

## Professional development includes

- > Precepted orientation
- > In-service education
- > ACLS training (including updates)
- > Study leave to support continuous professional development (Short courses / conferences)
- > Higher diploma in Critical Care Nursing (ICU pathway)
- > Higher diploma in Clinical Practice – Gastrointestinal Nursing (Gastroenterology strand)

## Higher Diploma in Critical Care Nursing

St. Brigid's Ward is one of the main areas of clinical placement for the intensive care post-registration nursing students. The critical care nurse requires specialised professional education and practice to acquire specific knowledge, clinical and technical expertise and appropriate interpersonal skills in order to provide comprehensive holistic care to the critically ill patient and family. St. Brigid's Ward is an ideal location for gaining critical care experience for those interested in pursuing the Higher Diploma.

In association with the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Dublin (UCD), the Higher Diploma in Nursing Studies (Critical Care Nursing) is offered at St. Vincent's University Hospital. Clinical experience is gained on both day and night duty. The General ICU is the home base for higher diploma students, which also incorporates placements in the High Dependency Unit (HDU) and the National Liver Transplant Unit (St. Brigid's Ward)

We advise that students have, where possible, at least six months ICU nursing experience prior to commencing the programme which can be gained in St. Brigid's Ward.

## Outline of the Programme

The programme may be studied over one or two academic years depending on the students previous academic achievements. Year one (Part 1) comprises three modules: Nursing Theory and Practice I; Nursing Research; and Biological Sciences. Year two (Part 2) comprises five modules: Health Promotion and Health Education; Applied Research/Management/Clinical Leadership; Care of the Person with Altered Respiratory Function; Care of the person with Special Needs; and Care of the Person with Multi-organ Dysfunction. Nurses wishing to undertake the intensive care pathway must be employed in ICU during Year 2 of the course.

Theoretical content is delivered in University College Dublin, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital and St. Vincent's University Hospital followed by supernumerary clinical foundation placements in the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, the Blackrock Clinic and Mater Private Hospital. The Higher Diploma in Critical Care is led and directed by the UCD course leader, Ms. Katie Wedgeworth.

## Study Leave for Higher Diploma Students

For staff undertaking the higher diploma in critical care nursing, paid study leave is provided to support attendance at college, ACLS, exams and clinical placements. The amount of study leave depends on the number of modules undertaken (3.1 days – 24 hours per module). For example Year 1 (3 modules) = 9 study days (70.2 hours); Year 2 (5 modules) = 16 days (124.8 hours). This may change arising from course developments and the planned reviews of the study leave policy. Study leave is calculated in hours SD = 7.8 hours – a LD is 12 hours and ND 11.15 hours. A detailed Academic Study Leave Form is completed, along with a learning contract, and form of undertaking agreed with the CNM and returned to the Divisional Nurse Manager (DNM) for approval.

## How to Apply for a Position with the National Liver Transplant Programme

Application for a position in St. Brigid's Ward / Liver Unit should be made to the Divisional Nurse Manager (DNM). An application form will be sent to you, this should be completed and returned to Nursing Personnel. If you wish to transfer from an existing ward your letter of request should be submitted to the DNM. For enquiries please contact **Nursing Personnel at 2094605** or e-mail [g.semple@st-vincents.ie](mailto:g.semple@st-vincents.ie) see also [www.st-vincents.ie](http://www.st-vincents.ie)

## How to Apply for a Position on a Higher Diploma Course

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCD, advertise their postgraduate nursing programmes in the national media in February each year. The application process involves completing a detailed application form and submitting documentation, which will support your application.

Nurses wishing to undertake this programme should be registered with An Bord Altranais and have at least one-year post-registration nursing experience. Preference will be given to students with critical care experience.

Further information on the Higher Diploma in Nursing Studies (Critical Care Nursing) can be obtained from **Ms. Maria Blair**, Health Science Building, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4. **Tel 7166448** or **Ms Katie Wedgeworth** School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Dublin, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, **Tel 7166447** also see web page at [www.ucd.ie/nursing](http://www.ucd.ie/nursing)

*Prepared by National Liver Transplant Nursing Team March 2005*



# Thinking about a Career in Liver Transplant Nursing at

**ST. VINCENT'S UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**

Elm Park, Dublin 4

## Information for nurses interested in working in St. Brigid's Ward or the Liver Unit

How would you like to be part of a dynamic multidisciplinary team, which offers a unique experience in the medical and surgical care of patients with liver disease including transplantation? Arising from our unit refurbishment we are recruiting nurses to work as members of the team providing care to patients in the intensive care, high dependency and ward setting.

## Philosophy

The following philosophy underpins all we do ...

*'we strive for harmonious collaboration between all members of the multidisciplinary team, to promote an environment conducive to health and well being. Mutual respect for patients, relatives and staff of all our cultural differences and religious beliefs are ever paramount. We aim to provide health and well being to a successful discharge or to a dignified and comfortable repose. We remember and remain ever grateful to our donors and their families for the unique and selfless gift of life to alleviate the suffering of others'.*

## National Liver Transplant Programme

The National Liver Transplant programme located at St. Vincent's University Hospital commenced in 1993 and to date has performed 349 transplants on 293 patients. Approximately 40-45 adult liver transplant operations are undertaken per year. The unit also cares for patients with complex medical and surgical liver problems.

## Hepatitis C Services

The service currently caters for approximately 800 patients who have been exposed to the Hepatitis C virus regardless of mode of acquisition. The initial Hepatitis C nurses post was established in February 1994. In 1997 a second nurse was appointed. This was in response to the identification that blood and blood products, which had been administered in the state, had exposed individuals to Hepatitis C. Clinical Nurse Specialist status was granted from the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery in November 1999.

## St. Brigid's Ward

St. Brigid's ward provides a unique opportunity to be involved with the patient from initial assessment, to transplantation, through recovery, to discharge and beyond. The eleven-bedded ward (including 2 ICU/HDU beds) opened in 1993. A strong multidisciplinary team approach to care has been developed over the first decade of the programme. New technologies and treatment modalities have improved the outcome for transplant patients and provide an exciting challenge in the development of nursing practice.

The programme has been extremely successful and has resulted in an expansion of the ward to 21 beds that will include 5 HDU/ICU in the future. The expansion will facilitate the immediate postoperative care of patients undergoing liver transplantation, hepatobiliary and liver surgery; management of patients with acute liver failure and those with acute variceal haemorrhage requiring endoscopic interventions.

Strong support for learning is provided by all staff of St. Brigid's Ward with active participation in the preceptorship programme for BSc Nursing students on rostered and specialist placements. Staff are also encouraged to undertake the Principles of Hepatology and Transplant Nursing course at the University of Central England Birmingham.

## The Liver Unit

The Liver Unit at St. Rita's is the location of the administrative base for the National Liver Transplant programme and Hepatitis C services. The facility is based on the campus and comprises Reception, Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), Consultant and Clerical offices along with consulting rooms. The Hepatitis C outpatients clinics are currently located in the unit. The hepatology unit will be moving to a dedicated facility within the Ambulatory Day Care (ADC) service in the new hospital building currently being completed.

## New Intensive Care Unit Coming on Stream

Staff of St. Brigid's Ward work closely with the staff in the General ICU (8 bedded unit). A major expansion programme for ICU is currently nearing completion in front of the main hospital, planned to open within the next year. The brand new state of the art unit will incorporate 16 critical care beds with panoramic views of Dublin bay on the fourth floor of the new building. With the most recent technology and up-to-date planning it is intended to create a spacious, bright friendly working environment for patients, visitors and all members of the multidisciplinary team.

## Nursing Positions

Experience in this area can be obtained in clinical practice, management, specialist practice, clinical education and research. An outline of the key nursing positions is given below:

- Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM) - CNM1, CNM2 and CNM3 positions
- Clinical Facilitator, National Liver Transplant Programme
- Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) – CNS Liver Transplant Co-ordinators and CNS Hepatitis C
- Staff Nurses with Intensive Care nursing expertise
- Staff Nurses with Hepatology nursing expertise
- Health Care Assistants (HCA)

## Multidisciplinary Team

Each shift is lead by a CNM with one to one nurse patient ratios for ICU patients and one to two for HDU patients, supported by a Health Care Assistant, Secretary and Orderly. A Consultant Hepatologist leads the medical team. The full team comprises: the Clinical Facilitators, Liver Transplant Coordinators, Hepatitis C CNSs, Microbiologists, Clinical Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians, Physiotherapists, Dieticians, Medical Social Worker, Radiographers, Clinical Engineers, Cleaners, and members of the Chaplaincy service.

Along side the daily patient management the multidisciplinary team meets formally on a weekly basis to review patient progress and consider patients being assessed for liver transplant.

## Orientation

A comprehensive orientation programme is offered for all new staff/staff transferring to St. Brigid's Ward / Liver Unit.

• New staff members attend the hospital orientation programme (5 days) arranged by the Nurse Education Center. Mandatory in-service education is covered during this week; CPR, Moving and Handling, I/V Policy and Fire safety.

• A supernumerary orientation is arranged for each new staff member by the Clinical Facilitator in consultation with the CNMs, which incorporates a competency based continuous skills evaluation.

## Clinical Support

Clinical Facilitators, CNMs and experienced staff are present to guide new staff members and students to the knowledge, experience and skills required for the development of a competent Liver Transplant nurse.

## Duty Patterns St. Brigid's Ward

Duty patterns offer flexibility to balance, where possible, work and personal commitments. The team comprises full-time and part-time nurses. The majority of staff chose to work a Long Day (LD) shift pattern. Each long day = 12 hours; 156 hours worked over a 4 week period = 13 LDs. Total 39 hours per week divided over a 4- week period. This means you work 3 weeks of 3-LDs and 1 of 4 LDs (1:4 rota) per month. Internal rotation to night duty is in operation, however ICU course students are not rostered for night duty on the day prior to or after a scheduled theory day.

## Annual Leave

Holidays for full time nursing staff (pro rata for part-time) are planned in the following way:

- > 78 hours (2 weeks) by the end of April.
- > 156 hours (4 weeks) by the end of August.
- > 234 hours (6 weeks) by the end of December.

Holidays are calculated in hours and are taken in 39 hour weeks. All leave must be taken within the calendar year, as it cannot be carried forward.

## Professional Development

The national liver transplant programme offers nurses an abundance of opportunities for professional growth and development.

## We provide

- > An autonomous and supportive environment
- > Exposure to the latest advances in treatment
- > Diverse patient populations
- > Continuous challenges to stimulate critical thinking skills.

St. Vincent's is strongly committed to and supportive of career development for nurses.