TRANSITIONING NEW REGISTERED NURSE GRADUATES INTO INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

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Introduction

The growth of inpatient hospital care combined with the continuing shortage of experienced nurses has demonstrated the need for distinct strategies for transitioning new RN graduates into independent practice. In their hospital research, the Health Care Advisory Board estimated that of all the nurses hired in hospitals, 42% of them would be new graduates. In Colorado, the graduation rate for nursing students has increased from 900 to around 1600 from 2001-2006.¹ Hiring new graduates is essential, and in addition to these market dynamics of increased supply of new graduates to hire, the cost of transitioning these nurses into practice is significant going as high as $81,000 per graduate.² With this investment, the importance of retaining these nurses is clearly important. The odds are high that the new graduate will not stay as their turnover statistics range from 35-61% leaving within the first twelve months.³ The mobility of nurses contributes to the turnover; however evidence would support the value of organized programs to support the new graduate in their first nursing role as one of the greatest retention factors. Such new graduate programs report a less then 10% turnover of the participants and should be the model for transitioning nurses into practice.⁴,⁵

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³ Supra N.I., National Association for Healthcare Recruitment. Bernard Hodes Group.