

The Nurse Mentorship Pilot Program

Strengthening the Employee Experience

Spring 2024

Background

Health-care organizations globally continue to face human resource challenges making the retention of newly recruited nurses more important than ever. Furthermore, the increasing complexity of the health system also requires increased support for new and transitioning nurses in practice.

NL Health Services identified the recruitment and retention of human resources as a top priority in its 2023-24 Strategic Plan and is committed to strengthening the employee experience, while creating a sustainable workforce. This further supports Health Accord NL's recommendation for investment in health provider education and readiness as an avenue to support a high-performance health system.

The Nurse Mentorship Pilot Program was created to respond to and support recruitment and retention of nursing providers. The program supports NL Health Services in its priority areas of Our People and Quality, its dedication to health system transformation, and the advancement of education and knowledge. The program represents NL Health Services' core values of innovation and excellence by encouraging generational knowledge and learning experiences.



Activities

NL Health Services supported program development by leading a number of activities, including:

- Scans of other jurisdictions and literature searches of mentorship programs
- Consultations with RNUNL, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, NL Health Services program evaluation consultants, NL Health Services program leaders, and registered nurses
- A survey completed by over 400 nurses, nurse practitioners, and nurse leaders
- A nurse mentorship program manual, FAQ, fact sheet and an education program were developed
- Presentations and information sessions for leaders, mentors, and mentees
- A program evaluation framework with follow up surveys and evaluations
- A community of practice for mentor participants to connect.



Program Overview

Mentorship is defined as a voluntary, mutually beneficial and long-term relationship where an experienced and knowledgeable leader (nurse mentor) supports the maturing and development of a less experienced nurse (mentee). Ongoing support and education through mentorship can assist in building a trusting and supportive relationship between mentors and mentees. Mentoring relationships contribute to a positive work environment, which enhances patient safety and improves nursing care outcomes.

NL Health Services partnered with the Registered Nurses Union Newfoundland and Labrador (RNUNL) to develop the mentorship program. The program is available to registered nurses and nurse practitioners entering the profession and to those who are new to an area of practice. The length of the mentorship relationship can extend from three to 12 months and depends on the needs of the nurse mentee.

The pilot program is offered in 13 locations across all zones of NL Health Services. Each nurse mentor can support one to three nurse mentees during the pilot phase. Nurse mentors are provided an incentive to participate in the program.



Knowing that you have a safe space to have discussions, and collaborate, has given some ease with the transition of coming to a new clinical area. It creates an environment of knowing that it is OK to reach out, no matter the question or concern.

- Participant (mentee), NL Health Services, 2024



Goals

Nurse Mentorship Program goals include:

- Ease the transition for nurses as they move into practice for the first time (or to a new area of practice).
- Create a culture of collaboration that sees nurse leadership and mentorship as an effective way to support and retain nurses now and in the future.
- Enhance the quality of nursing practice.
- Create a positive and supportive working environment that fosters the development of others.
- Enhance communication and teamwork.
- Improve the onboarding experience of nurses.
- Provide leadership opportunities for nurses.



Outcomes

The program currently has 42 mentor and 18 mentee participants. The program launched April 1, 2024 and will remain in the pilot phase until spring 2025 with ongoing evaluation.

Participants were asked to attend a mentorship education session to support the transition to practice, strengthen teamwork and communication, and enhance learning. NL Health Services' program evaluation consultants have evaluated the effectiveness of the education program to date. Of the 53 team members who attended training, 29 provided responses.

Post Mentorship Training Survey

n=29



Opportunities Ahead

- Program expansion to support all RNs entering practice
- Mentorship program development for other disciplines
- Recruitment and retention – workforce sustainability
- Individual and organizational learning
- Accelerated leadership development
- Enhanced patient care
- Continued follow up with leadership teams and mentoring pairs – Community of Practice
- Final program evaluation at the end of the pilot phase (Spring 2025)
- Opportunities to implement recommended program changes or enhancements post evaluation

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