



Wayne HealthCare – Versant® | CASE STUDY

Headquarters: Greenville, OH

Community Served: Patients of all ages in Darke County, Ohio and surrounding rural communities

Services: Patient-centered healthcare and wellness services including acute care, imaging, oncology, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedics, dialysis, rehabilitation, laboratory, emergency, and surgical services among others.

SUMMARY

Challenges

- Recruitment and retention of new and experienced nurses
- Inconsistencies in care delivery by staff and preceptors
- Lack of structure to support new graduate nurses transitioning into the organization

Solutions

- Prioritize use of a standardized, competency-based model to onboard new graduate nurses
- Establish hiring and recruitment processes and structures
- Use of a competency-based preceptor development capability
- Implement an academic-practice bridge program

Results

- Increased retention at year 1 of new graduate nurses
- Elevated clinical practice by preceptors
- Data demonstrating positive impact of having a supportive structure for onboarding

Hiring quality new graduate registered nurses (NGRNs) to support an organization's growth and replacing retiring nurses are essential for hospitals to ensure patients receive safe, quality care. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates over 175,000 openings for registered nurses across the country. To address this need, adequate support and training for NGRNs and their preceptors are paramount for a successful transition to practice.

CHALLENGES

Facing challenges with recruitment of new and experienced nurses, Wayne HealthCare decided to prioritize implementation of the Versant New Graduate Nurse Residency™ to address the onboarding of NGRNs. During the implementation process, inconsistencies in the delivery of care were identified among existing RN staff, including preceptors assigned to train the new graduate nurses. A lack of structure to adequately support new graduate nurses transitioning into the professional RN role, paired with the lack of standardization in care delivery provided by preceptors, would lead to confusion for the NGRNs being onboarded within the organization, and possibly inconsistent outcomes.



“Recruiting new talent is challenging for rural hospitals and small facilities. The implementation of the Versant nurse residency program allows new nurses to transition with confidence from the classroom to the bedside with the support of a trained preceptor. The nurse residency program provides a hands-on clinical experience that builds critical thinking skills. The Versant nurse residency has successfully resulted in an increase in nurse retention and recruitment within the organization,” says Kimberlee Freeman, DNP, MS, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, Vice President of Patient Care Services/CNO, Wayne HealthCare.

Turnover of nursing staff and preceptor burnout led the organization to seek out solutions that would retain nurses, keep them feeling satisfied and supported, and improve the standard of patient care provided across the organization.

SOLUTIONS

Retaining new nurses starts with hiring the right nurses. Wayne HealthCare utilized Versant's Behavioral Interviewing Tool to select appropriate candidates during the hiring process. This provided a streamlined approach to hiring and allowed nurse leaders to find NGRNs whose values best fit with those of the organization such as "creating a great workplace by going above and beyond to create a positive environment" (Wayne HealthCare, 2021).

Wayne HealthCare knew that an evidence-based, outcomes-driven approach was needed to assess competency for NGRNs. Implementing the Versant New Graduate Nurse Residency™ provided a standardized system for ensuring competency for nurses transitioning into the profession. This consistent approach enabled nurse educators to ensure each new resident received comprehensive training in alignment with the appropriate area of practice.

"We are thrilled to work with Versant, not only in the creation of the nurse residency program, but also in the maintenance and sustainability of this residency program as we evolve. I was born and raised in our rural agricultural county here in southwest Ohio. Growing confident, new nurses supports our hospital mission of 'Providing quality care and promoting wellness, close to home,'" says Deb Liette, BSN, RN, Manager of Education Department at Wayne HealthCare. To further support the NGRNs at Wayne HealthCare, consistent training and support for preceptors were also identified as immediate needs.

"Nurse preceptors need and deserve to be guided through their role training, just as much as the new grads do. Taking preceptors through a novice-to-expert approach in a Preceptor Role Development Program allows us to strengthen our existing preceptors, as well as transition novice preceptors into the new role. Our goal is to grow our Nurse Residency graduates into our leaders for tomorrow."

Amie Jo Stanley, MSN, RN

Versant Coordinator

Wayne HealthCare

Through Versant's Preceptor Role Development Program™, nurses are able to show readiness to serve as preceptors through specific competencies that are aligned with the role. Furthermore, the Versant Competency Currency Management Program™ allows the organization to identify areas of opportunity for preceptors' clinical skills and knowledge.

With the new residency program and preceptor training came new challenges. The program demanded a lot of preceptors, and signs of burnout and dissatisfaction among preceptors were rising to the surface. "Compassion fatigue is a very real problem for nurses. We need to be able to self-identify when we need support for ourselves. This is true in everyday context, but especially so during a pandemic. We need to be able to ask for time to depressurize and reboot before being asked to care for not only our patients, but for our novice nurses as well. Our new grads deserve a great learning environment with a caring and compassionate preceptor. We can make that happen when we work together," says Stanley. The team at Wayne HealthCare held focus group sessions with preceptors to better understand the issues. When a central theme of ineffective communication was identified, Stanley immediately took action to rectify the problem. She began to disseminate monthly preceptor newsletters and fine-tuned her plan for in-person rounding on resident/preceptor pairings. "Supportive tools, encouraging notes, and showing true appreciation for the role of preceptor has resulted in happier preceptors and other nurses identifying they would like to join the ranks of preceptor," says Stanley.

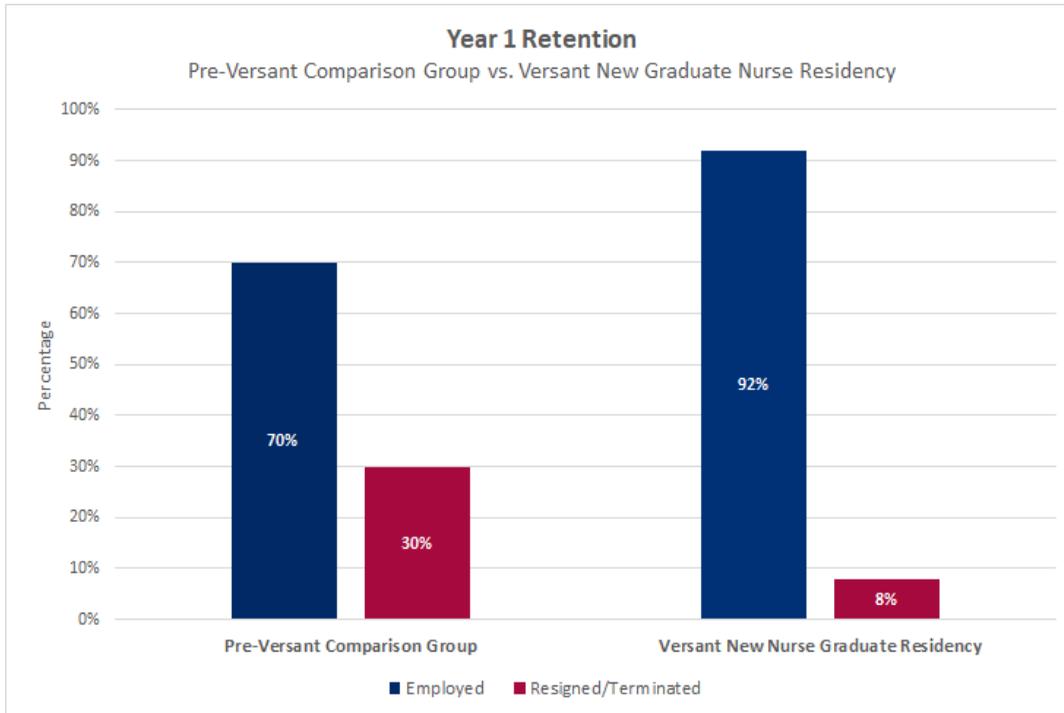


In addition to fine-tuning the hiring process & new graduate residency experience, Wayne HealthCare nurse leaders recognized the opportunity to engage local capstone nursing students using the Versant Student Nurse Capstone™ (SNC) to accelerate their connection with a department where they have an interest in working after school. "Wayne HealthCare is excited to partner with our local nursing schools in developing an innovative approach with the orientation of new nurses all while building a positive relationship with their preceptor, resulting in a successful transition to practice for the new nurse," says Freeman.

With Versant's Student Nurse Capstone, nursing students are able to demonstrate competency in their last semester of school, thereby jump-starting their experience in a potential department where they have interest in working as a nurse. This also provides early socialization to the potential department of hire as well as a glimpse into the organization's culture. "We have truly enjoyed having the Versant SNC process here at Wayne HealthCare. We were able to take a nursing student through her capstone experience while being paired with a Versant-trained preceptor. They developed a great working relationship and requested to stay paired after the student was hired into the New Grad Residency program. We are amazed at how beneficial that working relationship has been in our new grad's confidence and performance. It also means that our new grad is able to demonstrate competency levels faster during her immersion. She was able to be validated on 20% of her identified competencies within the first few weeks, when previously this time typically would have less than 10% validation completion due to the new nurse still learning role requirements. We are working to expand to include more surrounding schools into the program because of this success," says Stanley.

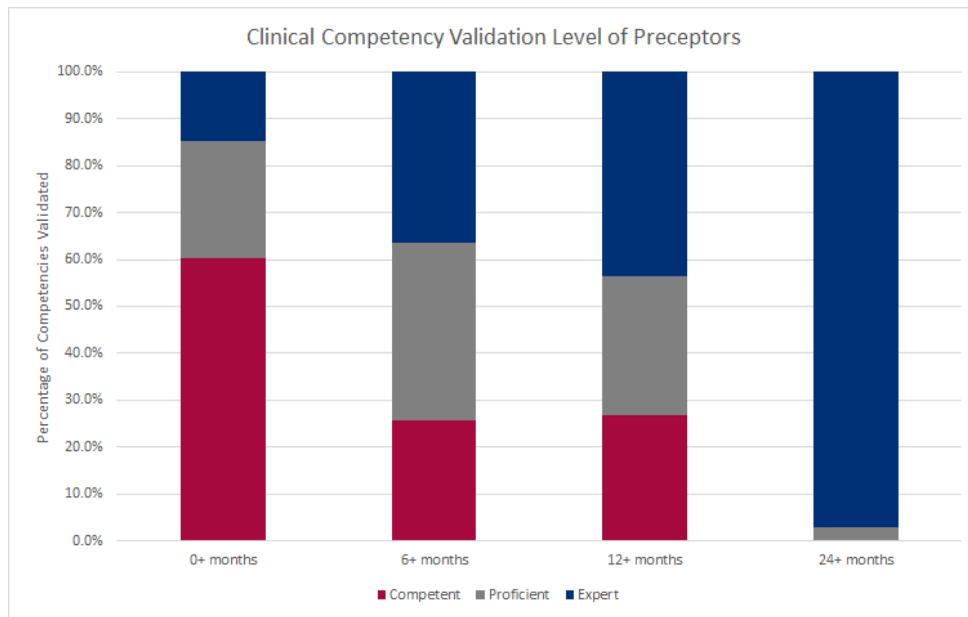
Wayne HealthCare’s decision to make changes with hiring and onboarding contributed to an increase in retention for new graduate nurses. Actual retention increased from 70% to 92% (see Figure 1). “The implementation of the Versant Residency program has allowed us to provide support and guidance beyond the immersion period. We had not previously been able to identify with specific clarity what the nurses wanted or needed beyond competency validation. Pre-Versant Comparison Group metrics helped us identify the need for and benefits of mentorship and debriefing events. The addition of those supportive components has resulted in novice nurses being given a place to express their concerns and fears in safe, supportive, and nurturing environments. The combination of individualized training during immersion, focused teaching plans, and these supportive components have resulted in the statistics you see below,” says Stanley.

Figure 1. RN Retention at Year 1 Comparison



Changes to preceptor preparation and training also created positive results for the organization. Preceptors showed increasing clinical competency over time. During the first five months of clinical competency validation, 60% of competencies were validated at the Competent level, 25% were validated at Proficient, and 15% were validated at Expert. As time in the program progressed, competencies were validated at higher levels. For example, for competencies validated between 12-23 months into the program, 27% were Competent, 29% were Proficient, and 44% were Expert. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2. Preceptor Performance



“At Wayne HealthCare, we utilize the Versant New Graduate Residency program as a conduit for onboarding, training and mentoring new RN graduates. We recognize the need for bridging the gaps between nursing school and bedside care, which is why we focus on closing the gap between theory and clinical practice. Our vision is to provide world-class, patient-centered healthcare and wellness for our friends, family, and neighbors, using the best technology, provided by highly skilled and engaged employees and providers. The Versant partnership is one of the ways we ensure the skill and engagement of our nurses is top-notch.”

Terri Flood, MHA
Vice President of Business Development
Wayne HealthCare