Raising the Bar: Advancing Expertise at the Bedside

Kate Williams-Ashman DNP MSN-Ed. RN-BC
Leslie Gembol DNP RN NEA-BC
STTI Creating Healthy Work Environment Conference 2019

Background:

- **Problem:** Certification is a common strategy within healthcare industry to increase the professionalism & clinical expertise of bedside nurses.
- In 2014, the organization had a certification rate of less than 10%.
- NDNQI RN Survey results Professional Development Opportunity and Access to Professional Development scored below the Magnet Mean.
- In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) called for healthcare organizations to ensure that nurses continue their education and engage in life-long learning to gain competencies needed to provide care for diverse population across the lifespan.
- **Aim:** to advance professionalism and expertise at the bedside the organization invested in a certification program focusing on removing identified barriers and using a peer-to-peer mentorship model to motivate, encourage, and support nurses embarking on the certification journey.

Literature Review:

- Positive impacts of certification include increased public safety, improved patient outcomes, promotion of excellence in nursing care, & validation of specialized knowledge & competency.
- Professional certification in nursing is widely perceived as standard for excellence in practice
- Validates knowledge, professional skills and practice, clinical expertise, and clinical judgment
- Specialty nursing certification demonstrates a professional’s commitment to lifelong learning and validates competency in the delivery of high quality care.
- Perceived & actual barriers to certification can be challenging for healthcare organizations to overcome.

Organizational Commitment:

- Nursing leadership communicating a shared vision
- Nursing Supervisors and above roles set goal to attaining certification.
- Department goals to increase number of certified nurses.
- Recognition program for certified nurses: Annual Luncheon; Wall of Fame; Huddle Boards; & Nursing Newsletter
- Financial commitment – incentive, certification reward incentive; Professional Career Ladder program; study material and resources; Conference Assistance Program.

Peer to Peer Mentorship:

- Education & Research Council developed toolkits with study guide, study resources and test taking strategies.
- Created peer-to-peer mentorship program by forming cohorts to study and sit the test together
  - CCI Take 2 program ®
  - Success Pays program ®
  - Yes You Can BCEN program ®
- Nursing Professional Development Specialist (NPDS) register staff for exam or issuing examination vouchers.
- NPDS facilitated study groups with Lunch & Learn WebEx review course.
- Certified Nurses designing and facilitating CE Review Course for peers.
- Study materials library at the unit level.
- Certification promotion poster created featuring certified staff.
- Certification promotion poster created featuring certified staff highlighting benefits of certification and a special message from the CNO.
- As a result of implementing these grass-roots initiatives, staff were forming their own study groups and requesting study materials for leadership.

Evaluation:

- Total of 16 peer-to-peer cohorts ranging from 3 to 10 participants.
- Specialty Certification rate increased to 39% over 4 years.
- Pass rate ranged from 50 to 100% per cohort.
- Increased in certification rate also correlates to increase in advanced degrees of the nurses who were certified.

Outcomes:

- Lessons Learned & Next Steps:
  - Organizational commitment to nursing excellence through specialty certification of it’s nurses is essential.
  - Mentor a Friend at Work 2019 – reward opportunity of attending National Conference; or 1yr journal subscription for Mentor & Mentee who attain specialty certification.
  - 100 Member Club – Manager with 100% certified eligible nurses gets 1yr journal subscription & opportunity to attend national conference.

References:


Brett, K. M. (2010). Nursing Professional Development Specialist (NPDS) register staff for exam or issuing examination vouchers. Journal for Nurses in Staff Development Volume 26, Number 5, Wolters Kluwer Health | Lippincott Williams & Wilkins