Summary: The Arizona Nurses Association (AzNA) supports the implementation of a state-wide model for new graduate residency programs as a means to retain new graduate nurses while ensuring that these nurses are provided with the essential skills needed to deliver competent nursing care. AzNA further maintains that residency programs can lead to increased job satisfaction and less stress for the new graduate and therefore may yield better patient outcomes and improved patient satisfaction.

The Arizona Nurses Association supports the following:

- The public has a right to expect registered nurses to demonstrate professional competence throughout their career.
- New graduate nurses need support in the transition from advanced beginner to competent nurse.
- Health care entities should provide environments conducive for transition of new graduates into the registered nurse role, including a new graduate nurse residency program.
- New graduate nurses, as individuals, share the responsibility and accountability for their successful transition to competent nurse.

Background:

Thirty percent of all new graduate nurses leave their first nursing position within one year (Welding, 2011) due to job dissatisfaction secondary to work load, stress, lack of orientation and poor physician-nurse relationships. Turnover of nursing staff is costly to the facility that hired the RN, both in terms of nursing salary lost and additional hours of orientation needed. Nurse residency programs can be used to provide a structured, mentored environment that facilitates the new nurse graduate’s progression from advanced beginner to competent nurse with minimal stress and anxiety. Benner (1984) describes new graduate nurses as advanced beginners who are curious about new experiences and enthusiastic to learn but often experience reality shock because of the disparity between the structured educational environment and the reality of chaotic clinical practice.

Recommendation #3 of the Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health Report (IOM, 2010) states that “boards of nursing, accrediting bodies, the federal government, and health care organizations should take actions to support nurses’ completion of a transition-to-practice program (nurse residency) after they have completed a prelicensure program.”

Benner, Sulphen, Leonard, and Day (2009) recommend that new graduates be required to complete a one-year residency program focused in a specific clinical area. New graduate residency programs have been shown to increase RN retention (Keller, Meekins & Summers, 2006) by providing new nurses with the tools and skills they need to be successful in their roles as registered nurses.

“Arizona does not mandate that newly licensed nurses complete a formal residency program before assuming the RN role. A few employers, mostly hospitals, have instituted formal residency programs. The residency programs instituted are shorter in length than recommended, not standardized and not consistently evaluated” (Arizona Campaign for Action, 2011).
AZNA will continue to stay abreast of current and evolving research and best practices regarding new graduate nurse residency programs that include, but not are not limited to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Transition to Practice Study (NCSBN, 2011), and the anticipated 2012 national approval of an Arizona Action Coalition that will function as the statewide driving force for implementation of the IOM recommendations (Future of Nursing Campaign for Action, 2011).

References


