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Raising Certification Rates Using the Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse FailSafe Program

Dawn H. Kressly, MSN, RN

Problem

Annually, Magnet and non-Magnet organizations are challenged to continuously raise their certification rates. Barriers identified in pursuing certifications by nurses include expense, anxiety related to failure, limited organizational support, preparatory materials, and perceived feelings of relevancy to practice (Harrison, 2014). Nurses that fail a certification exam can lose significant amounts of money and be discouraged to re-test and continue pursuing their certification.

Certification remains the validation of mastery for nursing skills and knowledge (Gablesen, 2003). Studies indicate certified nurses experience greater personal value, professional credibility, greater satisfaction at work and increased career development opportunities (Cary, 2001). Providing a program for Medical-Surgical nurses to obtain certification without fear of failure and loss of funds would increase certification rates and improve our Clinical Nurse's overall professional growth.

Population

For most acute care facilities, Medical-Surgical Nurses typically represent the largest number of Clinical Nurses. By providing our Medical-Surgical nurses with a no cost program and eliminating the loss of funds associated with failure when attempting to certify, our nurses were encouraged to enroll in the program and prepare to take the certification exam.



Practice Change

A certified clinical nurse from one of our Medical-Surgical units was eager to get her colleagues to complete their specialty certification. She brought the Certified Medical Surgical Registered Nurse (CMSRN) FailSafe program to the attention of the hospitals' nursing leadership after attending a nursing conference. This program only requires payment once the nurse passes their exam and was implemented in March of 2015 by Doctors Hospital.

Prior to implementation, the program was presented at our Professional Development council where clinical nurses were excited to engage their peers in participating. A minimum of 10 nurses were needed and easily obtained. Information for participation was communicated through e-mails and clinical nurses rounding on the units with a certification cart. Unit based Clinical Nurse Educators stepped up to provide Medical Surgical review classes prior to scheduled exam dates. Many nurse leaders across the hospital supported and also participated in recognizing the success of these newly certified medical surgical nurses.

Outcomes

- After the implementation of the CMSRN FailSafe program, the rate of all certified clinical nurses improved from 24.8% to 30.1%.
- When looking specifically at the rate of our certified Medical-Surgical nurses that were eligible, the rate improved from 26.5% to 37.9%.
- 73 nurses are currently registered in the CMSRN FailSafe program.
- A total of 16 nurses have passed on their first attempt.
- All nurses who attended our hospital based Medical-Surgical exam review, provided by the unit based Clinical Nurse Educators, passed on the first attempt.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

The CMSRN Failsafe program provides an opportunity to raise overall nursing and Medical-Surgical certification rates by reducing the barriers of anxiety related to exam failure and loss of funds.

Implications for practice and continued program success:

- Our clinical nurses participating in the CMSRN FailSafe program will need to complete the online CE Direct certification review course provided to all nurses at Baptist Health South Florida.
- With the goal of improving first attempt passing rates, our nurses must now attend the live hospital based Medical-Surgical exam review course to prepare and review questions before their exam.
- Provide an opportunity for Certified Clinical Nurses to lead the initiative and engage their peers.

References

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