



# MARYLAND ACTION COALITION

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## **New Virus, New Roles: Preparing Health Care Providers for Deployment During a Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many challenges for hospital staffing. There was not enough bedside staff to care for the growing number of patients while other health care professionals saw a decreasing patient load and thus loss of work hours. The Sinai Hospital of Baltimore Education Resource Center in conjunction with human resources created a new COVID-19 Surge Plan to meet the needs of patients while avoiding furlough of staff.

The first step in the plan was to define different support role with delegatable tasks: three levels of support techs and two levels of nurses, non-clinical support, and mid-level providers. As the support staff was deployed, they were matched with a nurse from the designated unit to be the coordinator of care.

The Education Resource Center developed training for support staff roles. Training included lectures, hands-on practice, and supplemental resources within electronic learning systems. Each support staff member was individually assessed to determine the most appropriate skill level. Educators provide didactic training for skills using the principles of adult learning. Additionally, educators found the need to provide emotional support and reassurance to deployed staff to prepare them to provide support in new environments using the Science of Caring Model of Jean Watson. Educators checked in on deployed staff as needed. Overall, deployed staff members appreciated the education and support provided by the Education Resource Center, as evidenced by unit feedback from the unit they provided support on during the pandemic.