

OB Nurse Residencies in Maternal Child Health – A Journey from Novice to Expert

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INTRODUCTION

- Maternal Mortality and Morbidity rates in the United States continue to be higher than expected.
- Since 2020 more than 100 hospitals have closed their maternity units.
- Patients are having to drive further to receive care and often from inexperienced caregivers.
- On average it takes 18-24 months for a new nurse to feel comfortable in their roles.
- As a rural healthcare facility that only delivers approximately 15 patients per month it can take twice that long. There is a shortage of maternity nurses in many rural areas and currently it takes over 2 years to hire an experienced OB nurse at Sharon Hospital.

OBJECTIVES

To develop an OB residency program in conjunction with a larger medical center, to increase exposure to maternal and neonatal emergencies

- By partnering with a larger facility, students will gain experience and repetition in caring for labor patients
- The larger hospitals see higher risk patients more frequently giving exposure to newer nurses while on orientation

To decrease orientation length while maintaining the strength and education provided to new nurses.

- By increasing exposure to low-frequency; high-risk events allows nurses to participate in the experience not just discussing it in practice.

METHODOLOGY

- Start an OB residency program at Sharon Hospital in conjunction with larger sister hospitals in the larger network
- Start with training on Labor & Deliver for the first 3 month after hiring at the larger hospital.
- Return to smaller hospital to add in training for postpartum, newborn and breastfeeding assessments approximately 9 months.
- 100% attendance at monthly simulation drills during the first year and 50% of drills in year 2.
- 100% attendance at monthly fetal monitoring strip reviews during the first year and 50% attendance in year 2.
- Maintain journal of experiences that they were a part of during their orientation.



NEXT STEPS

- Survey new hires at Sharon Hospital about the current model
 - We have 3 that were hired in the past 2 years using the current model
 - Orientation 14 months, 9 months (prev NICU exp) and 12 months
- Complete the same survey about experiences for the 2 new hires in 2026
 - Plan for 12-month orientation with additional support for 2nd year
- Continue to track low-frequency/high-risk events that new RNs are a part of and summarize for a discussion/education session when not present

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