

Bridging the Gap: A Collaborative Pathway for New Graduate Nurses in PeriAnesthesia Services

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Abstract Background Information: Integrating new graduate nurses into specialized units like perianesthesia services poses challenges, especially when these units traditionally require critical care experience. To address staffing shortages and support workforce development, nurse leaders at a tertiary academic medical center adopted a collaborative approach to create a pathway for new graduate nurses, aiming to fill staffing gaps while maintaining high standards of care. The collaborative approach ensures new graduate nurses can successfully transition into this highly specialized unit without prior critical care experience.

Objectives of Project: The program's primary goal is to alleviate staffing shortages by expanding the candidate pool to include new graduate nurses, developing them into competent perianesthesia clinicians. This includes fostering collaboration across the nursing division to support learning and ensure a seamless transition into a unit that previously required critical care experience.

Process of Implementation: The program spans 18 weeks and incorporates a collaborative, interdepartmental approach to provide comprehensive training:

- Weeks 1-4: New graduates are paired with experienced preceptors in general medicine inpatient units, focusing on foundational skills such as adult assessment, IV therapy, and patient education.
- Weeks 5-8: Orientation to the surgical inpatient units introduces more complex skills like rapid response and wound care, with continuous mentorship from perianesthesia nursing leadership.
- Weeks 9-10: Intensive perianesthesia services orientation, supported by the completion of ASPAN Standards of Practice self-study, prepares nurses for the demands of the unit.
- Weeks 11-18: In-depth training in PACU and surgical specialties (e.g., bariatrics, critical care, gender affirmation), supplemented by critical care lectures and advanced certifications like ACLS and PALS.

Statement of Successful Practice: This collaborative approach has successfully integrated new graduate nurses into the PACU, enhancing staffing levels and promoting staff retention and professional development. Weekly leadership check-ins and tailored preceptor support ensure individualized progress, fostering confidence and clinical competence.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: By adopting a collaborative and structured approach to nurse orientation, healthcare organizations can effectively address staffing challenges. This model demonstrates that with appropriate support and training, new graduate nurses can transition successfully into specialized roles.