



Partners in a Shared Agenda, November 2009

ESJH Selected to Participate in Nursing-Retention Pilot Program

ESJH has been selected by Denver University and the Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership to participate in a study they hope will generate insight into how to make the nursing profession more sustainable.



“Nursing is a profession – not just a job – and that’s been lost on younger generations,” said **Ruth Nauts, MD, CPMG** and physician member of ESJH’s pilot-study team. “Nurses are integral to our patient-care teams. We need to discover how to attract and keep passionate, highly competent people in this profession.”

ESJH was one of only five health care facilities selected to participate in this study, which is being funded by the Robert Wood Johnson/Northwest Health and Colorado Health foundations. Further, ESJH is the only facility participating that provides inpatient nursing care.

To participate in the program, ESJH has compiled a team that includes Nauts, as well representatives from nursing, physical therapy and discharge planning. Members will focus their efforts on Orthopedics, which clinical leadership says is a particularly challenging unit for retaining nurses: Last year, nursing turnover in Orthopedics was 29 percent, compared to just 12.4 percent for nursing turnover hospital-wide.

So far, the team has solicited feedback from the nursing staff on Orthopedics to determine what factors contribute to their job satisfaction. Insights include constructive and structured job evaluations, scheduling flexibility and respect from other health-care team members for their contribution, among others.

The team has developed a year-long plan to address these issues and it will present its plan to the other health-care facilities participating in the pilot. In return, ESJH will learn what their plans are. The best ideas will be implemented and monitored for at least two years to determine whether they had any affect on nursing retention.

Many thanks to the members serving on this team, including Nauts, **Judy Lynch**, ESJH Orthopedics and Neurosurgery clinical manager; **Amy Cameron**, ESJH social worker and care manager; **Patti Zimmerman, RN**, ESJH Orthopedics; and **Laura Bielak**, ESJH physical therapist.

“We’re incorporating staff input in all decision-making related to this program,” said **George Rudloff**, ESJH CNO. “This is not a top-down effort; we’re looking to the nursing staff to help us come up with the best ideas for keeping them engaged in providing the best care.”



Physicians who would like to offer comment or suggestions can contact Nauts at RNauts@msn.com.