

1. Program Overview

Henrico County-St. Mary's Hospital School of Practical Nursing seeks to continually "provide a quality program of nursing education designed and committed to preparing practical nurses to provide safe, effective, and culturally-competent nursing care to individuals across the lifespan in a variety of health care settings of the 21st century." As faculty members continually reflect upon the role of the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and the shift from acute care to chronic care, the program has created a stronger emphasis on community-based efforts, targeting prevention of illness, public education, and care of patients with chronic conditions.

In 2012, the practical nursing program restructured its course, "Leadership and Management." The changes included a focus on student-led education presentations and revising clinical experiences that more fully reflect the changing role of the LPN. The initiative began with classroom presentations on topics such as smoking cessation, oral care, hypertension, as well as diabetic care to students, faculty, and other building administrators.

The program has grown to include staff development opportunities in assisted living facilities. The current structure includes community education opportunities nearly every week. These reach a wide variety of participants in age, gender, ethnicity, and lifestyle. Topics have expanded to include exercise and weight loss; self-breast examination; HIV 101; preventing sexually transmitted diseases; and heart-healthy diets. The success and continued growth speak to the commitment of Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) to its community. HCPS is adapting to continue providing excellence in education and to prepare a new generation of licensed practical nurses.

2. Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

In 2008, the Institute of Medicine called for fundamental workforce reform to care effectively for older adults, advocating for “increasing the skill set and the size of the workforce in order to care effectively and efficiently for older adults with diverse needs.” (NLN, 2012, p. 4). There was also a call for increased integration of gerontology and community-based care in nursing curricula. The role of the nurse is experiencing a shift in which the focus for the Registered Nurse (RN) is primarily on the acute care patient, while the focus of the LPN is on chronic care patients.

The faculty of Henrico County-St. Mary’s Hospital School of Practical Nursing, in reviewing the curriculum, recognized the need to revise and restructure clinical experiences that moved from a primary focus on acute care patients to a stronger focus on chronic care and community-based experiences for learning. Faculty began adopting strategies to restructure clinical experiences for the practical nursing student to include additional community opportunities, which moved some learning experiences away from acute-care settings. This initiative was part of a continued effort to provide current, relevant educational experiences that prepare practical nursing students for their critical role in the health care field and recognize their value in fostering wellness and prevention of disease.

3. How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The initiative of reflecting upon the needs of the practical nursing program and restructuring the Leadership and Management course has been effective in preparing practical nursing students more fully for their profession. This innovative initiative has continued with the revision of the larger program curricula for clinical experiences, giving practical nursing students insight into their chosen careers. It is with this ideal that faculty and administration strive to provide optimal

learning opportunities and give graduates the tools they need for a successful transition to the workforce.

The school of nursing strives to instill in all students the drive to promote the human dignity, integrity, self-determination, and personal growth of diverse patients; to make sound judgments for safe, quality care; to articulate a unique role as a member of the health care team; and to collaborate with health care team members to promote optimal health for all people. This, in turn, adds to the health of our community. It also expands beyond this to Virginia and national concerns, contributing to the health and welfare of our nation.

4. How Program Was Carried Out

Henrico County-St. Mary's Hospital School of Practical Nursing's mission is to "provide a quality program of nursing education designed and committed to preparing practical nurses to provide safe, effective and culturally competent nursing care to individuals across the life span in a variety of health care settings of the 21st century." This mission, coupled with HPCS' mission to "actively engage its students in diverse learning experiences that inspire and empower them to become contributing citizens," is an integral part of all decisions made in the school of nursing. As faculty members continually seek opportunities for educational growth for the practical nursing student, they recognized the shift in the role of the LPN from acute care to chronic care, along with a stronger emphasis on community-based efforts, targeting prevention of illness, public education and care of patients with chronic conditions.

In addition to this recognized shift, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2012, that the employment of LPNs is expected to grow 22 percent by 2020 – faster than the average for all

health occupations. Identifying these factors and reflecting on the current curriculum, the faculty realized that the program needed a stronger presence in community-based initiatives. Faculty members began adopting strategies to restructure clinical experiences for the practical nursing student to include additional community opportunities, moving some learning experiences away from acute-care settings.

The ideal place to start was within the Leadership and Management course. In 2012, the course was restructured to begin this process by incorporating student-led education presentations. In 2012-13, presentations were given in the classroom and included students, faculty and administrators. Topics of instruction included smoking cessation, oral care, hypertension, domestic violence, and diabetes. Following these successful presentations, the course moved out into the immediate community, engaging an assisted-living facility.

For school years 2013-14 and 2014-15, health care providers received specialized staff development training that included care of the diabetic, healthy foot care, oxygen therapy, and transferring and feeding patients. The program expanded its community engagement after two years when the school's faculty saw the success and growth of the students and the positive feedback from community members.

A larger event was planned within HCPS' adult education program. This free, open event was held in the eastern and western parts of the county in the evening. It included similar topics, but added "HIV 101," exercise and weight loss, and education about conducting self-administered breast exams. These presentations were then taken into the community for the general public and proved to be effective both to the participants receiving information and students presenting.

This confirmed the need for educating the public in healthy habits, caring for chronic conditions, and preventing illness.

The program expanded greatly throughout the Richmond area in 2015-16 and 2016-17, with events in the community almost every week. It has expanded to vulnerable populations throughout the area, and addresses issues such as HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, diabetic care, domestic violence, smoking cessation, and blood pressure monitoring. This has led to numerous volunteer opportunities for students and teachers to serve our community.

The faculty and administration recognize that this initiative has potential for expansion, and the model has moved into additional courses, such as Medical-Surgical Nursing. Faculty members are driving efforts toward continued progress and curricular revisions; the school's goal is to provide excellence in education for graduating novice nurses who are prepared for their 21st-century roles.

5. Financing and Staffing

This initiative has not added costs to the programming needs of Henrico County-St. Mary's Hospital School of Practical Nursing, nor the governing organization. The educational opportunities have been integrated into the curriculum to meet the needs of the students and larger community, creating a stronger clinical experience while preparing for a career. The school of nursing has various agreements with health care facilities, community clinics, and outreach centers that allow students to participate in clinical activities to support learning. These agreements have been effective in restructuring clinical experiences; the health care community has responded favorably to the initiatives. The school continually seeks advice from community

partners and stays current to ensure that each graduate “plays a vital role in the delivery of ... health care in a wide range of settings to vulnerable populations” (NLN, 2014, p. 3).

6. Program Results

The objectives for the Leadership and Management course are to:

1. Promote the dignity, integrity, self-determination, and personal growth of diverse patients, their families, and themselves; to provide individualized, culturally appropriate relationship-centered nursing care (“human flourishing”).
2. Make judgments in practice – substantiated with evidence – that integrate nursing science in the provision of safe, quality care for diverse patients and their families in collaboration with the health care team (“nursing judgment”).
3. Articulate a unique role as a member of the health care field committed to evidence-based practice, caring, advocacy, and safe quality care, to provide optimal health care for diverse patients and their families (“professional identity”).
4. By collaborating with health care team members, use evidence, tradition, and patient preferences in predictable patient-care situations to promote optimal health status (“spirit of inquiry”).

Over the past 4 1/2 years, more than 80 students have experienced valuable community educational learning opportunities. Presentations have included a host of topics, including hypertension and blood pressure monitoring; diabetic care; oral health; wellness and prevention of disease; heart healthy habits; domestic violence; HIV; and sexually transmitted diseases. These have been taught to a wide array of individuals at health care facilities, community clinics, and community events such as health walks and community-wide celebrations.

This initiative has had a catalytic effect on students and faculty and has expanded beyond the classroom. Many students have become more involved in the community and have joined community centers and volunteer organizations. Over the past two years, six students have taken a course to become certified evaluators for a local organization that works toward HIV prevention and holistic care of all persons. Other students have joined and participated in events related to caring for vulnerable populations such as the homeless and underserved. Others have started projects to assist those with a critical need for personal items, clothing, hygiene items, and school supplies. While this initiative has been a necessity for the practical nursing curriculum, it has also encouraged a spirit of increased involvement in the community – recognizing others beyond the school walls who are in need of excellence in health care at all levels.

7. Brief Summary

Henrico County-St. Mary's Hospital School of Practical Nursing seeks to continually "provide a quality program of nursing education designed and committed to preparing practical nurses to provide safe, effective and culturally competent nursing care to individuals across the lifespan in a variety of health care settings of the 21st century." As faculty members continually reflect upon the role of the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and the shift from acute care to chronic care, the program has created a stronger emphasis on community-based efforts, targeting prevention of illness, public education and care of patients with chronic conditions.

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classroom presentations on topics such as smoking cessation, oral care, hypertension, as well as diabetic care to students, faculty and other building administrators.

The program has grown to include staff development opportunities in assisted living facilities. The current structure includes community education opportunities nearly every week. These reach a wide variety of participants in age, gender, ethnicity and lifestyle. Topics have expanded to include exercise and weight loss; self-breast examination; HIV 101; preventing sexually transmitted diseases; and heart-healthy diets. The success and continued growth speak to the commitment of Henrico County Public Schools to its community. HCPS is adapting to continue providing excellence in education and to prepare a new generation of licensed practical nurses.

In addition to preparing practical nurses for changing 21st-century roles as members of health care teams, the initiative has had a catalytic effect on students and faculty and has expanded beyond the classroom. Many students have become more involved in the community and have joined community centers and volunteer organizations, particularly those related to health care and wellness.