Pajama Day!
Improving multi-campus education using online conferencing
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BACKGROUND
In the constantly changing environment of healthcare, ongoing education is vital in maintaining staff knowledge and skills. In March 2016 RWJ Hamilton was struggling with low attendance for non-required classes. As a possible solution, ED educators from RWJBarnabas Health Southern Region hospitals began to collaborate and streamline classes. The decision was made to offer distance learning for some courses to eliminate the need for travel. This could potentially increase enrollment for non-required educational offerings.

SETTING
RWJ Hamilton is a community hospital, part of the RWJBarnabas Health System which has 11 hospitals in 6 counties. The ED Educators Collaborative was formed to pool resources and to improve and expand the educational catalogue. Because of the broad geographical area and associated travel, initial plans for multi-campus classes were thought to be cost-ineffective.

OBJECTIVE
To increase enrollment and attendance for ED triage class.

METHODOLOGY
An informal poll was conducted to see if there would be an interest in an online class. The Triage class was offered as a trial distance course using a teleconferencing site. The lesson was presented using a standard slide presentation. The students were emailed materials in advance, including slide presentation with notes. Information was provided on how to obtain a copy of the Emergency Services Index (ESI) Handbook. Invitees attended remotely and were able to view the course material, ask questions or comment as needed. Attendees were very receptive to the distance learning format. Evaluations based on American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC) criteria were submitted after the course. On several occasions, educators on different campuses organized a classroom environment and facilitated the class as it was taught online. Once the process was established and initial trials were concluded, the class was moved from an online meeting to a webinar format, which allowed for real-time polling, improved accessibility of handouts, and streamlined the evaluation process. Additionally, the new format provides the capability of recording a class and offering it as a static webinar for students who cannot attend in real time.

REFERENCES

RESULTS
Attendance for the triage class increased from 6 attendees in 2016 to 31 attendees in 2017 when the distance learning program was offered. The class has since been offered on multiple occasions to 63 nurses over five campuses in four counties with success. The initial difficulty faced was finding an appropriate product or application to facilitate the remote attendance – several online meeting services were explored, but were either cost prohibitive or did not meet the needs. Once a solution was found, the logistics of coordinating and tracking attendees – whether as a group or individually – was a concern, as CE credits were being offered which required strict protocols of pre-course assessment, post-course assessment, and evaluation for each student receiving a certificate. The online catalog has been expanded to include Journal Club meetings.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS
Using an online meeting or webinar site is a cost-effective way to improve attendance among nursing staff in terms of their non-mandatory education. It can allow clinical nurse educators to schedule educational offerings with more flexibility. In broader terms, this provides potential for a much larger catalogue of classes, as it eliminates the need for faculty travel, expanding the pool of resources.