Preparing new graduate nurses for practice in multiple settings: a community-based academic-practice partnership model

Background: Responding to local and national concerns about the nursing workforce, the California Institute for Nursing & Health Care worked with private and public funders and community health care partners to establish community-based transition-to-practice programs for new registered nurse (RN) graduates unable to secure nursing jobs in the San Francisco Bay Area. The goals were to retain new RN graduates in nursing and further develop their skills and competencies to increase their employability.

Methods: Leaders from academic and inpatient, ambulatory, and community-based practice settings, as well as additional community partners, collaboratively provided four 12- to 16-week pilot transition programs in 2010-2011. 345 unemployed new nurse graduates enrolled. Descriptive data on employment rates three months after program completion were collected by participant survey. Pre- and post- program differences in Casey-Fink Graduate Nurse Survey scores and a preceptor-completed New Graduate RN Transition Program Competency Assessment based on QSEN knowledge, skills, and attitudes were assessed using the two-tailed student t-test.

Results: The response rate to the survey was 54% (188); 84% (158) of respondents were employed in inpatient and community settings. The average total score for participants on the Casey-Fink Graduate Nurse Experience Survey increased from a baseline of 59.3 to 66.6 (P <0.001). The average item score on the preceptor-completed competency assessment increased from 1.97 to 2.73, reflecting an aggregate shift from high-level beginning competency to high-level developing competency. The average total score for all participants, as rated by preceptors, increased from 65.3 to 85.9 (P < .001).
Conclusions: The transition-to-practice program collaboratives achieved positive results in terms of improved confidence, competence, and employment of participating new RN graduates.