

A SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE TO AUGMENT CNA EDUCATION IN ACUTE CARE

An Education Initiative; the Development of a Certified Nursing Assistant Residency Program

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a challenge to hire and retain well-trained acute care certified nursing assistants (CNA)s. The Colorado state department of regulatory agencies require that the clinical hours in CNA education take place in a facility with a focus on older adults and chronic illness, and they do not require that CNA students have clinic training in an acute care setting. This has created an education gap in that newly graduated CNAs were not educated in acute care hospital practice.

PURPOSE

This education initiative's purpose was to develop, implement, and evaluate a certified nursing assistant residency program (CNARP).

METHODS

Nursing leadership and educators explored training and education to mentor newly graduated CNAs, so they could acquire the competencies for safe and successful practice. The hospital already had a successful established nurse residency program, so they proposed initiating the CNARP. A committee was formed to develop, initiate, and evaluate the CNARP, and develop a curriculum. The themes of the curriculum included leadership, workplace violence, skin and wound care, a resuscitation simulation, best patient experience, and compassion fatigue. The themes were chosen because they are unique to acute care; and to provide the residents with professional life skills.

RESULTS

Most residents completed residency on time. Since the program continued with a new cohort every other month, residents who were unable to attend all sessions could make up a session. Cohorts 1-4 included 27 residents and 20 (74 %) graduated. There were 3 (11 %) still making up class sessions at the time of this writing. There were 4 (15 %) CNA caregivers that were offered CNARP and resigned their positions and did not attend any CNARP sessions. Of the 23 graduates or current residents, all are still working as CNAs and 6 are current pre-nursing or nursing students. The graduates' evaluations were all positive, including quantitative and qualitative feedback.

DISCUSSION

Nurses can implement this model to augment CNA education and orientation in acute care. An increase in CNA competencies and standardized care delivery leads to better teamwork skills for improved patient care and satisfaction. Nurses can be confident advocating for enhanced CNA education.

