



# OUR PATHWAY TO REHABILITATION EXCELLENCE AND NURSE RETENTION

Florence Oppong, RN, BSN CRRN®  
Mary Kalmanovitch, RN, BSN, MS, CRRN®

## Purpose

To demonstrate that the RN retention rate is increased with:

- Nurses who become CRRN®'s.
- Nurses who are validated and rewarded through recognition and incentive programs.
- Nurses who feel that their competence and professionalism are enhanced through CRRN® certification.

## Background and Data

Changes in Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations require acute rehabilitation facilities to include on the treating team, "a registered nurse with specialized training and experience in rehabilitation services" (CMS, 2012, p.3).

HealthSouth recently implemented a companywide policy asking all RN's to sit for their CRRN® within two years of eligibility.

As a HealthSouth IRF, we employ 105 registered nurses in marketing, case management, PPS, management and at the bedside. Of those nurses:

- 33% of all nurses have passed the CRRN® exam.
- 46% of direct care RN's are CRRN®'s.
- 61% of direct care RN's have completed education and sat for the CRRN® exam at least once.
- 30% of direct care RN's do not yet qualify to sit for the exam.
- Five RN's will complete education in October and November.
- 100% of nursing management are CRRN®'s.

## Program Elements

### EDUCATION

- Two-day exam preparation course based on The Core Curriculum
- Study and review sessions
- Self study resources
- HealthStream/online courses

### REIMBURSEMENT

- Education course provided at no charge
- Staff is paid education time to attend the course and study sessions
- The facility pays for the cost of the exam and the ARN membership fee
- Reimbursement of exam fee for up to two attempts.
- Reimbursement of certification renewal each five years

### FINANCIAL INCENTIVE

- Bonus given once the RN passes the exam
- \$1,000 one-time bonus for full-time employees and \$500 for part-time employees
- \$2,000 one-time annual equivalent pay increase added to hourly pay

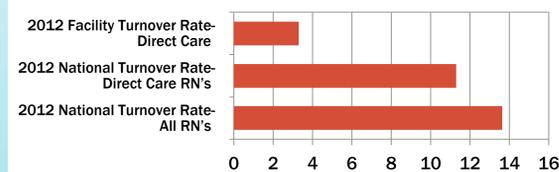
### RECOGNITION

- CRRN® lanyard
- CRRN® designation pin from ARN
- Professional pictures are taken and hung on a CRRN® Wall of Honor on each unit
- Annual luncheon during Nurse's Week
- Recognition of nurses who passed the exam in our newsletter and the local newspaper
- Facility-wide recognition award celebration event twice a year
- Letter from hospital CEO and CNO

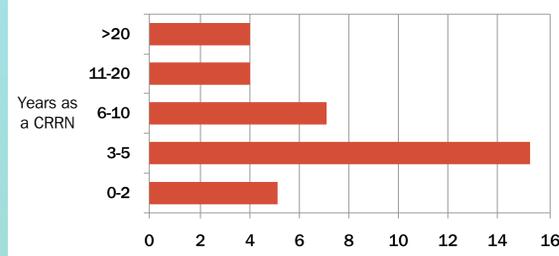
## Results

Nursing turnover amongst CRRN®'s is very low: in 2012, two CRRN®'s retired, and so far in 2013, one CRRN® changed to per diem status. Length of service among our CRRN®'s ranges from 43 years to two years, with five of our CRRN®'s working here as rehab nurses for over 20 years. When asked, 80% of our nurses felt more professional and competent after passing the CRRN® exam.

### Comparison of Turnover Rate (NSI, 2012)



### Review of How Long Our Nurses Have Been CRRN®'s



### Newsletter and Plaque

**CRRN's bring higher level of nursing care to stroke patients**  
50% of Fairlawn's nursing staff are certified registered rehabilitation nurses (CRRN's). But what does that advanced certification mean to stroke patients who come to Fairlawn?  
According to Mary Atkinson, Fairlawn's Director of Nursing, "CRRN's bring specialized knowledge and expertise to caring for the stroke patient." More specifically, she says:  
• They are very up to date on the anatomy and physiology of the neurologic system and the stroke process. This enables them to make critical decisions in developing the appropriate plan of care for each patient and identifying strategies that will help stroke patients overcome barriers to achieving their maximum level of independence.  
• Working with therapists, they are able to carry out strategies recommended in physical, occupational, and speech therapies.  
• They are expert in caring for both the medical and rehabilitative needs of each patient.  
"Essentially, CRRN's serve as educators, change agents, and advocates for the stroke patients and families in their care," said Mary Atkinson.  
Left to right: Florence Oppong, Kelly Sherman, Kelly Moore, and Linda Ward recently passed the national CRRN exams, making them and their colleagues Nancy Mangi and Eghena Wright the newest of Fairlawn's 25 CRRN's.

**Fairlawn Stroke Patient Outcomes / April - June of 2013**  
Number of Stroke Patients: 94      Average Length of Stay: 15.5 days  
FIM Gain: 32.5      Length of Stay Efficiency: 2.45  
Discharged To:  
Home: 64.9%      Sub-acute Rehab: 22.3%  
Long Term Care: 1.1%      Acute Care: 11.7%

FIM-Gain is a measurement of a patient's progress. Fairlawn exceeded the FIM gain of regional and national facilities who reported to Uniform Data System, which manages FIM data. Our performance in this area exceeded expectations as measured by this tool.  
LENGTH OF STAY EFFICIENCY refers to the amount of FIM gain patients made on average per day. Fairlawn exceeded the LOS efficiency of regional and national facilities who submit the same data. Our performance in this area exceeded expectations as measured by this tool.



## Discussion

When we asked our CRRN®'s about their motivation to become a CRRN® their number one reason was to improve their ability to provide expert patient care. The majority of our CRRN®'s feel more competent and professional once they passed the exam and 80% of our CRRN®'s feel more invested in remaining here. The national figures for direct care RN turnover is 11.5%. Our turnover rate is 3.4%.

## Conclusion

RN's, who obtain a specialty certification such as the CRRN®, have been found to have increased job satisfaction and retention (Craven, 2007). A company who promotes, facilitates and recognizes the nurses who show this commitment, will see the benefit in reduced turnover rates and increased patient satisfaction. As one of our nurses observed, her patient really enjoyed finding her nurses' picture on the "CRRN® Wall of Honor" (see below).



## References

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