

## AHEART- Adult HEALth Rotation Team at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital

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### Introduction, Background and Objectives

The project explores the initiation of a new hospital based float pool for novice registered nurses designed to supplement staffing vacancies on medical surgical nursing units as well as offering new nurses the chance to orient to several different units. Medical-surgical nursing units at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital have experienced elevated vacancy rates due to attrition, leave, and nurses advancing in their career paths. Originally, the hospital based float pool (Resource Pool) consisted of 5 medical surgical registered nurses. Grace N. Myers, Chief Nurse Executive, identified the opportunity of harnessing new graduate registered nurses to create a float team. The term **AHEART** – **Adult Health Rotation Team** has become the name of this team at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital and is comprised of new graduate nurses who are oriented to fill nursing vacancies by rotating to all medical surgical units.

### Project description

The allocation of 22.5 full-time equivalents was combined from vacant positions on the medical-surgical units (25 - 0.9 FTE positions). The program was launched May 2017 and was designed to provide a variety of clinical learning experiences on multiple medical-surgical nursing units.

Structure includes:

- ✓ Full-time positions
  - ✓ Full benefits
  - ✓ Rotate units every six weeks
  - ✓ Participation in one year Nurse Residency Program
  - ✓ Participation in Mentoring Program
- Career path options:
- ✓ Remain in program for 2 year or apply to nursing unit of choice after 1 year
  - ✓ Eligible for transition to hospital float pool after 18 months
  - ✓ Eligible to apply for internship programs
  - ✓ Intermediate Care Bridge Program



### Evidence based practice

The structure of the program includes orientation to all medical-surgical units giving the nurse the opportunity to develop skills, critical thinking and professional relationships. “Supplemental nurses have increased involvement and interest in advancing their professional development, as well as that of their peers, through mentoring” (Rainess, Archer, Hofmann & Nottingham, 2015, p.15). This support structure increases the confidence, critical thinking skills and knowledge base of the novice nurse (Muffley & Heath, 2017). Resource teams work best when managed by a central manager (Mendez de Leon & Stroot, 2013). The **AHEART** leadership team consists of a Director, Nurse Manager and Staff Educator.

### Evaluation and Findings

The goal of hiring 25 registered nurses was achieved in March 2019. 96% of all the nurses hired into the **AHEART** program are still working at SNGH with those who have left the program moving to specific units or internship programs. The program continues to expand and an additional ten positions (9.0 FTE) have been approved for hire. The Intermediate Care Bridge Program for the **AHEART** RN has been initiated with three RNs.

### Conclusions

The **AHEART** program provides a framework for training new graduate RNs to enter the workforce and develop their skills while floating to various nursing units. Implementing a novice nurse float pool has proved to meet the needs of the nursing unit vacancies as well as the needs of the registered nurse. The nurse is able to sample all of the medical surgical units without a long term commitment.

### Lessons learned:

- Ensure the recruiter is specialized in attracting new graduates and can highlight the program
- Provide centralized leadership for the **AHEART** team to establish a sense of team and belonging.
- Collaborate in scheduling the **AHEART** RNs between both nursing unit and **AHEART** Nurse Managers.
- Partner with nursing unit managers to provide support and preceptors for the novice RNs.
- Establish flexible interviewing processes and start dates to accommodate **AHEART** RNs relocating (50%) from out of state.
- Provide guidelines to nursing leaders that clearly outline the structure of the program in order to maintain its integrity.
- Replicate the design to benefit facilities that are challenged with hiring new graduate nurses.

This new way to create a medical-surgical based team offers a feeder process for the nursing unit staffing as well as an opportunity for new nurses who are interested in the challenge of working on multiple units.

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References available upon request