Development of a RN Clinical Coach program to improve retention of ICU residents and fellows

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Background
The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to substantial ICU nurse turnover. Large cohorts of Transition into Practice (TIP) residents and fellows are needed to bolster the workforce and rebuild a healthy work environment. Having a designated support person is key for a successful transition into ICU nursing practice.

Purpose
• Establish a program to increase retention of ICU TIP residents and fellows
• Foster a healthy work environment at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center (PSJMC) in Burbank, CA

Methods
• 4 experienced preceptors (2 AM, 2 PM) provided 4-hour at-the-bedside clinical coaching sessions with TIPs weekly
• One-on-one coaching began after conclusion of formal preceptorship
• Provided ongoing clinical support, social support, and reflective learning as TIPS entered independent practice
• Coaches completed a REDCap survey for each encounter based on AACN Healthy Work Environment (HWE) model

Results
• 94% retention January 2022 cohort
• > 275 coaching sessions recorded by 2/23
• All TIPs who completed a program evaluation survey agreed that the Clinical Coach program contributed to their decision to stay in their current ICU position

“There were multiple occasions about 1-3 months on my own where I had a more challenging assignment and was so thankful one of our amazing clinical coaches were available to help answer my questions and guide me through the situation”
– January 2022 RN Resident

Discussion
• New ICU nurses are at risk for becoming overwhelmed and leaving the ICU setting
• The Clinical Coach program improved retention of TIP residents and fellows
• Experienced preceptors are key resources to support the ongoing clinical and social needs of new nurses after preceptorship

Implications for Practice
• Innovative strategies are needed to retain large cohorts of TIPs
• Experienced preceptors are poised to provide that support
• The AACN HWE model was a useful conceptual framework to structure Clinical Coach interactions
• A small investment in similar programs may improve retention in other clinical areas and reduce first year turnover

Comparison of TIP first year turnover rates between PSJMC ICU and total TIP in Southern California region

*Data used with permission

Special Thanks to PSJMC Clinical Coaches
Megan Jones, Melissa Gitler, Rita King, Hyun Joo Kim, Dinorah Ramos, Gibson Bandayrel, and Bianca Cisneros