

EXPANDING THE NURSE RESIDENT PROGRAM TO THE PACU

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The expansion within the Surgical Services Department at a Magnet-designated, Level I Trauma Center created an increased demand for staff nurses. The leadership team reconsidered the traditional minimum one year of critical care experience requirement for Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) nurses and decided to expand the existing Nurse Residency Program (NRP) to meet the needs of new to practice nurses in the PACU.

The Surgical Services Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Education Specialist identified PACU learning needs for new graduates and worked collaboratively with the NRP Coordinator to develop a six month orientation that mirrors the existing critical care orientation. In addition to precepted clinical experiences, the orientation includes the American Association of Critical Care Nurses Essentials of Critical Care Orientation (ECCO) course, PACU specific content, and regular progress evaluations, Peer support, additional clinical and professional content is also provided in monthly NRP classes.

In January 2012, the first four Nurse Residents were welcomed into the PACUs. 100% (4 of 4) Nurse Residents successfully completed their six month orientation in the PACUs. Qualitative and quantitative data from Nurse Residents and their preceptors highlight the successes and lessons learned of integrating new graduates into the PACU. In the future, the NRP will continue in the PACU with the hiring of Nurse Residents.