

Nursing update



Via Christi committed to nurse recruitment

Did you know that for every nurse candidate in Kansas, there are on the average 15 potential employers?

“Working with Cielo, our recruitment firm, we’ve established a short-term goal of hiring 30 experienced nurses by Thanksgiving,” says Kris Hill, assistant chief nursing officer at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis.

Carla Yost, system chief nursing officer for Via Christi, says the goal was based on nursing feedback. “You’ve said that while graduate nurses are great, you need experienced nurses to balance out the knowledge and skills at the bedside. We’re listening and taking action.”

To date, Via Christi has successfully recruited and hired 19 experienced RNs and is working on recruiting at least 11 more by the end of November.

“If we are to be a model community, we need to recruit and retain graduate and experienced nurses so that we are less reliant on agency and are well prepared for the flu season, which is rapidly approaching,” says Yost. “We’re not there yet, but we’re working on it!”

Avoiding the avoidable

While we continue to do all that we can to recruit nurses, it’s equally important that we all work together to create the type of collegial and collaborative environment that helps retain great nurses.

Nurse manager Jennifer Rogers, RN, and her team on the Observation Unit at St. Francis have been tremendously successful in doing just that, as demonstrated by the unit’s turnover rate of 4.6 percent – well below the national best practice benchmark of 13 percent or less.

Rogers says it starts with hiring “for character and fit” – which, unlike skills, is not something that can be taught. At times, that has meant having an unfilled position for months. “But we’re a close-knit team where everyone prefers to pick up shifts, if needed, while waiting for the right person.”

Once that person is hired, “there’s a shared understanding that we are all responsible for each other’s success,” Rogers says, which helps ensure that the unit is welcoming and supportive to those chosen to become part of their unit family.

It’s also a unit where celebration of team and individual successes is the norm and where the nurses regularly plan after-work activities with coworkers as well as their families.

“I send about 1,000 ‘Be the Difference’ badges a year,” says Rogers, who in her 2 ½ years as the unit’s nursing manager continues to see its turnover rate drop even lower.

