

Pediatric Learning Solutions

Improve retention, reduce turnover and standardize education for NICU nurses

Ensure consistent standards of care and patient safety in the NICU.

Challenge

Hiring nurses at Providence St. Joseph Health was no problem, but retaining them was another story. The system's turnover rate for first-year graduate RNs (residents) rose to about 21 percent, and the use of agency RNs hit an all-time high. NICU nursing leaders recognized they needed to act to improve nurse retention and education. They suspected the lack of consistent training and support for residents and nurses transferring specialties (fellows) to the NICU environment contributed to the problem.

The high first-year turnover resulted in significant costs for re-hiring, education and agency staff. Leaders knew it would take program changes to reduce departures and move related costs to expected levels. Providence St. Joseph Health system has locations in six states, and staff care for newborns in 25 NICUs, making the creation of a solution complex.

Results

- Reduced turnover rate of first-year residents from 21 percent to 8 percent
- Decreased agency spend by an average of 50 percent across all specialties
- Self-reported learner confidence with application of knowledge to the clinical setting
- Standardized education across community campuses and the main facility

“With standardized curriculum, we can ensure all new learners to the NICU receive the same opportunities and up-to-date education regardless of resources and setting.”

—Marta DeVolt, NICU program manager

Details

Nursing leaders representative of the system and neonatal specialty content experts built a blended and flipped model of instruction incorporating Pediatric Learning Solutions online modules, simulation and in-class activities designed to assist learners in applying knowledge. During implementation, the system level NICU manager met with local education teams to ensure the integrity of the curriculum remained intact while allowing for flexibility to accommodate needs and resources.

Group planning

- Organize new hires from various locations into one cohort
- Prioritize classroom and simulation time in scheduling

Create learning success

- Engage learners through a variety of contemporary teaching strategies. Include role play, skills stations, simulation, case method, pecha kucha and peer-to-peer learning
- Request instant survey feedback from participants following each class session or simulation

MAKE IT WORK

- **Challenge:** Settings without a NICU educator to facilitate classes
- **Solution:** Level of detail in lesson plans and support by system program manager helped staff RNs, managers and guest speakers successfully implement the curriculum

BUILDING SUCCESS

- Providence St. Joseph Health built on the success of the NICU experience to formulate a Pediatric Acute/PICU curriculum using PLS content and the same learning structure. That program debuted in January 2019.
- **Webinar:** Improving NICU Nurse Retention and Clinical Preparation April 16, Noon - 1 p.m. ET

CONTACT

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