

3/20/17

To whom it may concern,

My name is Boone Richardson BSN, RN and I currently work as a Staff Development Specialist for Asante Three Rivers Medical Center (ATRMC). In this role, I'm not only involved with numerous educational and professional growth initiatives for Asante nursing staff, but I also function as the Clinical Student Coordinator for my facility. As such, I work closely with the local schools, primarily Rogue Community College (RCC) and Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU), coordinating clinical student placements, and providing facility orientations on Asante practices and standards to incoming students. As a result of these duties, I have the unique perspective of getting to interact with RCC and OHSU nursing graduates not only as students doing clinical rotations at ATRMC, but also as new graduate nurses ultimately entering the workforce at my facility, developing professional relationships with me and my peers, and performing care on our patients.

Considering all of this, I'm pleased to address the Oregon House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development on the following.

1. Experience with OCNE graduates (i.e. RCC and OHSU) and why they're good hires.

Between new grad residency classes and on-unit rounding, I ultimately end up spending a considerable amount of time with the new graduate nurses that ATRMC hires. When these new grads are from RCC or OHSU I am consistently impressed with the professionalism, work ethic, knowledge base, and general intelligence that they display. Nursing school is notoriously difficult, as is entering the workforce in modern clinical settings as a new graduate, which many will argue is a significantly more challenging step in the nursing career path than school itself. However, the graduates we hire from OHSU and RCC consistently show that they are up to the task, often excelling as new nurses, which I feel is a great reflection of RCC, OHSU, and ultimately OCNE.

2. How OCNE graduates are prepared to meet that region's specific patient population needs (practical curriculum).

Graduates from OHSU and RCC typically live and work in the Rogue Valley, and are generally taught by educators that do, or have done, the same. Their clinical experiences are at local medical facilities, and the schools' curriculum is based on meeting national/state standards as well as addressing local patient population needs, often in coordination with local medical facilities. As a result, these students get a rather immersive

experience in regards to the patient populations and subsequent needs that are typical in this area.

3. If a clinical partner, a few examples of valuable clinical experiences and how those experiences better train future hires.

Nursing students come to my facility for clinical experiences in two main capacities. One type I see are student groups at various points along their program track that come into the facility as a cohort and spend 1-2 days per week on-site with a clinical instructor overseeing their experiences. These students are primarily based in general-medical units for purposes of honing their base skills, but also get to rotate to specialty departments (Critical Care, OR, ED, Wound care, Cath Lab, Pediatrics, OB/Gyn, Family Birth, etc.) and within the multidisciplinary team (Respiratory Therapy, Diabetes Education, Physical Therapy, etc.). This structure allows students to establish their base skills, get exposure to a variety of practice areas, as well as gain an understanding of how multiple departments and/or disciplines function to ultimately provide the umbrella of care and services that our patients require.

The other nursing students I see are those completing their Integrated Practicum (IP). These are senior students in their last term(s) of school before graduation and must now complete a certain number of hours in an immersive clinical experience. To achieve this, these students are assigned to specially-trained nursing staff (Certified Teaching Associates (CTAs)) to then follow their work schedule. By doing multiple 12-hour shifts per week with their assigned CTAs, these students get real-life experience with nursing duties, and work towards functioning as a staff nurse in their assigned department by the end of the term. Students often report this term being their most memorable and profound, and it seems to be an excellent culmination of their training as well as a great preparatory step for entering the workforce.

4. The importance of encouraging ADN graduates to continue on to earn their BSN.

There has been a long-standing national initiative to progress the RN to a bachelors-prepared profession. While ADN-prepared nurses graduating from quality programs are perfectly capable of entering the workforce as competent RNs providing excellent care, those RNs that have BSN-level preparation are shown to have numerous advantages. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing states, "Baccalaureate nursing programs encompass all of the course work taught in associate degree and diploma programs plus a more in-depth treatment of the physical and social sciences, nursing research, public and community health, nursing management, and

the humanities. The additional course work enhances the student's professional development, prepares the new nurse for a broader scope of practice, and provides the nurse with a better understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and social issues that affect patients and influence health care delivery" (2015). In short, BSN RNs are better prepared to function highly within the complicated, demanding, ever-evolving, modern healthcare environment.

As a result, employers will often seek out BSN prepared nurses over ADN prepared nurses if given the choice. Many facilities and organizations have even moved to only hiring BSN nurses. Therefore, RNs are encouraged to work towards completing their BSN not only to make themselves more marketable, but also to better prepare themselves to function successfully within the current healthcare environment.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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