



## Co-worker Profile

### MIRIAM ENGEMANN, *Clinical Research Nurse*

Miriam Engemann knew that she wanted to be a nurse ever since she lost her father at age 11.

“I’ve wanted to help people all my life,” she says.

She followed this passion with a single-mindedness rare in young people. As a teenager, she served as a candystriper, volunteering at the local hospital passing out water to patients and rocking babies to sleep in the nursery. And for the next 39 years, she worked as a nurse, including a stint at Mercy. But after over four decades, she was ready for something else.

She found a new opportunity as a Clinical Research Nurse at Mercy Research in Washington. “I was glad to come back to Mercy,” she says. “I’d worked for Mercy before, and everything about this ministry, like the values and the culture here, really resonated with me. But it took some adjustment on my part. My first year was just so overwhelming. There was a lot I didn’t know about research.”

But her natural traits and almost four decades on the job gave her an edge in tackling her duties -- patient care and data management—with quiet competence and a confidence that she radiates.

“It’s up to the research nurses and coordinators not only to recruit and care for the patients, but also to enter and manage the data,” she says. “We analyze, document, log patient interactions and responses, and collect data unique to each study. I’ve always been a perfectionist, but now even more so. You’re answering to Mercy, to the FDA, to the State Board of Nursing, to the study sponsors—everything has to be just so.”

And she brings another asset to her work: her nurse’s intuition.

“Patient care is really at the heart of what I do,” she says. “After as long as I’ve been doing it, you really develop a sixth sense for how patients are doing: how they’re feeling, how they’re responding, and you just intuitively know when something isn’t right.”

In her time at Mercy, she’s worked on over 17 different clinical trials, including treatments for high cholesterol, diabetes, colon cancer and congestive heart failure (CHF). She supported a study that measured the impact of an investigational drug, Canagliflozin, on the health status, functional status and quality of life for CHF patients. This study was done virtually and was the first of its kind for Mercy Research.

One of her current studies, VIRUS (Viral Infection & Respiratory Illness Universal Study), is a COVID-19 registry study. Looking at ICU patients, the study documents variables like length of stay, demographics, lab and radiology data, vital signs, neurological and cardiovascular complications and response to treatments. Headed by Mercy’s Chakra Venkata, MD in partnership with the Mayo Clinic, VIRUS promises to be one of the most comprehensive studies yet on the effects and treatments of COVID-19. It will, Miriam hopes, shed some more light on a disease which, as much as it’s been studied, still presents more questions than answers and has many aspects that are still mysterious.

Just recently, Miriam was asked to be a part of the research team supporting Precision Medicine at Mercy, which she is very excited to join. This is a new endeavor for Mercy as well as Mercy Research. According to the NIH, Precision Medicine is an innovative approach that uses information about an individual’s genomic, environmental and lifestyle information to guide decisions related to their medical management. The goal is to provide a more precise approach for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease.

How does her role at Mercy Research differ from her prior nursing roles?

“Pretty much every day is a new experience,” she says. “But the goal is still the same. I know what I do here benefits people. I’ve had to pick up a lot of new skill sets, but everything I’ve done has rounded out my knowledge. It’s never boring.”