

Practice Transition Accreditation Program



CASE STUDY: Transforming Nurse Transition to Practice at WVU Medicine United Hospital Center

BACKGROUND

WVU United Health United Hospital Center (UHC) is a branch of WVU Medicine, located in North Central West Virginia. The hospital has 292 private rooms and a wide range of physicians and specialties. The education department at UHC is unique, combining education with patient services, and directly reporting to the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO).

CHALLENGE

The primary challenge faced by UHC was the need to improve the clinical skills and readiness of new graduate nurses. The existing four-week bridge program was insufficient, especially for graduates from local nursing schools who lacked the necessary clinical experience. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this issue, as many graduates had limited clinical exposure during their training.

SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

To address these challenges, UHC expanded the bridge program into a comprehensive six-month Graduate Nurse Transition to Practice Program. Key strategies included:

- **Program Expansion:** Extending the initial four-week program to six months, incorporating both classroom and clinical instruction.
- **Instructor-Led Clinical Training:** Increasing the instructor-led clinical component from four weeks to six weeks, with a focus on foundational nursing skills.
- **Monthly Connection Sessions:** Implementing monthly sessions for professional development and emotional support, covering topics like emotional intelligence, teamwork, and civility.
- **Accreditation Journey:** Pursuing accreditation from the ANCC's Practice Transition Accreditation Program® (PTAP), which involved a thorough gap analysis, strategic planning, and alignment with PTAP standards.

RESULTS

The expanded program led to significant improvements in the readiness and performance of new graduate nurses. Key results included:



Enhanced Clinical Skills:

Graduates demonstrated improved clinical skills and confidence, reducing the number of errors and mistakes.



Supportive Leadership:

Strong support from UHC's leadership team, including the CNO, facilitated the successful implementation and sustainability of the program.



Accreditation Achievement:

UHC successfully achieved PTAP accreditation in June 2024, validating the quality and effectiveness of their transition to practice program.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the program were highly positive, including:

- **Improved Retention Rates:** Higher retention rates of new graduate nurses, as they felt more supported and prepared for their roles.
- **Positive Feedback:** Positive feedback from graduates regarding the program's structure, support, and impact on their professional development.
- **Sustained Excellence:** Ongoing commitment to maintaining and improving the program, with regular updates and continuous learning.

CONCLUSION

The WVU United Health United Hospital Center's Graduate Nurse Transition to Practice Program serves as a model for effectively bridging the gap between academic training and clinical practice. Through strategic expansion, strong leadership support, and a commitment to continuous improvement, UHC has successfully enhanced the readiness and retention of new graduate nurses, ultimately improving patient care and outcomes.

ANCC Practice Transition Accreditation Program® (PTAP). recognizes programs that offer high-quality nurse residency and fellowship programs that transition nurses into practice with confidence and competence.

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