

# Transition-to-Practice Programs at Hospitals in Washington State



Results of a WCN survey conducted in May 2010

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## Introduction

This survey of Washington State hospitals regarding transition-to-practice programs (TTP programs) for newly graduated nurses was developed in response to the [implementation recommendations](#) for the [Master Plan for Nursing Education in Washington State](#). The recommendations called for the promotion of formal, structured TTP programs for new nurses in all settings, including the development and dissemination of a toolkit for creating and evaluating TTP programs. In order to better evaluate the current situation and needs regarding such programs in Washington State, a subcommittee of the Washington Center for Nursing's Transition-to-Practice workgroup developed this survey.

The survey was distributed via email to chief nursing officers to a total of 98 hospitals in May 2010. 44 hospitals responded for a 44.9% response rate; 39 completed the entire survey for an 88.6% completion rate. Respondents represented hospitals of all sizes, from under 50 beds to over 200, and came from 24 out of Washington's 39 counties.

## Summary

21 of the 44 responding hospitals (48%) stated that they currently have a TTP program. 17 hospitals (39%) provided information showing that they have elements of TTP programs in place. Only 6 hospitals (14%) either stated that they do not have a program or did not respond to the question. Hospitals with TTP programs or program elements represented all hospital sizes and were not concentrated in any geographic area of the state. (For more detail on this and all other results, please refer to the detailed report of results in this document.)

Of the hospitals that have TTP programs or program elements and responded to the respective questions,

- 100% assign a preceptor to all newly licensed RNs
- 100% have an advisory group for their program (30% for hospitals with program elements only)
- 65% have nurse managers schedule regular meetings with the newly licensed RNs
- 54% have nurse managers schedule regular meetings with preceptors
- 41% have a TTP Program Coordinator
- 24% provide focused education for nurse managers on healthy work environments
- 16% have a job description and a budgeted PT/FT position for the TTP Program Coordinator.

The duration of TTP programs ranges from 8 weeks to 12 months, with 3 to 4 months being the most common (about 50% of respondents).

The topics covered in TTP programs or program elements vary widely. The most frequently included topics are:

- Clinical competencies (90%)
- Patient safety (87%)
- Safe medication administration (81%)
- Managing the delivery of care (81%)
- Physician-nurse communication (77%)
- Responding to emergencies (77%)
- Technology training (77%).

The least common topics from the selection provided in the survey are:

- Professional boundaries (39%)
- Basic leadership concepts (39%)
- Multigenerational workforce (29%).

Hospitals with TTP programs employ a variety of outcome measures to evaluate their programs:

- Preceptor evaluation of new RN (90%)
- New RN satisfaction (85%)
- Supervisor/Manager evaluation of new RN (70%)
- New RN turnover within first 2 years of practice (58%)
- TTP Program completion rate (55%)
- Other (15%).

### **Study Limitations**

The survey results represent a self-selected convenience sample rather than external review data and cannot be considered random. While all hospitals had an equal opportunity to participate, those with Transition-to-Practice programs or elements of such programs may have responded at a different rate than those without such programs.

The overall response rate for the survey was less than 50% (less than 40% of contacted hospitals completed the entire questionnaire) so that practices at more than half of Washington's hospitals are not captured in the results. Some questions were interpreted differently by different respondents.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the results, we recommend the following:

- **Increase involvement of nurse managers in new nurse transition and TTP programs.**  
Only 65% of nurse managers schedule regular meetings with newly licensed RNs for status reports; only 54% schedule regular meetings with preceptors for status reports.
- **Align topics covered in TTP programs more closely with common reasons for disciplinary action by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission.**

Several of the most frequent reasons for disciplinary action appear not to be covered by all hospitals in the TTP process:

- Assessment & reassessment (part of *Managing the delivery of care* – included at 81% of responding hospitals)
  - Professional boundary issues (39%)
  - Medication administration (81%)
  - Treatment and reporting of substance abuse (related to *Regulatory issues* – 55%)
  - Patient confidentiality (74%)
  - Failure to intervene (related to *Managing the delivery of care* – 81%)
- **Include nursing faculty in TTP program advisory boards.**  
Only 21% (3 hospitals) reported having faculty on their advisory boards. Given that TTP programs focus on migrating new graduates more fully into professional practice from academia, it makes sense to incorporate faculty in the planning/evaluation conversations to potentially address issues that might need more attention in the academic environment.
- **Improve evaluation of TTP programs.**  
Only 85% of respondents evaluate newly licensed RN satisfaction with program, 70% have supervisors evaluate the newly licensed RN, and only 55% track TTP program completion rates. 58% track the impact of their TTP program on newly licensed nurse turnover within the first two years of practice.

## Conclusions

The survey results and comments provided by respondents showed significant interest in Transition-to-Practice issues at those responding hospitals. However, fewer than half of the responding hospitals currently have Transition-to-Practice programs in place. Few of those are as comprehensive as the literature recommends and evidence supports.

There is opportunity to expand the number of hospitals offering this support to newly graduated RNs as well as to enhance the content of the programs. Best practices in TTP are beginning to emerge nationally, and should be used to plan, deliver and evaluate TTP programs in our state.

In order to help hospitals establish new Transition-to-Practice programs or further develop existing ones, the Washington Center for Nursing is developing a Toolkit for Transition-to-Practice programs with specific recommendations for the topics to be covered, the roles of key personnel, outcome evaluation and the business case for TTP programs. The Toolkit will be posted on the WCN website in spring 2011.

## Detailed report of survey results

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### A) General Information

#### Survey participation

44 out of 98 hospitals contacted responded to the survey (44.9% response rate), 39 out of 44 who started completed the survey (88.6% completion rate).

	Response count	Response percent
0-50 beds	18	40.9%
51-100 beds	5	11.4%
101-200 beds	6	13.6%
200+ beds	15	34.1%

#### How many hospitals have TTP programs?

21 out of 44 hospitals stated that they have a TTP program. 17 hospitals provided information showing that they have elements of TTP programs in place. Only 6 hospitals either stated that they do not have a program or did not respond to the question. Hospitals with TTP programs or program elements were not concentrated in any geographic area of the state.

#### *Does your facility have a TTP program?*

	TTP Program	TTP Program elements	No TTP Program (or no response)	Total
0-50 beds	5 (27%)	9 (50%)	4	18
51-100 beds	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	-	5
101-200 beds	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	1	6
200+ beds	10 (67%)	4 (27%)	1	15
	21	17	6	44

#### Approximate number of new graduate RNs hired by responding hospitals

The numbers below are approximate as several hospitals provided estimates for all or some years and all 2010 numbers were estimates.

Calendar year	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of new RNs	875	866	604	602

## B) Characteristics of Transition-to-Practice Programs

We define a Transition to Practice program (TTP program) as "a formal program of active learning for all newly licensed RNs designed to support their progression from education to practice that is in addition to a facility's usual orientation process."

**Aside from newly licensed RNs, identify others who participate as learners in your TTP program. Please check all that apply.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
RNs with limited inpatient care experience	74.2%	23
RNs without clinical experience in the last 12 months	45.2%	14
Newly licensed RNs only	38.7%	12
Newly licensed LPNs	29.0%	9
RNs coming from another country	22.6%	7
Other	22.6%	7
<b>answered question</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>13</b>

**Which elements of a TTP program does your facility currently have in place? Please check all that apply.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Newly licensed RNs are assigned a preceptor	100.0%	37
Nurse managers schedule regular meetings with newly licensed RNs for status reports	64.9%	24
Nurse managers schedule regular meetings with preceptors for status reports	54.1%	20
Separate program is provided for newly licensed RNs	48.6%	18
A TTP program coordinator (residency coordinator)	40.5%	15
Nurse managers receive focused education on healthy work environments	24.3%	9
A Clinical Nurse Specialist to assist with the TTP program	24.3%	9
A distinct job description and budgeted partial or full-time equivalent for the TTP program coordinator	16.2%	6
<b>answered question</b>		<b>37</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>7</b>

**How long is your TTP program? Please state total number of hours and total number of months (x hours over x months)**

Responses to this question varied widely in format and detail. The information below is a summary.

>1 month	1	
1-2 months	3	
2 months	1	
2-3 months	2	
3 months	5	12
3-4 months	2	
4-5 months	3	
3-6 months	2	
5-6 months	1	
6 months	1	9
12 months	2	2
Varies	5	
Unclear	1	
Total	29	

**Please check each topic area included in your new graduate TTP curriculum.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Clinical competencies (skills check list)	90.3%	28
Patient safety	87.1%	27
Safe medication administration	80.6%	25
Managing the delivery of care (nursing process, i.e. assessment, planning, intervention & evaluation)	80.6%	25
Physician-nurse communication	77.4%	24
Responding to emergencies	77.4%	24
Technology training (including use of simulation, Electronic medical records, etc.)	77.4%	24

Decision-making/ clinical judgment	74.2%	23
Confidentiality	74.2%	23
Time management & prioritization	74.2%	23
Pain management	71.0%	22
Patient/ family teaching	71.0%	22
Professional behavior	71.0%	22
Hand-offs	67.7%	21
Communication skills	67.7%	21
Skin and wound care	61.3%	19
Organization/ unit social norms	61.3%	19

Delegation	58.1%	18
Resource management	58.1%	18
Evidence-based practice	58.1%	18
Healthy work environments	54.8%	17
Patient advocacy	54.8%	17
Latest regulatory issues & nursing standards related to practice area	54.8%	17
Stress management/ self-care	51.6%	16
Diversity in nursing care environment/Cultural competency	48.4%	15
Ethics	48.4%	15
End-of-life care	45.2%	14
Use and synthesis of clinical and quality data	41.9%	13
Basic Leadership concepts	38.7%	12
Professional boundaries	38.7%	12
Multigenerational workforce	29.0%	9
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>13</b>

**How many hours out of the total are spent in didactic portions of the program?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-25	26.9%	7
26-50	38.5%	10
51-75	19.2%	5
76-100	3.8%	1
100+	11.5%	3
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>18</b>

**Approximately, what portion of the TTP program consists of computer-based training?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0-10%	57.1%	16
11-25%	28.6%	8
26-50%	14.3%	4
51-75%	0.0%	0
76-100%	0.0%	0
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>16</b>

**Does Your TTP Program Contain a Simulation Component?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	35.5%	11
No	64.5%	20
<b>answered question</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>13</b>

**If yes, how many hours of simulation time does your TTP program contain?**

Responses to this question varied widely in format and detail. The information below is a summary.

0	1	
2	1	
6	1	3
8	2	
10-12	2	
16	2	6
Varies	3	
Unspecified	2	
Total	14	

**How many hours are spent in clinical with a preceptor?**

Responses to this question varied widely in format and detail. The information below is a summary.

<200	5
200-400	8
400-600	6
>600	3
Varies	4
Unclear	4
Total	30

**Does the newly licensed RN take a full patient load prior to completion of the TTP program?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	83.3%	25
No	16.7%	5
<b>answered question</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>14</b>



**Do participants in your TTP program need to commit to working full-time during the program?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	70.0%	21
No	30.0%	9
<b>answered question</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>14</b>

**Do you have an advisory group for your TTP program?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	44.8%	13
No	55.2%	16
<b>answered question</b>		<b>29</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>15</b>

**If yes, who is represented on your TTP program advisory board?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Chief Nursing Officer	78.6%	11
Nursing supervisors	85.7%	12
Nursing faculty	21.4%	3
Others	42.9%	6
<b>answered question</b>		<b>14</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>30</b>

**If others, please specify:**

Clinical Nurse Specialists, CNS and staff nurses, clinical educator, director of education, Organizational Development Director, Directors, Managers, preceptors, staff and nurse staffing committee

**How does your hospital arrange TTP programs?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
In a cohort model	48.3%	14
On an individual basis	51.7%	15
<b>answered question</b>		<b>29</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>15</b>

### C) Preceptors

We define a preceptorship as a 1:1 relationship with a newly licensed RN to teach them on the job skills and competencies and to evaluate their ability to be successful.

***Do you assign a preceptor/ preceptors to each newly licensed RN?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	21
No	0.0%	0
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>21</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>23</b>

***If yes, how many preceptors do you assign to each newly licensed RN?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Just one	61.9%	13
Two or more	38.1%	8
Assigned daily	0.0%	0
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>21</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>23</b>

***Which of the following qualifications apply to your preceptors?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
At least two years of experience as a staff nurse in the clinical specialty area of the preceptorship	54.5%	12
At least one year of clinical practice in the organization	45.5%	10
Meet or exceed staff RN performance expectations	72.7%	16
None of the above	0.0%	0
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>22</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>22</b>

***Do your preceptors have to complete a formal preceptor training program prior to taking on the preceptor role?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	68.2%	15
No	31.8%	7
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>22</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>22</b>

***If yes, what does this training cover?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
The process of new graduate transition	92.9%	13
Principles of adult learning, including blended and active learning techniques	92.9%	13
Giving and receiving of feedback	92.9%	13
Awareness of learning styles	92.9%	13
Positive communication	85.7%	12
Benner's novice-to-expert concept	78.6%	11
Time management skills	78.6%	11
Multi-generational workforce	78.6%	11
Cultural differences	42.9%	6
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>14</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>30</b>

***Do your preceptors receive premium pay for the preceptor role?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	95.2%	20
No	4.8%	1
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>21</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>23</b>

***Are your preceptors exempt from working with nursing students while working with newly licensed RNs?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	57.1%	12
No	33.3%	7
N/A	9.5%	2
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>21</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>23</b>

***Are patient care assignments adjusted for preceptors, i.e. decreased for those working with newly licensed RNs?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	47.6%	10
No	52.4%	11
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>21</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>23</b>

#### D) Mentors

We define mentorship as a formal relationship with a newly licensed RN in order to assist with his/her socialization and assimilation into the work environment and different from a preceptorship.

***Do you have a mentor program for newly licensed RNs?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.6%	10
No	52.4%	11
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>21</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>23</b>

***Is the mentor always a different person than the preceptor?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	50.0%	6
No	50.0%	6
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>12</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>32</b>

***Do all newly hired nurses (experienced and inexperienced) participate in this program?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	25.0%	3
No	75.0%	9
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>12</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>32</b>

***When does the mentorship begin?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Before the TTP program	0.0%	0
During the TTP program	36.4%	4
After the TTP program	27.3%	3
Whenever mentor identified and available	36.4%	4
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>11</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>33</b>

***Is the mentor usually on the same shift as the newly licensed RN?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	72.7%	8
No	27.3%	3
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>11</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>33</b>

***Do your mentors have at least two years of experience as a staff nurse?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	90.9%	10
No	9.1%	1
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>11</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>33</b>

***What training do your mentors receive?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Communication skills	63.6%	7
Benner's novice-to-expert concept	54.5%	6
Multigenerational workforce	54.5%	6
Cultural differences	45.5%	5
Delegation	54.5%	6
Scenarios for discussion with newly licensed RNs	54.5%	6
None of the above	27.3%	3
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>11</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>33</b>

***How long does the mentor-newly licensed RN relationship last?***

1	At least 6 months
2	18 weeks
3	mentored by staff while cross training until independent with Back up
4	as long as needed
5	As long as needed/wanted by the new RN
6	Up to a year
7	Up to at least 1 year, often goes on for years
8	Not sure about time line

9	As long as is mutually acceptable for both parties
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***Are your mentors recognized for their role?***

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	18.2%	2
No	81.8%	9
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>11</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>33</b>

***If yes, how are the mentors recognized for their role?***

1	mentor pay
2	At the graduation service. They are also paid when they meet outside of regular shift hours.

**E) Miscellaneous**

***At the time of TTP program completion, what outcomes do you measure?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Preceptor evaluation of newly licensed RN	90.0%	18
Newly licensed RN satisfaction with program	85.0%	17
Supervisor evaluation of newly licensed RN	70.0%	14
TTP program completion rate	55.0%	11
Other	15.0%	3
None	5.0%	1
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>20</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>24</b>

***If other, please describe***

Casey-Fink New Graduate Survey, Level of confidence, Clinical education specialist (RN) completes a milestone evaluation

***Do you have data on the impact of your TTP program on newly licensed nurse turnover within the first two years of practice?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	57.9%	11
No	42.1%	8
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>19</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>25</b>

***What tools would be helpful to strengthen your TTP program/ to help you introduce a TTP program?***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Curriculum elements	83.3%	25
Evaluation template	80.0%	24
Information on roles and responsibilities	66.7%	20
Business case template	53.3%	16
Other	13.3%	4
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>30</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>14</b>