

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

NICHE



Series Editor: Marie Boltz, PhD, RN
Managing Editor: Scott Bugg

NICHE SOLUTION #22 • 2012

INTEGRATING GERIATRICS WITH PATIENT & FAMILY CENTERED CARE ON MEDICAL SPECIALTIES

Author:

Justin Montgomery, ARNP, MSN, Geriatric Nurse Coordinator

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

Lebanon, New Hampshire

PROBLEM: The greatest percentage of Medical Specialties patients at Dartmouth-Hitchcock is aged 76 or older, and at least half are 65 and older. The hospital needed to focus on the needs of this core group.

SOLUTION: A multidisciplinary team at the hospital implemented a multifaceted approach (Geriatric Resource and Geriatric Patient Care Associate roles, and transitional care initiatives) to better meet the unique care needs of the older adult group.

Problem Identified Realizing the geriatric population in Medical Specialties at their facility represented their core consumers, Dartmouth-Hitchcock needed to commit to meet the unique care needs of this group.



Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

Solution Formulated A multidisciplinary team implemented a number of initiatives to help transform the culture of geriatric care and achieve the greatest potential for the older adult patients and their families. These initiatives included:

- Creation of a Geriatric Nurse Coordinator position in the medical specialty line
- Formation of a geriatric steering committee
- Use of local and national resources, including...
 - NICHE designation
 - Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging partnership
 - Clinical Microsystems quality improvement processes

Specific action steps involved an “Ask the Nurse” community education program, follow-up phone calls and ongoing internet-based education efforts. A Geriatric Resource Nurse and a Geriatric Patient Care Tech were also added to the staff.

NICHE Role The NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) core curriculum is designed for use by those at NICHE sites who train nurses in best practices for hospitalized older adults. GRNs are the foundation of system-wide improvement to achieve positive outcomes for hospitalized older adults. The NICHE program, available to hospitals throughout North America, offers evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to promote improved care for the hospitalized older adult.

Evaluation/Results In those areas that the Elder Care at DHMC program sought to improve outcomes for hospitalized older adults, results showed a 19% decrease in loss of functional status, 6-36% lower rates of delirium compared to reported levels, and pressure ulcers prevalence rates reduced by more than half from 6% to 2%.

For more information

1. Bechtel, C. & Ness, D.L. (2010). If you build it, will they come? Designing truly patient-centered health care. *Health Affairs*, 29 (5), 914-20.
2. Boltz, M., Capezuti, E., Bowar-Ferres, S. et al. (2008). Changes in the Geriatric Care Environment Associated with NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for HealthSystem Elders). *Geriatr Nurs*. 2008 May-Jun;29(3):176-85.
3. Havens, D.S., Vasey, J., Gittell, J.H. & Lin WT. (2010). Relational coordination among nurses and other providers: impact on the quality of patient care. *Journal of Nursing Management* 18 (8), 926-937.

NICHE-related resources

1. The NICHE GRN Core Curriculum. <http://elearningcenter.nicheprogram.org/course/view.php?id=2>
2. The NICHE Introduction to Gerontology Curriculum. <http://elearningcenter.nicheprogram.org/course/view.php?id=5>
3. The NICHE Geriatric Patient Care Associate Curriculum. <http://elearningcenter.nicheprogram.org/course/view.php?id=28>

About NICHE

NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is designed to help hospitals improve the care of older adults. A program of the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University College of Nursing, the vision of NICHE is for all patients 65-and-over to be given sensitive and exemplary care. The mission of NICHE is to provide principles and tools to stimulate a change in the culture of health care facilities to achieve patient-centered care for older adults. For more information visit www.nicheprogram.org.

Follow us on Twitter @NICHEProgram

NICHE