

Developing Future Nurse Leaders through Innovation

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Background

It is anticipated that this decade will present many challenges for the health care industry and for the profession of nursing. The role of nurse leaders in promoting changes necessary in the work culture to address the many challenges is considered essential. Even in this current economic downturn, recruitment to fill nurse leader vacancies is proving difficult for many health care agencies in the State of Florida and is likely to intensify during this decade.

Purpose

The purposes of the model initiatives are:

- 1) To develop future nurse leaders through innovative leveling from novice to expert.
- 2) To address leadership succession planning challenges in our community.

Collaborative initiatives engage new nurses as they enter practice and continue to promote their leadership development as they advance through a formal emerging leadership masters program.

Outcome Goals for initiatives include:

- Retention in the employment setting
- Development and evolution of a leadership mindset
- Development and evolution of a leadership knowledge base and skill set
- Promotion of articulation to a higher level of nursing education
- Establishment of a network of current and future nurse leaders

Model

An ongoing community partnership with an academic institution and several healthcare institutions created an innovative model for developing nurse leaders that begins at the onset of practice with novice nurses and continues through expert levels of nurse leadership.

Methodology

Programmatic development and evaluation as participatory action research with education and community healthcare institutions. Quantitative and qualitative research methods utilized.

Findings

When nurses were engaged in leadership development activities in their first year of practice, the following outcomes were achieved:

- 1) Organizational Retention
- 2) Development of Leadership Competencies
- 3) Completion of Evidence-based Projects
- 4) Involvement on Committees/taskforces
- 5) Articulation to Higher Education

The success of this five -year program and interest of participants in formal nurse leadership positions led to the development of a formal emerging leaders masters degree program in nursing.

Summary

Innovative initiatives for nurse leadership development designed to meet the needs of the novice nurse and beyond are useful, contribute to the evolution of nurse leaders, provide a pool of nurse leaders within a community and impact health outcomes.

