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Recommended Citation

Pollard, Rachel and Smith, Kathryn J. (Katy), "New graduate registered nurses in public health" (2015).
Celebrating Scholarship & Creativity Day. 64.

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New Graduate Registered Nurses in Public Health

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Nursing Department
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New Graduate Registered Nurses in 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)

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