To develop, implement, and evaluate a Student Nurse Technician (SNT) program evaluation tool that could be utilized to identify opportunities for improvement of the experiences of SNTs matriculating through a program provided by a federally funded, veteran-centric hospital in the southern United States.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

- Recruitment and retention of nursing staff is an intricate process, one that requires strategic data analysis and planning. In order to stay abreast of these trends, facilities must examine contributing factors to the recruitment, retention, and turnover of nursing staff, both internally and externally to the healthcare environment.

- Though a federally-funded, veteran-centric healthcare facility in the southern United States has taken steps to recruit and retain new nurses through innovative student nurse pipeline programming, it has experienced a low retention of participants following completion of its Student Nurse Technician (SNT) program, with virtually none of the program participants electing to:
  - stay on to be converted to Graduate Nurse Technicians (GNTs) while waiting to achieve licensure
  - request conversion to full-time RN status by the end of their academic term
  - participate in an anonymous survey to be distributed by the DNP Project Team

- As additional evidence, undergraduate students also complete clinical rotations at the facility each year, but none have expressed an interest in working for the facility.

- Evidence from the literature speaks to understanding new nurses’ intent to stay at their jobs and cites several factors that influence intent to stay and intent to leave, which are connected to the feelings of imbalance between effort and reward that may be idealized in the recruitment, retention, and turnover of nursing staff, both within this facility.

- The problem has been attributed to various reasons, including:
  - administrative processing barriers such as speed of hire
  - surrounding community incentives and promotional opportunities including scholarships and sign-on bonuses
  - student nurse perceptions of the program

- As additional evidence, undergraduate students also complete clinical rotations at the facility each year, but none have expressed an interest in working for the facility.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Aiken & Field's Theory of Reasoned Action/Theory of Planned Behavior

Hypothesizes that intention is a predictor to attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms about the performance of the behavior, and perceived behavioral control.

Provided a solid foundation to which the concepts pertaining to evaluating an SNT program could be viewed.

Applications include intent, and intent is like each were attitudinal, i.e. subjective norms. Intentions are measured by asking participants to provide feedback about the SNT experience during the program.

For Part I, participants had highly favorable responses with statements made in Q5, Q7, and Q15 with 4/6 agreeing or 2/6 strongly agreeing.

Questions focused on feeling at ease with asking for help from RNs on the unit, practicing new procedures, skills, increase of knowledge base since starting the program, and whether participants felt they would be better nurses by being SNTs.

Five items related to role of mentor-figures, & their assistance with providing encouragement and feedback, as well as how the SNT program contributed to academic improvement respondents showed mixed reviews, ranging from agree to strongly disagree.

For Q17-Q20, the majority agreed that they had difficulty with role expectations and SNT program orientation/ unit socialization. They also indicated that the most satisfying aspect of the program lied in learning the professional nursing role and interactions with patients/families, as well as professional responsibility.

Narrative data Q16 and Q21 yielded only 1 result for each. For Q16, the respondent expressed concerns of not having a defined preceptor and clarifying expectations of the role being realistic.

For Q17-Q20, the majority agreed that they had difficulty with role expectations and SNT program orientation/unit socialization. They also indicated that the most satisfying aspect of the program lied in learning the professional nursing role and interactions with patients/families, as well as professional responsibility.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Results indicate a need for SNTs to have:
  - More clearly defined role definition
  - Increased desire for additional support from mentor-figures
  - Programmatic support
  - The use of the tool with larger SNT participant pool aggregated over longer period of time is needed for further evaluation
  - Understanding program deterrents and issues will help to further develop quality improvement measures to improve SNT experiences and increase recruitment and retention efforts