

## VALOR Experience

Nursing was a second career for me, and it is one of the best choices I have ever made. During my third semester at California State University Sacramento, when the nursing program was three years long, I sought internship opportunities through the school. I was fortunate to apply for, interview, and get selected for the Veteran Affairs Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR) program in June 2008, with 9 other students. I was a VALOR for one year on the Transitional Care Unit (TCU) from June 2008, until I passed my board exam in June 2009. The experience as a VALOR student helped me tremendously in developing many nursing skills before I became a full-time nurse. I overcame my fear of medication pass, developed an understanding of our unique Veteran population, and tackled the challenge of time management as an up and coming nurse. This paid internship was also very helpful financially while still a student, completing nursing school. I was able to complete my 800 hours during summer and winter breaks, and holidays. It was a valuable experience that I will always be grateful for.

After graduating from nursing school in two and a half years instead of three, I was hired in TCU in August 2009, when a full-time position became available. I continued to work there for six and a half years. I had always wanted to work in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), but unfortunately, unexperienced ICU nurses were unable to work on that unit. I frequently asked the educators and manger how I could get experience, until one day, the Modified Critical Care Transition (MCCT) Program was offered. This program was an avenue for career advancement within the VA and to add to retention of nurses. I was one of two RN's selected for the program, and the only one in the organization to complete the program. Since completing the program and transferring to the ICU as a full time RN in 2015, new graduate nurses are now able to work straight into the ICU and get trained. I worked in the ICU for two and a half years before taking a job as the Assistant Nurse Manager on the Medical Surgical Unit (MSU) in April 2018.

Today, I have been working as the MSU nurse manager since July 2019. I feel blessed to have seen the organizational evolution, advancement, and expansion of the VA Northern California Health Care System over the last twelve years. I am working towards obtaining my master's degree through the VA NNEI scholarship program and continue towards professional and personal development through leadership prospects. The VALOR program has assisted with preparing me through this VA journey and I am so appreciative for the all the opportunities.

Respectfully,

*Daisy Chock*

Daisy Chock, BSN, RN

MSU Nurse Manager