Problem
The NSLIJHS has a core value of patient safety and recognizes that staff competency is a major contributor to patient safety. Approximately 70% of newly hired nurses at NSLIJHS are new graduate nurses; a population who, while they are predicted to be heavily relied upon to staff existing units and support future growth, has also been documented as entering the workforce unprepared to perform basic clinical skills and apply classroom learning to real-life practice (Nursing Executive Center Practice Brief, 2006). Two critical competencies for ensuring patient safety are nursing process application and medication math calculation.

Evidence
The IOM report To Err is Human noted that nearly 100,000 people die annually in hospitals due to preventable medical errors (Kohn, 1999). NSLIJHS data analysis showed that only 27.5% and 57.4% of nurses met the health systems expectations in nursing process application and medication math calculation respectively upon hire.

Strategy
The NSLIJHS, Institute for Nursing, designed an RN orientation program using state of the art, high fidelity simulation to recreate patient situations. Nurse educators who have participated in the design and interrater reliability testing of the programs quantitative measurement instrument, individually assess RN orientees performing in simulated patient care settings. A pretest-posttest design is used to measure nursing process application in simulation and medication math calculation. A 4.5 day standardized, comprehensive blended learning RN orientation program occurs between assessment points. 

Results
2008 post program RN orientation data analysis revealed increased performance scores in nursing process application and medication calculation to 92.7% and 84.6% respectively.

Practice change/ recommendations
System RN orientation performance outcomes have led to an orientation overhaul including revamping specialty and unit based orientations to mirror the system orientation program principles.

Lessons Learned
When practice informs research and research informs practice professional nursing is advanced. Nurse leaders must use the literature to identify nurses learning and performance improvement needs, develop strategies to address those needs, and measure the strategies effectiveness.
Bibliography
