

Transitioning Experienced Nurses: One Acute-Care Organization's Journey

Lee Health

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Introduction

Health care organizations struggle recruiting experienced nurses into many specialty areas. Although there is a plethora of newly-licensed nurses entering the nursing profession, recruiting experienced nurses remains challenging. As a result, many organizations are following the Institute of Medicine's (2011) recommendations in developing transition-to-practice programs for experienced nurses changing specialties. The Nursing Professional Development (NPD) practitioner is challenged with meeting the needs of these transitioning nurses.



Purpose of the Pilot

Experienced nurses transitioning to new specialties have unique needs similar to newly-licensed nurses (Benner, 1984). Varied backgrounds and knowledge of experienced nurses result in the need for customized orientation plans. It is important that the NPD practitioner assess, develop, and validate the knowledge, skills, abilities, along with the attitude of the transitioning nurse. These nurses also require monitoring and support of their psychosocial needs to assist with the transition. Failure to adequately meet their needs can lead to increased turnover rates which could be upwards of \$88,000 per nurse (Kovner, Brewer, Fatechi, & Jun, 2014).

Objectives

After reviewing the poster, the participant will:

- Explain the steps needed to implement an experienced nurse transition-to-practice program
- Identify two challenges when developing and evaluating an experienced nurse transition program

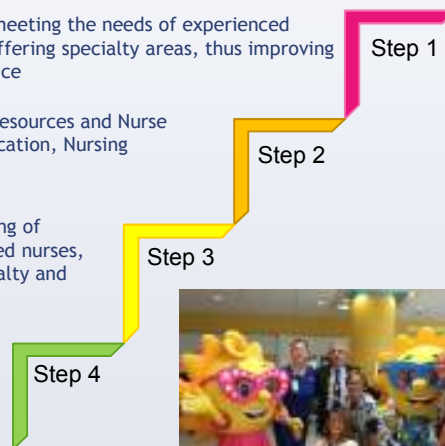
Steps

Step 1 Strategic Planning: Succession planning, meeting the needs of experienced nurses while alleviating the nursing shortage by offering specialty areas, thus improving satisfaction and retention, while advancing practice

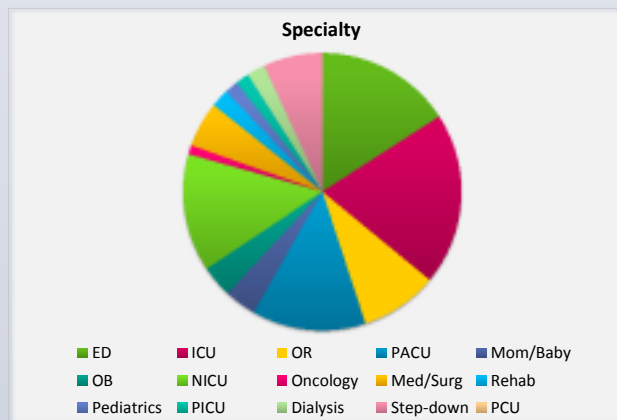
Step 2 Partnerships with Stakeholders: Human Resources and Nurse Recruiters, Senior Financial Partners, Clinical Education, Nursing Leadership and Registered Staff Nurses

Step 3 Recruitment Selection Process: Job posting of specialized fellowship targeted toward experienced nurses, interviews with NPD practitioner to identify specialty and discuss training and orientation process

Step 4 Development: Individualized orientation plan may include unit-based education, didactic classes, online modules, clinical coach support and ongoing progress meetings with NPD practitioner



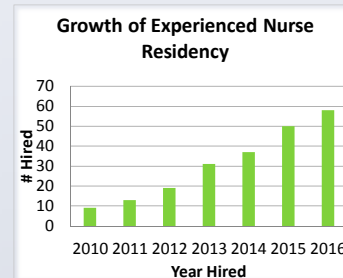
Outcomes



- 2010 to 2016, a total of 217 experienced nurses hired into 15 specialties
- First year turnover: 3% voluntary turnover
- In 2016: 3 nurse recoveries, moved to a new unit, but retained for the organization

Challenges

One of the major challenges included the need to create a customized orientation based on each experienced nurse's background and the new specialty. Moving from expert to novice also posed a psychosocial impact and required more emotional support during the transition. Understanding the needs of a unique population and learning new technical skills also posed a challenge. One last issue to manage was what to do if the experienced nurse did not acclimate to the new specialty. A recovery program was implemented, so they could transfer the nurse to a new area.



Lessons Learned

- Encourage the experienced nurse to shadow prior to accepting the new position
- Number of weeks for orientation were approximately half of that of a new graduate
- Experienced nurses transition better if given a unit specific orientation
- Experienced coaches help ease the transition
- Anticipate and offer psychosocial support
- Specialty transitional programs enhanced job satisfaction and increased retention

References

Benner, P. (1984). *From novice to expert: Excellence and power in clinical nursing practice*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley

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Kovner, C., T., Brewer, C. S., Fatechi, F., & Jun, J. (2014). What does nurse turnover rate mean and what is the rate? *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice*, 15(3-4), 64-71.