



The Promise of Patient Partnerships

Planning a National Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance

Ellen T. Kurtzman, MPH, RN
Assistant Research Professor
The George Washington University
Department of Nursing Education



Planning a Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance

- 12-month RWJF-funded 'planning' grant
- Explores the nature of nursing's voice in transparency and accountability policies and the need for a unified 'policy voice'
- GW as 'neutral convener' to facilitate discussions with leaders from representatives from national nursing organizations
- Responds to key questions: How might nursing accelerate improvements in quality and safety? What formal arrangements, if any, should be pursued – vis-à-vis establishing a nursing quality and safety alliance?




Underlying Assumptions

- Continued safety and quality lapses
- Disparities and inequities exist
- Low patient perception of inpatient nursing care
- Limited information on which to quantify nursing's contribution to value
- Not typically 'tapped' in policy setting (e.g., single nurse at the table "syndrome")
- Patient safety influenced by nursing work environment
- Without nursing engagement, rapid and sustained improvements in quality and safety are unlikely


THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
ESTABLISHED 1827

Four Colliding Forces


DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION




Invisibility



Indifference



Absence




Fragmentation

© The George Washington University
Do not cite, quote, or distribute without permission

4

Equal, Opposing Forces



Single largest health profession →

Nurse-outcome link →

The most trusted professional →


← **Acknowledged threats of nursing and faculty shortages**

← **Policy's influence on nursing**




Strengthening Nursing's Voice in Policy

© The George Washington University
Do not cite, quote, or distribute without permission

 **Progress to Date**
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

- Leaders of the nation's nursing organizations have been exploring a collaboration to improve patient safety and quality and influence the policy agenda
- Initial discussions focused on internal looking, nurse-only alliance (akin to HOA, AQA, PQA, etc.)
- Most recent discussions have resulted in enthusiasm for different direction




Dedicated focus on quality and safety in full partnership with consumers, patients, and their families

© The George Washington University. Do not cite, quote, or distribute without permission

 **The Promise of Patient Partnerships**
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

- Consumers as the ultimate beneficiaries of care
- Unique and central role in health care reform
- Strong rationale for partnership:
 - On many issues patients and nurses share similar views
 - Under a nurse-patient quality alliance, nurses, who have claimed to represent the patient 'voice,' will live up to this promise
 - Patients and nurses as strong advocates
 - Involving patients as full partners is effective, authentic, and honorable
 - Collaborating with patients is strategically persuasive
- Alters the alliance's direction, aim(s), configuration, operating procedures, resources

© The George Washington University
Do not cite, quote, or distribute without permission 8

 **The Promise of Patient Partnerships, cont.**
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

Pros	Cons
• adds authenticity	• adds complexity to operational aspects
• builds trust and confidence in the nursing profession	• distracts from internal, professional issues
• generates credibility	• requires effort to identify suitable partners
• improves on other alliance models which have not engaged consumers	• results in necessary conformance to shared/collaborative positions
• Strength in numbers	
• concentrates nurses on their roles as healers	
• dedicates significant, shared resources	

© The George Washington University. Do not cite, quote, or distribute without permission 9



THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER
WASHINGTON, DC

Key Questions

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

- Is a shift from a nurse-only to a nurse-patient alliance supported?
- What obvious advantages does this present?
- What major challenges does it present?

© The George Washington University
Do not cite, quote, or distribute without permission

10
