

Professional Development Framework

Implementation Team Chronicles



The Implementation Team for Professional Development Framework: What a Difference a Day (10) Makes!

December 12, 2005...What do you get when you ask 711 people for their reactions to an entirely new professional advancement system that will affect them and those around them in just six more months? *Feedback*—in copious amounts! All that solicited input from the Nursing community, who attended over multiple shifts in forums held November 14, made it worthwhile for the full Implementation Team to re-group for an extra day to capture the implications for the conclusion of this phase of the work.

Certain themes emerged as the team analyzed data. Maximum accessibility of Framework information was considered key for any nurse to consider the level of current practice and further application for advancement. The Team had already planned for an internet-accessible, dedicated Web site; staff feedback nudged them to think harder about both time and work location accessibility. Templates for resumes; structure for clinical narratives and portfolios; and the personal touch of other people available at a unit level to guide and help — these were further emphasized by those attending last month's informational sessions. Implementation Team members contemplate Framework discussions at the unit level, in every clinical area, and even pre-employment, in the hiring phase, as well as preliminarily in Central Nurse Orientation. The depth and complexity of current nursing practice at UMHS already carries the essence of potential clinical stories needing only to be captured in some narrative form. If only, the Team speculated, nurses carried tape recorders to speak about these gems of patient care as they happen, so that they could remember and use them later!

Certain issues received special attention on Day 10, for their immediate clarification and consideration, and ultimately, for longer-range reflection and resolution. On the status of one of the issues: a number of staff asked why undergraduate educational levels were not explicit in the professional Framework. This Team clarified for itself that indeed, that was a subject of extensive discussion during the collective bargaining process itself as the Framework was under development. Even more pragmatic, though, for Framework as it evolved as part of the contract was the fact that, after intensive analysis, the fiscal implications for undergraduate educational distinctions would have offset the possibilities for the fiscal “abundance” offered through advancement in the Framework as configured. Costing out comparisons (due diligence for a sound contract) led to choices among options (an inherent part of mutual-gains bargaining processes). For now—in the current contract—this was the thoughtful choice made.

Of most staff curiosity and comment were the considerations of whether distinctive Framework titles would be indicated on name badges, and the titles themselves. Some wanted distinctive recognition or to know others' levels at a glance; some were concerned that the names chosen by staff contest in September were themselves confusing. No one wanted any titling distinctions that might undermine patient/family trust, which was one of the original reasons the Team made an early decision not to title name badges. Grateful to contest participants who brought them to this point, the Team came to consensus that, given the magnitude of responses from staff, a better course for now was to embrace some ambiguity, leaving levels known simply as “A” through “E,” until more clarity and consensus emerge over time--as nurses live with the Framework. In the meantime, team members will explore name badges that will honor staff's distinctive practice levels.

A small, core “lead team” of staff/managers that does extensive between-meeting follow-up and planning will gather again, three more times, in January, to determine the *who, how, and when* of all details necessary to get done before July 2, 2006, when Framework actually goes “live.” The 41-person Implementation Team is very proud not only of its product--a strong foundation, with vision and plans--but for the high-level, high-integrity synergy that created them. Purposefully selected to represent the widest possible sampling of the diversity that is the UMHS Nursing community, the ably-led Team truly played out its possibilities in becoming capable of results that were more than the sum of the parts. The seeds of the Professional Development Framework at Michigan are sown, well-grounded, and now the Implementation Team network—all across the Health System--will undoubtedly be a resilient support network for the bloom.

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