Innovative residency program supports new nurses

Starting in March, nine newly minted nurses will be taking part in a residency program at Fairview-University Medical Center—one of five health care facilities in Minnesota offering support to first-year nurses.

The program, called N-Lighten, is funded by a three-year, $625,000 federal grant to the University of Minnesota School of Nursing and its partners. All of the nurses taking part in Fairview-University Medical Center’s program are recent graduates of the university’s School of Nursing.

“N-Lighten aims to help new nurses be successful in the first months of their professional lives,” says Colleen LaVine, R.N., nursing recognition and development specialist at Fairview.

Among the features of the residency curriculum are tools nurses can use to assess their leadership skills, to record and reflect on their first year of practice and to develop strategies for handling situations involving potentially different views on ethics, standards of care and the use of evidence.

Mentorship also is key. Through the N-Lighten program, senior nurses now individually mentor new nurses on topics ranging from their professional roles to providing care to patients from culturally diverse backgrounds.

“The leap from the classroom to the workplace is a real culture shock,” says Ann Jones, director of undergraduate studies at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing and the project director. “This program will help nurses make that transition.”

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