

Achieving Specialty Certification at a Community Hospital

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Purpose

- The purpose of this evidenced based practice project is to increase the number of specialty certified nurses at the community facility by 10% in 2015, 2016 and again in 2017.

Background

- Although specialty certification is linked to improved patient outcomes and satisfaction, Nursing Professional Development (NPD) practitioners struggle to promote nursing specialty certification in organizations.
- Nurses may not recognize the value and benefits of specialty certification. Additionally, nurses may not be aware of the certification process, requirements and available programs.
- Nurses list common barriers as reasons for not achieving specialty certification, some of which include cost, test anxiety, and lack of access to preparation courses and exam sites (Perlstein et al., 2014).
- Certification validates an individual's knowledge and skills in a defined role and clinical area of practice (ANCC, 2016).
- Benefits to Organization include: reduced turnover, reduced vacancy rates, increased engagement, higher standards of practice, increased accountability, promotes positive work environment.
- Benefits to Patients: Improved patient outcomes, reduced falls, reduce lengths of stay, improved patient satisfaction.

Literature Review

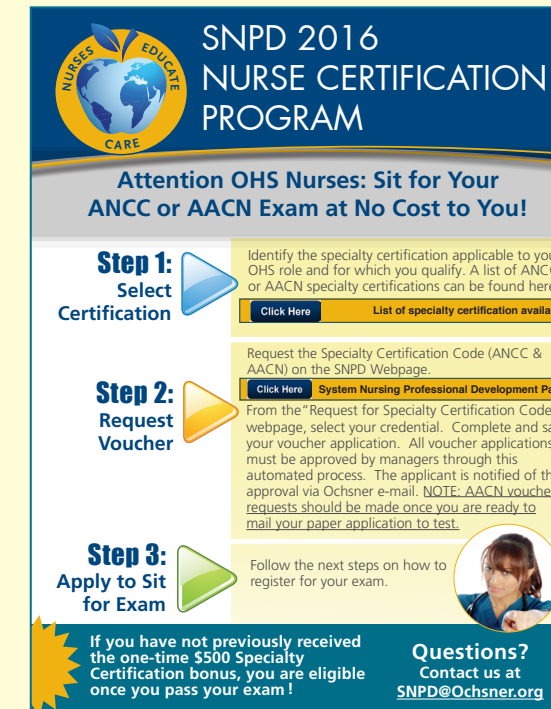
- Barriers to certification include cost of exam, test anxiety, lack of facility support, lack of access to preparation course and lack of access to exam site (Perlstein et al., 2014)
Level of Evidence 4
- Perlstein et al. (2014) report an increase of specialty certification from 6.45% to 51.6% after the implementation of a structured Certification Achievement Program reducing barriers on a medical surgical unit.
Level of Evidence 4
- Boyle, D. et al. (2015) completed a secondary analysis of longitudinal data from NDNQI, showing a small significant relationship, suggesting increase in RN specialty certification is associated with improved fall rates.
Level of Evidence 4
- Nurse specialty certification is associated with better patient outcomes including decreased mortality and failure to rescue (Kendall-Gallagher, et al. 2011).
Level of Evidence 4
- Haskins, et al. (2011) reviewed a replicated study by the Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board to validate perceptions, values and behaviors of certified nurses. This study was the first to report internal consistency of the Perceived Value of certification Tool (PVCT).
Level of Evidence 4

Project Description

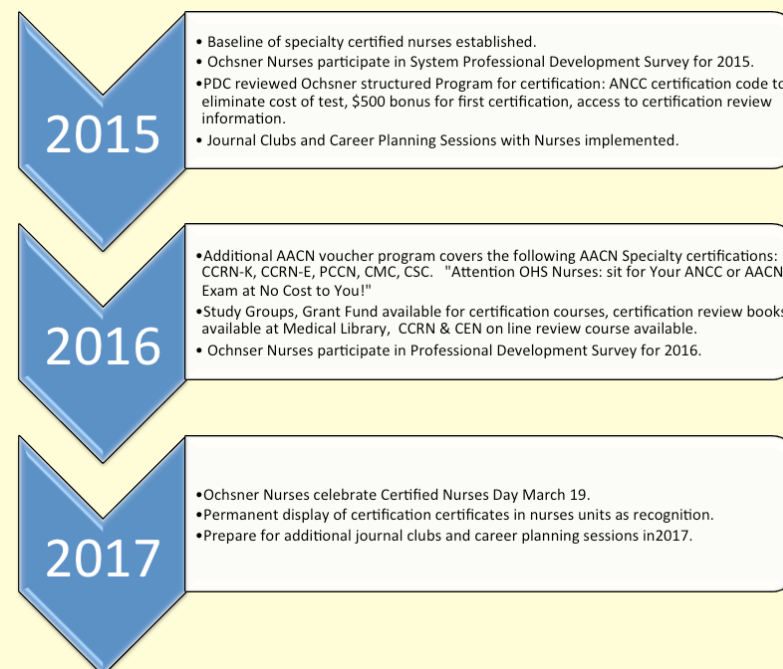
- NPD practitioners will promote certification through education on certification process, benefits, value and reduction in barriers.
- Time Frame: 3 Year Project 2015-2017.
- The Evidenced Based Practice Team consisted of Professional Development Council (PDC) RNs and NPD practitioners.
- Key stakeholders include RNs, Nurse Leaders, NPD practitioners and PDC Members.
- Setting includes OMC-Kenner, including Free- Standing Emergency Department.

Method Design

- Learner Engagement methods included: learner centered approach using collaboration, facilitation and feedback. Nurses had access to web-based learning, study groups, journal clubs and career pathway sessions.
- Monthly Metric tracked and recorded through Nursing Education Dashboard.
- The quality improvement model is Plan, Do, Study and Act (PDSA) which is an effective quality change model (Langley, Moen, Nolan, K., Nolan, T., Norman, & Provost, 2009).



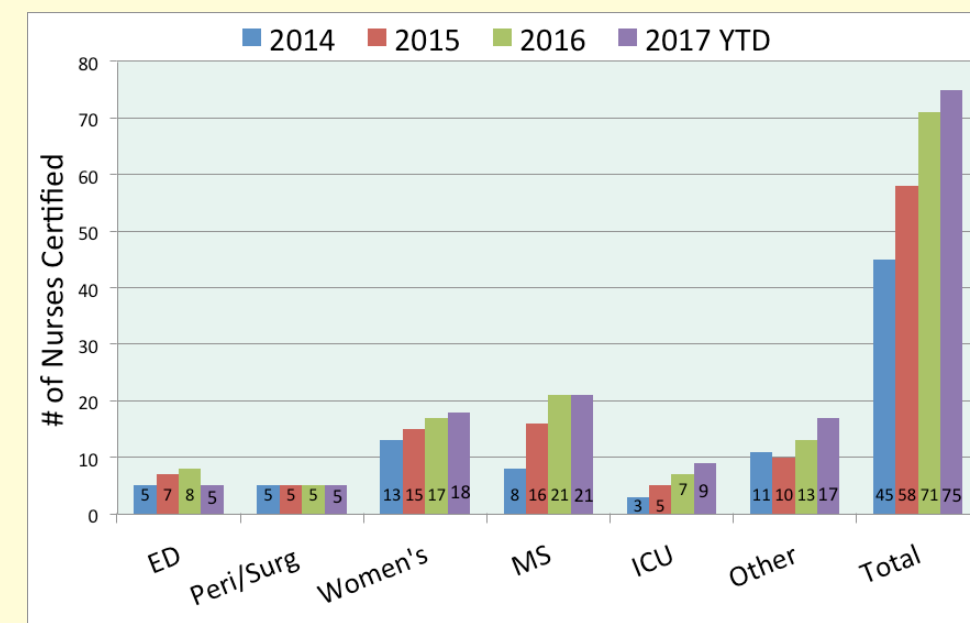
Implementation



Outcomes

In 2015, 58 nurses held specialty certification, exceeding project goal. Year to date 2017, 75 nurses hold specialty certifications.

Specialty Certified Nurses



Conclusion

The increase in nurses certified in their specialty indicates success of this model. Opportunities include enhancing study group access and career development sessions.

Suggestions for Further Research

The ANCC has requested a scoping review to examine how specialty certification is operationalized in nursing (Kitto, S. & Rachel, G. 2017).

Although studies suggest a link between specialty certification and improved outcomes, more research is needed to support value of certification.

Researches may have difficulty drawing conclusions between patient outcomes and certification due to variability in certification requirements (Kitto, S. & Rachel, G. 2017).

Implications for Nursing

- Certified RNs demonstrate lifelong learning, changes in practice and are more engaged.
- Certified RNs are linked to improved patient outcomes: quality and patient satisfaction.
- Benefits to Nurses include: recognition, respected as expert in specialty area, enhances professionalism, builds confidence, demonstrates lifelong learning, and improves marketability.

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