

**Title:**

Implementing a Dedicated Education Unit for Senior Year Baccalaureate Nursing Students in Primary Care

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**Session Title:**

Evidence-Based Practice Poster Session 3

**Slot (superslotted):**

EBP PST 3: Sunday, 30 July 2017: 9:45 AM-10:15 AM

**Slot (superslotted):**

EBP PST 3: Sunday, 30 July 2017: 12:00 PM-1:15 PM

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**Keywords:**

Dedicated Education Unit, Nursing Education and Primary Care

**References:**

Mulready-Shick, J., & Flanagan, K. (2014). Building the evidence for dedicated education unit sustainability and partnership success. *Nursing education perspectives, 35*(5), 287-293.

Rhodes, M. L., Meyers, C. C., & Underhill, M. L. (2012). Evaluation outcomes of a dedicated education unit in a baccalaureate nursing program. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 28*(4), 223-230.

**Abstract Summary:**

Nursing education largely focuses on acute care. Upon graduation, nurses enter the field with little experience in primary care. A dedicated education unit was established in primary care to bridge this gap and help students understand the role of primary care nurses and the full continuum of care for patients.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to describe the key features and implementation of a dedicated education unit in a primary care setting.	We will describe the education gap that exists in academic training for registered nurses with regard to primary care, and the need to provide primary care clinical experience for nursing students. We will describe the dedicated education unit concept and discuss the implementation of one in a primary care center.
The learner will be able to explain the importance of training the next generation of	We will describe the benefits of student experiences in a dedicated education unit in

nursing students in the primary care setting regardless of which setting they may choose post-graduation.	primary care for baccalaureate nursing students. This will include discussing challenges both academic and clinical settings face with a changing nursing workforce, and growing job demand in primary care and other community settings.
The learner will be able to convey the need for dedicated education units in primary care settings throughout the world to better prepare nurses to succeed in a changing healthcare culture.	We will illustrate the impact a dedicated education unit has on training nursing students to better care for complex patient in primary care settings, and the potential for replication as healthcare struggles on a global level to improve quality of care, reduce costs and ensure that workforce demands are met in a rapidly changing healthcare environment.

**Abstract Text:**

The Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) is a clinical-education experience that allows nursing students to receive hands-on learning with frontline nurses to ensure they are reinforcing their academic teaching while also gaining the clinical pearls and practical knowledge from those who regularly perform the job. The DEU concept came out of Flinders University of South Australia School of Nursing in the 1990's due to the growing need for quality clinical placements for nursing students. This allowed for an improved strategic partnership between academia and clinical sites, to ensure an excellent student experience while also factoring in the clinical challenges of placement sites.

In the United States, clinical placements can be challenging to identify, particularly because rotations generally focus on acute settings, and because partnerships with primary care settings are typically not well established. The minimal focus on this nursing role in academic curriculum previously highlights why primary care clinical competencies are not well defined. With the growing workforce demand for primary care nurses, particularly roles in complex care management, nursing students need to have additional education and experience with frontline nurses in these settings to truly understand the care continuum and the full array of job opportunities available to them upon graduation.

A DEU was developed at the Community Health Center, Inc. (CHCI) to provide senior year baccalaureate nursing students experience in an interprofessional collaborative practice environment with frontline primary care nurses that support complex care management work for the provider panels they support. This was one facet of the implementation of a complex care management program across 12 clinical sites of CHCI. CHCI is a statewide agency providing care to individuals with low socioeconomic status, including many that are uninsured and underinsured. It has 14 integrated patient-centered primary care sites, delivering medical, behavioral health and dental services along with other ancillary care services such as those delivered by registered dietitians, podiatrists or chiropractors to name a few. CHCI delivers care in over 200 total service delivery sites, when school based clinics and health care for the homeless sites are included in the total count.

Through the DEU, nursing students learn how to deliver care to patients in the primary care setting. At the CHCI, students receive support and mentorship from clinical instructors and clinical faculty coordinators who prepare them for the rigor of caring for patients in the primary care setting. The clinical instructors are nurse care managers who have experience delivering care to patients in the primary care setting. In pre-clinical conference, students receive brief didactic to support their understanding of the role of the primary care nurse and to ensure they truly understand the shift in critical thinking needed for this setting. As the students learn about primary care competencies in their academic programming in the classroom, they

are reinforced with real examples in pre-clinical conference and then concurrently practice them during their rotation time at the primary care site.

Students also experience innovative healthcare practices such as team huddles, integrated care meetings, and population management. They are trained on how to use dashboards, scorecards and other data sources to inform their practice throughout the day. They also participate in innovative training delivered to CHCI's nurses such as Project ECHO®: Complex Care Management, which is a telehealth model that creates a knowledge network for nurses. It includes both didactic and case-based learning, where frontline nurses and student nurses can present complex cases and get feedback and support from a multi-disciplinary team of experts on next steps in their care planning.

Students were part of focus groups during the first two years of DEU implementation to provide direct feedback that informed performance improvement between year one and year two. They contributed changes to the length and content of the DEU, as well as to further confirm the potential benefit. This ongoing quality improvement will ensure an optimized student experience, and hopefully will improve nursing preparation, and possibly increase the number of new nurses that choose primary care as their chosen career. One student shared during the focus group: I like how they kind of changed my view about where nursing can go...it's not just, you see a patient and that's it and you move on. You can stay with that patient and follow-up with them and make sure that everything in their life is not affecting their health.

The DEU is vital in training the next generation of nurses to understand the critical role of the primary care nurse. As students build this understanding, they also learn what it means to work on an interprofessional collaborative practice team. Simultaneously, they have the opportunity to build their leadership and collaboration skills to better care for complex patients once they enter the nursing workforce, no matter which part of the care continuum.