

News Release

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NCSBN Embarks on an Innovative Multi-Site Transition to Practice Study to Examine the Effects of Nurse Transition to Practice Programs on Patient Outcomes

Chicago-The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN[®]) (www.ncsbn.org) announces the launch of an innovative, multi-state study to evaluate safety and quality outcomes in nurse transition to practice programs. In addition, the study will determine how well the preceptor training module prepares preceptors for their role; identify the challenges and potential solutions of implementing the NCSBN transition model; and determine cost/benefit analysis.

NCSBN has brought together a research advisory panel of nationally renowned experts with extensive backgrounds and experiences studying new nurses and entry into practice. The panel was convened to assist NCSBN in the planning of the study and will continue to share their expertise throughout the implementation and analysis of the study.

During Phase I, the NCSBN Transition to Practice Study will follow newly licensed registered nurses (RNs) hired to work in hospital settings in Illinois, Ohio and North Carolina during their first year of employment. Phase II will include newly hired RNs who work in settings other than hospitals and licensed practical/vocational nurses (LPN/VNs) who work in all health care settings. Throughout the year the newly hired nurses will participate in interactive, online transition to practice modules, work one-on-one with a preceptor and receive institutional support from their hospital.

"NCSBN has been working on transition to practice for more than 10 years," said Maryann Alexander, PhD, RN, chief officer, Nursing Regulation, NCSBN. "Evidence shows that transition to practice programs protect patients and the public, which is the very mission of state boards of nursing and NCSBN. We are excited to embark on this study and the data collected will have a great impact on the future of nursing after initial licensure."

This study is unique in two ways. First, it is the only transition study where sites will be randomly assigned to either a standardized transition to practice model or to a control group. The use of a control group will allow NCSBN to statistically analyze differences between study and control groups. Secondly, this study is the first to analyze actual patient outcomes in programs that transition new nurses to practice. Other studies of transition programs have looked at retention rates, new nurse satisfaction, preceptor satisfaction, and nurse's perceptions of competence and confidence, but they haven't examined actual patient outcomes. Since NCSBN's transition to practice program is a regulatory model, it is essential to evaluate patient outcomes.

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Each site in Illinois, Ohio and North Carolina will be randomized to either the study group or the control group. The control group will use its usual practice of transitioning new nurses to practice. The study group will participate in NCSBN's Transition to Practice Model. Newly licensed nurses in this group will successfully complete five interactive, online modules within their first three months of employment. The modules include patient-centered care, communication and teamwork, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and informatics. These modules are designed to integrate experiential and active learning, and will not incorporate relearning of content that the new nurses have already learned in their nursing programs.

In addition to the modules, newly hired nurses will be given a preceptor to work with during their first six months of employment. The preceptor will be required to complete NCSBN's online preceptor training module. During the final six months of their involvement in the study, the newly hired nurses will receive institutional support. This may include being invited to serve on committees that look at the root cause of an error or creating procedures that allow the new nurse to be given continuous feedback and evaluation. By providing institutional support, nurses are encouraged to reflect upon the care they have provided and to suggest quality improvements.

Site coordinators at each hospital will submit data electronically to study researchers at NCSBN. The data collected will measure actual patient outcomes such as infection rates, patient falls, patient satisfaction, as well as new nurse competencies, job satisfaction and job stress, to name a few. Once Phases I and II of the study have concluded, statisticians will compare safety and quality outcomes of the control group with those of the study group.

The final report of the NCSBN Transition to Practice Study will be reviewed by the NCSBN Board of Directors (BOD) in May 2014. Based on the results, the NCSBN BOD may recommend adoption of the NCSBN Transition to Practice Model to the NCSBN Delegate Assembly.

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) is a not-for-profit organization whose members include the boards of nursing in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories - American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands. There are also seven associate members.

Mission: NCSBN provides education, service and research through collaborative leadership to promote regulatory excellence for patient safety and public protection.

The statements and opinions expressed are those of NCSBN and not the individual member state or territorial boards of nursing.

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