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Graduate Nurse Residency Programs: Bridging the Knowledge – Practice Gap

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Program Background/Concept

- Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals' Post-Baccalaureate Graduate Nurse Residency Program is based on the University HealthSystem Consortium (UHC) & American Association of Colleges of Nurses (AACN) nationally standardized curriculum. The program maintains an evidence-based foundation.
- The Graduate Nurse Residency Program is a result of the partnership between Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals and the Jefferson School of Nursing to support the Graduate Nurse (GN) through the transition into his/her first professional role.
- Program framework is based on *Benner's* model of Skill Acquisition.

Novice → Advanced Beginner → Proficient → Competent → Expert

Purpose of the Graduate Nurse Residency Program

- To provide the foundation needed to address the unique needs of Graduate Nurses (GNs) through their first year in a professional role
- To promote autonomy and effective decision-making skills through application-based learning opportunities
- To blend the collaborative atmosphere of peer networking opportunities with the promotion of critical-thinking skills and hands-on activities

Knowledge – Practice Gap

- Nursing Theory
- Professional Development
- Research
- Application of Clinical Skills
- Clinical Leadership
- Evidence-Based Practice

Program Goals

- Develop effective decision-making skills related to clinical judgment and performance
- Provide clinical nursing leadership at the point of care
- Incorporate research-based evidence linked to outcomes into practice
- Provide support for the Graduate Nurses during their first position as they develop in their professional roles
- Formulate an Individualized Development Plan related to their new clinical role

— *University HealthSystem Consortium (2008)*

Program Objectives

- Improve communication skills
- Promote critical thinking
- Develop autonomy at the bedside
- Integrate evidence-based practices into patient care
- Positively affect the retention of Graduate Nurses

Method

- Implementation of the Graduate Nurse Residency Program provides:
  - Peer support for Graduate Nurse
  - Standardized curriculum
  - Application-based learning activities
  - Program input from participants

Application-Based Learning

Conclusion

- The Graduate Nurse Residency Program is beneficial to the Graduate Nurse and the employer.
- The program:
  - Promotes better patient outcomes
  - Improves nurse satisfaction
  - Decreases Graduate Nurse turnover rates

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