



Partnerships for Professional Advancement

Mary Etta Mills, ScD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN; Linda Hickman, PhD, RN, FACHE

Background: Over the past 10 years of Nurse Support Program II work with 24 Maryland hospitals, more than 150 Masters' level, hospital-based Clinical Instructors, Faculty, Preceptors and Mentors have been prepared and an additional 45 are enrolled and pursuing a degree. Through individual arrangements with hospitals, Schools of Nursing in Maryland can seek to utilize these graduates as clinical instructors to expand clinical access in support of increased nursing student enrollments. Using online programs, these projects addressed the need to fill expected vacancies in the nursing workforce and to reduce the nursing faculty shortage. Nurses serving in the dual role of hospital-based staff and clinical instructors/faculty preceptors have been evaluated as being value added to the service setting and nursing education.

Model: The partnership model consists of doctoral-prepared faculty members and staff members at UMSON, and master's prepared nurses at each partner hospital working as a team to coordinate the program, mentor, advise, and guide students through their educational experience and career progression, while sharing resources. Each hospital identified an education coordinator as the contact person for schools of nursing seeking clinical placements for undergraduate students enrolled in clinical coursework. These coordinators work with nurse managers to make staff prepared as Clinical Instructors available to directly supervise and assist in the education of individuals and groups of students.

Evaluation Results: (Part 1) Availability of hospital based clinical instructors has led to increased clinical rotations of groups of undergraduate students, and clinical experiences with an individual preceptor. For example, one hospitals' clinical usage increased from 125 requests from a combination of 10 schools of nursing to 146 requests for a total of 580 students. Schools of Nursing seeking clinical rotations at NSP II grant partner hospitals increased their number of enrolled students by an average of 13.2 percent compared to schools not seeking clinical rotations at grant partner hospitals. (Part 2) A Graduate Survey was conducted to determine the activities of Organizational Partnership, Teaching Involvement and Semesters Taught at Maryland Schools of Nursing before and after enrolling in the graduate Health Services Leadership and Management program at the University of Maryland, School of Nursing. The survey was conducted using the Survey Monkey online tool. The survey was mailed to a random sample of 42 graduates and had a 52% (22/42) response rate. Respondents indicated involvement in a wide variety of organizational and teaching related activities. This included accepting greater leadership responsibilities for clinical unit management and serving as continuing education instructors, Schools of Nursing clinical instructors, and simulation lab instructors.

Challenges and Opportunities: Changes in project personnel due to health issues, administrative changes of Chief Nurse Officers, staff vacancies and increasing competition from new and existing programs were some of the key challenges. Increased attention to tuition support by hospitals combined with work obligation policies, performance standards and clinical ladders with educational requirements as well as innovative position descriptions for the new combined practice and faculty roles created opportunities.