The Supporting Professional Advancement in Nursing (SPAN) Program: Advancing Nurse Education, Supporting Maryland’s Nursing Workforce

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The Supporting Professional Advancement in Nursing (SPAN) Program

Background

• Maryland’s nursing workforce must have adequate numbers of qualified nurses with advanced nursing degrees to meet the demand.
• Maryland’s hospitals and health systems need to retain new graduate nurses.
• The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (JHSON) received funding from the Maryland Higher Education Commission to develop the Supporting Professional Advancement in Nursing (SPAN) Program.
• The SPAN Program is an innovative workforce development program that identifies high performing pre-licensure students intent on pursuing an advanced nursing specialty degree and creates a seamless path for them from pre-licensure generalist in the workforce to completion of an advanced specialty nursing degree.
• SPAN allows nurses to achieve higher levels of education and training while actively employed.

Methods

• The SPAN Program has academic-practice partnerships with five Maryland area hospitals.
• SPAN participants complete their clinical practicums at a hospital on a unit of interest.
• Participants are offered employment on the same unit where they completed their practicum.
• SPAN consists of three phases:
  - Phase 1: Generalist role Synthesis Practicum 14-week experience leading to full-time RN employment in practice facility.
  - Phase 2: Explore Specialty role Mentoring by JHSON faculty, facility mentor(s), online and in-person tools and support, apply to advanced specialty degree program, all while continuing to work full-time in practice facility.
  - Phase 3: Generalist to Specialty role Enrollment in an advanced graduate program while continuing to work at the practice facility. Cont. to receive access to mentorship and program supports.
• The SPAN Program provides a variety of benefits and incentives to participants. Program incentives:
  - Free NLECEX review course.
  - Maryland Nurses Association membership.
  - Guiding Initiatives for Doctoral Education (GUIDE) workshop.
  - Regular luncheons with guest speakers.
  - Monthly text messages on topics related to nursing skills and transition to practice.
• Program benefits:
  - Access to nine (9) self-paced online learning modules that aid with transition to practice.
  - Mentorship.
  - Onsite hospital based mentor.
  - JHSON faculty mentor.

Findings

Data and statistics for participants current as of the end of program year (PY) 4:
• 125 applications received for SPAN PY 1 – PY 4.
• SPAN had a total 50 participants who were offered and accepted full-time nursing positions.
• Attrition to date has been 5 nurses.
• Retention of nurses who have begun full-time employment as RNs in the SPAN Program is 87.5%.
• To date 18 participants are enrolled or have applied to an advanced specialty nursing degree program.
• 127% increase in applicants to the program from PY 2 to PY 3 due in part to refining recruiting methods and added participant incentives.
• Results of mentee satisfaction survey showed that the majority of SPAN participants were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the quality of the mentorship they receive from their mentors.

Conclusions

• The SPAN Program uses employment placement, mentorship, participant incentives, text notifications and online learning modules support new graduate nurses entering Maryland’s nursing workforce.
• Applicant numbers and retention data.
• Students and new nurse graduates are receptive to early career help launch them into their desired nursing specialty practice.
• Nurses are committing to their employers for three years which aids in ensuring adequate nurse staffing.
• Nearly half of SPAN participants have enrolled in an advanced specialty nursing degree program.
• Evaluation metrics are in place to measure the satisfaction and efficacy of the mentoring component of the Program.
• Data collection and qualitative feedback from participants is ongoing.

SPAN Program Placement Partners

• Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore MD
• Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Baltimore, MD
• Sibley Memorial Hospital, Washington DC
• Mount Washington Pediatric Hospital, Baltimore, MD
• Baltimore VA Medical Center, Baltimore MD.

Conclusions

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