

A Case Study for Neonatal Educators

STANDARDIZED CURRICULUM DECREASES LENGTH OF NURSE ONBOARDING IN THE NICU

Educators reduce NICU orientation cost and time across facilities.

Challenge

The education team at Swedish Medical Center identified a need to develop a comprehensive neonatal care curriculum and improve onboarding across multiple locations. Based in Seattle, the medical center operates five campuses that include four NICUs (one level 4 and three level 2Bs).

Two factors helped frame the team's improvement plan. Hospital leaders requested a significant reduction in the number of traveling nurses assigned for duty, and local nursing schools were providing very little pediatric-specific education for their students. A rise in census and limited resources added urgency to the team's strategy of decreasing orientation time and the number of instructor-led classes.

After conducting a gap analysis of their processes, the education team developed a new onboarding curriculum which included didactic content through Pediatric Learning Solutions' (PLS) online course library and a simulation program using standard NICU equipment.

Results

- Reduced traveler assignments to zero in 18 months
- Eliminated 40 hours from the orientation process
- Increased engagement with the primarily millennial new hires
- Standardized education across community campuses and the main facility
- Implemented changes with no increase in reported safety events

Details

Using a flipped learning model, conceptual learning occurred primarily online before class, while in-person trainers delivered interactive learning. Incorporating PLS online allowed Swedish to assign courses individually, monitor progress to make sure learners stayed on track and ensure each orientee received the same, evidence-based information.

Group planning

- Onboard in cohorts three times a year
- Cohorts range from 12-16 people to as few as four
- Conduct high-fidelity simulations in groups of three to six

Create learning success

- Track learners in onboarding groups for a picture of individual progress
- Participants receive 20 hours per week of clinical experience on the floor and four hours in the simulation room.
 - Simulation activities were held in smaller groups of three to four learners to increase interaction.

LESSONS

- Improve knowledge retention by adapting curriculum to personal learning styles
- Use a learning management system to track progress and ensure no individual falls behind
- Younger learners engage well with a flipped learning model

BUILD IT RIGHT

- Develop a strong curriculum with PLS courseware offering evidenced-based content
- Onboard in cohorts
- Incorporate simulation
- Bring learners together in a central location
- Integrate a social media platform

CONTACT

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