ACADEMIA AND PRACTICE: WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE NURSING RESEARCH

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Purposes/Aims: The purpose of this presentation is to describe the process by which academic researchers and practicing clinicians collaborated to develop a successful Research Council in a community hospital that was seeking Magnet certification. Developing, maintaining, and advancing a program of nursing research is a key part of the Magnet journey, thus it was imperative to develop processes to begin and advance nursing research.

Rationale/Background: Nurses are often hesitant to become involved with research however the current era of health care reform, with its focus on evidenced-based practice, supports the importance of nursing research. Research is foundational to evidence-based nursing practice, which improves patient outcomes. Staff nurses often report negative attitudes towards research, however it is well recognized that we must eliminate nursing care that is based on tradition and outdated policies and procedures, so that all clients receive evidenced-based nursing care.

Description: For several years a small group of clinical nurses and nursing faculty members interested in nursing research held numerous discussions to explore collaboration to support nursing research. With the support of the Chief Nursing Officer specific steps to formalize and structure our collaboration began. Clinical nurses who were interested in research met with academic researchers from a College of Nursing. While all involved had good intentions this informal process was unsuccessful in getting nursing research underway. Things changed when the community hospital made a decision to formally pursue Magnet Recognition, as it became imperative to establish opportunities for nursing research. With this new motivation we were able to effectively collaborate and in early 2010 a Nursing Research Council was formed. This council included both clinical staff nurses working at a community hospital and academic researchers from a College of Nursing. The group began monthly meetings with agendas, action plans, and financial support to recruit staff nurses to serve as research fellows.

Outcomes: We received several applications from staff nurses who applied to be nursing research fellows. Applicants presented their research ideas to a small group of members of the Research Council and all members of the Research Council reviewed the applications. For the first few years two staff nurses were selected to serve as nursing research fellows; selection was based on the relevance of their project to nursing care, alignment with priorities form the nursing strategic plan, practicality of accomplishing the study within the calendar year, and enthusiasm and commitment of the applicants. The selected research fellows conducted literature reviews, and developed a research study with assistance from academic researchers. All research proposals were submitted and approved by the Investigational Review Board (IRB). Two research fellows have been selected each year, with three research fellows accepted in 2012 to conduct a larger research council designed mixed methods study.

Conclusions: To date 6 research studies have been initiated; with 4 of these studies completed and two studies discontinued. The topics of these studies included: an examination of readmissions after strokes; perceptions of night shift nurses health; removal time of indwelling urinary catheters; bar code medication administration; and a study of fall rates and fall prevention interventions. Dissemination activities have included both presentations and posters at local and regional meetings and two manuscripts have been submitted for publication. Collaboration between nursing researchers from academic settings and clinical nurses in practice settings is a win-win proposition, which is particularly important for health care settings located in rural areas. Future efforts will be directed towards publication of nursing research generated through this collaboration between clinical nurses and college of nursing academic researchers.