

## **PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE THROUGH NATIONAL CERTIFICATION AND EDUCATION**

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**Background Information:** Starting in 2010, Arkansas Children's Hospital began an organizational initiative to promote professional excellence while embarking on their Magnet journey. Recognizing American Nurse's Credentialing Centers (ANCC) Forces of Magnetism core characteristics to support professional development, PeriAnesthesia leadership developed a strategic plan to increase the number of professional certifications and bachelor-prepared nurses within the PeriAnesthesia areas. These professional advancement goals were set in accordance with ASPAN position statements, and the Institute of Medicine's report on the Future of Nursing. Organizational expectations were communicated and the nursing ACHieve clinical ladder was updated to reflect nursing's commitments to education and certification.

**Objectives of Project:** The objective of this project is to increase the number of staff nurses with national certifications and/or BSN degrees by 2% annually as set by the institution.

**Process of Implementation:** Perianesthesia leadership optimized staff participation in organizational initiatives through education and increased awareness. Organizational strategies to engage nurses included tuition reimbursement, scholarships, lotteries for memberships to professional organizations, and certification bonus payments. Efforts to raise awareness focused on individual recognition through organizational-wide communications, in-house preparatory courses, and organizational celebrations for certified nurses. Unit-based initiatives included the lending of study materials, staff mentors, scheduled study days, practice review questions, nursing council promotion, and financial support for staff to attend local conferences. Additionally, practice-specific certification was supported through unit leadership.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** The implementation of the project resulted in exceeding the institutional goal of a 2% annual increase of BSN prepared RNs. In addition, the unit goal of 10% of nurses with a national certification was also exceeded. Pre initiative BSN prepared nurses comprised 32% of staff and 25% of nurses were nationally certified. Post initiative, BSN rate increased to 71% and national certifications increased to 42% of RNs.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** Innovative and diverse strategies are needed to enhance the professional excellence of nursing staff. Through educational efforts and increased awareness, nurse leaders can have a significant impact on increasing the number of certified and bachelor-prepared nursing staff. Historically, national certifications in this unit were nonexistent. In 2016, ASC/PACU celebrated the first Certified Post Anesthesia Nurse and increased the number of RN's with national certifications by 19%.