The importance of certification cost as one barrier to certification

Nada Wakim
South Miami Hospital, nadaw@baptisthealth.net

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Citation
Wakim, Nada, "The importance of certification cost as one barrier to certification" (2017). All Publications. 2537.
https://scholarlycommons.baptisthealth.net/se-all-publications/2537

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The Importance of Certification Cost as One Barrier to Certification
Nada Wakim, PhD, RN, NE-BCC

Introduction

Nursing Certification:
- An acceptable validation of cognitive knowledge and continued competency.
- Instills a sense of pride and accomplishment and has real implications in the practice environment.
- Empowers nurses to positively affect outcomes through the advanced competency and knowledge nursing certification validates.
- Has an inverse relationship with fall rates.
- Improves recruitment and retention of qualified nurses.
- Improves organizational culture of health care delivery, job satisfaction, empowerment and confidence.
- Advances safety, improves processes of care, and quality of care.

Problem

Why then do so many nurses not follow through?
- Perceived and actual barriers to certification can be extremely challenging to healthcare organizations.
- Two major barriers to nurses taking a certification exam were fear and cost.
- The fear was something nurses could work through especially with the support of colleagues who would commiserate with the situation.
- Cost was identified as the most cited barrier to achieving certification.

Methods/Project Description

- In July of 2015, a 400+ bed acute care South Florida Hospital, contracted with an external organization to help address the cost barrier.
- The Failsafe Certification Program allowed our facility to remove two main barriers for nurses: fear of failure and upfront cost fees.
- By entering into this agreement, our facility agreed to have at least 10 eligible registered nurses (RNs) to register over the period of the contract year.
- Each RN has the opportunity to attempt the test 2 times. If the RN succeeds on the first or second attempt, the facility will pay the fees. But if the RN doesn’t pass either time, no one pays.
- This exciting opportunity for nurses was advertised using email and unit staff meetings, a study group was formed, and materials for review were provided.

Results/Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th># RNs Scheduled to test</th>
<th># RNs Passed test on 1st attempt</th>
<th># of RNs Failed test on 1st attempt</th>
<th># of RNs Passed test on 2nd attempt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul-Dec, 2015</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-Dec, 2016</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-Sep, 2017</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

- Since July 2015 to August 2017, a total of 54 RNs have taken the Medical Surgical Certification Exam (CMSRN).
- Forty Three (48) RNs became CMSRNs. Nine (9) RNs failed the test on their first attempt with 3 RNs out of the 9 passing the test on the second attempt.
- In addition, there are 15 RNs who are currently in the process of studying and are registered for the exam.
- Prior to initiating this program, the total CMSRNs at South Miami Hospital accounted for only 9 nurses (6.9%).
- The CMSRN Failsafe Program allowed this hospital to increase its CMSRNs to a total of 48 which accounts to a 36.8% increase since this program was initiated.

Conclusion/Implications

- In summary, the CMSRN Failsafe program has opened the door for Medical Surgical RNs at our facility to obtain this certification without the fear of failing or paying any upfront fees.
- This has not only provided the RNs with a sense of personal accomplishment and satisfaction but it also allowed for our facility to exceed the NDNQI benchmark for specialty certification on the Medical Surgical units.
- Recognition from peers, other health care professionals, and leadership team have provided the impetus for the success of this endeavor.

References