An Innovative Nursing Shared Governance Approach to Creating a Healthy Practice Work Environment: Communities of Practice

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OBJECTIVE: To share the experiences of nurses at Harris Health who have made a commitment to creating a healthy professional practice environment through the implementation of a unique Community of Practice Shared Governance Structure.

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Employer: Harris Health System
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Harris Health System

- Member of America’s Essential Hospitals
- Serves 330,000 Harris County beneficiaries
- Three major hospitals:
  - Ben Taub (444 beds)
    - Level I trauma center
    - Comprehensive Stroke Center
    - Designated Chest Pain Center
    - Baby-Friendly Designation
    - Pathway to Excellence Designation
  - Lyndon B. Johnson (207 beds)
    - Level III trauma center
    - Pathway to Excellence Designation
  - Quentin Mease (49 beds)
    - CARF-accredited
Expansive Ambulatory Care Services

- **18** community health centers
- **5** school-based clinics
- **6** same day clinics
- **5** specialty clinics
  - 2-bed dialysis center
  - Dental center
  - Geriatric Assessment Clinic
- Specialty Programs
  - HIV Program
  - Homeless Program
  - Troubleshooting Mobile Health Van
  - Ask My Nurse Triage
Demographic and Statistical Highlights

>8,000 employees

>2204 RNs (85% >= BSN)

>225 LVNs

1043 additional Nursing Services staff
(unlicensed clinical, admin support, and non-RN professional staff)

*Fiscal Year Ending Feb 28, 2018
MISSION
Harris Health Nursing optimizes health and provides healing services to our patients and community through quality care delivery, coordination of care, and education.

VISION
Harris Health Nursing will be recognized globally for excellence in professional practice, patient-centered care, innovation, and scholarship.

VALUES
• Compassionate Care, Dignity, and Respect
• Diversity and Inclusion
• Integrity and Accountability
• Advocacy
• Innovation
• Partnerships
• Scholarship
We are committed to excellence...
Introduction

Healthcare organizations demonstrate nursing excellence through a strong and healthy professional practice environment (PPE).

Characteristics of healthy PPEs:

- Measureable quality and safety indicators
- True collaboration
- Effective decision making
- Skilled communication
- Appropriate staffing
- Meaningful professional recognition
- Authentic leadership

Sources: AACN, ANA
• Nurses operating within a healthy work environment typically function within the framework of a PPM (Tinkham, 2013).

• PPMs generally include five key components:
  - professional values
  - relationships
  - patient care delivery
  - recognition
  - shared governance

• Nursing strategic plan focused on achieving excellence using the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s (ANCC) (2018) Magnet® standards as its benchmark.

• High-leverage strategy led to nurse leaders focusing resources to establish a Nursing PPM with a strong shared governance structure.
Our Nursing PPM
Professional Environment Domain

Designed to empower and enhance the professional nurse and his/her work environment.

Differentiated Practice
- program congruent with Benner’s model for advancing clinical expertise at the bedside

Professional Development
- CNE, onboarding, residency, leadership education, etc.

Shared Governance
- critical to the effective implementation of the nursing PPM; CoP is the basic element
Professional Environment: Shared Governance Component

- Provides the foundation for engagement in meaningful communication and collaboration.
- Affords nurses the feeling of empowerment to control and regulate their professional practice through shared decision making.
- Allows the NPPM to become an effective mechanism for directing and evaluating nursing practice and strengthening the professional environment.

**IMPROVED:**
- Staff satisfaction
- Productivity
- Outcomes

**Shared Governance:**
- Collaboration
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Accountability
What is a Community of Practice?

"... group of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis..."
How Do CoPs Work?

- Nurses have a natural “CoP-type” relationship
- CoPs were established at the lowest level
- Formal structures and processes were developed such as CoP boards
- CoP board members meet monthly as part of the pavilion nurse clinician council
- During CoP meetings, members confer regarding nursing concerns, professional development issues, and/or patient care processes
Decision-making Continuum within a Clinician-Leadership Partnership

Guiding Tools
- Nursing Bylaws
- Operational Guidelines
- Shared Decision-making Model

Professional Environment: Shared Governance Component

Source: This decision-making continuum is an adaptation based on the Tannenbaum & Schmidt Continuum of Leadership Behavior (1977).
CoP’s Impact on Professional Practice Work Environment

- Staffing Advisory Committee makes criteria-based staffing decisions and has decision making/communication channels to the CoP Board.

- Facilitation of professional recognition through clinical advancement, specialty certification, and special awards celebrations.

- Increased satisfaction with their practice and work environment (RN NDNQI Survey).

- Participation through various scholarly and professional development activities.

- Quality and safety benchmark indicators are routinely met or exceeded.
Summary

• The CoP structure has been successful in **transforming practice and advancing the organization’s goal** of achieving a healthy professional environment while in the pursuit of nursing excellence.

• Work and commitment of **engaged nurses functioning within a healthy professional work environment** have been central to the Nursing Services’ achievements.

• With a CoP-based shared governance structure designed within a comprehensive PPM, the organization’s **professional and practice accomplishments have been validated externally**.

• Nursing leaders are committed to further **enhancing the unique CoP role as a “secret weapon”** to pursuing strategic initiatives relative to Magnet Recognition.
Questions?

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