

## ABSTRACT

New graduate nurses are needed to fill the ever-growing needs of the nursing workforce <sup>(1)</sup>. Unfortunately, current trends show that high numbers of new nurses leave their first assignment in less than a year, and many leave nursing altogether <sup>(2)</sup>. The Institute of Medicine recommends institutions create nurse residency or transition-to-practice programs to support the new graduate nurse and to help them achieve a more successful transition from student to practicing nurse <sup>(3)</sup>. Programs which include a mentor have been found not only to improve the successful transition from new graduate to practicing nurse but also to improve new nurse retention <sup>(4)</sup>. This MSN Project proposes the implementation of a new nurse mentor program to reduce first-year turnover in new nurses.

## PICO QUESTION

In newly hired nurses, does having a well-trained, designated mentor compared to a standard orientation, without a mentor, reduce turnover or intent to leave within the first year of employment?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review showed the effectiveness of nurse residency and transition to practice programs. The evidence showed several common themes.

- Nurse residency and transition-to-practice programs effectively aid in transition to practice <sup>(5)</sup>.
- Nurses who participate in programs show significant improvements in satisfaction, communication, accountability, and independence <sup>(6)</sup>.
- Mentors were identified as the most essential component of a transition program <sup>(5)</sup>.
- These programs indicate a positive effect on retention of new nurses <sup>(7)</sup>.

# Improving Nurse Retention Through Mentoring

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## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Cedar City Hospital is a community hospital located in Southern Utah. Due to the small number of nurses working on any given shift, departments are greatly affected by nursing turnover and the training of new nurses. This master's project seeks to decrease turnover rates in newly hired nurses through the implementation of a nurse mentor program. To facilitate the presentation, implementation, and evaluation of the mentor program, three deliverables were created. First, an education plan was created that outlines the need for and expected benefits of the program and presented to hospital leaders. This plan also showed the details of assigning a mentor to each new nurse for their first year. In addition, the following were created to evaluate the mentor program: a pre-survey used to establish a baseline and a follow-up survey to evaluate the progress and end results of the program. Working with Human Resources, nurse managers, and nurse educators, baseline data will be established, and program participants will be identified.

### Implementation

- Meeting with Cyndi Wallace, CNO.
- Present to nurse managers in monthly HLT meeting.
- Meet with HR, obtain list of new nurses hired within the last 2 years and historical turnover data.
- Send pre-surveys to nurses identified by HR.
- Use survey results and turnover data to establish baselines.
- Meet with managers and educators from each department to identify potential mentors and establish expectations.

### Evaluation

- Follow-up surveys will be given to participants every 3 months during their first year.
- Results will be used to monitor participation and effectiveness of mentors.
- Follow-up surveys will also be given at the completion of the first year.
- Turnover data will be acquired from HR for the test period.
- Survey results and turnover data will be compared to baseline data to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
- Results will be presented to the hospital leadership in monthly HLT meeting.



## FRAMEWORK

The Iowa Model is a multiphase evidence-based change process that guides healthcare providers in making decisions that affect healthcare outcomes <sup>(12)</sup>. This model was chosen due to its applicability not only to clinical practices but also to administrative practices. The transition of new nurses from student to practicing nurse is not only a clinical function but also an administrative one. The Iowa Model has proven to be an effective tool for implementing change and is well suited to the implementation of a new nurse mentor program.

## CONCLUSIONS

A review of available evidence suggests that transition programs, as recommended by Institute of Medicine, are effective in helping new nurses transition from students to practicing nurses. These programs have been found to help new nurses develop the skills needed to become proficient and professional. The evidence also supports the need for mentors, as a key to successful transition to professional nursing. Studies show these programs, together with mentors, are effective in reducing first-year turnover in new nurses. Implementing orientation programs that include mentors will improve new nurse retention and help to develop the next generation of professional nurses and nurse leaders.

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