Dear Nurse Resident Colleagues:

In recent days we have been bombarded with challenging economic news that affects our country, our hospitals, and certainly our personal lives. The UHC/AACN Nurse Residency Program™ meeting at the UHC Performance Excellence Forum held near Orlando, Fla in early March was a refreshing change—providing encouraging news of the continued positive outcomes and success of the residency program, an opportunity to showcase the wonderful accomplishments of our new nurses, and a venue for our esteemed nurse residency coordinators to collaborate and share their experiences. Read further to see the outstanding results of nursing knowledge and ingenuity!

We want to recognize the first-year nurses who are participating in the Nurse Residency Program across the country and share their experiences and lessons learned. We want to hear from you! Tell us what you’re thinking and what you’ve accomplished. As always, we wish you well as you travel through this exciting and challenging first year of your professional practice.

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We Welcome Your Comments!

Please contact us with your questions, comments, and feedback.

2008 Program Outcomes: Increased Nurse Retention

At the March meeting, Mary Lynn, RN, PhD, the data analyst for the UHC/AACN Nurse Residency Program™ and professor at University of North Carolina School of Nursing, again reported the outcome data captured by the Nurse Residency Database:

• Program participants remain in their positions at an impressively high rate of 94.4%, which exceeds the recently reported national average (73%) by more than 20 percentage points. The organizational implications of a stable nursing staff are compelling: better quality of care and reduced recruitment expenses. It can also be speculated that the professional growth of residents is positively affected when they remain in their first professional position for a few years.

• A number of sites (11) had 100% retention.

• Residents provide positive evaluations of the program, including its impact on their professional growth.

The Nurse Residency Program, developed jointly by the University HealthSystem Consortium (UHC) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), is a 1-year series of learning and work experiences that support new graduates as they transition into their first professional position in an acute care setting. The program focuses on the transition to professional nursing practice using Patricia Benner’s theoretical framework as described in *From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice.*
Demonstrating that nurses influence health care from their earliest days, 2 groups of nurse residents presented their projects at the UHC/AACN Nurse Residency Program™ meeting held in conjunction with the Performance Excellence Forum in Florida, and other nurse residents took first and second places and tied for third among 50 entries in the forum’s poster competition. The podium presentations were chosen from abstract submissions based on residency projects. The poster competition was held as part of a national meeting of UHC health care administrators and clinical leaders, who voted to determine the 3 posters that best illustrated process improvements or successful practices.

We congratulate all of the nurse residents who represented projects at the forum. Attendees’ enthusiastic acknowledgment of the podium presentations and posters speaks to the importance and value of nurse resident projects for UHC member hospitals. Most important, the quality of these projects underscores that these nurses understand that the work they do makes a significant contribution to their organizations—and that each of us really can make a difference.

### Podium Presentations

| First Place | “Implementing Patient- and Family-Centered Care in the CICU: The First Steps” | Stony Brook University Medical Center | Sara Spronz, RN, BSN |
| Second Place | “The Septic Stethoscope: Exploration of Infectious Disease Prevention Through the Diligent Decontamination of Stethoscopes” | University of Colorado Hospital | Jennifer Holschuh, RN, BSN |
| Third Place (tie) | “Overhauling the Physician Revenue Cycle Through a Faculty Practice Plan Group Consolidation” | University of Mississippi Faculty Practice Plan |

### Posters

| First Place | “Pre-filled Normal Saline Syringes: Let’s Take Another Look” |
| Second Place | “Family Presence During Resuscitation” |
| Third Place (tie) | “Nurse Residents Earn Graduate Credit” |

### Former Nurse Residents Share Their Wisdom

As has become a tradition at the UHC/AACN Nurse Residency Program™ annual meeting, former nurse residents were invited to share their thoughts about the program with the residency coordinators, facilitators, and faculty who attended. The interactive discussion covered topics such as the support needed for first-year nurses, difficulties encountered in practice settings with patients and with other staff, and suggestions about program content. Many talked about the value of the support provided by the residency—“I would have quit if not for the residency program”—and the difference a year makes in one’s perceptions as a nurse.
Nurse Residents Earn Graduate Credit

The University of Kentucky Chandler Hospital, in collaboration with the University of Kentucky College of Nursing, has created a special option for BSN residents to take a graduate research course and earn 3 hours of graduate credit as part of their 1-year UHC BSN residency. The idea for the offering stemmed from the need to provide an avenue for new graduates who want to continue with graduate education soon after completing their undergraduate degree. Many of them experience the conflict of wanting to continue their education but are overwhelmed by the role, expectations, clinical involvement, and scheduling of their new jobs. Additionally, it is difficult for nurse managers to work around class schedules as well as the many orientation classes that new graduates must attend.

As an alternative, Dr. Mary DeLetter, assistant professor at the University of Kentucky College of Nursing, designed a special section of “Research Methods for Advanced Practice Nurses” just for BSN residents. This specific course was chosen because it focuses on using research in practice, so it is directly applicable to the residents’ work setting. Additionally, it is a core requirement in the College of Nursing master’s program and is likely transferable to other graduate programs. The distributed learning course is paced over 9-10 months rather than the traditional 15-week semester. The students have 7 formal 2-hour classroom meetings over the duration of the course. Other coursework is completed independently, using audiotaped PowerPoint modules and the Blackboard Learning Management System. The major assignment, an integrative literature review, is tied to the residents’ projects. Residents may work in project groups with others from the course, although each student produces his or her own individual written paper. When the residents have completed all course requirements, they receive a course grade, which is posted in their permanent student record.

In addition to the content benefits, there are several logistical factors that make the course appealing. The resident section is not open to other graduate students, so the residents are in a special section with their peers. Residents are enrolled in the University of Kentucky Graduate School as postbaccalaureate students, so the GRE or a formal graduate program admission is not required. Because the university offers full-time employees 6 hours per semester of tuition benefit, residents can take the course with no out-of-pocket tuition expense. Residents are paid for their

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Jesica Deputy, RN, BSN, received the Friends of Nursing Award from Jim Stotts, RN, MS, director of patient care services practice and education at Stanford Hospital and Clinics.

Jesica Deputy was part of the first nurse resident cohort at Stanford Hospital and Clinics and graduated in summer 2007. As a new grad she was hired into and continues to work in the CCU/CSU. In December 2008, at the annual hospital Tree-Lighting Ceremony, Jesica received the Betty Cretekos Scholarship Award from the Stanford Hospital and Clinics Friends of Nursing association. This scholarship is given yearly to only 2 staff nurses and is meant to promote RNs’ involvement with professional nursing organizations by giving funds to support their attendance at a national nursing conference.

To qualify Jesica completed an application that covered questions about professional contributions made to her unit; rationale for attendance at this particular meeting, including what she hopes to bring back to Stanford; an evidence-based practice (EBP) change she would like to see implemented on her unit in the coming year; a description of how the EBP change could be accomplished; and a description of her participation in professional organizations.

Jesica requested funds to attend AACN’s annual conference because of the “vast array of educational and networking opportunities that are unique to this conference and targeted specifically toward critical care nurses.” Jesica wants to focus on how to create a healthy work environment and gain insight about structure behind a welcoming and sustaining environment for nurses, and she is especially interested in understanding factors that promote retention of new nurses. Her goal is to develop a more comprehensive resource for preceptors on CCU/CSU that includes expectations, strategies for success, and resources for teaching new staff. Jesica is also currently co-chair of her unit council.

For one of her staff nurse projects, Jesica compiled a packet of health resources (classes, gyms, group sports, etc) available to hospital employees as a means to further enhance this unit’s health improvement program. She believes “nurses do their best work when they are healthy and empowered.” Many unit nurses said they were unaware of many of the opportunities.

Jesica is also working on a project to give additional support to all of the new Stanford nurse residents. She is organizing a group of prior graduates who are willing to volunteer their time to speak with current cohorts, talk about transition issues, and lend them support on the journey of new graduate nurse resident. The panel discussion will include questions such as:

• What questions do you have for someone that was in your shoes 2-3 years ago?
• What do you imagine or have you experienced as the greatest barriers to your successful transition to a professional nurse?
• What difficult situations have you encountered that were complicated specifically because you are a “new nurse”?

Jesica is currently an SNIII on the clinical ladder and self-directed on her journey to help others and grow professionally.

Submitted by Katherine Dyble, RN, MA, Stanford Hospital and Clinics