Innovation in Action: How to Design a New Graduate Float Pool
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Background
- The institution was unable to successfully establish and maintain a float pool of seasoned nurses.
- The Medical Center is anticipating a need for 300+ skilled nurses in upcoming years due to expansion plans.
- Newly graduated nurses in the area have been experiencing difficulty in securing RN positions in some cases, up to a year.
- Hiring newly graduated nurses into a float pool using the existing Nurse Residency program with additional support for multiple clinical environments.
- The goal was to create a float pool of nurses appropriately trained within clinical zones so they can serve as an internal resource for clinical units experiencing growth or nurse attrition.

Objectives of the Project
- To improve staffing resources through the implementation of a NEW Graduate Nurse Float Pool (NGNFP).
- Provide new grads a means of employment in a competitive market predominately hiring experienced nurses.

Methods/Approach
- Implemented in 2013, nurses apply and interview with nurse managers and the Residency Coordinator.
- Nurses are oriented to the units they will be working on within the Medical/Surgical Zone.
- New grads spend four weeks on a Medical/Surgical unit and one week on each of the remaining units in the Zone for a total of 12 weeks of orientation – similar to unit hired RNs.
- The nurses also participate in a year long RN Residency program alongside nurses that were hired straight to units.
- The first cohort hired in August 2013 consisted of six new nurses – the “Super Six!”

Description

Preparations for New Graduate Float Pool
- Nurses are employees of Clinical Resource Department
- Orientation performed by unit staff nurses
- Participation in Casey-Fink Survey for comparative analysis to unit based nurses in RN Residency.
- Partnership with unit management and APNs was pivotal to their success.

Where Are They Now?
What are the original “Super Six” Doing today?

Christina
- Nurse Clinical II on 7 South Medical/Surgical unit after spending 3 months in Float Pool
- Charge Nurse, Clinical Coach and Unit Council member
- “I was able to see each unit and pick where I felt I could succeed”

Elizabeth
- Working on the Oncology unit as Nurse Clinician II after 10 months in the Float Pool
- Chemotherapy Certified
- Involved in Research Council and as a data collector on research project
- “One of the great things about the float pool was meeting people from every floor!”

Gloria
- Remains in the Float Pool
- Member of the Shared Practice Council as Chair for Float Pool and trained for peer interviews
- “I really like the different experience and learning opportunities I receive from each floor.”

Jeanette
- Stayed in the Float Pool for almost 1 year
- Currently working in the Critical Decision Unit

Katy
- Currently a Nurse Clinician II on Labor and Delivery after spending 6 months in the NC FP
- Education Committee Member and Super User for Products
- Pursuing FNP
- “I enjoyed getting to know so many different people that work at the hospital. It is still fun to see them passing!”

Katrina
- Nursing on a medical/surgical floor she previously floated to for 18 months
- Active in Unit Council activities both in house and in the community
- “What I liked about the float pool was the constant change and challenge of learning fast...I always felt like I accomplished something great!”

Preparation
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Tracking, Competencies and Support
- Rounding by House Supervisor on all New Grads on a regular basis
- Monthly Staff meetings in the Clinical Resource Department
- Skills Binders containing checklists to track both clinical and interpersonal aptitude by new graduate nurses as nurse orientates on several units.
- Information and Huddle Boards in Nursing Resource Office to keep nurses up to date on unit, hospital, and also float specific topics.

Discussion
- Two years later, of the six NGNFP nurses, all have been retained at the medical center.
- One remains in the float pool while five others have transferred out. Two recently transferred after a year and a half floating.
- There are currently 76 nurses in the NGNFP with ongoing hiring processes in place. In total, there have been 84 hires to the NGFP with 87.6% retained within the organization.
- As a result of the NGFP, on-boarding and orientation to the units has been enhanced by developing unit specific orientation binders, mentoring by previous NGNFP nurses and streamlined reporting processes.
- Support staff for the Float Pool has also increased with the addition of two Assistant Clinical Managers.
- Two additional zones, Telemetry and ICU, have been added to the NGNFP.
- NGFPNs have developed their own Unit Council and also participate in the Professional Clinical Practice Council.

Implications for Nursing Practice
- The NGNFP has the potential to change how nurses are hired and is a win-win for the organization and the nurse.
- To further evaluate the NGNFP nurse’s satisfaction, stress, organization/prioritization, communication and support. The Casey-Fink survey is being implemented.
- Further investigation of the impact of a NGNFP on organizations can contribute significantly to nursing research as only one peer-reviewed published article on this specific topic was found in current literature.

References

Figure 1: Information board for float nurses in the Clinical Resource Unit.
Figure 2: Daily Huddle Board organizing information into system and hospital wide Key Result Areas and Behaviors of Excellence.
Figure 3: Example of unit specific skills list.