



[careers]

Photos by STEVE REED

Facilities planner Michael St. Clair (left), former RN Beverly Dorney, project architect Larry Chan and "people ambassador" Christi Morgan discuss a project at FKP Architects.

Clinician transition

BY JOHANNAH LUZA



Beverly Dorney has taken her clinical expertise to new heights at FKP Architects.

Beverly Dorney still practices nursing — yet she rarely encounters a patient.

A former registered nurse and administrative director at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas, Ms. Dorney now is a member of the planning team at FKP Architects, a firm that specializes in health-care, medical, scientific and research projects.

"My first Christmas with FKP, I actually went to New York for a whole week with no pager — no umbilical cord connecting me to the hospital," she says.

Ms. Dorney is among the tide of practitioners who are leaving patient care for non-clinical work. The transition is paying off. Although her work hours are more diverse and intense at times, she has the option of working from home. And she still works closely with the teams at the hospital, which she enjoys.

"When I started with FKP I had this pact with our president," Ms. Dorney says. "He would not try to make me an architect and I would not try to make him a nurse!"

Dallas resident Betsy Good was born into a family of health-care professionals. Her father and brother were physicians and her mother and sister went into nursing. Following tradition, Ms. Good used her own patient-care skills as a case manager and social worker in a hospital. But after five years, the facility closed its doors and her career path took a new turn.

"I was offered a position in sales, marketing health-care services," Ms. Good says, "and although I wasn't looking to get out of the patient-care arena, the opportunity was appealing and I was excited to try something new."

Ms. Good's new position provided a higher income and the opportunity to move into management and "learn how to run a business successfully."

Through her own sales consulting business, Ms. Good now has a position with Quest, a Microsoft partner, to develop a health-care services market.

"Case management and sales are similar," she says. "Both require helping to identify needs and apply solutions."

Tracy Nixon, vice president of a start-up hospital company responsible for implementing systems, policies and overall infrastructure, says her desire to take on more management responsibilities in clinical roles helped prepare her for her current job.

"The key is to become involved," says Ms. Nixon, a former speech pathologist. "Participate in activities outside actual job responsibilities, coordinate quality assurance initiatives specific to your area and learn how other departments operate to familiarize yourself with the operational aspects of the business."

If you're looking at a career change, "seek the real passion you have," Ms. Dorney advises.

"All successful careers require hard work and dedication and the grass is not always greener on the other side," she says. "For me, I have found a great place to practice nursing. I may not touch patients physically anymore, but I do hope I impact their care environment and make their experience a better one." ■



Beverly Dorney uses computer programs to simulate various scenarios within the proposed design, enabling FKP Architects to see how plans will work before they are finalized.

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