

Collaborative Practice Underlies Children's Hospital L.A. Nursing Excellence

By Nora Haile
Contributing Editor
California Healthcare News



When Children's Hospital Los Angeles received the call that they had not only achieved Magnet[®] Recognition for Nursing Excellence for the second time, but also Exemplars, it came as a very pleasant surprise. Mary Dee Hacker, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President for Patient Care Services, explained that although they felt they would achieve re-designation based on data submitted, "We did not expect

the Exemplars for quality. Standards are really tough around quality and safety. The recognition was a great affirmation of our nursing practices."

Hacker credits the exemplars to the innate culture of responsibility for excellence combined with their collaborative practice model, which is the standard in Children's Hospital L.A. "Our standard is to expect individuals to be committed to learning, quality and care delivery based on best practice. Professional staff that is as close to the patient as possible makes the decisions regarding care." Hacker's view is that she's a servant to those delivering the care, assuring they have the resources, knowledge, equipment and support to thrive as practitioners.

Magnet's appraisers witnessed Children's highly successful collaborative practice model, where the nurses lead the rounds. The care team includes all those involved: doctors, pharmacists, social workers and patients. "At Children's L.A.,

it's understood that the RN is the professional who is present 24/7," explained Hacker. "According to their observers, we're leading the nation in areas that have to do with inter-professional rounding, particularly with the respectful way we set goals for the day with very acute patients." Parents were seen as significantly involved from admission to discharge; learning, being advocates, engaged in moving their child to a state of wellness.

The parental involvement is a factor that Children's feels is critical to the wellbeing of the child, that what the parents know is as important as what the medical practitioners know. Children's has worked to be sure families understand what the drugs are, how the treatments work and care management. Hacker stated, "We've made a conscious move from being paternalistic to knowing that families know their children. Our job is to wrap ourselves around the family until they have the confidence and competency to manage their child's health needs. So their kids can go back to doing what kids do."

The nurses at Children’s L.A. have taken their mission of care and collaboration beyond the hospital walls, as well. The Adolescent Division has a nurse-led program where the nurse practitioners work with homeless youth. The NPs go into the shelters and minister to the children there, handling it all: managing infections, abrasions from street fights, or educating young people regarding STDs, and the risks they face living on the streets of L.A. Magnet appraisers identified that as an exemplar as well. Hacker said, “NPs have the competency to do a lot of primary and preventative care that fits into the ACA future state for healthcare, as well as the recommendations for the future of nursing.”

Having nurses strongly out in front has made a good case for the success of the collaborative practice model, as well as demonstrating that where nurses feel valued and respected by their physician colleagues, patients

benefit. Children’s Hospital L.A.’s annual job satisfaction survey shows that 90% of their direct care nurses (those who deliver care ~50% of the time) took the survey, and one of the highest indicators had to do with doctor and nurse collaboration and respect. Also, the hospital incentivizes formal and higher education for its nurses, fostering a strong sense of personal responsibility for learning, a focus on the educational ladder.

Collaboration between nurses, doctors and patients extends to assuring language and cultural beliefs aren’t a barrier to care, hence the teleconferencing interpreter services. Being a hospital in an international city like Los Angeles means being respectful of cultural values. Because as Hacker says, Western medicine and culture is only a part of how care should be delivered, translation must move beyond medical information and information for intake in order to be

taken to a higher level.

Children’s L.A. is inclusive of a family’s health beliefs and values in how they provide care, which means a need to understand both language and culture. Hacker elaborates, “Health translation is not the same as conversational translation. It’s a rigorous testing process to qualify as a teleconferencing interpreter. We have a huge organizational commitment to really thinking better about how we assess and deliver care.”

Hacker comments, “None of us think we know everything. Our institution is committed to research and new knowledge. Every day, we have to be better than the day before. I’m privileged to help create an environment where people taking care of kids know that their job is about those kids.”

Nora Haile can be reached at nhaile@healthcarenewssite.com.

Reprinted with permission from the California Healthcare News. To learn more about the California Healthcare News visit cahcnews.com.