New graduate registered nurses in public health

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New Graduate Registered Nurses in Public Health

Rachel Pollard and Katy Smith

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University Nursing Department
in collaboration with Stearns County Public Health
Objectives

* Discuss current challenges facing the public health nursing profession
* Synthesize existing literature regarding new graduate RNs in public health
* Present the benefits of hiring new graduate RNs with baccalaureate degrees into public health agencies
* Utilize existing literature to suggest support measures that will optimize new graduate RNs' success in public health
Challenges in Public Health Nursing

* Budget/funding
  * Cuts in training funds
  * Cuts in positions and programs
  * Decreased faith in leaders

* Time constraints
  * Increased workloads
  * Burnout (1)
**Contributing Factors**

* Budget: only 5% of the U.S.'s health care dollars are designated for public health
  * Difficulty offering wages comparable to acute-care settings

* Staffing shortage
  * Aging public health workforce
  * Lack of diversity (2)
Existing Literature

* Limited research about benefits of new graduates in public health
  * Collaboration between academic institutions and PH agencies recommended (3)
  * Knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in public health (1)
  * What attracts new graduate RNs to public health (4)
New Graduate RNs in Home Care

* Baccalaureate programs have a broad range of community experiences and home health content
* Acute care nurses may lack the knowledge and skills needed for home health nursing
* Home health care competencies are different than those in acute care
* Lack of evidence supporting 2 year acute care prerequisites for hiring
* New nurses in home care need support (5)
New Graduate Nurse Residencies

- Evidence-based trend in acute care settings
- Key components include:
  - Instruction: case studies, simulations
  - Clinical immersion
    - Competency validation
  - Looping
    - Experience outside of specialty
  - Mentoring
  - Debriefing
    - With other new graduate nurses (6)
Benefits of Residencies in Acute Care

- Residency programs:
  - Decrease turnover
    - 36% to 6.4%
  - Reduce costs
    - Contract labor dollars per average daily census: $19,099 to $5,490 (6)
How do we apply this to public health nursing?
Quad Council Recommendations (2007)

- Use marketing to attract new nurses to public health
- Encourage collaboration between educational institutions and public health agencies
- Reward experienced nurses for serving as preceptors
- Enhance leadership development programs for public health nurses (7)
Public Health Certification in Minnesota

* Baccalaureate or higher degree with a major in nursing
* At least 30 hours of public health theory and clinical practice in public health nursing (8)

*The majority of BSN programs in Minnesota contain public health content*
RNs graduating from these baccalaureate programs are equipped to:

* Identify incidence, distribution, and control of disease
* Identify high-risk environments and populations
* Intervene with high risk populations
* Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
* Utilize community services and other resources

(8)
Benner's Stages: Novice-to-Expert

* Any nurse entering a new specialty will perform as a novice
  * New graduates
  * Experienced nurses entering a new clinical setting or patient population (9)

*Two-year acute care experience requirement is unnecessary*
Recommendations

* Waive the two-year experience requirement
  * Example: Alaska's entry level Public Health Nurse position
* Establish a new graduate nurse residency for public health
Components of New Graduate Nurse Residency

* Mentors
* Peer support
* Support for at least 9 months to assist new graduates (10)
* Focus on:
  * Financial planning and management
  * Leadership
  * Systems thinking (2)
Benefits

- Cost-effective
- Decrease turnover
- Address public health nursing shortage
  - Better serve communities
- Decrease stress for new graduate
  - Benefits to whole agency
- Improvement in team's organization, prioritization, communication, leadership skills (11)
References


