

# Look into health care

## ■ Valley General Hospital offers competitive jobs in caring environment

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There has been a change in the face of local health care.

Patients are no longer defined by their illness but by who they are as a whole.

Health-care environments are being redesigned, and cutting edge technologies, once only available in big cities, are now here in Snohomish County.

This is great news for nurses, imaging technicians, physical therapists and other medical professionals. They no longer need to commute to find a satisfying forward-looking workplace in which they can feel confident. Valley General Hospital in Monroe is one of those that has focused on providing high-level care in a nurturing supportive environment.

“Our pay is competitive with downtown Seattle,” said recruiter Stacy Riden. “But you don’t have to commute to get it. We have a very rich retirement program. We have 100-percent employer-paid insurance premiums and very good time-off benefits.”

Add to this the fact that employees are able to live and work in their own community and it creates a positive situation.

Nurse manager Alleson Lansel has experienced first hand the satisfaction of serving the community in which she lives.

“It’s an amazing thing to be able to give to your community in a meaningful way,” Lansel said. “We used to call ourselves a rural hospital and we can’t call ourselves rural anymore. In our technology, we’re competing right up there with all of the hospitals in the area.”

Perhaps the biggest benefit to working at a community hospital such as Valley General is that it is smaller. The staff is able to bond as a team. A hospitalist program provides staff physicians to ensure continuity for both inpatients and care staff. New

employees find they are supported in a friendly helpful manner.

“We’re pretty proactive in addressing the issues of how we work together, caregiver to caregiver, and making sure we have the best of relationships,” Lansel said. “We have an infrastructure here that supports that process to ensure success.”

Lansel is aware that each person is an individual with his or her own way of learning. Because Valley General is small, she and her colleagues are better able to track new people and individualize their training to support success.

Caregivers also enjoy diverse nursing opportunities. In a large hospital, nurses hire onto a specific floor such as orthopedics or telemetry. It narrows the type of patients they come in contact with and the type of nursing that they do.

“In this hospital you get many different aspects of nursing,” Lansel said. “They’re going to be taking care of patients across the life span. The same thing is true of our ER, too. We’re going to grow your skills to where you can diversify into almost any career track that you want.”

For those who are just beginning their careers, it means gaining a wide experience and knowledge base. But it’s also appealing for established nurses who find they are trapped on a single floor at distant medical center. Valley General offers them a chance to come on board in their own community, enjoy the variety and make a difference.

“We’re one of the first in the state to be focusing in on staff safety and bring it to the equality of patient safety,” Lansel added. “We have a very active program working on that. We’ve also done a very nice job of bringing in lift devices so that nurses can actually have a career and not destroy their backs.”

The hospital is in the process of researching some new nursing modalities for providing patient comfort. An

oncology program is in the works, and they’re developing a wound-management program complete with hyperbaric capacity.

They’re also in the process of changing the décor to more natural color tones to enhance patient peace of mind. Recent research suggests that people in the 50-plus age group have a greater sense of wellbeing in a room with golden tones. Below that age group, green tones tend to be more soothing. The facility will feature both color schemes.

Sound also can be key to both patient and staff comfort. At Valley General they are implementing a research-driven program that provides different types of music in different areas depending upon use. For example, in a waiting area, the type of music being played may be designed to promote a sense of calm for nervous patients and their families. Other types of music may be designed to encourage focus.

The hospital recently worked with the community to build a healing garden. A multi-denominational chapel was created with natural colors and materials to promote a sense of wellbeing. Recognition programs acknowledge those who give a little extra.

“There are two types of facility,” Lansel said. “There is the facility that gives words that the nurses will be satisfied and there’s the facility that does something. We do something. We support our nurses. I’m impressed with us and I have the greatest faith that we will continue to use these parameters as we continue to build this hospital.”

● *If you would like to learn about career opportunities and joining the team at Valley General Hospital, you can contact Stacey Riden at (360) 805-3478, fax (360) 805-3459 or email at [hr@valley-general.org](mailto:hr@valley-general.org).*

*Find more information at the hospital’s Web site [www.valleygeneral.org](http://www.valleygeneral.org).*