

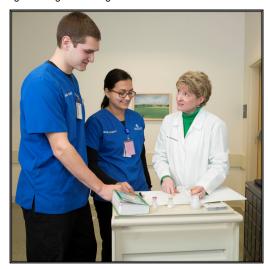
# Establishing an Academic Practice Partnership in Long-Term Care: Challenges, Lessons Learned and Hope for the Future

CLARK

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#### **BACKGROUND**

- Academics and health care organizations must strategically align to influence the future registered nurse workforce
- Healthcare is shifting away from emergency and acute care to care provided in transitional, community and long-term care environments
- Long-Term Care (LTC) organizations are an increasingly vital venue for the current and future provision of healthcare services to older adults
- New graduate nurses seldom select positions in gerontological nursing for various reasons



#### **PURPOSE**

- The goal was to build an optimal practice environment for students and staff that fostered a reciprocal relationship to address changing healthcare environments
- A Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) was planned between a baccalaureate nursing program and a LTC sub-acute rehabilitation unit



# **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

- An Initial presentation was conducted with key stakeholders of the LTC organization to determine feasibility and to secure commitment
- An organizational assessment was completed that revealed opportunities for best practice
- The Logic Model was used to present opportunities for program planning and innovation in designing the DEU
- An embedded faculty was hired to promote a collaborative relationship within the academic-practice partnership. Role was designed to:
  - Foster an effective partnership among all stakeholders
  - Promote evidence-based clinical practices
  - Facilitate student learning and optimal clinical experiences
  - Advance development of the nurses to serve as clinical preceptors
- Robust recruitment strategies were designed to facilitate hiring of BSN prepared nurses to serve as clinical preceptors:
  - Developed unique staffing schedules
  - · Partnered with human resources
  - Recruitment campaign
  - Postcard mailing
  - Radio Interview promoting the partnership and the DEU
  - Scholarship program for BSN degree completion
  - Promoted the partnership to graduating seniors
  - Fostering connections for employment between nursing students and Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) positions
  - Implemented a process for interviewing which includes the embedded faculty
  - Redesigned a comprehensive orientation program for licensed and CNA nursing staff

# **CHALLENGES**

- Shortage of baccalaureate prepared nurses to serve as clinical preceptors
- · Lack of best practices on the unit
- Turnover of the administrative team during the design and implementation process
- · Open RN vacancies
- An inadequate orientation process resulting in high turnover
- Misinterpretation of DEU goals and design between the academic partner and the LTC organization during the administrative changeover
- Competing priorities between academic and organizational objectives and operations

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

- · Effective communication is essential
- Understanding the uniqueness of academic and organizational cultures
- Respecting and appreciating the value that each partner contributes
- · Successful implementation of the DEU requires time

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

- · Elevate best practices that will sustain quality and safety
- · Advance the nursing workforce in this unique setting
- Align a model that fosters collaboration between education and practice

