

Innovative Academic-Practice Partnerships: Integrating Nursing Clinical Faculty into University-Based Student Health Care Centers

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Abstract

Background/Introduction

Graduate nursing faculty should maintain clinical practice to ensure relevancy in the classroom and align with the updated guidelines set forth by the AACN Essentials and the NTF Standards. University-based student health care centers (SHCC) experience soaring patient volume during Fall and Spring semesters with the influx of students, presenting challenges for the clinic to meet the needs of patients.

Purpose

To highlight an innovative academic-practice partnership (APP) within a university-based SHCC, opening the door to flexible and supportive work environments for clinical faculty, increasing provider availability for patients, and increasing DNP student preceptor availability.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

An AAP was formed between a college of nursing and university-based student health care center, initiated by clinical faculty. It was founded in line with the AACN-American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) task force guiding principles on APPs, including establishing a shared vision and expectations; mutual goals within designated time frames; frequent and meaningful engagement between those involved; and mutual investment and commitment.

Results

Patient visits increased by a total of 452 during Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 with the addition of one clinical faculty member. After one year, a total of two clinical faculty have established practice within the clinic.

Limitations

A nursing faculty shortage contributes to increased workload, which may limit the availability of faculty to practice. Not all academic institutions are associated with a student health care center, though alternative clinical environments should be considered.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

AAPs can be fostered to increase collaboration between colleges of nursing and university-based SHCCs. University-based SHCCs can offer flexible options to support faculty practice that is aligned with academic calendars and increase DNP student preceptor availability. Integrating faculty into SHCCs increases provider availability and patients visits during semesters with higher demand, advancing innovative approaches to improve health care delivery and higher education.

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