Problem: The full integration and diffusion of relevant evidence into clinical practice requires commitment to effective, timely, and efficient staff development. Nursing staff knowledge and implementation of evidence-based practices impact quality outcomes in the neonatal population.

Evidence: Information overload can be a significant barrier to nurses using evidence-based practices however the development of a core group of experts to mentor staff has been demonstrated to accelerate evidence-based practice diffusion and integration.

Strategy: Learning tools for staff development of 80-90 nurses included multiple venues such as in-services, learning stations, and bulletins in high traffic areas but a significant time delay existed between information delivery and implementation into individual practice. To accelerate diffusion of best practices the NICU preceptor group was targeted for an intervention using the train the trainer model.

Practice Change: The preceptor group received training in quarterly educational seminars reviewing new clinical practice guidelines and hot topics in NICU practice. A multidisciplinary panel of experts served as instructors including: neonatal nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, lactation consultants, respiratory therapists and a clinical educator. Preceptors were then assigned the training of 4-6 fellow staff members each quarter.

Evaluation: Staff awareness and acceptance of practice changes in the NICU post implementation of the teaching program was tracked to assess speed of full integration.

Results: Random surveillance revealed information reached the bedside in 2-4 weeks compared to 2-4 months prior to preceptor training. Initial feedback regarding this new method of knowledge translation from both tenured and newer staff members was positive. Benchmarks for quality indicators such as central line infections have shown improvement.

Recommendations: The context of a busy fast paced nursing environment may require innovative facilitation of staff development to disseminate and implement relevant evidence as best practice at the bedside.

Lessons Learned: Integration of best practices in the NICU can be accelerated effectively by developing a core group of experts using the train the trainer model for information acquisition and dissemination.