Forging a NICHE to Strengthen the Inpatient Geriatric Service Line - Lessons from the Field

Tracie Heckman MSN, RN, CMSRN
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Tracie.Heckman@lvhn.org

Carolyn L. Davidson RN, PhD
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Carolyn_L.Davidson@lvhn.org

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Lessons from the Field
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Driving Forces:
- Network participation in Medicare Innovation Collaborative (MED-IC) to enhance services for the geriatric community
- Analysis of current practice environment by physician champions and nursing leaders using Geriatric Institutional Assessment Profile (GIAP)
- Opportunity to strengthen inpatient geriatric service line
- Determination by interprofessional leadership team that Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) model of care positively aligns with network priorities

Goals:
- Enhance medical-surgical nurse knowledge and skill
- Improve outcomes and quality of care for geriatric patients
- Increase patient and family satisfaction

Outcomes
- 100+ Geriatric Resource Nurses (GRN)
- Network Geriatricians
- Geriatric Patient Care Associate (GPCA) Program – online component + classroom component to test knowledge
- 13 staff members successfully completed pilot program
- 13 additional staff members enrolled in second cycle
- GRN curriculum in all in-patient units caring for older adults
- Collaborative initiatives resulting in evidence-based protocols/projects
- Mobility Protocol
- Delirium Management Project
- Network continuing education opportunities focused on geriatric patients
- Unit staff acknowledge confidence and empowerment

Goals:
- Enhance medical-surgical nurse knowledge and skill
- Improve outcomes and quality of care for geriatric patients
- Increase patient and family satisfaction

Design & Implementation
- Obtained administrative commitment
- Secured financial support for education
- Formed dedicated NICHE Team
- Determined pilot unit
- Established goals and timeline
- Identified unit nurse champions

Pilot Unit Successes:

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<th>Fall Rate Reduction</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>FY 2011</th>
<th>FY 2012</th>
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<th>Overall Nursing Satisfaction (Press Ganey)</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>FY 2011</th>
<th>FY 2012</th>
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Challenges
- Competing network priorities
- Staff engagement
- Compensation for staff education
- Time commitment
- Leadership support
- Technical support
- Ancillary staff education
- Unit expansion
- Translation of learnings to unit practices

Next Steps
- Dedicated Acute Care of the Elderly (ACE) unit
- Gerontological Nursing certification (RN-BC)
- Repeat GIAP

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