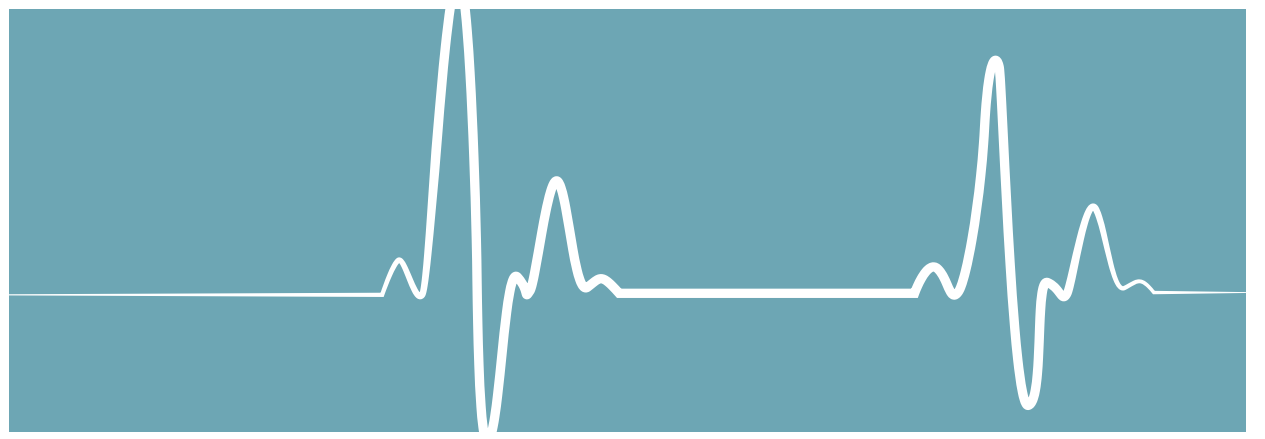


HEALTH REPORT



At Sentara, people are the priority

"Am I going to die?" asked David Orta Vega's patient. "Yes," said David. "But not today. Not on my watch."

David, along with Deidre Thomas and Harlen Pepito, comprise a triumvirate at Sentara's Heart and Vascular Center that embodies the hospital's unified goal to provide each patient with the very best care using cutting-edge science and technology, humility, humor, and compassion.

The old adage, "It's not personal; it's business," doesn't apply at Sentara's Heart and Vascular Center. It's all personal. It's about the people—the patients. Working together every day, side-by-side, the staff and doctors see their patients as family. That level of care sets Sentara apart from other hospitals. Above and beyond the advances in medicine and research, it's this level of concern that's improving patient outcomes and creating healthier communities.

A dream team with a commitment to patient care

David, Deidre, and Harlen each entered the healthcare field as a calling. Rather than believing that they chose healthcare, they believe healthcare chose them. Between them, they have 88 years of experience in healthcare.

"I was surrounded by a family of health care professionals," said Deidre. "My father died in Vietnam. I was always challenged in my youth to commit and serve. During my junior year of high school, my mother was critically ill. Seeing the compassion and expert care that the nurses provided to my mother inspired me to accept a military nursing scholarship from Walter Reed."

Harlen shares this deep drive to care for and build community. "Nursing is a career that requires selflessness and public service," said Harlen. "I cannot see myself being anything else. It has been fulfilling professionally and personally."

Patients they'll never forget

Like Deidre, David also had a brush with family hardship that focused his attention on medicine. Early in his career, his sister was diagnosed with breast cancer. David was closely involved in her care and treatment. David's sister lost her battle with cancer on David's birthday in 1990. Her favorite quote was by baseball player Roberto Clemente: "Any time you have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth."

David thinks of his sister and that quote everyday. "She will always be my favorite patient," said David. "I will follow her advice for the rest of my career and the rest of my life."

Deidre's early experiences as a Captain in the Army Nurse Corps (ANC) showed her that caregiving extends far beyond life, and far beyond the patient she is treating. Her first experience with a dying patient and his family during her time with ANC shaped her career and her life.

It was very clear that her patient, a Vietnam veteran, was dying. At one point, he turned to Deidre and said, "Thank you for all you have done for me. I no longer need you, but my family does. Please take care of them. Don't let my dying be the end for them. Talk with them. Remembering things that went on here will bring some comfort to them."

Deidre was stunned. This man, on his deathbed, wasn't concerned about himself. He was concerned with the people who would be left to pick up the pieces, and Deidre committed herself to his wishes to take care of his family.

She never forgot that patient, and she never forgot his message. Deidre felt the weight of that responsibility to care for a patient's loved ones after the patient passed, and was honored to take up that responsibility. In that one moment with her patient, she became acutely aware of the difference she could and would make as a nurse.

Inspired by the journey, and inspiring others along the way

Harlen trained to be a nurse in Auckland, New Zealand, and then moved to Melbourne, Australia before landing in the United States. She's been able to travel with her husband and two sons. By watching her, they have seen the sacrifice and public service a nurse devotes to their profession. She wants her sons to find a career that offers them the same sense of personal and professional fulfillment that she found.

When she thinks of her patients, Harlen realizes the many ways in which her career as a nurse has allowed her to impact each of them. "This is the idea that makes me love my work as a nurse."

Walking the walk and talking the talk

In many organizations across every industry, there is a lot of lip service paid to customer experience. There's a lot of clever, glossy marketing that paints the picture of care, concern, and commitment. By investing in its people such as David, Deidre, and Harlen, who are invested in their patients, Sentara has hit upon the authenticity that all of these organizations want. Their patients aren't numbers; they're people with lives and families, and that point-of-view is exactly what healthcare in America should be. As Deidre so eloquently stated, "As a nurse, my priorities are patient, patient's family, and then myself."

About this section: This special advertising section was prepared by independent writer Christa Rose Avampato. The production of this section did not involve the news or editorial staff of The Washington Post.



Harlen Pepito, Deidre Thomas and David Orta Vega
Sentara Heart and Vascular Center

The Heartbeat of Great Healthcare

A message shared from our team's heart:

"Healthcare chose me. There is nothing better than living and working in the same community. I have taken care of my neighbors over the last 25 years. Knowing I made a difference in someone's life. It doesn't get any better than that."

- David Orta Vega, Lead Invasive Lab Technologist

Compassionate, Expert Care

The **Sentara Heart and Vascular Center** is here with the region's leading heart experts providing the best in care, close to home in Prince William County.

Find a cardiologist, primary care or specialist provider in your neighborhood.
Call 1-800-SENTARA or visit sentara.com