

Promoting Excellence in Care for Kids: Increasing RN Certification Rate

Ronit Schwartz, RN, MSN, PNP, Med/Surg Heme/Onc Nurse Educator
Suzanne Monteleone, RNc, MS, Neonatal Nurse Educator
Kathleen Schmidt, CCRN, MSN, PNP, RN, Pediatric Critical Care Nurse Educator

Schneider Children's Hospital
North Shore-LIJ Health System, New Hyde Park, NY



SCHNEIDER CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL

Learning objectives: After viewing this poster attendees should be able to:

- Understand the importance of certification in a pediatric institution
- Describe why a multi-faceted approach works in promoting RN certification
- Identify the various modalities and strategies used for certification success

Introduction/background:

Nursing certification validates specialized knowledge, indicates an increased level of clinical competence and the attainment of a practice standard along with enhancing professional credibility and promoting consumer confidence and satisfaction. Increased RN certification rates have been linked to improved patient outcomes by requiring certified nurses to remain up to date on current knowledge and practices leading to improved critical thinking skills, better patient assessments and earlier interventions. Increasing certification is a priority in promoting nursing excellence and patient care and thus educational and institutional programs were set in place to promote RN's certification at our institution in 2007.

Initiative or project description:

A multifaceted process was put in place which includes leadership support through reimbursement and publicly celebrating accomplishments; educational support through a review process, development and implementation of group work and 1:1; ongoing communication through unit postings, emails, web page and phone calling; exam facilitation through scheduling days off and bringing paper and pencil exams to site; interdisciplinary team encouragement, physician and nurse led review classes, MD sponsored breakfast on morning of exams; as well as certification maintenance through on site CEU accrual, specialty specific education at no cost for staff.

Results/Outcomes:

RN certification rate hospital wide increased from 21 percent in December 2006 to a current rate of 45 percent.

Future of initiative:

A multifaceted approach helped in achieving an increased certification rate in our hospital in 2007. Success has led to greater interest and further applicants for certification with plans for 100 percent certification rate, along with a noted heightened seeking of clinical knowledge by certified staff.

Lessons learned:

While recruiting and supporting the application and testing process is important, it is just as vital to support the maintenance of the certification with CEU accrual, recognition, and monetary compensation.