

Fighting Our Way Back: When RN Satisfaction Gets Pounded by Fiscal Realities

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Introduction

Fiscal realities, resulting in decreases in RN hours and nurse-patient ratio increases, had a significant negative impact on Flagler Hospital's RN satisfaction.

The 2007 and 2008 NDNQI RN Practice Environment surveys demonstrated that direct care RNs were changing their attitudes about the practice environment. It was clear that Flagler Hospital was not immune to the issues facing the country. The volume of admissions and surgeries was down below budget and some quick decisions were needed to get the budget back on track. These "quick decisions", made without feedback from direct care RNs, had a serious impact on the RN practice environment.

In 2008, two years after achieving Magnet recognition, Flagler Hospital's NDNQI RN Practice Environment Survey Scores were below the Mean for the second straight year, pounded by decisions made in response to fiscal realities.



Methods

The decision was made to add a Nursing Practice Environment Council (PEC) to our existing Magnet Councils. The PEC membership was drawn from staff RN unit leaders, with all nursing units represented. This council's mission, through direct communication with the CNO, COO, and CEO, is to receive current financial and administrative information, to serve as a direct link back to the units and to return staff RN feedback to the administration.

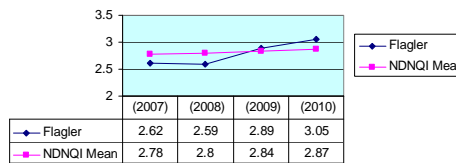
Inevitably, another "opportunity" to decrease costs arose. The PEC provided feedback to administration on decreasing overtime, eliminating specific entitlements, RN retention and benefits, development of a hospital-wide float pool and revamping unit-based prn usage.

PEC input was instrumental in the development of the Nursing Intranet site, further increasing immediate communication opportunities.

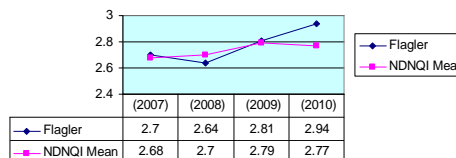


Results

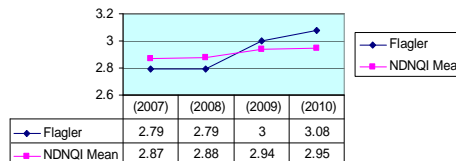
Flagler Hospital NDNQI RN Survey
Nurse Participation in Hospital Affairs as Compared to the NDNQI Mean 2007 - 2010



Flagler Hospital NDNQI RN Survey
Staffing and Resource Adequacy as Compared to the NDNQI Mean 2007 - 2010



Flagler Hospital NDNQI RN Survey
Mean Practice Environment Score as Compared to the NDNQI Mean 2007 - 2010



Conclusions

Receiving the hospital's financial information was an "eye-opening" experience for the PEC members and the nursing staff. The PEC continued its mission by recommending nurse-patient ratio improvements and charge RNs without a patient assignment, to the Flagler Hospital Board. This goal was met, with physician Board members in full support. Direct care RN participation in decisions that affect the RN practice environment has resulted in two years, 2009 and 2010, with overall NDNQI RN Practice Environment indicator scores above the NDNQI Mean.

Excellent timely communication, at all levels of nursing, is the key when RN Satisfaction is challenged by healthcare realities.

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