Dear Colleagues,

I’m excited to introduce this week’s guest blog by Dr. Lou Ann Montgomery outlining all the great opportunities available to staff right now related to education, professional development/advancement by way of the Professional Recognition Program (PRP), and certification. I hope that you’ll heed her call and make it a priority to engage in at least one of these activities next year, to either return to school, become certified, or prepare to apply for our PRP. We’ve removed many barriers to making these happen—it’s in everyone’s best interest for you to pursue one of these great opportunities! It is our goal to have the highest rate of certification of any Magnet hospital. We’re currently leading other hospitals with strategies to incentivize nurses to do this and our patients expect this. To illustrate this, a recent poll conducted by the National Board of Certification for Nurse Anesthetists and the Citizen Advocacy Center, shows that about 91 percent of Americans believe it’s important or very important that a health care professional has been tested on specialty-specific knowledge, among other lifelong learning attributes. Remember—to receive your $500 certification stipend in calendar year 2014 (paid in August), you must be certified and have your application form completed and submitted to HR by March 15, 2014.

Finally, I want to make sure you know how you can help your patients who have IowaCare or Medicaid coverage or are uninsured to get enrolled within the next three weeks, if possible. We currently have an enrollment center open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, in the former PCCN-Annex in Boyd Tower (Elevator A, Level 1). We also have satellite enrollment offices off the Main Lobby, and in the Pomerantz Family Pavilion lobby (Elevator L, Level 1). We’ll be focusing on this for our inpatients, as well. Social workers and patient navigators, along with all of you, should help patients get plugged into the new healthcare insurance opportunities under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Click here for a flyer that shows how you can help.

Thanks to Lou Ann for a great blog, and thanks to you, as always, for all you do!

Way to go, Hawks!
An Almost-New Year’s Resolution—It's Time to Go Back to Nursing School and Get Certified!

By Lou Ann Montgomery, PhD, RN-BC, Director, Nursing Professional Development, Advanced Practice and Informatics

The start of 2014 may be four weeks away, but it is not too early to decide on a personal resolution to consider returning to school either for a BSN or an advanced degree. And while you are thinking about that, why not consider pursuing a professional certification? There are some great opportunities available now to our nursing staff that are just too good to pass up.

RN-to-BSN

Have you been thinking about getting your BSN? We have $9,000 available for each of you (allocated up to $3,000 a semester), but only until summer semester 2016. If you won’t be able to complete your degree before the $9,000 allotted to you expires, you still will be eligible to participate in our current $1,000/semester tuition reimbursement program for nursing classes. I personally work 1:1 with each staff member applying for these RN-to-BSN dollars to help guide you on how best to spend it. We now have contracts for tuition reduction with Mount Mercy University (MMU), Upper Iowa University (UIU), Walden University (WU), and Western Governors University (WGU). The agreement with MMU includes holding their RN-to-BSN nursing classes in evenings here in our Nursing Clinical Education Center—assuming we have sufficient staff to form a cohort. Field representatives from each school are available to discuss your questions either by email or by phone. Although we are not able to offer tuition reduction with UI College of Nursing (CON), due to Board of Regent rules, that program is another option for you to consider. Cheri Doggett from the CON is available to review transcripts with anyone who is interested. All of these programs are dedicated to having information sessions on campus on a quarterly basis so you can talk with them personally. Some schools may be able to offer additional grants and scholarships, and we are working on providing direct-payment of tuition to our partner schools so you do not have to pay upfront. I am working on this first with Mount Mercy University before moving on to the other partner schools. Watch for updates on this in the coming weeks.

Please read the comments below from some of our nurses who have taken the plunge to advance their education and are pleased they did so.

The tuition package offered by the University has given me an opportunity to accomplish something that I may not have otherwise had. WGU online classes have fit well in my schedule allowing me to work at my own pace, and their contract with the University of Iowa has made it even more affordable for me. I feel very fortunate to be given this chance by UIHC.

Vince Vorwald, RN, staff nurse, 3BT

I really appreciate the University's tuition reimbursement program for the RN-BSN program. You made me an offer I could not refuse with the $3,000 per semester for the nursing classes. The contract you made with Mount Mercy has made it extremely easy for me to take classes. The Mount Mercy staff has been very flexible in this process. I
have taken a few classes before, but this experience has been very positive. I would encourage anyone that does not have their BSN to take advantage of this program. I have really enjoyed my classes and am very happy with my decision. On site classes work out well. It is also nice to have so many co-workers in class, it is a good support group. I would like to thank you for all the time and effort you put into the reimbursement program. I really appreciate it.

Julie Wiebold, RN, staff nurse, MICU

Going back to school for the BSN program has long been a goal of mine. Having the increased tuition reimbursement and tuition package with Walden University has eased a lot of the anxiety about the cost and is allowing me to enjoy my learning experience with Walden.

Robin Enfield, RN, CNRN, staff nurse, 2BT

Advanced Nursing Degree
In addition to increasing your knowledge, earning an advanced nursing degree has many advantages. Not only is it a great accomplishment for your personal growth and development, but an advanced nursing degree meets one of the criteria for the Professional Recognition Program (PRP). And just a reminder—we opened the inaugural application cycle for the PRP. If you are considering earning a master’s degree in nursing, a DNP, or a PhD, our present tuition reimbursement program offers $1,000/semester toward tuition for nursing classes. You are also eligible for the tuition reduction offered by WU and WGU. If you choose to attend MMU, you receive your third class free, which is a savings of $1,600.

Professional Nursing Certification
If you would like to earn a professional nursing certification but have been hesitant to take the exam due to upfront costs, now is the time to do it! We have two “no pass/no pay” contracts available. One is with the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) for Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN). The other is with the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) for ANCC-board certifications, which includes exams for medical-surgical nursing, cardiovascular, behavioral health, and many other certifications. Click [here](#) to see the list. Kudos to Tiffany Phillips, BSN, RN, CPN and to Heather Eastman, BSN, RN, BC-PEDs on 2JCP, for getting the CPN “no pass/no pay” started. This certification option has taken off like wildfire and we now have over 30 certified pediatric nurses! John Wagner MA, RN-BC, clinical director of Behavioral Health Services, also got “no pass/no pay” option from the ANCC. Lisa Kongable, MA, RN, PMH-CNSBC, a staff nurse on 1JPW, has taken it upon herself to start teaching prep classes for the Board Certification in Mental Health exam. Rhonda Evans, BSN, RN, OCN, nurse manager of 7RCS, is talking to the Oncology Nurses Certification Board about a similar program for the oncology certifications and Martha Blondin, MSN, RN, ONC, MSS APN has contacted the Orthopaedic Nurses
Certification Board to encourage them to offer a “no pass/no pay” option in partnership with us. If there are other organizations we should contact, let’s do it!

Here’s a testimonial from a staff nurse about the benefits of seeking certification.

Thanks to our UIHC administrative and educational leadership, the BHS Nursing Division has recently been granted the opportunity to participate in an ANCC Success Pays program. As a result, several BHS nurses are pursuing attending a certification workshop and planning to take this exam. Having the "No Pass/No Pay" incentive helps reduce some of the anxiety related to test-taking, and makes it financially inviting. By achieving the Board Certification in Mental Health, our psychiatric mental-health nurses will officially attain a professional credential that further validates their educational and clinical expertise in this specialty area of nursing. This is something our BHS nurses deserve to feel and have a sense of accomplishment about, and the momentum is catching! This further reflects our nurse excellence and Magnet culture at UIHC

Lisa Kongable, MA, RN, PMHCNS-BC, staff nurse, 1JPW

For those of you in critical and step-down intermediate care, we have purchased vouchers with the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (ACCN) to pay for your certification exam at no up-front cost to you. See Kim Jordan in the Central Nursing Office to pick up a voucher, then follow the directions to apply. I offer the same challenge as above—if your specialty organization might consider a voucher program with us, check with them and let me know.

The AACN vouchers are an awesome opportunity for our staff nurses to take the CCRN test at no cost to them. The day we sent the information out to the staff we had nurses filling out their forms and rallying with each other to set up study sessions. It’s great to see the excitement among the staff about growing professionally. It has lifted a weight off their shoulders knowing that they do not have to pay for the test upfront.

Katie Burrell, BSN, RN, Assistant Nurse Manager, SNICU

For more information on Academic Nursing Programs, Tuition Reimbursement, and Nursing Certification go to the Nursing Intranet Homepage and look for the icons below! Here you’ll find FAQs, contract information, news about upcoming information sessions, and tuition reimbursement information. Also, check Ann’s Blog each week for updates, and don’t forget to make plans now to attend our Nursing Education, Professional Organization and Certification Fair, being held Monday, February 25, 2014, in the Nursing Clinical Education Center.
You are also welcome to contact me, lou-montgomery@uiowa.edu, for questions Monday through Friday by email, by phone 6-3959, or pager 5571.

Make 2014 the year to expand your professional horizons by taking advantage of one of these opportunities!

**Guest Column on Health and Wellness**
**Making Our Programs and Services More Accessible to Staff Nurses**
*By Nicole Studt, Manager, UI Family Services*

We are partnering with the Health and Productivity Unit from UI Human Resources, to make programs and services from UI Wellness, Faculty and Staff Services/Employee Assistance Program, and the Family Services Office more accessible to staff nurses. Take the first step by completing your personal health assessment or recruit a team from your unit to participate in the Live Healthy Iowa Challenge, January 27 through April 4. Whether we participate as individuals or as a group, we can positively impact our wellbeing and maintain a focus on good health. Click [here](#) to read more.

**Special Grand Rounds on Worker Fatigue, December 12**
*By Sharon Tucker, PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC, Director Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice*

A special Nursing Grand Rounds focusing on fatigue as a factor that influences care delivery and health care worker health and wellness will be from 1400 to 1500 on December 12, in W417 GH. Our featured guest speaker is Christopher P. Landrigan, MD, MPH, associate professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at Boston Children's Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School. Dr. Landrigan is a pediatric hospitalist and researcher with 15 years of experience studying and improving the quality and safety of inpatient care. A major focus of his work has been evaluating the effects of health-care provider sleep-deprivation on patient safety, and the positive effects of interventions, including schedule redesign. In addition, he has led a series of projects evaluating the effects of hand-off interventions designed to improve physician and nurse transitions of care. Dr. Landrigan’s work has been published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *JAMA, BMJ, Pediatrics, JAMA Pediatrics*, and other leading journals. He will specifically focus on the issues of work schedules and 24/7 workflow for nurses, and the impact on fatigue levels in nurses. Dr. Landrigan will also meet with nurse leaders in separate sessions throughout the day to guide them in identifying strategies to mitigate fatigue and create safe health-care work environments. Please join us for this important presentation.
**Milestones**

*Awards*

**Kates named “Leader to Know”**
Becker’s Hospital Review has named Kenneth P. Kates one of its “300 U.S. Hospital and Health System Leaders to Know” for 2013. Becker’s editorial team considers the 300 men and women to be some of the most prominent health care executives to watch as health care reform unfolds. The team also reviewed factors including recognition they have received and their organization’s recent performance.

*Honor*

**Robin Norfleet**, an HR Specialist in the Department of Nursing, has been selected as a finalist for the [Live Healthy Iowa](http://www.livehealthyiowa.org) Dream Team for the upcoming 2014 Live Healthy Iowa 10-Week Wellness Challenge. The Dream Team is a group of five Iowans who will work towards their wellness goals with the support from team captain Shawn Johnson. Please show your support for Robin and vote for her on the [Live Healthy Iowa 2014 Dream Team website](http://www.livehealthyiowa.org).

*Kudos*

For the second week in a row, 90 percent or greater adherence was achieved house-wide for our hand-hygiene campaign. Congratulations to everyone at UI Health Care, and thanks for the continued support for this important initiative.

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**New this Week:**

*Mount Mercy University RN-to-BSN cohort opportunity, starting January 2014*
There are still openings for staff interested in joining a cohort (starting in January 2014) for the RN-to-BSN program at Mount Mercy University. If you are interested, please contact Candace Chihak, MSN, RN, RN-to-BSN Adjunct Faculty at [cchihak@mtmercy.edu](mailto:cchihak@mtmercy.edu) or 319-363-8213 ext. 1565. Contact her before Monday, December 9.

*Spring Semester 2014 Tuition Assistance Program*
The online Spring 2014 semester tuition application for P & S, Merit Exempt, and Merit Confidential staff will be available beginning Wednesday, November 13 through Friday, December 13. Click [here](http://www.mercuryui.org) for more details.
**Save the Date**

Click the links below to view items related to:
- [Nursing Certification](#)
- [Tuition Reimbursement, Scholarships, and Loans](#)
- [Academic Nursing Programs](#)

**Grateful patient letter—for our Oto Surgery team, Main OR, and DOSA**
This week’s grateful patient letter was sent to Mr. Kates regarding the great care received in the MOR—by the surgery, anesthesia, and nursing staff. Thank you all for your great care of this patient. Way to go!!

Dear Mr. Kates,

I was recently a patient at UI, having had sinus surgery this fall. It was a very high-tech procedure performed by Dr. Eugene Chang. I want to report that I have the highest respect and regard for Dr. Chang for his unparalleled skills, professional manner and patient care.

My visit to UI exceeded my expectations. Then anesthesiologists, Dr. Taften Kuhl and his partner put me at ease, as did the wonderful nursing staff. All who attended me were very kind. Dr. Reed and Dr. Tokita were others who participated in my care.

I wish I had the names of the nurses for you, as all should receive praise for their efforts. My surgery was unexpectedly delayed and the nurse who cared for me during that wait (which could have been stressful) was very reassuring.

Excellent services come from good leadership. Therefore, I commend you for all you do for the people of Iowa at UI Hospitals.

Sincerely,

A grateful patient

**Patient Satisfaction Update—Friendliness and Courtesy of Nurses**
Take a look at our current performance related to friendliness and courtesy. Many areas are showing improvement—but in the aggregate, the adult inpatient areas have dropped over the past several quarters. We can do better! Please take a look at the best practices (BHS, Clinics, ED, Inpatient Adult, Inpatient Peds) for each of your areas and make sure everyone is following them as much as possible. Thanks for your attention to this!
Announcements

Clinical Learning Environment Review (CLER) Site Visit, December 3 to 5
Site visitors from the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education are at UI Hospitals and Clinics to conduct a three-day assessment of our clinical learning environments. The site visitors will be here December 3 to 5, during which time they will conduct a variety of exploratory sessions with institutional leaders, resident and fellow physicians, program directors, and faculty. Additionally, they will conduct “Walk-Around Visits” to various clinical units. Click here to read more about the visit.

Nominate a worthy colleague to be a 2014 Great Iowa Nurse by December 31
Time is drawing short to nominate a colleague for next year’s 100 Great Iowa Nurses award. We have so many nurses who are very worthy of this honor. Click here to submit a nomination.

Complimentary holiday meals
Click here to find out about faculty and staff meals.

Musical performances scheduled
click here to learn more.

Has a nursing student touched your life?
Nominate them for the Daisy in Training Award! Click here for details.

Charitable opportunities through holidays
Click here for information about the Scarf and Mitten Tree and The Angel Tree.

The Giving Tree through January 3
The Giving Tree, which honors organ, eye, and tissue donations made at UI Hospitals and Clinics, will be on display from November 19 through January 3 in the Main Entrance Lobby (Elevator E, Level 1). Click here for more information.

Quick Links
Click here to learn more about:

○ RN Staff: Release Level of Care Orders for All Pediatric and Adult Admissions

When commenting, please be respectful of your colleagues.