

The “Crabby Nurses”: New School Nurse Orientation

Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute Scholars:

Donna Keen; RN, A.S.N.

School Nurse Supervisor; Lake Cumberland District Health Department

Bethany Oursler; RN, B.S.N.

School Nurse Supervisor; Lake Cumberland District Health Department

Donna Parrish; RN, A.S.N.

Clinic Nurse Supervisor; Lake Cumberland District Health Department

Mentor:

Shawn Crabtree; M.P.A., LCSW

Director; Lake Cumberland District Health Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The “Crabby Nurse” KPHLI Leadership team desires for there to be knowledgeable, confident, competent and well trained nurses in the school nurse program in the ten counties of the Lake Cumberland District Health Department (LCDHD) thus enabling the school sites to promote better health practices in the school settings of our health district.

An additional goal of our project is for it to serve as a template for other health departments in Kentucky as to promote consistency of training and service delivery statewide.

Specifically, we updated the current LCDHD School Nurse Orientation Manual with all the new or updated protocols that have been implemented since the manual was last updated in 2009. In addition, we developed a series of companion training video segments which demonstrate scenario based situations that provide the new school nurses a firsthand look at what a typical day can be in the life of a school nurse. It is one thing to read about what to do in a manual, and another thing altogether to watch by video the services actually being performed. Hopefully the companion video will provide a significant degree of additional clarity.

To further facilitate the expedition of practice competency, we will enlist the assistance existing, seasoned school nurses to serve as mentors to new school nurses. The mentoring process will enable each new school nurse to have someone to contact if a situation should occur requiring help or advice.

In summary, we have updated our existing school nurse training manual, developed a series of companion video segments, and are in the process of implementing a new mentoring process between existing and new school nurses. Finally we hope our model will prove not only to be vitally useful for LCDHD, but can also serve as a template for other health department school nurse programs across Kentucky.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

The “Crabby Nurse” KPHLI Leadership team began their KPHLI experience in April 2009. The vision for the team was to develop an updated and enhanced training program for new nurses hired by LCDHD to work in the school nurse program. An additional vision of the project was for it to serve as a template for other health departments in Kentucky as to increase consistency of service delivery and training statewide.

The school nurse program at Lake Cumberland District started in 1990 with one school nurse at one school site in Pulaski County. This was funded by a Maternal Child Health block grant. The school nurse program has now expanded to one school nurse administrator, four school nurse supervisors, seventy school nurses and one secretary. There are 14 school districts and fifty three school sites with at least one school site in each of our ten counties. ¹

For the 2008-2009 school year, there were a total of 128,355 sick visits and 43,317 medicine visits to the school nurses in the ten counties. In addition to these visits the school nurses also do immunizations, well child exams, vision screenings, scoliosis screenings and dental varnishing.²

We feel that even though the current orientation process has worked relatively well historically, with the exponential growth in the past few years of the school program our process has become strained (since the existing nurse supervisors are primarily responsible for training new hires, the growth of the school program has resulted in an ever increasing challenge in regards to providing ample training). While coping with our growth there has not been sufficient time or staff available to improve or revamp our current school nurse orientation process.

Problem Statement:

Why do new school nurses at Lake Cumberland District Health Department feel that they do not receive adequate training when they complete the orientation process?

Behavior Over Time Graph:

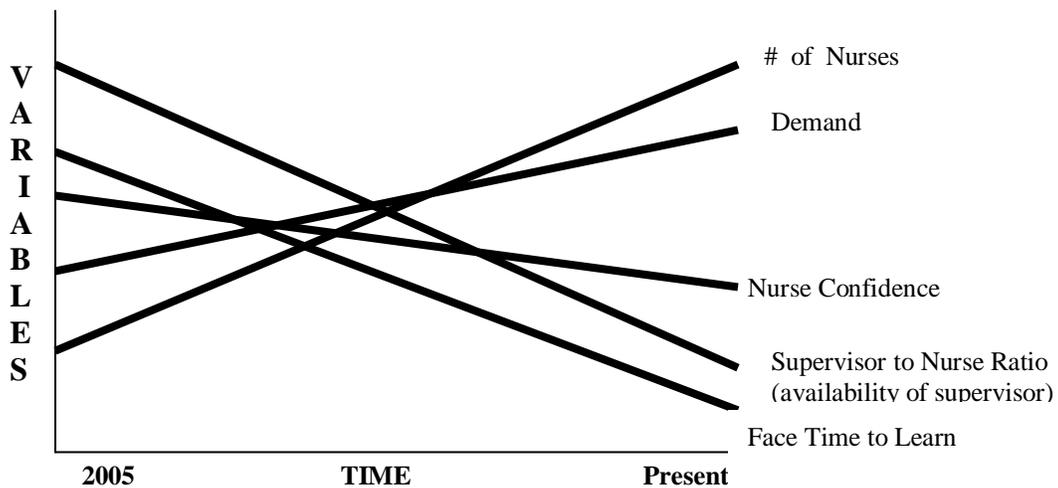


Figure 1: Key Trends Graph

Causal Loop Diagram:

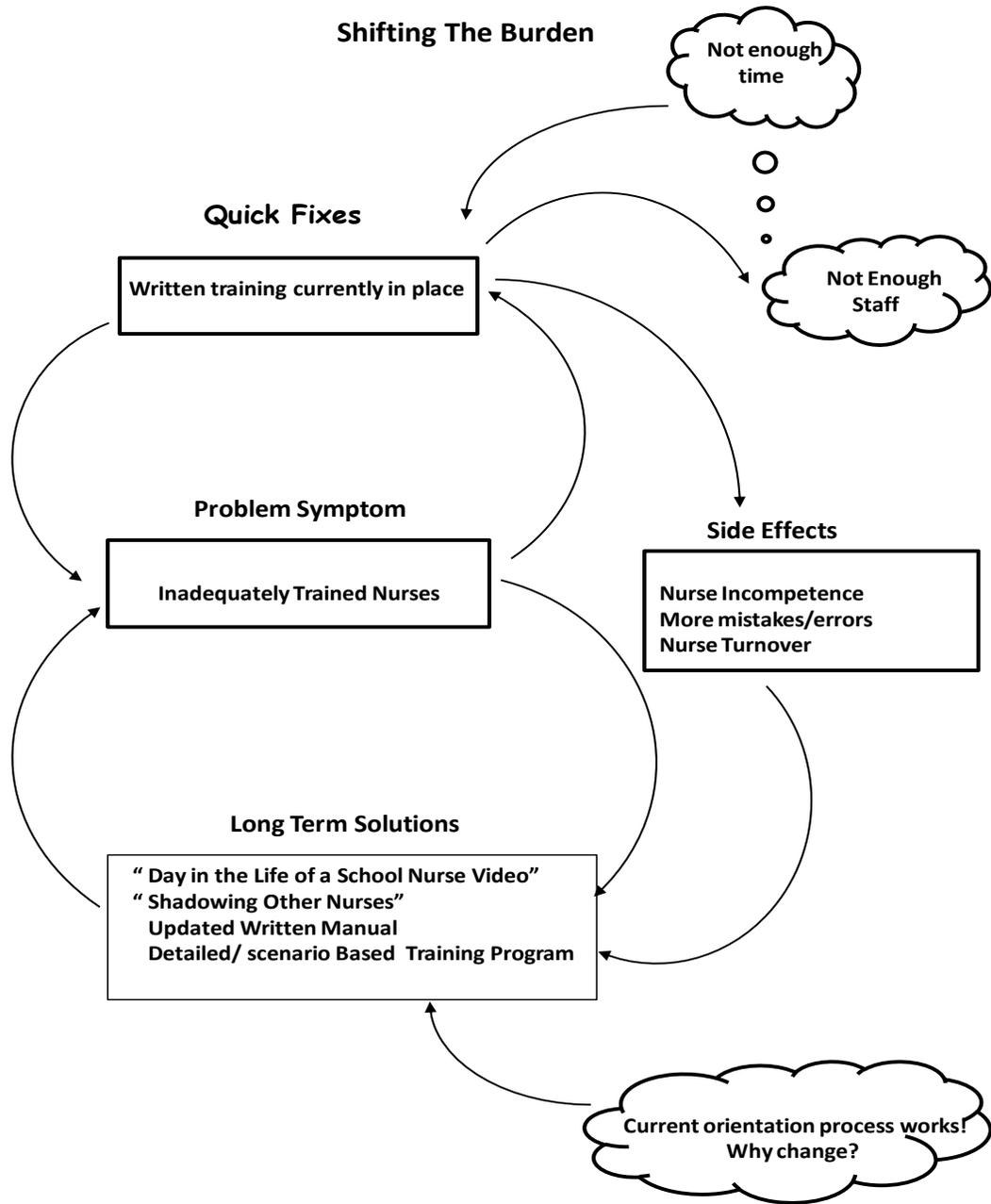


Figure 2: Causal Loop Diagram

10 Essential Public Health Services/National Goals Supported:

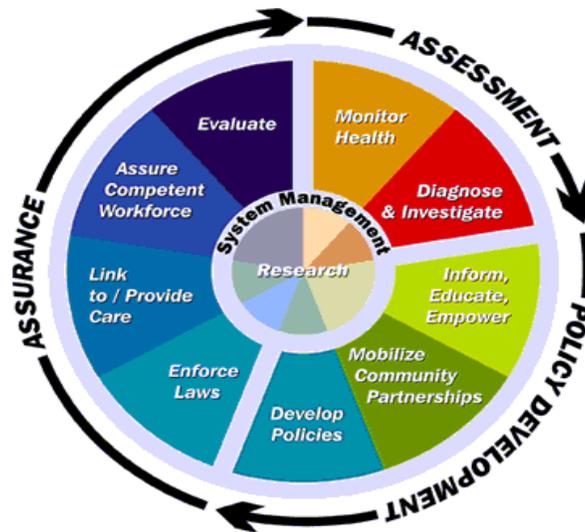


Figure 3: This picture is from the 10 Essential Public Health Services³

This project supports the following essential public health services:

Essential Public Health Service # 3: Inform, educate and empower people about health issues

Essential Public Health Service # 8: Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce

In addition this project supports the following national goals:

Healthy People 2010 Objectives:

23-8. Increase the proportion of Federal, Tribal, State and local agencies that incorporate specific competencies in the essential public health services into personnel systems

23-9. Increase the proportion of schools for public health workers that integrate into their curricula specific content to develop competency in the essential public health services

23-10. Increase the proportion of Federal, Tribal, State and local public health agencies that provide continuing education to develop competency in essential public health services

23-11. Increase the proportion of State and local public health agencies that meet national performance standards for essential public health services

PROJECT OBJECTIVES/DESCRIPTION/DELIVERABLES:

Objectives:

1. Change current orientation process when training new school nurses.
2. Have more knowledgeable, confident school nurses.
3. Improve consistency and quality of training considering high supervisor/nurse ratio.
4. Decrease potential nurse turnover.

Deliverables:

1. Updated school nurse orientation manual.
2. A companion training video which provides "real life" examples of common nurse services.
3. An implemented mentoring program by which existing, seasoned school nurses are paired with new school nurses so that more immediate feedback, discussion and general communication can readily take place.
4. Promote the above as a template to the Kentucky Health Department Association so other health departments might more easily adopt a similar training/mentoring program.

METHODOLOGY:

In order to meet our objectives we started by sending out a survey to approximately 80 school nurses in our district, all health department directors and school administrators in Kentucky. The purpose of the survey was to assess what areas in the school nurse orientation process that needed improvement. We used the information from the survey to help develop our training video segments and to update our current nurse training manual.

After we completed the video segments and updated manual, we engaged our School Nurse Administrator and our Health Department Director in reviewing needed changes to such.

RESULTS:

We used the information from the survey as a guide to assist us in revising our existing training manual and in making the companion training videos. The School Nurse Administration and local qualified coding/documentation experts have reviewed our updated written nurse orientation manual and approved the revisions/additions. The updated manual is now available for all current LCDHD school nurses and will be available to any new school nurse as part of the LCDHD orientation process. The manual is also available on jump drive and readily able to be shared with our sister agencies in Kentucky.

The companion videos include different situations that might occur at a school site in a typical day and the best response by the school nurse to each situation. The table of

contents in our electronic training manual has hyperlinks to pertinent companion video segments designed to enhance and exemplify the written material. These videos are available on jump drive and readily able to be shared with local staff and sister agencies in Kentucky. We feel that the addition of the video segments will serve as a useful reference for new school nurses and will save them time by providing easily accessible “real life” examples of common services thus producing additional clarity and providing more detailed information than the written manual alone.

The mentoring process of partnering existing, seasoned nurses with new nurses will be used in conjunction with the updated manual and companion videos to further enhance new school nurse training.

Our team hopes our project will serve as a template for other health departments in Kentucky to utilize in developing their own training module.

CONCLUSIONS:

The “Crabby Nurse” KPHLI Leadership Team feels that the updated training manual, the new orientation companion videos, and the mentoring program will greatly improve the total orientation process for the new school nurses. This will give the new nurses more knowledge and confidence to do their jobs. We also feel that staff turnover rate will go down if the nurses are better satisfied with their jobs which will in turn reduce organization costs.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Donna Keen

My year long experience as a KPHLI scholar has been both challenging and rewarding. I have gained new insight on alternative ideas and thoughts regarding supervisory skills and duties. I particularly enjoyed receiving the results of the 360 feedback, the social styles profile and the emotional intelligence assessment. I found it interesting comparing my scores with those of my co-workers, peers and my superiors. I hope to use the skills in KPHLI to enhance my career in public health and also in my personal life.

I was fortunate to work with a great team. We worked very hard on our change master project and each of our team members had an honest concern to do our very best in the hope that our project will be a great learning tool and reference for our newly hired school nurses. I feel very privileged to have been part of this KPHLI group.

Bethany Oursler

The Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute (KPHLI) has been a very insightful and educational experience for me. I feel as if I have grown both professionally and personally throughout my KPHLI experience. As a result, I have been able to learn my strengths and weaknesses as a leader and will continue to build upon these skills long after my KPHLI graduation. I have enjoyed the time I have spent working with my

change master team. I have developed a better understanding of various aspects of public health by working on our project and working with my team members. I feel our change master project will positively benefit new nurses in the future.

Donna Parrish

This past year in KPHLI has been a learning experience. Our team, The Crabby Nurses, started in April 2009 with four members and we are completing the year of study and work with only three members.

The two ladies that are my team members have been wonderful to work with. Our mentor, Mr. Crabtree, gave us the leeway to do our KPHLI project our way but was always willing and available to help us if needed.

The KPHLI program has been enlightening for me in many ways. It has made me realize that there are many ways to deal with difficult situations and difficult people. It has also made me look at myself and realize that the way I react to situations affects not only me but the people I work with and the people I live with. I hope that I can take the things that I have learned and apply them to all aspects of my life.

Questions on the Survey to Help Improve the School Nurse Orientation Process

1. If there were an orientation video for school nurses, what would be the most beneficial aspects to highlight?
2. Please list ways we can improve the orientation process that would benefit the confidence level and better prepare the school nurse for the first few weeks at the school site.
3. List the aspects of the current school nurse orientation process that helped the school nurse the most.
4. List the aspects of the current school nurse orientation process that helps the school nurse the least.
5. Please list any additional comments/suggestions you feel may help us in the process of creating a new approach to the school nurse orientation process.

REFERENCES

1. Monica Hall, School Nurse Administrator, LCDHD
2. Deann Cross, School Health Program Secretary, LCDHD
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/od/ocphp/nphpsp/essentialphservices.htm>