

Abstract Title Professional Development in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit

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Background Organizationally, Registered Nurse (RN) retention is a concern, as nursing retention is associated with lower cost to the healthcare organization, better patient outcomes, and increased nurse job satisfaction. Research shows that in addition to better patient outcomes, “self growth and promotion,” (Lu et al., 2004, p. 214), or professional development, is a source of nurse job satisfaction and therefore retention, consistent with ANA standard 12 (education). Operationally, there is a positive correlation between nurse retention and mentorship programs (Block et al., 2005; Bowles & Candela, 2005; Hurst & Koplin-Baucum, 2003; Scott, 2005). Peer to- peer mentoring in nursing “is defined as a relationship between two nurses formed on the basis of mutual respect ... with the common goal of guiding the nurse towards personal and professional growth,” (Hale, 2004, p. 11). One program at Kaiser Permanente that meets the above criteria is the Registered Nurse Career Ladder (RNCL). By providing a venue for RNs' professional development, engagement with the RNCL also provides the opportunity for frontline RNs to participate in greater numbers in the organization's shared governance committees, increasing the inflow/outflow of information and organizational capacity.

Purpose The purpose of this presentation is to show that peer-to-peer mentorship is an effective intervention in increasing nurses' professional development and engagement, as measured by rates of participation in the RNCL.

Strategy The RNCL is a vehicle for professional development at Kaiser Permanente. To increase (voluntary) participation in the RNCL, the primary intervention in the PACU was one on-one peer mentorship. This consisted of pairing a RN already participating in the RNCL with one who had expressed interest. (S)He would then assist with explanation of the program and its benefits, problem solving, and barrier identification. RNs accepted into the RNCL program, in turn, then became mentors themselves.

Results Participation in the RNCL via one-on-one peer mentoring increased from 5% to 40% in one calendar year. There is no information on RN retention.

Conclusion One-on-one peer mentorship was a successful intervention for increasing professional development and engagement in the PACU. This mentorship consisted of the RNCL RN helping her colleague with perceived barriers, clarifying criteria, and providing encouragement during the application process. During this process, other interventions were noted, including identifying RNCL opportunities in the monthly unit-based meetings and posting educational offerings.