Evidence-based practice growing at MGH

— by Lynda Brandt, RN, clinical project specialist, and Liz Johnson, RN, clinical nurse specialist

In making crucial decisions about patient-care delivery, it is essential that our practice be evidence-based. The Re-Tooling for Evidence-Based Nursing Practice project is funded by the Division of Nursing of the Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources and Services Administration. The goal of the project is to infuse a common language and understanding of evidence-based practice (EBP) throughout MGH Nursing. Launched in January, 2010, through The Institute for Patient Care, the EBP project has reached more than 500 MGH nurses through classes, forums, and HealthStream courses. The aim is to provide nurses with opportunities for education and skill-development in order to provide high quality care to our patients using best evidence.

In May, 20 nurse leaders from a variety of specialties attended a three-day workshop, The Clinical Inquiry Institute: an Evidence-Based Approach, designed to teach the philosophy, science, and procedures of evidence-based practice. Nationally recognized expert, Marita Titler, RN, professor of Nursing and associate dean for Practice and Clinical Scholarship at the University of Michigan School of Nursing, brought humor, candor, and a remarkable depth of clinical knowledge to the course. Titler authored The Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice to Promote Quality Care with a focus on evidence-based practice as an organizational endeavor.

Titler challenged nursing directors, clinical nurse specialists, and staff development specialists during the three-day workshop. Interactive discussion gave participants a new perspective on evidence-based practice. Participants learned how to articulate evidence-based questions, navigate the evidence-based practice process, and identify strategies to implement practice changes based on evidence and new nursing knowledge.

Nurses who participated in the workshop continue to meet regularly to reinforce the skills they learned. These on-going seminars provide opportunities to network and refine skills. The goal is to educate a community of nurse experts who can help translate nursing knowledge into practice. These experts will be poised to support their colleagues interested in implementing evidence-based changes on their units.

The Evidence-Based Practice project team offers monthly classes on the principles and strategies of evidence-based practice. Classes are listed on the calendar of The Norman Knight Nursing Center for Clinical & Professional Development. Consultation is available for nurses interested in evidence-based-practice, and the team is available to teach, lead discussions, or help start unit-based journal clubs. For more information, contact Lynda Brandt, RN, at 643-6671.

Above: Marita Titler, RN, professor of Nursing at University of Michigan School of Nursing, confers with workshop participant
Below: MGH nurses who attended the three-day Clinical Inquiry Institute workshop