art robotic technology that helps surgeons personalize total knee replacement procedures for each patient’s unique anatomy. ROSA Knee enables surgeons to use computer and software technology to control surgical instruments, allowing for greater accuracy by facilitating more precise implant positioning. This enhanced precision leads to better patient outcomes.

In 2020, Washington Regional became the first hospital in NWA to offer ROSA® Knee System technology.
Community Outreach, Education, Partnerships

Heroes Put Others First...Always.

Washington Regional’s mission of improving the health of the communities we serve through high-quality care and wellness education is at the heart of everything we do. During the pandemic, our health care heroes found ways to safely serve our neighbors while continuing our mission of community wellness education by drawing on our strong relationships with local partners.

Last year, Washington Regional presented health education through:
+ “Ask an Expert” features in the Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
+ Employer “Lunch and Learn” events focusing on vascular health
+ Health for Life newsletter for seniors
+ Heart Month activities
+ Stroke education events
+ Injury prevention events
+ “You at Your Best” features in the Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
+ “Your Health Today” segments on KNWA-TV
+ Interviews featuring medical experts with local print and broadcast outlets
+ Pandemic-related videos, infographics and updates shared through Washington Regional social media platforms and website
+ Public service announcements shared on social media and local broadcast stations
Heroes don’t work alone. Washington Regional partnered with these valued nonprofit organizations to provide health education and services throughout Northwest Arkansas:

- Alzheimer’s Association
- American Heart Association/American Stroke Association
- Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- The Cancer Challenge
- City of Fayetteville Parks and Recreation
- Down Syndrome Connection of NWA
- Healthy Active Arkansas
- Hogeye Marathon
- Jackson L. Graves Foundation
- Jr. Civic League
- LifeStyles, Inc.
- March of Dimes
- Partnership for a Healthy Arkansas
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkoma
- Susan G. Komen Cancer Support Home

In 2020, the Washington Regional Medical Foundation began construction on a new Cancer Support Home located at 488 E. Longview Street in Fayetteville. The new facility was made possible by gifts from many generous donors, including a $1.5 million gift from J.B. Hunt Transport Services for which the new facility is named. A groundbreaking ceremony for the new 9,980-square-foot Washington Regional J.B. Hunt Transport Services Cancer Support Home was held on February 17, 2020, and the new Cancer Support Home began welcoming clients in March 2021. The new facility provides eight accessible overnight guest suites with private bathrooms, an elevator, an expanded wig and prosthesis boutique and support services.

During 2020, the Cancer Support Home received significant funding from The Cancer Challenge, Susan G. Komen - Ozark Affiliate, the Walmart Foundation and private donors to provide:

- Navigation services to 254 cancer patients
- 502 nights of overnight lodging for clients traveling to Northwest Arkansas for treatment
- Over 150 hours of counseling services
- Education, information and referrals for 750 community members
- 304 boutique items (wigs, scarves, post-mastectomy bras and breast forms)

Washington Regional is investing in the future of Northwest Arkansas by helping train nurses and other health professionals to care for our community.

Washington Regional gifted $1 million to Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) to support the college’s health professions and nurse training programs. The gift was part of the NWACC Foundation’s capital campaign, which raised funds for the new Washington County location. It included funding for the Washington Regional Nursing Simulation Lab and the school’s existing health professions training programs, with a goal of alleviating the shortage of nurses in the state and meeting the expanding health care needs of Northwest Arkansas.

We believe quality health care should be accessible to everyone. In 2020, Washington Regional allocated more than $19.2 million to charity care, uncompensated care and community health services and education including:

- Arkansas Department of Health for Prenatal Services
- Arkansas Hospital Education and Research Trust
- HIV Clinic at Washington County Department of Health
- On-site community health education
- Scholarships for students at University of Arkansas
- Eleanor Mann School of Nursing and John Brown University Nursing Program
- Tuition assistance for health care professionals
- United Way
- WelcomeHealth free clinic

In 2020, Washington Regional allocated more than $19.2 million to charity care.

During 2020, Washington Regional allocated more than $19.2 million to charity care.
Recognition

Heroes don't expect praise, but when they go above and beyond, others take notice.

Get with the Guidelines® – Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award

Washington Regional was honored for the fourth consecutive year with the American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association’s Get with the Guidelines®- Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes the hospital’s commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

Mission: Lifeline® Silver Receiving Quality Achievement Award

Washington Regional earned the Mission: Lifeline® Silver Receiving Quality Achievement Award for implementing specific quality improvement measures outlined by the American Heart Association for the treatment of patients who suffer severe heart attacks. Washington Regional worked with external EMS partners to implement the measures and earned the award by meeting specific criteria and standards of performance for quick and appropriate treatment through emergency procedures to restore blood flow to blocked arteries in heart attack patients.

Get with the Guidelines® – Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus Award

Washington Regional received the American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association’s Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus Award. To qualify for this recognition, Washington Regional met quality measures aimed at reducing the time between the patient’s arrival at the hospital and treatment with the clot-buster drug tPA. This is the fifth year Washington Regional has earned the recognition.

Get with the Guidelines® – Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll Award

The American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association recognized Washington Regional with a new award, the Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll award for meeting quality measures developed to ensure patients with Type 2 diabetes receive the most up-to-date, evidence-based care when hospitalized with stroke.

Mission: Lifeline® Regional STEMI Trailblazer Achievement Award

Washington Regional, a participant in the American Heart Association Mission: Lifeline Regional Reports, received the Mission: Lifeline® Regional STEMI Trailblazer Achievement Award as a part of the Arkansas Region. The award is presented for implementing specific quality improvement measures at a regional level as outlined by the Association for treating patients who suffer severe heart attacks.

Washington Regional – Hospital of Choice

Washington Regional was once again honored by Arkansas Medicaid and Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care as part of the annual Inpatient Quality Incentive program. Washington Regional was recognized for its ongoing commitment to quality through participation in the IQI program’s patient quality initiatives.

Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce

Washington Regional team members were honored at the Fayetteville Chamber’s virtual Annual Luncheon and Excellence in Business Awards ceremony for their dedication and hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CitiScapes

Results of this regional magazine’s annual readers’ poll:

- Washington Regional Medical Center – Best Hospital in the Ozarks Region
- Washington Regional J.B. Hunt Transport Services Neuroscience Institute – Best Neurologist/ Neurosurgeon
- Washington Regional Walker Heart Institute – Best Cardiology Clinic
- Washington Regional Internal Medicine Associates

Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

The newspaper’s readers ranked Washington Regional at the top for:

- Walker Heart Institute – Best Cardiology
- Washington Regional Women and Infants Center – Best Place to Have a Baby
Heroes care for others – that’s why Washington Regional’s care team members continuously work to grow their skills and better serve our community.

Medical Specialty Providers
We recruit medical providers who have the skills and expertise to provide the best care to our community. In 2020, Washington Regional welcomed 26 new physicians and advanced practice providers with specialties including:

- Cardiology
- Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery
- Critical Care
- Emergency Medicine
- Family Medicine
- General Surgery
- Hospital Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Neurology
- Stroke Care
- Urgent Care
- Urology

Clinics
At a time when many hospitals were forced to scale back, Washington Regional kept growing to be here for you – wherever you need us – through new providers, new clinics and satellite locations.

Washington Regional COVID-19 Screening Clinic
Washington Regional was the first hospital in Northwest Arkansas to establish an off-site location to screen and test individuals for COVID-19.

Washington Regional General Surgery Clinic
Washington Regional General Surgery Clinic, formerly Fayetteville Surgical Associates, joined Washington Regional on January 1, 2020. Jeff Bell, MD, Jon Berry, MD, Gareth Eck, MD, Stephen Wood, MD and Brittany Huls, APRN provide high-quality surgical care and 24/7 surgicalist coverage in the hospital. The clinic has since opened two satellite locations and now provides services in Fayetteville, Eureka Springs and Harrison.

Washington Regional Integrative Gynecology Clinic
Washington Regional Integrative Gynecology Clinic opened in September 2020. Kristin Markell, MD, a board-certified gynecologist and integrative medicine specialist, provides gynecology services using integrative, functional and conventional medicine techniques to evaluate symptoms using a holistic approach. She also provides integrative medicine consultations to help patients restore optimal health and balance.

Washington Regional Primary Care – Main Street Medical Clinic
Main Street Medical Clinic in Harrison, now called Washington Regional Primary Care – Main Street, joined Washington Regional in December 2019. Internal medicine physician Charles M. Klepper, MD and Jean Ann Thompson, APRN provide care for patients age 16 and older. Washington Regional now serves Harrison-area families with three primary care clinics, an urgent care clinic and a cardiology clinic.
Washington Regional Ozark Urology

Providing diagnosis and treatment of urological disorders, Ozark Urology welcomed two new physicians, John Brizzolara, MD and Robert Grand, MD. The clinic also opened satellite locations in Eureka Springs and Harrison. These new locations bring the total number of Ozark Urology clinics to four, helping better serve patients throughout the region in Eureka Springs, Fayetteville, Harrison and Springdale.

Care Team Achievements

Physician Achievements

For their commitment to improving the health of people in the communities we serve, four Washington Regional physicians earned recognition in their specialties last year:

- Kristin Markell, MD, FACOG of Washington Regional Integrative Gynecology Clinic completed a Fellowship in Integrative Medicine at the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine, at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson.
- Allison Moss Johnson, MD, FACP of Washington Regional Internal Medicine Associates graduated from the Fellowship in Integrative Medicine program at the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine, at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson.
- Drew Rodgers, MD, FASA, a cardiothoracic anesthesiologist with Premier Anesthesia of Arkansas and a member of the medical staff at Washington Regional, earned designation as a Fellow of the American Society of Anesthesiologists. This is the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ highest acknowledgment of dedication to exceptional education, leadership and commitment to the specialty.
- Randy Shinn, MD of Washington Regional Senior Health Clinic was the inaugural recipient of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Pat Walker Distinguished Chair in Senior Health. An endowed chair is among the highest academic honors a university can bestow on a faculty member. Those named to a chair are among the most highly regarded scientists, physicians and professors in their fields.

Nurse of the Year Awards

These team members were honored by their peers as part of the annual Nurses Week observation:

- Nurse of the Year – Medical Center: Patty Hooten, RN, Interventional Neuroradiology
- Nurse of the Year – Clinic: Amber Halfacre, RN, Walker Heart Institute Cardiovascular Clinic
- Midlevel Provider of the Year: Taylor Marshall, APRN, Walker Heart Institute Cardiovascular Clinic
- Nursing Assistant of the Year: Olivia Seal, Neurosurgical Intensive Care Unit
- Assistive Personnel of the Year: Nikola Wilson, Walker Heart Institute Cardiovascular Clinic

Employee of the Year

Tawny Vanhook, a registered nurse at Walker Heart Institute Cardiovascular Clinic, was selected as the 2019 Washington Regional Employee of the Year and recognized for her achievement in early 2020. Vanhook was selected from 12 employees of the month candidates in a systemwide vote of Washington Regional employees. Vanhook, who joined Washington Regional in 2018, was recognized for her commitment to Washington Regional’s mission, vision and values and for consistently going above and beyond for her coworkers, patients and their family members.

Danita Mullins Named ED Leader of the Year

Danita Mullins, emergency department director, received the 2019 Arkansas ED Leader of the Year Award from the Arkansas Emergency Nurses Association. Mullins, who has been with Washington Regional for over seven years and formerly served as assistant director of the emergency department, has been an emergency nurse for 20 years. She previously served as state council president for the Emergency Nurses Association and is currently serving as the government affairs chair for the Arkansas Chapter.

Jessica Royal Named Nursing Leader by Arkansas Center for Nursing

Jessaca Royal, RN was named one of the Arkansas Center for Nursing’s 40 Nurse Leaders Under 40 for 2020. Royal was nominated and selected using criteria on how each applicant stands out among their peers in four distinct areas: commitment to excellence, service and outreach, leadership qualities and contributions to the advancement of the nursing profession. Royal currently serves as the director of critical care.
Guiding Others Through the Pandemic

Practice Transformation Team

Throughout 2020, Washington Regional’s practice transformation team pioneered the way care is delivered to COVID-positive patients in the community. At the onset of the pandemic, the team pivoted to lead efforts at the Coronavirus Hotline, which provides information on testing, isolation and treatment. The practice transformation team also became COVID navigation leaders, providing a much-needed resource in Northwest Arkansas. COVID navigators follow up with patients who test positive for the virus and provide information on quarantine guidelines and management of COVID symptoms to ensure individuals receive proper care throughout their illness.

RN Residency

Like many other programs, Washington Regional’s RN Residency Program had to deviate from its usual schedule in response to the pandemic. Regardless, 104 medical-surgical, emergency department, intensive care/clinical care, neurosurgical intensive care and neuro progressive unit nurses started the program in 2020. The past year also saw 80 students from the 2019 cohort graduate.

Many nurse residents immediately began their career during the pandemic to help meet staffing needs. In the early days of the pandemic, several nurse residents also started in labor pool as screeners, nurse assistants and other needed roles before their official start date as they felt called to help in any way they could.

Care Team Support and Administration

Jim Daly, Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Jim Daly, MBA was named vice president and chief information officer in July 2020. Daly, who had served as director of information services since 2017, leads the information services, information security, communications/PBX and biomedical teams.

Paula Storment, Vice President of Clinic Operations

Paula Storment, CPA, CMPE joined Washington Regional as vice president of clinic operations and oversees the physician enterprise. A native of Northwest Arkansas, Storment earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Arkansas. She previously served as the chief financial officer at MANA for nine years.

Birch Wright, Chief Operating Officer

Birch G. Wright, MPA assumed the role of chief operating officer and hospital administrator in March 2020. Wright leads hospital operations and strategic business development, providing day-to-day leadership that is aligned with Washington Regional’s mission and core values. Wright previously served as associate medical director and chief operating officer of the Veterans Healthcare System of the Ozarks.