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*Five Year Anniversary*

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The Authority for the Continuing Advancement of Endoscopic Nursing



## Louisiana Nurses Assist Hurricane Victims

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## Louisiana Nurses Assist Hurricane Refugees

By Kathy Dix

Some might say that the claim to fame for the Endoscopy Center of Monroe, Louisiana, is that it was the second freestanding endoscopic facility in the United States, opening in 1988. But the patients and physicians would say that the staff is the most crucial element. "Everyone was really caring and helpful; the staff talked to me as if I was the most important patient there," stated a patient in a recent satisfaction survey.

Perhaps it is "southern hospitality" that influences their work with the patients; however, it is also the support of the physicians on staff and administration. Joan Baldwin, CGRN, director of nursing, states, "I think we might be the only endoscopy center that sends the entire staff to the SGNA annual meetings and pays SGNA membership dues for all its nurses."

Educating the staff on the newest technologies and procedures is one of the priorities emphasized by management. The endoscopy center's medical staff has taken a keen interest in presenting lectures to the nursing staff on new technologies such as capsule endoscopy and Bravo pH studies. One physician gave a series of lectures from the SGNA's "Gastroenterology Nursing — A Core Curriculum" to prepare the nurses for the certification exam.

"Our goal is to have 100 percent of our staff certified," says Baldwin. This support from the physicians on staff has been an underlying reason for the nurses' enjoyment of their work and ability to function as a team. The endoscopy center's nurses are cross-trained to work in several different areas, making the



From left to right: Front Row: Joan Baldwin, CGRN, Regina Gaines, RMA, Melissa McCullars, LPN Back Row: Kathy Spillers, ST, Stacy Giddings, ST, Amy Brooks, LPN, Jodi Beavers, LPN, Suzonne Jolly, RN, Krista Harris, LPN, Blake Bamburg, ST, Melissa Brunn, RN and Susan Nielsen, RN

department run more efficiently. From studying together to assisting each other in making a patient more comfortable, this nursing staff is a unique group.

Following Hurricane Katrina in the fall of 2005, the city of Monroe became a shelter for over 5,000 evacuees. The physicians and nursing staff personally collected donations and supplies to deliver to the shelter. Not only that, but the endoscopy center waived its fees and worked closely with the Red Cross to provide gastrointestinal and endoscopic care to any displaced patient needing their help. "This influx of patient care increased the hours each day for all the staff, yet many of them would leave the center after an exhausting day and go directly to the shelter to continue helping the evacuees," says Theresa Brandle, RHIA, director of quality assurance for the center.

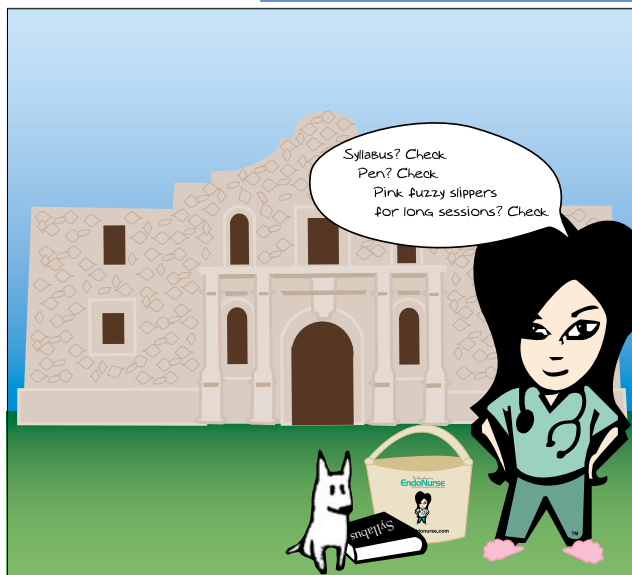
Monroe also provided a shelter for hundreds of displaced animals. Susan Nielsen, RN, the endoscopy center's admission nurse, spent countless hours and nights feeding, walking, and giving her support to these animals that were frightened and missing their owners. The endoscopy center's nurses gave from their heart their time, talent and compassion to all who came their way who were affected by this insurmountable tragedy.

"It could be said that the secret to this center's success lies within the combination of a highly educated nursing staff backed by supportive physicians and administrators," Brandle says. "Nurses at the Endoscopy Center of Monroe know that it is the sheer enjoyment of working with friends, a genuine compassion for each patient, plus a touch of southern hospitality that achieves great success. And that's their real claim to fame ... always being an Endo All-Star team."

*Byrne Medical, Inc., salutes the nurses at the Endoscopy Center of Monroe, La., for their hard work and commitment to exemplary patient care. The team will receive a commemorative plaque in celebration of their EndoNurse All-Star recognition.*

## The Adventures of Endonurse

2006 SGNA Conference



EndoNurse on a Mission

By Tamara Elliott and Kathy Dix