

Impact of Academic-Practice Partnerships on Nursing Entry-Level Clinical Rotations and Graduations

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NSP II Grant # 17-126

Abstract

Introduction

Over the past four years, the University of Maryland, School of Nursing joined with 18 Maryland hospitals in all five geographic regions of the State of Maryland to form an Academic-Practice Partnership NSP II grant supporting work to prepare hospital-based staff nurses as master's-level hospital-based clinical instructors, faculty, preceptors, and mentors. It was anticipated that an increase in master's-prepared nurses would expand opportunities for Maryland nursing schools to provide additional clinical and preceptor experiences for students in entry-level programs or graduate specialties.

Design

Grant outcomes were evaluated using an eight-question clinical rotation survey emailed to 18 partner hospitals at the conclusion of each fall semester. Questions sought information about which schools of nursing were utilizing each hospital for clinical and preceptor experiences, number of undergraduate clinical rotations, number of students supported during the semester, percentage of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) nurses, and use of hospital resources by out-of-state schools of nursing. Maryland State Board of Nursing annual NCLEX reports showing the number of new graduate nurses, by school, were used to assess the effect of grant partner hospitals on the number of new nurses graduated by schools utilizing them for clinical experiences. Clinical rotation survey data was collected and analyzed for Years Two through Four of this grant.

Results

Overall, the number of students from Maryland nursing schools being accommodated by hospitals partnering with the NSP II grant in clinical rotations has risen from 2,185 students to 2,409 students between 2017 and 2019. The average number of students has increased from 5 to 6.7 per clinical rotation. Total graduations from nursing schools in Maryland have declined between FY '16 (2,724 graduates) and FY '19 (2,527 graduates). A key finding of the project found that schools participating with NSP II partner hospitals appear to have experienced a 2.5%

lesser decrease in new graduates (FY '16: 1,501; FY '19: 1,464). Schools not primarily using NSP II partner hospitals appeared to experience a 13.1% decrease (FY '16: 1,223; FY '19: 1,063). This 5.2-fold difference is significant. The academic-service partnership NSP II grant administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission with funding from the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission supported the preparation of 219 Master of Science graduates as leaders and educators for Maryland acute care hospitals, and 96 others are currently enrolled. The average percentage of partner hospital BSN nurses has increased from 48.9% in fall 2017 to 55.5% in fall 2019 with a range of 38% to 80%.

Conclusions

A concentrated effort to recruit and prepare hospital-based staff nurses as master's-level clinical instructors, faculty, preceptors, and mentors can have a positive effect on the number of entry-level nursing students and subsequent graduates from Maryland nursing schools collaborating with statewide hospitals within academic-practice partnerships.