

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

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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

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

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

Pilot Unit Successes:

Fall Rate Reduction		
FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
5.2	4.0	4.2
Overall Nursing Satisfaction (Press Ganey)		
FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
87.9	85.8	89.0

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

Next Steps

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



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