

Rural Routes: Recruitment and Retention in Rural Areas for Health Human Resources

Julie Rivers, RN, BScN
Simulation Specialist
Loyalist College

Amy Hallaran, RN MScN
Professional Practice Leader
Quinte Health Care

Bree Ricketts
Recruitment Coordinator
Quinte Health Care

LouAnne Melbourne, RNBN
Clinical Educator
Quinte Health Care

Grace Zwartz, RNBN
Nurse Clinician
Quinte Health Care

Earl Hough
Director Human Resources
Quinte Health Care

In order to respond to the great needs for healthcare providers in the Quinte area the health human resources (HHR) demonstration project created a number of initiatives. Our group focused on two parts: a nursing internship program and human resources planning across our rural communities. Components of this project included developing useful tools as well as a partnership within our communities to build and foster collaboration between multidisciplinary organizations.

The nursing internship project focused on the practice of rural inpatient medicine by identifying strategies to meet the learning needs of nurses working in or relocating to the area. We developed a competency self-assessment tool for nurses,

along with a program curriculum and evaluation criteria to measure skill acquisition, critical decision-making in patient scenarios and current knowledge base. This portion of the project was developed through partnering with Victoria Order of Nurses, ParaMed, Loyalist College and Quinte Health Care. Knowledge gained will be utilized to implement similar internships in other specialty and hard-to-recruit areas, including critical care, emergency and intraoperative nursing.

The HR planning component included development of a number of surveys and questionnaires. We also developed a healthcare recruitment website for healthcare providers seeking employment in the Quinte area. By evaluating information collected using these tools, we could more accurately identify the current healthcare situation in our area and prepare ourselves to better recruit and retain qualified healthcare professionals.

Lessons Learned

- *Nurse clinician:* Implementation of the clinician's role was the most successful component of our project. Its downside was that the clinician was funded for only one shift and the role was split between two units.
- *Competency skills self-assessment tool:* This was useful when organizing educational sessions. It provided nurses with an opportunity to reflect on and verbalize their learning needs.
- *HR website:* Development of this website gives healthcare providers the opportunity to access employment options and information from all healthcare Quinte area organizations. Ongoing maintenance of the site is challenging

Correspondence may be directed to: Amy Halloran at ahalloran@qhc.on.ca