

**UPMC**  
NURSING

# Student Nurse Pathways



Dear Nursing Colleague,

I hope that you are having a meaningful fall semester. UPMC Nursing is experiencing a positive fall. Over the past few months, nursing has been leading the organization with the feedback received by patients on the Press Ganey patient satisfaction inpatient survey. Patient-nurse communication responses have been very favorable and moving in the right direction, yet we have many opportunities to further improve our communication with patients. For most hospitals, this patient feedback is publicly reported as part of the hospital's HCAHPS (*Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems*) via the Medicare.gov Hospital Compare website. There is even a free iPhone app to track and compare hospital scores.

A recent Press Ganey study found when a hospital aims improvement efforts on the patient satisfaction domain of "communication with nurses," the hospital will likely see improvement with other areas such as responsiveness of staff, pain management, and communication about medications. Additional evidence has demonstrated a positive relationship with nurse communication and improved treatment compliance; reduced 30-day readmission rates for myocardial infarction, heart failure, and pneumonia; lower inpatient mortality rates among acute myocardial infarction patients; and lower rates of certain hospital-acquired conditions, which include falls, pressure ulcers, and hospital-acquired infections. Taking the

time to communicate with your patient(s) has great benefits for the patients we care for in all of our settings across the continuum of care. I recognize that communication is not always easy due to your time constraints, language differences, and the patient's cognitive or psychological state, or language impairment. Some effective strategies to add to your practice during your clinical experiences include:

- Sit at eye level when talking to your patients and families.
- Use "teach back" to make sure your message was understood.
- Watch for nonverbal cues from patients to ensure your message was received.
- Consult with the speech therapy department.
- Consult with the UPMC Disability Resource Center.

This issue of *Student Nurse Pathways* will provide you with more insight for communication with patients. As a student at UPMC, we want you to partner with the nursing team to continue to lead the way in providing high quality care for the patients we serve.

**Holly L. Lorenz, MSN, RN**  
Chief Nurse Executive, UPMC

## Additional Reading

Finke, E., Light, J., and Kitko, L., (2008). A systematic review of the effectiveness of nurse communication with patients with complex communication needs with a focus on the use of augmentative and alternative communication. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, Vol. 17, p. 2102-2115.

Press Ganey (2013) *The rising tide measure: Communication with Nurses*, retrieved from <http://healthcare.pressganey.com/content/NurseCommunicationWP>.

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## UPMC Nursing Vision

UPMC Nursing will create the best patient experience, nationally and internationally, through the selection, development, retention, and reward of the highest-performing nurses, while creating systems and programs that create consistency and excellence in patient care.

# Nurses Communication With Patients and HCAHPS

Kira Bowers, MBA  
 Donald D. Wolff Jr. Center for Quality, Safety, and Innovation at UPMC

Since 2008, HCAHPS has allowed valid comparisons across hospitals locally, regionally, and nationally. UPMC has been working diligently in various HCAHPS areas to meet national standards for the benefit of our patients. One of the areas in which UPMC shows success is the category of Nursing Communication with Patients. By implementing best practices throughout the hospital, such as face-to-face bedside handoff and collaborative rounding, many UPMC hospitals have increased their nursing communication scores to the national 50th percentile and above. By continuing to improve the patient experience in nursing communication, we can truly make a difference in the patient's overall experience. The patient response to bedside handoff and collaborative rounding reflects positively in patient comments across the UPMC system:



- “Participating in the morning round meeting is a really good way to know how our babies are doing, and what treatment plan or decision (is being made) for the babies” – Magee-Womens Hospital
- “Nurses went above and beyond patient quality care and also provided the right support and information to my daughter.” – UPMC Passavant
- “Seem to have a good communication process. From one shift to next, nurses always on top of everything!” – UPMC Horizon
- “Excellent communication between shift nurses and me.” – Magee-Womens Hospital
- “The nurses I had were very friendly and willing to communicate with you.” – UPMC Presbyterian

By continuing to focus on these best practices, nursing communication scores continue to improve over time. While survey data is still being received, over the past six months there has been an increase in nursing communication scores. From an odds-ratio perspective, by moving patient's responses from a “usually” to an “always” in the nurse communications domain, patients are eight times more likely to rate their overall experience high. ■

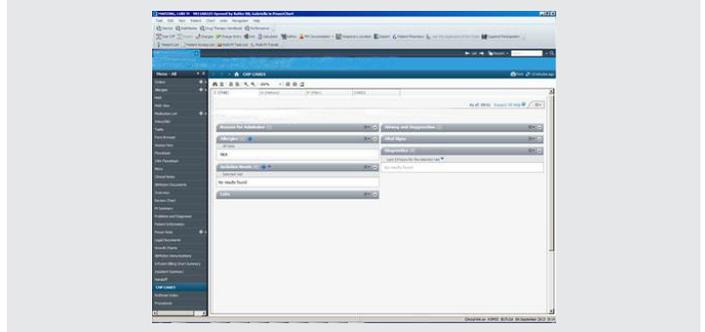
## Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC Test of Change: Bedside Handoff

Heather Stockman, BSN, RN, CPN  
 Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC

In today's health care system, patients experience an increasingly complex environment of health care delivery. Consistent and accurate communication of information is imperative to promote a culture of safety and trust among patients and caregivers. When first identified as a test of change, bedside shift handoff was initiated with several goals in mind. The goals included creating a safe and effective handoff method, enhancing patient safety, utilizing the patient's white board to increase family communication and participation, and empowering nurses to prioritize their patient's needs.

Bedside handoff is a collaboration with the patient and family during which nurses verify the patient, infusion rates, pain management, pertinent lab values, and review the daily plan of care and discharge criteria. CHP Cares, an electronic tool, standardizes the handoff process by guiding staff through pertinent information (figure 1). In the acronym CHP, C represents the child (or patient), H denotes history, and P signifies plan. “Cares” stands for “what do I as the caregiver care that the receiver knows, what do I as the care receiver care need to know, and what does the family/guardian care that the receiver knows.” The “cares” portion of the handoff provides the opportunity to ask questions. This model is adapted to fit the needs of the unit or department where the handoff is occurring.

Figure 1

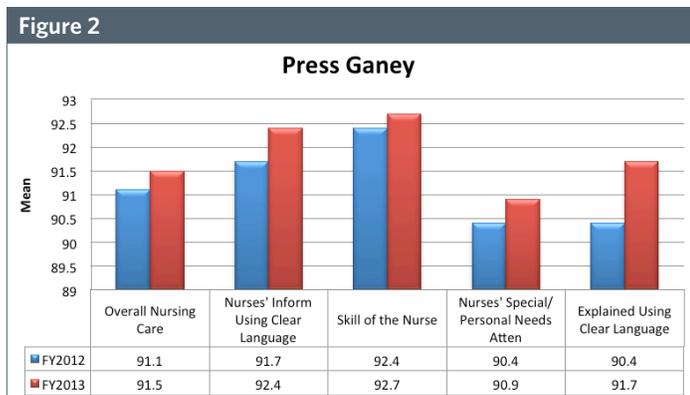


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Direct care nurses, with nursing leadership support, have engaged one another in this process. Physicians and interdepartmental staff have also embraced the change by decreasing the number of unnecessary nurse interruptions during this time.

As a result of standardizing bedside handoff, Press Ganey patient satisfaction has improved. Improvements measured following the implementation of CHP Cares and bedside handoff demonstrated increased inpatient satisfaction. Survey results in the categories of overall nursing care, nurses' inform using clear language, skill of the nurse, nurses' attention to special and personal needs, and explanation using clear language increased from fiscal year 2012 to fiscal year 2013 demonstrating success (figure 2). Bedside handoff has empowered nurses, improved patient and family involvement, and supported, safe transition of care between providers. Trusting relationships between nurses and patients and families serves as a foundation for teamwork. Patients and families expect more transparency and increased safety. Bedside handoff is not only the right thing to do, it is the only acceptable option at Children's Hospital. ■



## Valuing Communication Skills: UPMC Schools of Nursing Rise to the Challenge

Linda Kmetz, PhD, RN, Gina DeFalco, MSN, RN  
 Brigid Slack, DNP, RN, and Alexis K. Weber, MSN, RN  
 UPMC Schools of Nursing

Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) (qsen.org) in collaboration with the Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2003) provides the foundation for several concepts and competencies taught at all of the UPMC Schools of Nursing. Two QSEN competencies introduced immediately in all educational programs are safety and communication. This article will address the specific strategies utilized in teaching and practicing communication at all of the UPMC Schools of Nursing.

At UPMC Shadyside, UPMC McKeesport, and UPMC St. Margaret Schools of Nursing, one of the first required courses in the new concept-based curriculum is Professional Communication. At Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, similar content is taught in the Foundations of Nursing Practice course. In this class, student nurses engage in learning activities that foster the integration of communication skills into practice.



Techniques of self discovery and planned learning activities specifically assist in identifying the student's personal style of communication. Through this process the student explores his or her personal beliefs and values, and creates a foundation upon which the concepts of interpersonal, therapeutic, and professional communication are examined. The nursing curriculum focuses on the benefits, barriers, and use of strategic communication techniques. It also helps students develop the skills required to communicate with diverse populations, including those with special communication needs, individuals with language barriers, the aging adult, and children of all ages. Low- and high-fidelity simulation exercises are used to assist students in gaining confidence when communicating in a simulated health care environment. The students, under the guidance of their instructors, practice communicating with patients, families, and other health care professionals in the actual clinical setting during the 20-month programs.

By graduation, with coaching from instructors, students become proficient in applying the principles of effective communication with patients, colleagues, and families. Implementing strategies to improve communication is a fundamental expectation for student nurses. Full implementation of communication concepts and processes is placed strategically throughout the nursing curriculum and evaluated by teaching faculty. The UPMC Schools of Nursing stand fully prepared to assist UPMC in meeting and exceeding the communication expectation of 50th percentile achievement in HCAHPS by preparing and graduating nurses who excel in communicating with patients, families, and colleagues. ■

# EXCELLENCE ISN'T JUST A GOAL AT UPMC. IT IS PART OF WHO WE ARE.

UPMC Summer Student Nurse Internship Program



## MY CAREER: NURSING

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Enrollment in a bachelor's or associate's degree nursing program
- Completion of junior year or equivalent by spring semester prior to the internship
- Minimum QPA/GPA of 3.25 preferred
- Faculty letter of reference preferred
- Completion of application materials by deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Items include:

- > online application materials
- > submission of official transcripts
- > selection of hospital choice. Browse the locations on UPMC.com
- Commitment to the duration of the program and all program professional development workshops

### Are you a junior nursing student looking for a meaningful clinical experience in a nationally acclaimed health care environment?

If the answer is yes, we invite you to enhance your clinical skills and gain valuable experience working in a premier health care system as an intern in UPMC's summer student nurse internship program. At UPMC, the redefined models of health care delivery and superb clinical outcomes serve the health needs of more than 4.5 million people each year. UPMC is ranked 10th among the 17 hospitals recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as "America's Best Hospitals."

### About the Program:

This innovative summer student nurse internship program is a paid 10-week internship for students who are committed to their education and future role as a professional nurse. The internship program goals are to provide the intern with the opportunity to experience professional nursing in a quality driven premier health care system, clinical education experiences that will bridge the gap between academia and practice, and one-on-one mentoring by a dedicated preceptor.

### Application Details:

To learn more about this internship program opportunity, and to explore our hospitals, visit our website, [www.upmc.com/studentnurse](http://www.upmc.com/studentnurse). There you will find details about the online application process and deadline.

## UPMC Schools of Nursing Promote Communication for Patient Satisfaction

“Treat others as they want to be treated” (Alessandra, 2013). This is the platinum rule taught to nursing students at UPMC Schools of Nursing during the first semester and carried throughout the program. By considering the patient’s perspective students are encouraged to develop empathy for each patient in their care. The students’ initial clinical experiences emphasize communicating with patients using Sharon Dingman’s Caring Model (Koloroutis, 2007) to establish rapport and a therapeutic relationship. They are taught behaviors to engage the patient and demonstrate active listening, such as maintaining eye contact, sitting next to the patient, and assuming a relaxed body position. The students are also encouraged to assess their feelings about caring for patients prior to the interaction. For example, what is the patient’s social history? What is the patient’s ethnic or religious background? What is the patient’s gender or sexual orientation? How do the patient’s values and beliefs differ from the student’s values and beliefs? During this period the student is encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate differences, which allows the student to keep biases in check. This crucial activity allows the student to demonstrate a patient-centered focus during patient communications. Professional, therapeutic communication is a theme that is stressed throughout the nursing curriculum. Students are able to articulate how effective communication impacts patient satisfaction by the time they complete the first semester. Timely and caring encounters are key elements to achieve positive outcomes resulting in a relationship the patient can describe as satisfying. While the professional communications course is introduced during the nursing student’s first semester, the impact is evident as the student progresses through the nursing program. As graduation approaches students are able to share specific, personal examples that describe application of effective communication in practice. The students express readiness to manage challenging situations as a result of learning critical interpersonal competencies. We are pleased to instill the value of patient-centered communication skills in our nurse graduates. ■

## Magee Offers Student Breakfasts, Student Ambassador Program

It’s always nice to have a breakfast break during a clinical day, especially when you can get valuable information at the same time. At Magee-Womens Hospital’s student nurse breakfasts, clinical groups and their instructors share a meal with hospital leadership and human resources personnel. The administrators provide an update on hospital happenings, and then our human resources colleagues discuss job opportunities at Magee. There is also a question-and-answer session. The breakfasts are held monthly on rotating days of the week. This allows clinical groups from different schools to all get a chance to attend. We have received very positive feedback and are thrilled to provide prospective employees with an early opportunity to have their questions answered.

This fall Magee kicked off a Student Ambassador Program. We want to ensure that students are having the best possible experience when they come to Magee, so each unit has selected a nurse to act as a Student Ambassador. This nurse will help to welcome students to the unit by greeting them during their first week, facilitating introductions to key unit personnel, and providing other welcoming touches such as signs and bulletin boards. This group will be meeting regularly to update each other on new ideas and best practices. ■

## UPMC Nursing Recruitment Updates

Members of SNAP (Student Nurses Association of Pennsylvania): We hope to see you in Harrisburg Nov. 21 to 22 for the annual convention. Be sure to stop by our table to talk with one of our recruiters about your future nursing career at UPMC.

It’s never too soon to plan: mark your calendars to talk with us at the NSNA (National Student Nurse Association) National convention in Nashville in April 2014. ■

## Editorial Advisory Board

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**Have a story idea?**  
Contact Melanie Shatzler at  
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