

Academic-Practice Partnership Overview

An Academic-Practice partnership between the University at Buffalo's School of Nursing and Catholic Health System's Sisters of Charity Hospital was established in 2012. Our partnership offers clinical, research, educational and professional development opportunities for member of the academic and the practice community. This partnership grounded in a shared vision of promoting excellence in nursing and made visible through the mutual goals of:

- engaging students and RN staff in evidence-based practice, quality improvement and nursing research,
- creating high quality collaborative learning experiences,
- socializing students to the multi-faceted role of the professional nurse as a member of the healthcare team and preparing them for the transition to professional nursing practice,
- nurturing the professional growth and development of nurses as clinicians, mentors and leaders,
- involving students and staff in disseminating knowledge through professional presentations and publication,
- designing collaborative research projects to meet the needs of the partner organizations and to advance nursing knowledge,
- inspiring life-long learning behaviors, and
- fostering the professional growth of nurses as innovative and forward thinking leaders in the rapidly changing and complex healthcare environment.

Active participation, open communications and sharing of resources and outcomes among all members of the partnering organizations has been critical to our success.

Since its inception, our partnership has been productive and beneficial to both partners. Collaborative work among students and nurses has brought evidence to the practice setting. Asking important clinical questions, finding and analyzing evidence and translating it into practice benefits patients and has resulted in poster presentations at the annual nursing research dinner sponsored by the Western New York Professional Nurses Association and the regional Sigma Theta Tau Chapters and professional journal publications. Nurses from the practice setting and students or faculty from the academic setting jointly author all these presentations and publications.

One of our major outcomes is the evidence based, Safe Sleep BABY project. This started as a group of nurses wanting to develop a teaching program for new parents. Collaborating with the academic partner, an evidence based teaching program was developed and tested. Our research two important findings: (1) Verbal teaching with a paper handout may not be effective for this patient population and (2) other influences on the newborn's sleep position in the home are barriers to parents implementing the teaching they received. The results of our research identified the need to share safe sleep education with extended family and caregivers in the community and to provide the education in a format preferred by many people in the demographic of the new parents we care for. The production of the Safe Sleep Baby video and providing parents, a link to this video addressed this gap, and shares education about safe sleep position and environments for newborns with extended family members and caregivers thereby protecting newborns in the community. Members of both the academic and the practice organizations were involved in all phases of this project. This project is just one example of the positive impact of our partnership.

Many of our activities are embedded in our Dedicated Education Units (DEU) as a model of collaborative learning for nursing practice education. This collaborative learning experience has benefited both students and their RN mentors, as is evidenced by the RN's engagement in teaching students, the growth of the RNs as mentors and the high quality learning experienced by the students.

Our partnership is entering an exciting time. The first years of this partnership have been fulfilling and have strengthened the collaboration among the partners. The future holds unlimited possibilities for our partnership to have a lasting impact on the partners, the community and the profession of nursing as we transform nursing education and practice and create a seamless and innovative synergy among practice, education and research.