

University of the Incarnate Word & Methodist Specialty and Transplant Hospital Academic-Practice Partnership

In 2014, the Dean of the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) and Chief Nursing Officer of Methodist Specialty and Transplant Hospital (MSTH), new to their organizations, recognized that an academic-practice partnership could facilitate the implementation of hospital-based evidence-based practice (EBP), nursing research, and innovative nursing programs. The partners' vision was to strengthen the nursing practice environment at MSTH. This professional practice environment would grow to be a site of innovation and shared faculty-nursing projects, improve the quality of patient care and patient outcomes, attract BSN nurses, and provide an exceptional clinical site for undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Specific partnership goals included growth in professional practice and improved patient outcomes through implementation of EBP, nursing research, dissemination, clinical redesign, innovative clinical experiences, and nurse recruitment/retention.

The partnership introduced the nursing staff and leadership of MSTH to EBP. Two EBP teams were formed and built protocols for the prevention of catheter-acquired urinary tract infection (CAUTI) and central-line associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI). CAUTIs (2014-2017) were reduced hospital-wide from 1.59 to 1.08 per 1000 line days and CLABSIs (2014-2017) were reduced from 1.24 to 1.00 per 1000 line days in a vulnerable specialty and transplant population. Innovative outcomes of the EBP work included the development of a process for building EBP policies/protocols and an innovative interdisciplinary peer-to-peer staff education process.

Two nursing staff research teams were formed. Two descriptive research studies have been completed and two intervention/one outcome research studies are currently being implemented. One descriptive research study is pending publication in July/Aug 2018 *Nephrology Nursing Journal*.

Across the 5-year partnership, three articles have been published by MSTH RNs and their faculty mentors in peer-reviewed publications. There have been 10 international, national, and regional peer-reviewed podium presentations, 8 international, national, and regional peer-reviewed poster presentations, and numerous local podium and poster presentations. Aspects of the academic-practice partnership have been shared through presentations at AONE, ANA QI, and NETNEP conferences.

Clinical nursing unit redesign (2016-2017), undertaken on one unit to increase nurse efficiency, patient safety, and overall satisfaction of nursing staff and patients, resulted in improved patient satisfaction, nurse satisfaction, and improved interdepartmental communication. The exemplar project demonstrated opportunities for redesign now being implemented by other hospital nursing units.

Innovative student clinical opportunities, including the Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) Fall 2015 to Spring 2018 and the Dedicated Education Transition to Practice (DETP) Spring 2015 to Spring 2018 have increased recruitment and retention of BSN nursing students. Fourteen of the 39 BSN nursing students participating in the DEU have graduated with 6 (42.9%) of the graduates currently working in the Methodist Healthcare System (MHS). The DETP recruited 96% (25) and retained 84% (21) of the BSN students Spring 2015-Fall 2017. Of the Spring 2018 DETP 100% (18) have applied for positions at Methodist Hospital System. UIW Graduate nursing projects are now being implemented at MSTH by CNL, CNS, and DNP students and four CNL/CNS students were recruited.

The percentage of BSN RN staff increased from 46% to 54% across the 5-year period. The efforts to understand clinical unit design, leadership traits, work environment traits, and other nurse satisfiers/dissatisfiers impacting intent to stay continue through research and intensive study of metrics. Two retention research studies were completed and a retention work plan is being developed.

This partnership is unique in the investment of UIW faculty for RN education, professional growth, and coaching and MSTH's investment to defray these additional costs. While innovative programs recruited BSN nurses through building clinical nursing and graduate nursing student experiences at the hospital, the partnership's primary emphasis was building the professional nursing environment.