



MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL

NURSING



FORCE 11 Nurses as Teachers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FORCE 11: NURSE AS TEACHERS

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“So what do teachers do that makes them effective leaders? They spend their time explaining their philosophies, explicating their values and helping students/followers understand how what they do contributes to larger organizational systems and objectives. Great teachers educe what is best from their students- inspiring them to perform at the highest levels by showing them what they are capable of achieving with focused and disciplined effort. Great teachers expand our horizons.”

James O’Toole, Leadership A to Z

The role of the nurse as teacher, whether to colleagues or patients, is deeply ingrained in the culture of Massachusetts General Hospital and Patient Care Services, starting with the Chief Nurse. In 2007, Jeanette Ives Erickson received the Massachusetts Association of Registered Nurses (MARN) President’s Award in recognition of her “unwavering commitment to mentoring and creation of mentoring environments to support professional nursing practice.” Examples of effective mentoring through established structures such as Collaborative Governance as well as through the creation of The RN Residency Program, a nine month mentored-internship designed to help nurses gain competence in geriatric and palliative care through the support and guidance of senior Nurse Preceptors, are detailed in this Force.

As stated in the Professional Practice Model, learning is viewed as a lifelong process essential to the growth and development of clinicians striving to deliver quality patient care. Professional development efforts begin with new employee orientation, designed to provide all employees with the knowledge required to navigate through their initial period of entry into the organization. The mission, vision and values of the organization are disseminated through this process. Whether a novice or an expert Staff Nurse, entry into clinical practice at MGH is supported by preceptors, peers, Clinical Nurse Specialists and Nursing Directors. The new graduate staff nurse orientation and the state-of-the-art, New Graduate Critical Care Program are described at length in this Force. For nursing leaders, a role-specific orientation process has been developed and is outlined in this Force as well.

Consistent with the organization’s mission *to educate future academic and practice leaders of the health care professions*, The Department of Nursing is closely affiliated with a number of nursing schools and provides numerous, innovative academic practicum experiences for nurses and nursing students both at entry level and at advanced levels, as well as for individuals who are interested in nursing as a career. MGH is rich in masters and doctorally- prepared nurses that are typically sought

for faculty positions. Paired with the large number of educational institutions in the Boston area, there are extensive opportunities for nurses to perform as faculty.

As an integral component of their practice, MGH nurses precept hundreds of nurses and student nurses annually. From this vast range of experiences, there are cadres of nurses who emerge as expert teachers. The Norman Knight Nurse Preceptor of Distinction Award has been developed as a formal, visible mechanism to recognize the impact of nurse's expertise in teaching.

In further support of the principle of lifelong learning, The Norman Knight Nursing Center for Clinical & Professional Development promotes clinical excellence and professional advancement by offering or coordinating programs that integrate innovations in clinical practice, research, continuing education, and training into patient care delivery. Nurse planners from The Norman Knight Nursing Center work with Staff Nurses, Clinical Nurse Specialists, collaborative governance committees, leadership and, as needed, other organizations to ensure the continuing education needs of nurses at all levels of the organization are met.

The role of the nurse as patient educator is also well established and articulated in the job descriptions of both staff nurses as well nurse leaders. Patient and family learning needs including cultural preferences are assessed upon initial admission to the hospital, or on initial outpatient visit, and reassessed throughout the course of care. As part of the Collaborative Governance structure, The Patient Education Committee has been actively involved in shaping clinician patient education practice for more than a decade through a variety of programs and activities depicted in this Force. Centrally-located on the first floor of the MGH, The Eleanor & Maxwell Blum Patient and Family Learning Center serves as a consumer health and patient education resource center for MGH, providing services that include information searches in a variety of languages, free delivery of materials to patients at home or on the patient care unit, a library with over 500 book titles, 300 pamphlet titles, 30 consumer health journals, and a web site with links to a variety of consumer health databases and resources.

Finally, the ability to provide quality patient care, achieve satisfaction in one's practice and advance nursing as a profession is based on the opportunities available to learn from one another. MGH nurses have established numerous connections within the community that enable them to both bring resources into the organization as well as offer clinical expertise out to the nursing community. Selections highlighted in this Force include: Nursing Journal Club, Nursing Research Day, The International Nurse Consultant Program, The Norman Knight Visiting Professor Program, and The Global Nurse Training Program.

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