Developing A Volunteer Nurse (RN) PROGRAM
AT RIVERSIDE Methodist Hospital
Columbus, Ohio
A Successful Strategy to Improve Customer Service and Patient Safety In Today’s Cost Containment Environment
Riverside Methodist: Who WE Are

- Founded in 1892
- OhioHealth’s Flagship Hospital
  - Largest and oldest hospital in the system with 1000+ Beds
- Market share leader for most specialties
- Constructing new patient bed tower to open in 2015 to enable all private beds.
- A top 100 Truven Health Analytics award winner.
OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this presentation is to discuss concepts used in the development of a Volunteer Nurse program and its impact on patient safety and customer service.
Organizational Assessment

– “There were a lot of jobs that volunteers could do, but none of them were satisfying to me as a nurse,” “Then I realized that if I wanted to volunteer my time and nursing skills in a meaningful way, I probably wasn’t the only one out there.” (Rundquist 2004)

– RN shortages and recruitment
– Volunteer structure
– Motivating other people
Barriers To Starting a New Program

• Find RNs willing to volunteer
• Nursing staff accept volunteer nurses
• Nursing management open to accept volunteer nurses on their units
• Have adequate resources
• Support from leadership
• Size and complexity of the organization
Volunteer Nurse program

What is a Volunteer Nurse?
Volunteering is part of "Being a Nurse"

- "Lifelong commitment to learning and sharing your time and talents with others"
- "Sharing yourself with others by caring for them"
- "Sharing joy and sadness with humankind"
BEING A NURSE

“Making someone smile at a very bad time in their life”
“Giving of oneself throughout their lifetime”
“It’s a commitment to helping others”
“Volunteering (offering) yourself to help others”

A NURSE IS NOT JUST WHAT YOU DO, BUT IT’S WHO YOU ARE!
Today’s Nurses are..

- Today’s Nurses influence healthcare policies and promote healthcare practices in many ways— one way is being visible to the public as compassionate care providers.
- Giving back to the community, the college programs and hospitals that supported their nursing education is part of our nursing profession and encouraged in the education of today’s professional nurse.
- Volunteerism is a part of a professional’s responsibility.
Today’s Professional Nurse

Volunteers in times of crisis
- after 911
- after the disasters in Italy and Haiti
- after floods, earthquakes, tornadoes or wildfires– Nurses are there

**Retired nurses continue to have the desire to give back and share their nursing expertise**
Volunteer RN Program

- Brought to Riverside OhioHealth by Gerry O'Shaughnessy, Manager Volunteer Services 2008
  -- Attended annual conference: Association for Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals (AHVRP)

- Brought to attention of Nursing Leadership

- Challenged by CNO, Jann Marks
Volunteer RN Leadership

Rita Smith, RN  Michelle Rubertino, RN  Gerry O’Shaughnessy
Volunteer RN program

Investigate what a volunteer nurse could do in the state of OHIO

Ohio Board of Nursing/ ANA/ ONA
- Discuss with Risk Management
- Discuss with Legal
- Focus groups with Nurse Managers
- Review the policies for Volunteers
- Decide on initial list of competencies
- Develop position description

Commitment from Leadership for resources
The Nurse as a Volunteer Nursing Practice Statement NP 81

ONA Statement on Volunteerism

- The American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses states that the nurse* in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems. The nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.

- The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse’s obligation to provide optimum patient.

- The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
Applicable Law and Professional Standards

ANA

Statement

In accordance with the Code for Nurses, the intent of this statement is to provide guidelines for the registered nurse acting in a volunteer capacity. Nurses have an extensive history of volunteerism at every level, from local to international efforts, in the pursuit of social justice and equality through the provision of quality health care to all persons.

Despite the altruistic nature with which volunteerism may be viewed by nurses and the recipients of nursing care, that care must be provided within the bounds of local, state, and federal law, and in alignment with the Nurse Practice Act of the state in which the nursing care is provided, as well as the standards of nursing practice developed by professional associations. The provision of nursing care on a volunteer basis does not relieve the nurse from liability for malpractice or from meeting the requirements of licensure.
Applicable Law and Professional Standards ANA

The Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 was passed in an attempt to encourage the waning number of volunteers nationwide and to provide protection from frivolous lawsuits. The statutes provide that no volunteer of a nonprofit or government organization can be held liable for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer if:

• The volunteer was acting within the scope of his duties
• The volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized if such is required for the activities performed
• The harm was not a result of willful or criminal misconduct
• The harm was not caused by the volunteer operating a vehicle for which the state requires operator licensure and/or insurance
• Exemption from liability does not apply to crimes of violence, hate crimes, sexual offenses, violation of civil rights laws, or behavior while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
• This law is generally thought to contain various loopholes and does not relieve the volunteer agency from legal action being taken against the agency itself.
ONA Practice Statement

Responsibilities of the Nurse Volunteer

When offering volunteer services as a registered nurse, the nurse should adopt the following requirements and guidelines:

1. Possess a current, unencumbered, license as a registered nurse in the state in which the services will be offered,

2. Perform only those duties for which the nurse possesses the necessary skills and competencies, including appropriate intervention and referral for persons at immediate risk for illness or injury,

3. Perform duties according to nationally recognized standards and in accordance with the requirements of the Nurse Practice Act,

4. Accept only those monetary benefits which are in accordance with federal and state law; i.e., meals, travel, or training costs within approved amounts.
ONA Practice Statement

• Professional Standards, including those standards required by state licensing laws and those developed by professional associations, must be followed in all health care situations, regardless of their volunteer nature.

• Volunteering does not release a nurse from following the mandates of the profession. In addition, findings of negligence are based on the prevailing standard of care. Failure to meet that standard can result in a finding of malpractice.

• Different if volunteering during emergency or disasters
  – Good Samaritan Acts
  – Exemptions from licensure laws
Getting By-In

- Informal campaigning
- Involve stakeholders
  - Focus groups
  - Shared at meetings
- Administrative support for expenditures
- Develop plan
  - Time line
  - Who needs to be involved
  - Purpose of program
  - Benefit to organization
- Regulatory implications
Volunteer RN program

- RMH policy on Volunteers
  - Added Nurse Volunteers
- Position description—
  - Similar to the Patient Support Assistants
  - Not include LPNs
  - Unique blue lab coat, white shirt and pants, shoes, volunteer badge
  - Brochure and handbook
  - Pocket cards to dispense on unit
Riverside’s Volunteer RN program

-Rita Smith, RN, Director of the program
  (Director of Nursing Philanthropy)
- RMH program part of Volunteer Services
- Modified hospital orientation for their needs
- First Volunteer RN, Barb Wears started fall of 2009
- Presented our program at the AHVRP convention in 2011
Riverside’s Volunteer RN program

Program attracts retired RNs

Draws nurses from other age groups
- new mothers who are unable to work due to family responsibilities
- those whose spouses have recently been transferred from out of state
- nurses who work in other types of facilities
- nurses who volunteer as a way to assess whether they want to return to hospital work
Qualifications of a Volunteer Nurse (RN)

- Registered Nurse with active RN license from state of Ohio
- Not presently employed by OhioHealth
- Current CPR/BLS certification
- At least 2 years of experience at the bedside

- Attend 2 day hospital orientation which includes:
  - CSO, ACE and Horizon Electronic Documentation (HED) computer documentation training
- Attend 2 hour Volunteer Orientation (unless presently a RMH volunteer)
Qualifications of a Volunteer Nurse (RN)

- Excellent customer service and communication skills
- Able to meet the physical demands of the position (standing, walking, lifting)
- Wears Volunteer RN uniform and badge
- Obtain 24 contact hours every 2 years for license renewal (stay active)
- Complete initial skills competency check-offs (vital signs, fall prevention, pulse oximetry)
- Time commitment: 100 hours per year at their discretion (2 hours a week)
- Individualized orientation to their unit
- Minimal annual competencies
Screening and Placement

• Interview requirement
  – Manager Volunteer Services
  – APN
  – Recent experience, service time
• Employee Health assessment
  – TB testing
• Human Resources
  – Licensure current
  – Covered by hospital liability insurance
• Placement discussed with nursing manager and volunteer for ‘good fit’
Orientation and Skills

• Orientation scheduled through Organizational Development tailored to specific Volunteer needs
• APN organizes/ schedules hospital orientation and unit orientation
• APN clinical resource during unit orientation
• Assigned to preceptor/mentor on unit
• Skills limited so as not to burden the VRN with many annual competencies
As a Volunteer Nurse (RN)

- Assist the primary care givers (staff RN or PSA) on the nursing units with basic patient care functions
- Program offers a retired nurse or a nurse who has been away from nursing for a while or who is not presently employed at OhioHealth, the opportunity to give of her time and talents and to continue to utilize her nursing skills while learning about OhioHealth
Why do nurses volunteer their nursing skills?

- Love of patient care
- Maintain licensure
- Remain connected to the nursing profession
- Access to opportunities for education and updates on changes in nursing and health care through hospital programs
- Make a difference in patient’s lives
- Gift of their time and talents
Benefits of being a Volunteer RN

• Flexibility to practice their skills when they want and how long they want
• Freedom to pick the unit they wish to volunteer on
• Be able to do the ‘basics’ without keeping up with the ‘technical’ aspects
• Free 24 contact hours through OhioHealth Learning Management University for their license renewal
• Attend Nursing Rounds educational sessions
• Access to RMH library services
• Comradery between nurses and volunteers
• Keep active and feel useful
Volunteer skills

- Deliver flowers
- Filling water pitchers
- Deliver mail
- Tear down charts
- Read to patients
- Assemble packets
- Stock supply rooms
- Answer the telephone
- Engage patients in activities such as cards & games
Volunteer RN Clinical Skills

- Obtain vital signs (TPR, BP, Pulse oximetry.)
- Perform ADL’s (bathing, turning, grooming, assist with ambulation)
- Assist with meals
- Transport non-monitored patients
- Measure and document intake/output
- Hourly nursing safety rounds (4 P’s- pain, position, potty, personal needs)
- One-on-one observation for someone in restraints
Volunteer RN Clinical Skills

- Make occupied and unoccupied beds
- Transferring to chair or wheelchair
- Collect urine or stool specimens
- Stock and maintains supplies
- Discharge patients to car
- Conduct discharge phone calls
- Document all care given on computerized system
Volunteer RN Clinical Skills

‘Do Not Do’

- Replace the ‘nurse’ on the unit
- Physical assessments
- Sterile procedures
- Administer medications
- Communicate with physician as patient’s nurse or take physician orders
- Administer blood products
- Perform dressing changes
- Insert or remove
  - Drainage tubes
  - IVs
  - Foleys
  - Feeding tubes
Volunteer RN Clinical Skills ‘Do Not Do’

- Transport patients on telemetry
- Initiate or discontinue oxygen
- Perform waved testing (fingerstick blood glucose testing)
- Initiate or discontinue restraints
- Bladder scanning
- Perform a 12-lead EKG
- Perform a nursing report (hand-off)
- Adjust or hang tube feedings or intravenous solutions
Impact Safety and Patient Satisfaction

Volunteer RNs

– Help with safety rounds and fall prevention
– Sit with or distract confused patients
– Ambulate patients to the BR
– Give patients undivided attention
– Provide the softer touches
  – Wash feet, wash or brush hair, pray, read, back rub
– Accompany an anxious patient to a test
– Explain hospital routines
– Run errands
Impact Safety and Patient Satisfaction

– Assist with ordering meals
– Comfort the dying
– Provide a friendly ear to the lonely, frightened or worried patient or family member
– Encourage that new graduate nurse who is overwhelmed and unsure
– Intrinsic value of having the ability to identify and report changes in patient conditions that may go overlooked by someone having less experience

**Having an experienced nurse at the bedside

Priceless!
Volunteer RN’s Meet Regularly
Quotes:

As a VOLUNTEER NURSE….

“You are the extra set of eyes or hands to help prevent a patient fall”

“You are a ‘seasoned’ nurse who can share experiences and mentor those new grads”

“You can interact with patients without the worry of what else needs to be done”

“You can provide individualized ‘hands on’ care” to patients, that when you were working, you never had time to do”

“You will be able to do what you went into nursing for in the first place”
Honoring the Spirit of Service

Quantifying the Quality of the Care We Provide

Association for Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals  |  W: www.ahvrp.org  |   E: ahvrp@aha.org   |  P: 312.422.3939
Comments from Patients and Staff

“We welcome them because volunteers have a knowledge of the hospital routines and patient care standards.” “They were staff nurses and they know what they would have wanted. They jump in and get things done because they know what patients need.”

“They are an extra pair of ears and the more information we have the better we can help patients, and that is the goal of nursing.”

“They are highly skilled resources for our patients that are more complicated when time for hands-on-care is so limited.”

“They are someone you can look up to, who has been there and has done it before, and you can ask a question without being afraid of the response”.

“They take the time to get to know you, and sit with you and listen.”
Cost Savings

-14 Volunteer RNs
2009--2013

YTD 3,721 nursing hours
x average $22.14 =
$82,382.94 savings
from Volunteer Nurses
providing nursing hours
Successful Placements

High satisfaction for the volunteer, the patients, the families, the nursing staff and nursing management:

1. Emergency department
2. Women’s services
3. Heart services
4. PACU
5. Medicine
6. Neurology
7. Surgical
8. Infusion Center
9. ALS clinic
10. Behavioral Health
11. Oncology
In summary:

Top 10 Reasons to consider being a Volunteer Nurse (RN)
Number Ten:

Rejoin the rapidly expanding and changing field of nursing
Number Nine:

More fun than working at McDonald's (although you won’t be paid)
Number Eight:

Busy, varied workflow, every shift is new and different (you will never be bored!)
Number Seven:

Get to eat, drink, and use the restroom during your shift
Number Six:

Opportunity to expose yourself to rare, exotic, and exciting new diseases
Number Five:

You can take comfort in the knowledge that you can volunteer as little or as often as you like.
Number Four: Wear fashionable shoes and a sexy uniform
Number Three:

Experience

Interesting aromas.
Number Two:

You are able to help out your fellow nurses.
And the **Number One** reason:

You are able to do what every nurse wants to do:

Help make a positive impact on patient care!
References


References


• Riverside Methodist Hospital, Columbus, Ohio Volunteer RN Position Description, 20009