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At the conclusion of the State Implementation Program (SIP) 1 grant, best practices have emerged from the planning and implementation phase of Utah's nurse residency programs. The following is a compilation of best practices from Utah's nurse residency programs:

**1. Promising Nurse Leaders Are Being Identified from the Nurse Resident Programs**

A top priority of the Utah Action Coalition for Health (UACH) is to develop future nurse leaders. This is of particular importance in Utah as there have not been many young nurse leaders participating in our Action Coalition. To remedy this, UACH members plan to implement a joint program with the Utah Organization of Nurse Leaders (UONL), which would recognize emerging nurse leaders from the residency programs. These individuals would most likely be selected for enhanced leadership training. In addition, all nurse residency graduates would receive a diploma and a pin from the UACH and UONL acknowledging this important graduation milestone. This diploma and pin is something the newly graduate nurse resident can use as credentials/evidence of practice competency for future nursing employment. Likewise, employers can benefit from knowing that the nursing applicant has successfully completed a Utah nurse residency program, a definite plus for future employment.

**2. Increasing the Diversity of Utah's Nursing Workforce is a Future "Pipeline" Issue**

Much work needs to be accomplished in getting Utah's nursing workforce to be more diverse. The key to reaching this goal is to promote interest in the nursing profession to future nurses in the pipeline, such as middle school and high school students. High school counselors at schools with a high minority population will be targeted with a brochure/document describing nursing career opportunities each year at their annual conference. In addition, UACH members will target high schools with a large minority population for individualized visits. It is our hope this intervention, along with the regularly scheduled hospital and higher education career fairs, will attract a higher percentage of minority nursing school applicants in the future.

**3. Minority Role Models are Important for Increasing the Future Diversity of Utah's Nursing Workforce**

Once minority students enter higher education programs, it is essential they be paired with successful, highly visible minority nurse role models. This needs to occur in academic programs, along with the nurse residency programs. Creation of the Utah Hispanic Nurses Association, which will highlight minority nurses, is a big step forward in realizing this goal. The



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Hispanic/Latino population is the largest and fastest growing minority sector in Utah, which is one of the main reasons this Chapter is being created.

**4. Simulation Exercises Developed in Nurse Residency Programs Have Now Become a Screening Tool for Hiring All RNs**

Dixie Regional Medical Center, one of our SIP nurse residency programs, implemented a very extensive simulation-teaching program for their nurse residents. The simulation program was so successful/well received that the nurse residency program coordinator thought simulation could be used as an interview/hiring tool for other hospital nursing positions that required past work experience. This practice was implemented and Dixie Regional Medical Center nursing staff report great success in using simulation as a tool in hiring experienced RNs. Nurses that do not interview as well as others may excel at simulation exercises, which then allows a more rounded and predictive RN interviewing process for the hospital.

**5. The REDCap Data System is an Ideal Program for Nursing Research Projects**

The SIP grant coordinator has been extremely pleased with the REDCap system for nurse residency data collection. The program is easy to use and allows for prompt management of the survey responses. For example, individual nurse residents that did not respond initially to completing the required data elements can easily be re-prompted to do the surveys through the system. This automated process made it particularly easy for the SIP grant coordinator to manage. A big advantage of the REDCap data system is data inputted is then automatically displayed into charts and graphs, giving immediate positive feedback of this task to the nurse residency coordinators. Many of these coordinators are using the REDCap graphs and charts to justify the value of the nurse residency programs to their executive leaders in hospital administration and human resources.

**6. Evidence-Based Projects are an Important Program Component for Nurse Residency Programs**

The Salt Lake Veteran's Administration (VA) Hospital nurse residency staff reported that their nurse residents enjoyed completing individual evidence-based projects. This was one of the highest rated areas of satisfaction in the VA nurse residency program. Nurse residents were paired together to complete an evidence-based project for the particular unit that they would most likely be working on in the future. A doctoral prepared nurse with extensive research

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experience, Dr. Nicolette Estrada, works with the nurse residents on these projects. The scope of these projects is designed to be manageable and they are easily completed during the end of their residency year. The evidence-based projects contributed to the sense of professionalism of the nurse residents and allowed them to positively contribute to the hospital units assigned. Finally, the nurse residents prepared a poster presentation of their evidence-based projects and presented it to hospital administration at veteran's recognition events. Dr. Nicolette Estrada spoke about her work at one of our recent nurse residency group meetings, and this information was very well received by the individual hospital coordinators. The Utah SIP program is now seeing evidence-based projects being integrated into individual hospital nurse residency curriculums across the state.

#### **7. Education and Practice Partners are Beneficial to Both Academic Programs and Practice Settings**

The model of the Utah SIP program was to pair individual hospital nurse residency programs with a local nursing academic partner. This partnership has proved beneficial to both parties:

- The individual hospital nurse residency programs benefitted from curriculum development and the teaching expertise of the nursing school faculty
- The nursing schools benefitted from improved understanding of how well their programs prepared new graduates for their first jobs and also promoted a seamless education progression from the capstone to the nurse residency experience

This partnership model is very beneficial to the ultimate success of hospital-based nurse residency programs.

#### **8. Internet Chat Rooms are an Innovative Way of Keeping Nurse Residents Connected**

Once the intensive didactic nurse residency curriculum is completed, an innovative way of keeping the nurse residents connected to one another is by using internet chat rooms. An "esprit de corps" was found to develop among the group and this was an important element of continued workplace support for the individual nurse residents. The chat rooms were a supportive way to address concerns/problems the residents encountered and provided important peer guidance and support. It is likely the chat rooms will continue in some hospitals after the nurse residents have graduated from their programs, as this was a very popular and successful practice.



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**9. A Website for Sharing Best Practices Promotes Learning and Improves the Quality of Nurse Residency Programs**

The Nurse Residency SharePoint information, located on HealthInsight’s website, has been very valuable for sharing of best practices, curriculum content, and other lessons learned. Each nurse residency coordinator was granted access to the SharePoint site and was requested to place their best practices on the site. When new nurse residency programs’ began, these nurse residency coordinators used the SharePoint information to assist in developing their nurse residency program. This readily available knowledge facilitated a timely implementation process for new programs, avoiding errors and duplication of effort. In addition, the broad-based sharing of information on SharePoint, helped break down communication barriers among the acute care hospital nurse residency programs, promoting an “esprit de corp” among the participants.

**10. REDCap Data is Ideal for the Quality Improvement of Nurse Residency Programs**

Comparing individual nurse residency program REDCap data to other sites, and to the group as a whole, promotes quality improvement of individual nurse residency programs. For example, programs that were consistently receiving high scores on nurse resident confidence levels in mastering certain medical procedures, shared what they were doing with other programs that were not receiving as favorable ratings. Drilling down on the REDCap data for these patterns has been beneficial in identifying what the best practices are while ultimately fostering improvement of all the nurse residency programs.

**11. It is Ideal to Have a Neutral Community Organization Lead the State-wide Planning and Implementation of Nurse Residency Programs**

It is important to have a neutral community organization, such as HealthInsight, lead the efforts to implement nurse residency programs though all of the state’s acute care hospital corporations. These corporations are often in a competitive position and a group leader that was viewed or perceived as being biased, or favoring one hospital corporation over another, would doom the overall progress of the initiative. The neutral community organization creates a level playing field and fosters the sharing of program and practice information.

The above is a summary of the best practices from Utah’s SIP 1 nurse residency grant. We look forward to building on these areas in our SIP 3 grant and identifying additional best practices.

