**Name**

Rachel Gates

**Credentials**

BS, RRT-RCP

**Education**

Bachelor‘s of Science from The Ohio State University

**Years of Experience**

2

**Current Place of Employment**

Duke University Hospital

**Role in Respiratory Care**

Advanced Respiratory Care Practitioner and Pediatric Core Team Lead

**What do you enjoy most about your position?**

As a pediatric respiratory therapist, I truly enjoy the patients I get to work with every day. But, as an ICU therapist, I often do not see my patients at their best. I look forward to meeting the families and hearing all about their little one. It is something truly amazing to experience a very sick child slowly progress and return to the happy, playful, and charismatic child his or her parents have described throughout their stay.

**What are your biggest challenges in your position?**

Some of the biggest challenges in my position are the heart-breaking stories and trauma my patients experience. Being in a pediatric ICU, I have seen more than I ever thought I would in my two short years, and it has made me realize how much my patients need advocates. Each day, I try to do my very best to help my patients and their families in even the most difficult of situations.

**Would you please identify one strength in our profession (not job description) as a whole and why you feel it is a strength?**

One strength in our profession is our flexibility. Often unharnessed, we can work in a variety of settings providing insight and education to many different populations including sleep, cardiopulmonary rehab, neuromuscular clinics, and inpatient care. With the rise of respiratory conditions and cardiopulmonary diseases, I believe we have many opportunities for expansion that will take respiratory therapy from a consultation group to a cornerstone of healthcare.

**Would you identify one weakness in our profession (not job description) as a whole and why you feel it is a weakness?**

Our biggest weakness is our lack of publicity. “Respiratory therapist” is not a common household term as is “nurse,” “doctor,” or even “physical therapist.” As an aging profession, we need to spread the word about our profession to meet the demands of our ever-growing healthcare system. Imagine a time when you ask a child what they would like to be when they grow up, and they respond with, “a respiratory therapist.” Publicity could help us increase university enrollment and educate more respiratory therapists to fulfill the profession’s growing staffing needs.

**What health care skills would you like to develop?**

As I progress in my career as a respiratory therapist, I would like to develop more as a therapist but also as a member of the ICU team. I feel extremely grateful to be able to work with such a thoughtful and intelligent team of individuals. I hope that I never stop learning from my respiratory coworkers but also from my ICU team members. Learning from them, I hope to develop health care skills that go beyond the cardiopulmonary system and help me understand the bigger picture of treating my patients.

**Is there anything you would like to share with our readers?**

I do not believe I have been in the respiratory profession long enough to give advice. But, I can definitely say what keeps me going is seeing patients like those we treat in their real lives. Every year, I go to a week-long camp for children with tracheostomies and those who require technological respiratory assistance. These kids are exactly like the sick children I take care of in the hospital, so seeing them in an environment that they are able to swim, canoe, climb, and zipline like healthy, happy children is truly a rewarding and refreshing experience that reminds me why I love being a respiratory therapist.

**Could you please attach a photo?**

•Yes

No