Improved Nurse Retention and Patient Outcomes using Leader Development
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Problem:
Future demand for RNs will exceed supply. Shortages are associated with increases in length of stay, nosocomial infections and patient deaths. Providing quality, safe and cost effective care is paramount. Nurse leaders at this organization responded by implementing a comprehensive leadership development program to improve RN retention and patient outcomes.

Evidence:
The Institute of Medicine’s report Keeping Patients Safe: Transforming the Work Environment of Nurses identified management practices as 1 of 4 fundamental, evidence based practices essential to patient safety. When nurses have positive relationships with their leaders, they are more likely to remain with an organization. It’s critical to have stable, experienced staff nurses to provide the care needed to positively impact patient outcomes.

Strategy:
Strategy focused on developing knowledge, competencies and abilities of nurse managers. Leader competencies served as the foundation for the design of a comprehensive leadership development program. Components of the program included a 360 assessment, didactic classes, seven basic management courses, online resources and tools, executive coaching, and on-site assessment and coaching.

Practice Change:
As the nurse leader develops knowledge, competencies, and abilities pertaining to leadership the environment and support for front-line decision-making expands resulting in improved patient outcomes.

Evaluation:
Evaluation focuses on measuring for a direct correlation of leadership development program with nurse retention and patient outcomes. Metrics include: nurse retention rates, patient satisfaction, reporting of patient care errors, nurse satisfaction and patient outcomes: pressure ulcer prevention for adults, and central line infection rates for pediatric patients.

Results:
Initial results show overall improvements in nurse retention metrics, patient satisfaction, reporting of patient care errors, nurse satisfaction and central line infections improvement. Self-assessment of leader competencies improved and program qualitative evaluations are very high.
**Recommendations:**
Broader development training to include the shift supervisor and front line clinical nurses.

**Lessons Learned:**
Selecting metrics that remain constant and managing large data sets over time is challenging. Executive and on-site coaching resulted in high satisfaction scores from participants.

**Bibliography:**