

Nursing Certification...Raising the Bar

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Background

An organization's commitment to the professional development of its nurses confirms their role and contribution to the health care team. Specialty certification serves as a validation to nursing staff of their expert knowledge and clinical skills and brings recognition to the individual nurses for their expertise. High levels of nursing certification represents the quality of nursing staff and care delivery within the organization.

Methodology

Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics (CMH&C), recognizing the importance and significance of specialty certification, is committed to supporting nurses in achieving these goals by providing resources, compensation, and recognition. Nurses at all levels are encouraged and recognized for obtaining specialty certification and are provided resources to support their pursuit of this achievement.



"We set high goals and have high expectations as an institution."

Kari Davidson, RN, BSN, CCRN, PICU Staff Nurse



Strategies to Increase Certification

Certification Exam Review and Testing

- CPN written exam hosted on-site 3x/year
- Review courses and specialty study groups held at hospital

Expense Reimbursement

- Organization pays for certification/re-certification costs

Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) exams

- Institutional Competency Assessment Plan (ICAP™) implemented for online registration
- Organization is billed directly & not charged for failed exams

Compensation

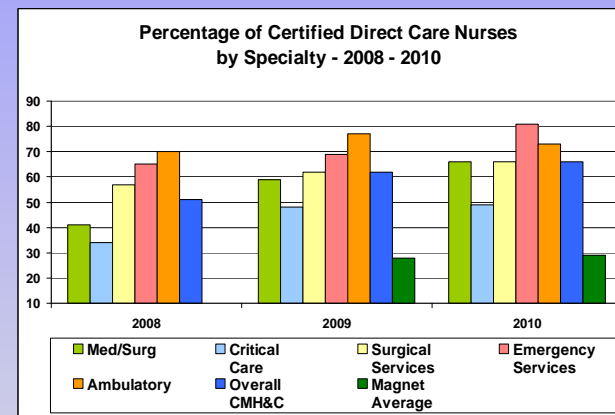
- Certification pay awarded as increase to base pay

Recognition

- Eligibility for higher levels of Career Advancement Program
- Nurses Week – Certification Pins awarded during Certification Luncheon hosted by Chief Nursing Officer
- Recognition on certification plaques, in Nursing Annual Report and denoted on employee badge

Results

CMH&C has experienced remarkably high certification rates, including recognition as the first organization with over 500 PNCB certified nurses. Over 65% of our direct care nurses are certified, significantly exceeding other Magnet Designated Organizations (American Nurses Credentialing Center, 2010).



Implications for Practice

Certification substantiates patients, families and health care colleagues' confidence in the nurse's expertise. By supporting nurses in obtaining certification through financial and physical resources, organizations are able to deliver exemplary nursing care and further enhance patient outcomes.



Reference: American Nurses Credentialing Center (2010). Magnet Recognition Program® Overview. Retrieved from <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/Magnet/ProgramOverview.aspx>