



History

The Foundation for Nursing Excellence ("FNE") was created by the NC Board of Nursing in April 2002 as a non-profit, corporation organized to improve health outcomes for the citizens of North Carolina by enhancing the practice of nursing and to support projects whose efforts will provide new and innovative methodologies related to nursing regulation and safe, effective nursing practice.

Projects to date

- The FNE sponsored two invitational conferences focusing on improving health care delivered to citizens of NC. The **Patient Safety Symposium** was held to update attendees on patient safety initiatives nationally and across North Carolina and to identify opportunities to enhance patient safety through collaboration among NC's leading health care entities. This symposium was the first of its kind held in North Carolina.
- A research conference titled **Building an Evidence-Based Transition to Nursing Practice** was held with the objective of identifying core competencies needed by new nurses regardless of practice setting and developing reliable measures to assess their competence. This conference was partly funded by a grant from Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

- **Transition to Nursing Practice Project**

In 2004 the NC Institute of Medicine issued a report on North Carolina's nursing workforce with the recommendation that the NC Board of Nursing convene a work group to study options to improve school-to-work transitions for new nurses. The FNE, in collaboration with the NC Center for Nursing and NC AHEC Programs, began meeting to develop strategies for an evidence-based nurse transition program.

New nurses are entering into an increasingly complex healthcare environment. The goal of the **Transition to Nursing Practice Project** is to ensure that new nurse graduates are afforded the opportunity to gain confidence and competence as they enter the workforce, thus enhancing patient safety and increasing retention in the workplace.

Currently there is no statewide model or standardized approach to support the transition from student to entry level safe practitioner. Nor is there any standard measurement of the time required or the extent to which new grads improve their competence and confidence following their entry into the workforce.

In early 2006, the FNE convened an information session to share the vision of a future transition to practice program in NC and received ideas from nurse educators, employers, and practitioners. Stakeholders who represent the diversity of nursing practice and education across our state continue to help guide this work.

In June 2006, the FNE received a grant from BCBSNC Foundation to support a 2 year planning phase for this collaborative project.

In August, October and December 2007, data related to competence development and risk for errors was collected from newly licensed registered nurses and their preceptors in selected hospitals across North Carolina as Phase I of this project. Analysis of data should be available by March 2008 to inform the planning for Phase II of the project.

The long-term project goal is to create an evidence-based statewide transition to practice program for new nurse graduates by 2015.

- **Building a Just Culture Community in North Carolina**

Just Culture a term coined by David Marx, an engineer and attorney, is described as follows: *On one side of the coin, it is about creating a reporting environment where staff can raise their hand when they have seen a risk or made a mistake. On the other side of the coin, it is about having a well-established system of accountability. A Just Culture must recognize that while we as humans are fallible, we do generally have control of our behavioral choices.*

Just Culture philosophy makes a distinction between human error, at-risk behavior and intentional reckless behavior by looking at why an event happened in a systematic manner and determining whether the actions of the individual warrant counseling, remediation or punishment.

Just Culture uses a framework designed to enhance patient safety by implementing a learning and quality improvement approach to reducing errors and potential for errors

The NC Board of Nursing has adopted this framework for evaluating practice-related complaints. The NC Center for Hospital Quality and Patient Safety is facilitating a collaborative with several NC hospitals to implement a *Just Culture* environment. NC Board of Nursing is piloting a *Just Culture* partnership with six hospitals to promote consultation and assist employers in identifying events that can be addressed in the practice setting versus those that would benefit from board intervention.

The **Foundation for Nursing Excellence**, working in collaboration with key stakeholders, seeks to extend this learning and quality improvement framework into a variety of healthcare settings with the long term goal of creating a statewide *Just Culture Healthcare Community*

Planning meetings have begun with the first priority focused on extension of this *Just Culture* environment into long-term care settings.