Title:
Developing Competent Float Pool Nurses Through Collaboration and Communication

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Abstract Text:
A float pool of nurses is an essential part of ensuring adequate staffing and providing safe care in our 500 bed tertiary care pediatric academic Magnet hospital. This resource team (or float pool) provides nurses for units with inadequate staffing due to high census, high acuity, or leaves of absence. The nurse educators for this unit coordinate orientation for each nurse through more than fifteen pediatric medical-surgical and intensive care units. Preparing for a float nurse’s orientation to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) requires extensive collaboration among units and a detailed plan to train these nurses to be competent and confident in a shorter period of time than unit-based nurses. Managers and educators from both units worked in partnership to create a standardized process for orienting float nurses and developed a plan for consistently orienting additional nurses in the future. The elements of this improvement project included:

- Selection of preceptors from both units who could consistently orient float nurses
- Development of a readiness assessment tool
- Creation of didactic classroom content prior to clinical experience
- Development of a competency tool for evaluating orientation completion
- Consideration of the number of PICU nurses in orientation
- Increased manager and educator presence on the unit during a float nurses’ orientation
- Clinical time with a PICU respiratory therapist

This interdepartmental collaboration has resulted in successful orientation of 11 float nurses in the past 10 months compared to 10 nurses in the previous 12 months. Ongoing communication and evaluation of the orientation process ensures that our Beacon-awarded PICU is safely and adequately staffed by competent float nurses when needed.