Leveraging Technology for Reward and Recognition: The Honored Nurse Program

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Background

Nursing leaders are challenged with finding meaningful ways to reward and recognize staff using objective criteria to evaluate performance. Ideally, such mechanisms should be applicable to nurses across practice settings and serve to recognize high performance. In our organization, nurses were dissatisfied with the traditional approach of nominating candidates for annual awards. The writing skill of the nominators unduly influenced who received rewards and the process needed revamping.

Purpose

The purpose is to describe an innovative strategy to reward and recognize nurses through development of an electronic nurse portfolio with an overall goal of recognizing achievement with awards. Nurse leaders, informaticists, and clinical nurses collaborated to develop this unique process.

Dashboard Examples

Strategy and Implementation

- A group of nurse leaders was tasked with developing a novel approach to reward and recognize nurses as part of a leadership initiative.

- The group reviewed literature and evaluated programs at other organizations.

- Based on their findings, they recommended developing an electronic nurse portfolio with points attached to each activity.

- Awards are given based on an accumulation of points.

- Nurses self-report activities related to shared governance, community service, evidence based-practice, improvement initiatives, presentations, and other categories that coincide with clinical ladder criteria and reflect professional nursing practice.

- Nurse managers are asked to validate their nurses' reports, quarterly.

- An Olympic-style ranking was created based off a point system to place nurses into a bronze, silver, gold or platinum level.

- The top 10% of medaled nurses in four categories (Inpatient, Outpatient, Perioperative Services and Clinical Support) become candidates for the Nurse of the Year award.

- Dashboards are posted quarterly, by unit, detailing each nurse's progress.

- The Honored Nurse Committee, comprised of nurse leaders, informaticists, and direct care nurses, meets monthly to identify and implement improvements to the program. Examples include:
  - Revising the electronic portfolio to improve ease of data entry.
  - Identifying communication strategies related to the Honored Nurse Program.
  - Surveying nurses annually about their satisfaction with the program and making changes accordingly.

Evaluation

Nurses participated in a survey six months after the Honored Nurse Program was introduced and were re-surveyed at the end of the first year. With respect to awareness of the program, 59% of respondents indicated awareness at 6 months and 88% indicated awareness at one year. At one year, 57% of respondents agreed the point system was achievable, up from 38% during the original survey.
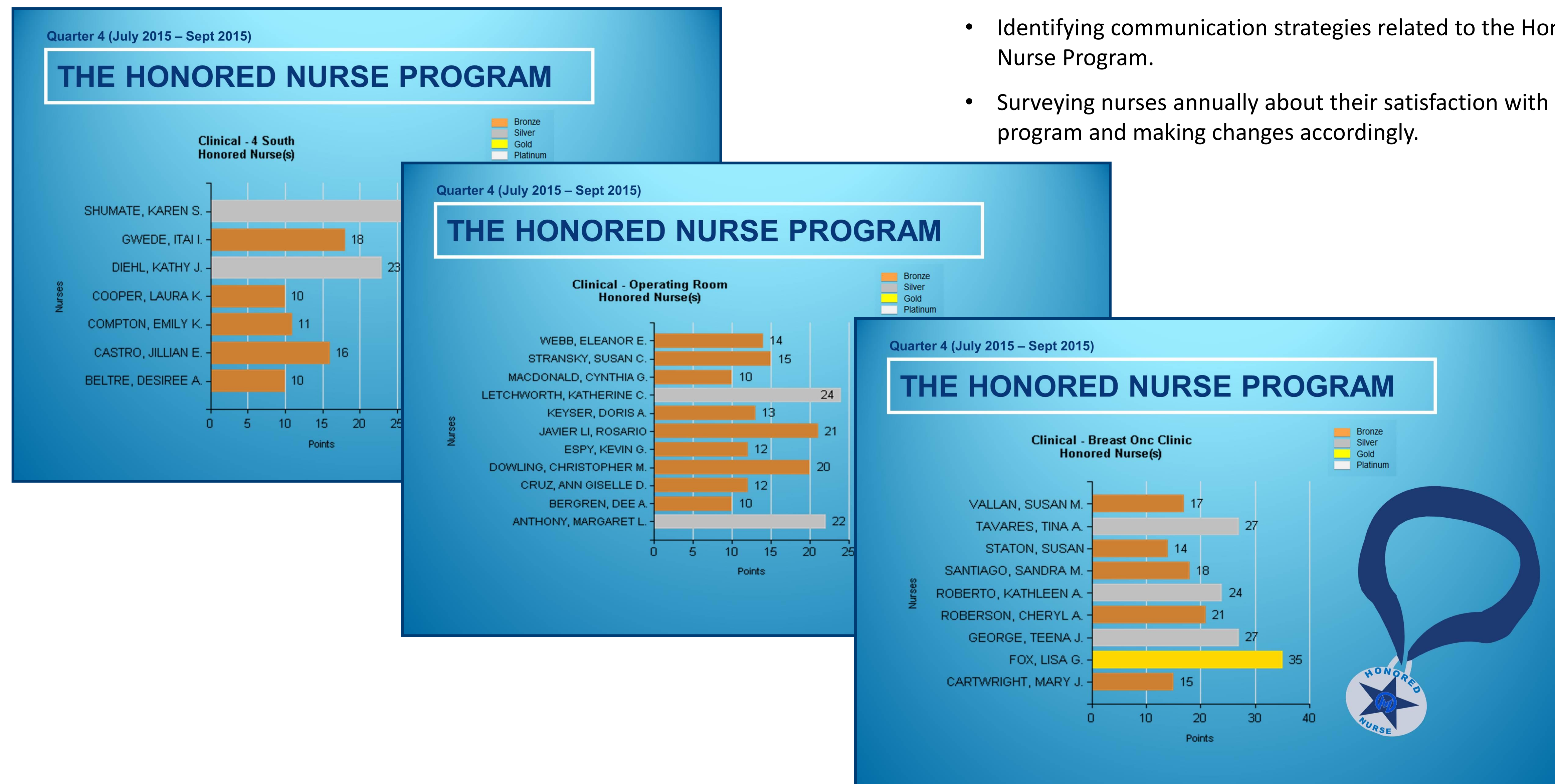
2015 Nurses of the Year

Implications for Practice

- The Honored Nurse Program provides a mechanism for nurses to report their contributions to professional nursing practice and track progress toward meeting criteria set forth by our Clinical Ladder program.

- Objective criteria and a point system are used so nurses can gauge their own performance.

- Asking nurses to identify ways in which they contribute to their unit and the organization promotes engagement.

- Leveraging technology in this fashion allows nurses to participate at their convenience, both from their respective work units and homes.

Recognition Event