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ST. VINCENT NURSES HELP ENDURE THEIR PATIENTS EXPERIENCE OPTIMUM PATIENT CARE

PORTLAND Ore. – People go to the hospital for many reasons, yet all patients share the need for receiving individualized care from their nurses. With today’s diminishing hospital resources and increased demands for efficiencies, nurses must consistently look for new ways to meet these needs.

When St. Vincent nurses find opportunities to improve patient outcomes they often turn to their Clinical Ladder program. The nurse-driven program exists to recognize and awards nurses for creating independent projects that improve patient outcomes and impact patient experiences in positive ways.

RNs Pat Roby, a St. Vincent nurse for 25 years and Dee Dee Kight, a Providence nurse for 24 years, recently teamed up to research and find ways to reduce the occurrences of catheter acquired urinary tract infections (CAUTI). CAUTIs account for over 40 percent of the health care-associated infections (HAIs) reported by acute care hospitals. After months of work, their comprehensive solution involved centralizing equipment, further educating nursing colleagues and teaching certified nursing assistant (CNA) classes, to address the unique role CNAs play in preventing these infections. They also taught staff to engage in more one-on-one patient education, which allows patients to understand that they can help prevent infection with some simple modifications to their own self-care. The project was so successful, they were asked to roll out their program hospital-wide.

Now, a few months later, CAUTI rates in the hospital are trending strongly downward. “Our patients and their families love it,” noted Dee Dee. “It’s so rewarding to experience such great patient outcomes. It also draws hospital staff together in a manner that motivates them to be leaders in applying evidence-based practices on each shift, every day. The Clinical Ladder
program has encouraged all of us to push ourselves and others to achieve excellence in our practice. The results are truly worth the hundreds of extra hours involved.”

On Feb. 27, 2014, Dee Dee and Pat’s project was presented at Oregon’s statewide CAUTI meeting, sponsored by the Oregon Association of Hospital and Health Systems.

“I believe the Clinical Ladder program attracts great nurses to St. Vincent, and it encourages our current nurses to stay. It’s an exciting way to learn, grow and encourage others to advance, as we each step through different levels of the program. And, it’s really gratifying to see how our unit staff pull together, encouraging each other on these projects,” Dee Dee commented. “I feel that the Clinical Ladder program is our flagship of professionalism – one that sets St. Vincent apart.”

Kathy Keane, RN, former chair of St. Vincent’s Clinical Ladder program added “Sometimes our project outcomes are not quantifiable and yet have tremendous impact on the emotional needs of families in pain. One example is the “Butterfly Room” in our maternal-child area. A labor and delivery nurse made this dream a reality for just this reason. She identified that parents and families of stillborn babies needed a place sit apart with their child or to have conversations with physicians and staff. At St. Vincent’s we now have a special room with images of butterflies, just for this purpose. When tragedies occur, the families truly appreciate its presence.”

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