

Utilizing a Best Practice Staffing Framework to Promote Interprofessional Collaborative Practice at the Niagara Health System

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The human health resources demonstration site project was initiated based on the need to build capacity within the Niagara Health System (NHS) to resolve the nursing shortage in the emergency program and to further the work of the baseline staffing project established in the fall of 2007. Fluctuating vacancy rates and high turnover, in combination with the building of a new healthcare complex, highlighted the need to develop strategies to attract, recruit and retain professionals skilled to deliver specialized and complex care in the emergency program.

The project's overall goal was to promote and demonstrate the benefits of utilizing a baseline staffing framework, tools and processes to enhance interprofessional collaboration and teamwork. The shift to advance interprofessional collaboration in the practice setting was also about developing and sustaining partnerships with other internal and external healthcare professionals to achieve these common goals. Specific and measurable objectives were developed to define project priorities and targets for progress and accountabilities. These objectives were:

- Development of a baseline staffing framework, associated tools and processes
- Utilization of the baseline staffing framework to assess staffing needs in the emergency program
- Investigation of the US Emergency Nurses Association staffing tool
- Development of interprofessional care core competencies
- Implementation of educational workshops for emergency department (ED) staff and other professionals
- Development of a Champions Network
- Development of job descriptions for other professionals working in the ED
- Testing of the Advisory Board, Human Resources Investment Centre Workforce Demand Forecasting Toolkit

Lessons Learned

- The NHS demonstration site project has been successful at not only introducing new principles in best practice staffing; it has also been instrumental in launching interprofessional practice.
- Our success was due to collaboration with both key internal and external stakeholders who shared responsibility for interprofessional collaboration and practice.
- Systematic best practice staffing approaches and changes to our models of care delivery are cultural changes that require ongoing commitment, collaboration and dedicated financial and human resources.

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