

Marlene Meyer, FULD Fellow, Cohort II



Among ICUs nationwide, 70% of patients with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) do not receive lung-protective ventilation, resulting in an estimated 5,465 preventable deaths each year (Pronovost et al., 2004). The goal of my quality improvement project is to increase adherence to low-tidal-volume ventilation (LTVV) in patients with ARDS in the Weinberg ICU. The project objectives involve identifying local barriers to LTVV use, measuring adherence to protocol, and developing strategies to ensure all ARDS patients receive LTVV. Under the mentorship of Pedro Mendez, MD, I attended rounds to observe team adherence and distributed an online survey to nurses regarding knowledge, attitudes, and perceived barriers. After consulting with the unit's nurse practitioner about nurse-specific training needs, I created an education module focused on empowering nurses to advocate for lung-protective ventilation, to speak up when guidelines are not being followed, and to mentor new nurses in calling for LTVV.

I am a BSN candidate, graduating December 2013. In 1991, I graduated from University of Wisconsin-Madison with a bachelor's degree in zoology. In 1996, I returned to complete a master's degree in counseling psychology. My graduate training focused on solution-focused brief therapy and generating systemic change. I have more than a decade of experience working with individuals, families, and groups, and collaborating with interdisciplinary treatment teams.

From my background as a therapist and my work as a Fuld fellow, I have come to appreciate that focusing on small, achievable goals, exceptions to problems, unit culture, and empowering nurses to advocate for evidence-based practice can determine whether or not change is adopted.

As a new graduate, I hope to join a unit that embraces quality improvement as part of its mission and actively encourages nurses to lead these projects. At a fundamental level, joining a team dedicated to improving patient safety and satisfaction is intrinsically rewarding because it affects change at a systems level and improves overall patient outcomes. My long-term goal is to pursue advanced practice, teach, and continue to develop as a leader by making positive, lasting contributions to patient safety and quality of life.