Shared Governance: Growing Next Generation of Nurse Leaders

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Shared Governance: Growing Next Generation of Nurse Leaders
Simone Cheong, MSHSA, MSN, CMSRN, RN

Background

- Evidence-based strategy of shared governance, in the form of unit-based practice councils (UBPCs), provides opportunities for shared decision making between clinical nurses and nurse leaders.
- By leveraging a Magnet culture of nursing excellence, UBPCs enable professional development.
- Through active engagement in decision-making, policies and procedures, nurses develop leadership skills.
- Successful shared governance programs assist hospitals with internal succession planning, creating a pipeline for new nurse leaders.

Project Goals/Objectives

Shared governance and UBPCs utilized as a mentoring opportunity, succession planning tool and pipeline for nurse leadership positions.

Methods of Implementation

- In 2011, an acute care hospital established UBPCs across nursing departments, later extending to non-nursing areas such as Lab and Pharmacy.
- Established purpose of UBPCs is to provide clinical staff a framework to identify and find solutions to issues regarding clinical practice, professional development, and administrative and quality management.
- UBPC officers’ onboarding requires training to their role.
- UBPC chair, specifically, gains experience with leading a team through projects designed to improve the practice environment or patient outcomes.
- Nurse leaders meet regularly with UBPC chair, acting as mentors to professionally develop what is hoped to be future nurse leaders.

Outcomes

- After years of implementation, it was discovered that many of the nurses, as well as other interprofessional staff, who were committed to shared governance as UBPC officers, subsequently took leadership positions in nursing and other fields.
- UBPC officers gained valuable experience leading a team through projects, and presenting those projects to nursing at large.
- From 2017 to 2021, 17 staff members (13 nurses and four interprofessional staff) who actively participated in shared governance through UBPC officer positions, received promotions to leadership positions.
- That translates to nearly four leadership promotions of UBPC officers per year for the last 5 years.

Discussion

- Effective implementation of shared governance, results in UBPC officers receiving mentoring in their role as leaders of a team.
- This experience provides the foundational tools upon which to build a career path to leadership and a method of succession planning for current leaders.

Reference

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