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**FIVE PROVIDENCE HEALTH NURSES RECEIVE 2017 PALMETTO GOLD AWARD**

COLUMBIA, SC – Each year the South Carolina Nurses Foundation recognizes 100 nurses who exemplify excellence in practice and commitment to the profession. Nurses are nominated across the entire state from a variety of practice settings to receive this Palmetto Gold Nurse Award. This year, five nurses from Providence Health received the award.

These five individuals now join the prestigious group of past honorees who continue to serve and contribute high-quality care to patients.

- **Holly Lewis**
- **Traci Dennis**
- **Valarie Pendergrass**
- **Teresa Dixon**
- **Regina Gibson**

Each spring, the Palmetto Gold Gala is held to recognize the award recipients. The proceeds generated from this gala contribute to a scholarship fund for nursing students. In May during National Nursing Week, Providence Health will ceremoniously hang portraits of each of its 2017 recipients in the downtown hospital.

For more information on the Palmetto Gold program, go to <http://www.scpalmettogold.org/>.

**MORE ABOUT THE PROVIDENCE PALMETTO GOLD RECIPIENTS:****Holly Lewis****Certified Critical Care Nurse**

During the flood of 2015, Holly Lewis came in when she didn't have to and worked a 13-hour shift. When water became unusable, she arranged for instrument sterilization for the operating room to be done at an outside facility. She went to extraordinary lengths to keep the surgery department functional and safe for patients. Nurses she mentored have cited Holly as "the reason they stayed," because of the way she encouraged them through difficult times.

**Traci Dennis****Senior Charge Nurse**

Nursing is personal for Traci. When she was in high school, her father went to work one day and never came home, dying of a massive heart attack. She knew then that she wanted to care for cardiac patients. Traci is the clinical manager of the Cardiovascular Surgery Recovery unit. Her unit has no central line infections, no peripheral line infections, and has 100% compliance with DVT prophylaxis. The unit has achieved a 3-star rating from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons 20 consecutive times, and patient satisfaction for her unit remains at an all-time high.

**Valarie Pendergrass**  
**Bronchoscopy Lab Nurse**

Valarie Pendergrass had a very sick patient admitted with respiratory failure who wasn't getting better. The patient had an unusual tracheal device. Valarie went above and beyond, calling all over the country to learn more about the device. The patient improved quickly with her suggestions for the patient's care. She's known to pray with patients, bring them personal items they could not get for themselves and comfort them when troubled. She also volunteers her services to assist the homeless and giving flu shots. Her patients often say she makes them smile even when they don't feel well at all.

**Teresa Dixon**  
**Staff nurse**

This extraordinary bedside nurse has walked our hospital halls for more than 30 years, providing care and compassion to acutely ill patients in critical care. She was inspired by her grandmother, who practiced nursing until the age of 70. She is the first nurse considered to guide new hires, because those trained by her are known to have a better grasp of what they need to do, and fit more smoothly into the hospital's culture. Physicians ask for her when they face complicated procedures because of her high standards and critical-thinking skills.

**Regina Gibson**  
**Director of Emergency Room**

At 6 years old, Regina Gibson said, "I want to be a nurse. I want to help others." Now she is director of a fast-paced emergency room that sees more than 100 patients a day. Committed to excellence, her ER outperformed more than 740 hospitals to achieve the highest patient satisfaction scores. The standard goal for patients arriving in an emergency room with chest pain is to have an EKG within 10 minutes. Her ER averages 6 minutes. Regina says, "No matter who you encounter, you can touch their lives." She promotes the idea that patients should be treated like family, and she practices what she preaches.

**About Providence Health:**

A part of LifePoint Health, Providence Health is the leading provider of cardiovascular and orthopedic services in the Midlands. Providence is composed of two hospitals, sixteen physician practices, a network of rehabilitation centers, two sleep centers, an imaging and diagnostics lab, a school of cardiac diagnostics and an accredited chest pain center. In total, Providence employs more than 1,800 dedicated staff. Founded in 1938 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Providence is known statewide for outstanding clinical quality and compassionate care. Providence Health was recognized nationally by U.S. News & World Report, tying for second place as the Best Hospital in South Carolina. In addition, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services awarded Providence Health a 4-star rating, which is the highest rank issued to a Columbia health care entity. The Providence open heart surgery program has consistently ranked in the top 15 percent of open heart programs in the nation. Both orthopedics and cardiac services have received the South Carolina BlueCross BlueShield Blue Distinction Center designation. For more information, visit [YourProvidenceHealth.com](http://YourProvidenceHealth.com).

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