Charge Nurse Competencies

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Purpose

The role of the Charge Nurse is critical for both patient safety and staff satisfaction. They often have the clinical expertise, but they are missing valuable skills and knowledge to lead. Staff reported inconsistent decision making, favoritism, and communication breakdown with the team. Competencies were used to establish strengths and opportunities for growth for the Charge Nurses in the Family Birth Center.

Background

The unit lacked a consistent model for the role of the Charge Nurse. A need for competencies for all units was identified by the Director and Chief Nursing Officer of the Medical Center. In addition, a new staffing law required each unit to demonstrate the competency of specialty roles.

Methods

The staff identified the key characteristics of an effective Charge Nurse using a survey format. The results were used to build a preferred profile. The competencies were created using the ANA Scope and Standards for Nursing Practice, AACN Synergy Model, and the Charge Nurse Leader Program Builder. Benner’s Model is used in the residency program in this health system, and it was also used to assess the competencies of each RN. The competencies were presented to the Charge Nurses at a retreat in April 2018. Each Charge Nurse was evaluated by the manager at the annual performance review, and opportunities for improvement were identified.

Results

The Charge Nurses continue to work with the administrative leadership team to increase knowledge relating to communication, coworker feedback, and delegation. They completed a self evaluation of progress at 4 months. The staff were surveyed about the effectiveness of the new role at 5 months. The survey included a request for overall feedback and the strengths and opportunities for improvement for each Charge Nurse. The results will be used to further refine the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the Charge Nurses. Results are pending.

Discussion

Competencies were used to assess the each charge nurse and identify opportunities for improvement. In a self reflection exercise, the charge nurses reported increased confidence to manage complex issues and conflict. They reported improved communications skills and increased openness to coworker feedback. They continue to focus on communication and managing up others.

Conclusions

Competencies are used to assess skills, knowledge, and attitudes of staff. The Charge Nurse Competency allows for individualized development towards a common skill set. Building leadership skills will build trust with the frontline staff and empower charge nurses to make critical decisions.

References


Swihart, D., & Gantt, K. J. (2015). The charge nurse leader program builder: A competency-based approach for developing frontline leaders.

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