

Certification Campaign

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Objectives

- Describe rationale for specialty nursing certifications
- Perform literature review related to the effects and outcomes of certification
- Pilot and evaluate a Gerontological Nurse Certification course
- Discuss strategies to increase and promote certifications

What is Certification?

- Certification is a process that allows validation of a nurse's skills and abilities in a defined functional and clinical area of practice. This validation is based upon pre-determined standards.
- Typically, clinical requirements, general experience requirements and academic degrees are required for most initial certifications. Application and submission of fees are the initial steps to sit for a certification exam. The certification examination is proctored and is completed with either a paper/pencil exam or via computer at a testing center.
- Examination review is available through structured courses offered by experts in their field of study, self-study, and/or with review materials found on-line or in book stores.

Why Certify?

- Validates a commitment to professional career development and for quality patient care. Verifies nurse's knowledge in a specialty practice area. Pediatric Nursing, 2004
- Demonstrates a greater professional commitment to lifelong learning Nursing Management, 2005
- Expands and opens future career opportunities and advancement and promotes confidence in clinical practice. Nursing 2004
- Creates an intrinsic sense of professional pride and accomplishment and validates competence in a specialized area to colleagues, peers, and the public.
- Indicates a mark of excellence and is an indicator of mastery and quality of nursing care Nursing Management.com, 2005
- Provides a tool for recruitment and retention tool by employers. Certification is encouraged for Magnet accreditation.

Literature Review

- Findings from the International Study of the Certified Nurse Workforce was based on a random sample of 19,452 nurses. Demographic characteristics and the nature of their practice and any benefits or rewards they might attribute to certification were examined. Seventy-two percent of nurses reported one or more benefits of certification and almost all respondents reported that certification brought about at least one change in their practice. These results provide initial evidence that certification may give nurses an opportunity to practice in a manner likely to improve outcomes.

AJN, 2001

- This study was designed to determine similarities and differences in perceived value of certification among peroperative nurses. Survey response rate was 55.5%. Perceived value of certification among certified (n 1250), non-certified (n 2000) and administrative (n 1250) peroperative nurses indicated that although intrinsic values are important, barriers to certification listed most often related to lack of extrinsic rewards. Non-certificants were significantly different from certificants and administrators on the extrinsic construct and the total Perceived Value of Certification Tool score.

Journal of Professional Nursing, 2006

Reason for Study

AGE WAVE

Older Americans account for >50% of days in hospital care. According to the Alliance for Aging Research "the average 75 year old has three chronic conditions and regularly uses about five prescription drugs as well as multiple over-the-counter remedies." By the time an elder reaches age 80, three out of four older adults have a disabling condition.

Mezey M, NYU 2006
AJN, 2004

Sioux Valley Hospital's CORE BUSINESS is older adults.

- 68% Rehab
- 62% Cardiology
- 55% Pulmonary
- 50% Ortho Neuro
- 60% rural SVHHS hospitals
- 49% Medical Oncology
- 47% Surgical Renal
- 46% Critical Care Units
- 42% Cardiovascular/Surgical
- 90% SVHHS nursing homes

Age

15-44
45-64
65+

Length of Stay

3.3 days
4.5 days
5.5 days

Readmission (30 days)

8.2%
11.7%
13.5%

(SVH Fiscal Year 2004)

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE in older adult care

- Only two nurses at SVH and SVHHS were certified in Gerontological Nursing in 2004.

(SVH Human Resources 2004)

Gerontological Nurse Certification Course Pilot

- Develop ten week course of three hour classes
- Link national certification, Nurse Competence in Aging course, and development of Geriatric Resource Nurses
- Provide education for 3 levels of exams & offer CEUs
- Sign informal letter of agreement/contracts for success
- Promote a nurse-friendly system via video conferencing to the SVHHS sites and video recording of classes
- Facilitate a study group environment, encourage self-study, promote managerial support
- Measure outcomes:
 - Number of nurses passing examination
 - Post-course satisfaction survey
 - Geriatric performance improvement projects to enhance Quality of Life for elder patients
- Reward and recognize

Key Elements for Success

- Create a sense of urgency and interest
- Develop curriculum, select resources & expert presenters
- Offer continuing education units
- Utilize computer shared drive to access education
- Create class camaraderie in geriatric investment
- Recognize, reward, and re-invest

Findings of the Study

- 2005 Post-course survey
 - 100% rated course as Excellent/Good
 - 92% rated knowledge gained as Excellent/Good
 - 100% would not have certified but for course
 - 85% felt SVHHS recognized their efforts
- 2005 SVH Gerontological Nurses
 - 16 Associate Degree/Diploma
 - 13 Baccalaureate
 - 3 Clinical Nurse Specialists
- 2006 SVH Gerontological Nurses
 - 11 Associate Degree/Diploma
 - 9 Baccalaureate

Geriatric Performance Improvement projects

- Fall reduction projects
 - Surgical Cardiovascular Unit
 - Orthopedics/Neurology Unit
 - Medical Oncology Unit
- Depression screening project - Pulmonary Unit
- Fall risk tool comparison study – Surgical Renal Unit
- Geriatric column in Nsg newsletters – Cardiology Unit
- Advance Directives education study - APNs
- Arthritis Support Group - Community
- Catheter associated Urinary Tract Infections reduction project – Rehabilitation Unit

Implications for Nursing

The older adult population is exploding, and that brings new demands on nurses. Older Americans already account for 50% of hospital care. The number and severity of disabilities increase with age. It is imperative to create a culture of expert, elder-friendly care that focuses on healing and quality of life for older adults/families. Nursing certification provides a means to promote competency for nurses not only in gerontological nursing but in all specialties.