



Gerontological Nursing Quarterly

Grant for Transitional Care At UNMC CON Helps Shape The Future

When older patients are discharged from a hospital in Nebraska, 20% of them will be readmitted within a month. On average, these readmitted Nebraskans are 80-years-of-age. The two most common medical conditions leading to hospital readmission are congestive heart failure and pneumonia. The 2009 Hospital Compare database indicated that 24.5% of the 2,581 older Nebraskans admitted with congestive heart failure and 18.2% of the 715 older Nebraskans admitted with pneumonia returned to the hospital in less than 30 days after discharge. This is not only costly from a healthcare system perspective, but also from the patient's perspective in that many older adults experience a decline in their physical functioning with every readmission.



Dr. Mary Naylor's research on transitional care has shown that nurse practitioners (NPs) can stop this poor health care trajectory. Elderly patients were assigned to nurse practitioners while they were in the hospital. The NPs followed discharged congestive heart failure patients, utilizing frequent NP home visits and phone follow-ups, and thus, assured safe transitions and progress

towards optimal self care capacity. They saved \$5000.00 per Medicare pa-tient by avoiding rehospitalization.

In Nebraska, similar transitional care models are already in development. Many of the health care centers are seeking ways to optimize discharge and avoid rehospitalization of older Nebraskans'. Alegent Health's Nursing Home Network and Palliative Care Programs, utilizing geriatric specialized NPs, has greatly improved safe transitions and advanced care planning. Veterans' Hospital in Omaha utilizes a primary home care model with NPs and RN case managers who make home visits to assure safety, manage complex disease and mental health issues, while decreasing rehospitalization of older veterans. Senior Assist, a case management program, utilizes geriatric specialized RNs and NPs for patients at risk for rehospitalization at UNMC. Also, Care Trek, a federally funded quality improvement initiative focuses on improving transitional care in Nebraska.

Colleges of nursing and academic medical centers are best positioned to champion basic and advanced nursing education for optimal transitional care for older adults. The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** grant awarded to University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) College of Nursing (CON)-**Partners Investing In Nursing's Future** – is focused on improving the quality of long-term care nursing through RN education and leadership preparation in post hospitalization care in nursing facilities. And most

certainly, the **HRSA-funded Geriatric Nurse Practitioner-Masters Accelerated Post Certificate Project** at UNMC is leading the way in education of transitional care geriatric nurse practitioners to fill the primary care needs of Nebraskans pre and post hospitalization. Most importantly, UNMC CON's Morehead Center for Nursing Practice, along with their Graduate Geriatric Nurse Practitioner faculty, is now providing part-time GNP services to two skilled nursing facilities in Omaha. The process for preventing rehospitalization in these new clinical sites involves post hospitalization NP patient visits and consultations, staff education, and quality improvement program development.

Specialized **geriatric nurse practitioners** and other gerontological specialized nurses with their expertise in transitional care assessment and interventions are critical to any successful transitional care initiative. These specialized nurses can make a difference in improving transitional care by addressing issues in medication management, post-discharge follow-up, self-care management of chronic disease, communication, and coordination of care. The older adult in connection with their GNP and/or their gerontological specialized nurses has an opportunity to develop new relationships, coping strategies, acquire resources, social support, and access to venues of care. This GNP- led transitional care model will not only **decrease rehospitalization by half** but will greatly enhance the quality of life for older adults during times of difficult transitions.

RWJ Grant Directors



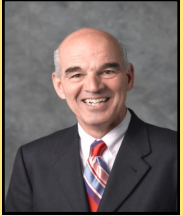
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Notes From the RWJ Grant Directors

As baby boomers retire, they will expect—even demand—the same high quality care they have grown up with. How will they measure high quality care?

Surveys show that the public associates safe, quality health care with RNs. Research supports this. Studies document that increased levels of RN care are linked to improved patient outcomes.

When RNs are **certified** then patients benefit even more. According to the Institute of Medicine, RN certification is an indicator of quality — and quality attracts patients. In fact, RN certification is the main criteria used by consumers to recognize and measure quality nursing care. (Briggs et al., 2006)



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RNs who certify in their specialty— Gerontological Nursing, for example – have passed a rigorous national exam that validates their clinical expertise and knowledge in caring for the older adult patient. Certification validates the RN's professionalism to patients, public and professional peers.

How is certification linked to quality care? Consider these facts:

- The number certified RNs is inversely related to the frequency of patient falls (Kendall-Gallagher and Bleegan, 2009)
- Certified RNs report higher levels of job satisfaction. Facilities with certified RN report improved retention, recruitment and patient satisfaction (Aiken, Collier & Harrington).

How do you know if an RN is certified? Look for the credentials: “RN-BC”.

Ask your health facility if they employ certified RNs – *It's a Measure of Quality* !



Notes From the Desk of the GNP-MAP Director



Claudia Chaperon,
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The Retooling for an Aging Nebraska: Geriatric Nurse Practitioner - Master's Accelerated Post-Certificate (GNP-MAP) team has been very active this quarter. We have enhanced GNP

student clinical opportunities by adding two inner city faculty practices at Florence Nursing Home and at Maple Crest Care Center here in Omaha. These intraprofessional educational clinical sites along with new partnerships with rural hospice and palliative care agencies will greatly enhance clinical education for GNP students.

News about the GNP-MAP Leadership Team

We are delighted to announce the addition of a Co-PD on the team, **Karen Schumacher** PhD, RN.

Karen's clinical background is in home care for older adults. She is now a senior faculty here at UNMC CON who

conducts research on family care giving, as well as cancer pain management. She is a nationally acclaimed expert on transitional care theory. In addition, the Project Coordinator, **Ginger Rogers**, DNP, APRN, GNP-BC has been awarded a Sigma Theta Tau Gerontological Nursing Leadership Academy Fellowship.



Karen Schumacher
RN, PhD
Associate Professor
CO-Project Director
Campus: Omaha

This fellowship will provide Ginger and our program indirectly with resources and national gerontological nursing experts to assist in development of the leadership role of GNPs in nursing home practice.

Applications Are Now Being Accepted

The GNP-MAP program is sensitive to the learning needs of practitioners working in remote clinical sites and is delivered through enhanced distance education technology. Federal traineeships may be available soon. I will notify interested applicants about eligibility criteria as soon as that information is available.

Visit us On-Line

www.unmc.edu/nursing/programs.html

Leadership Academy for Long-Term Care



Terri Ernesti,
RN-BC
Vetter Health
Services

Terri Ernesti, and September Stone are Co-Chairs of the new **Geriatric Nurse Leadership Academy for Long-Term Care**.

The **Academy** is supported by the RWJ grant awarded to UNMC College of Nursing and The Vetter Foundation.

The **Academy** has an Advisory Board that includes national gerontological nursing leaders – Dr. Cornelia Beck from University of Arkansas, Dr. Claudia Beverly from University of Minnesota, Dr. Neva Croshans from University of Arizona and Deborah Conley MSN, APRN-CNS, GCNS-BC,

FNGNA and Gerontological Clinical Nurse Specialist from Nebraska Methodist College.

Academy goals are to advance clinical excellence among RNs employed in LTC, and promote best practices for effective RN leadership in long-term care.

Academy membership is for LTC RNs who are nationally certified in one or more specialty areas:

- Nurse Executive (ANCC)
- Nurse Leadership (AATCN)
- Gerontological Nurse (ANCC).

Academy members enjoy the benefits of professional resources for best practices, career support, on-line mentoring, member activities, awards, recognition through Nebraska Health Care Association Conventions, and social networking.

Fifty-four RNs from long term care will be inducted as new members into the **Academy** on September 22, 2010 at the Nebraska Health Care Association's Annual Convention in Lincoln Nebraska.

Awards for excellence in Gerontological clinical care and LTC management/ leadership will be awarded to two Academy members at the convention.

LTC RNs interested in qualifying for Academy membership can contact Beth Culross, RWJ project coordinator, UNMC College of Nursing at (402) 559-6617 or bculross@unmc.edu.

Visit the Academy website for further information at:

www.geroleadership.org



September Stone,
MSN, RN
Nebraska Health
Care Association

The First Summer GNP-MAP Program Is In Session

Summer 2010, finds **Marcia Merboth**, MSN, APRN, ANP-BC & CNS-BC completing her GNP-MAP Post



Marcia Merboth

Certificate program to become a dually certified geriatric nurse practitioner. The Geriatric Nurse Practitioner–Masters Accelerated Post Certificate (GNP-MAP) is an accelerated course over 12 weeks in the summer or over one calendar year beginning in the fall. The GNP-MAP aims to assist experienced adult, family, or acute care nurse practitioners to transition from ANP, FNP, or ACNP to a dually certified GNP. This career path

change is timely, as Marcia intends to pursue a dream job of hers to work as a nurse practitioner (GNP) in palliative care.

After January 1, 2011, many hospice home care agencies will be seeking competent geriatric nurse practitioners to meet their goals based on legislative reform for hospice and palliative care. Health Care Reform Legislation will be launched in 2011. This legislative reform has mandated that Hospice and Palliative Care be in the forefront as a model of cost-efficient and high-quality health care delivery. The health care reform requires mandatory physician or NP face-to-face encounters with each hospice patient to determine continued eligibility for hospice care prior to the 180th-day recertification and each subsequent recertification. Thus,

Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Agencies are now hiring NPs for this traditionally RN-focused practice. The GNP role is desirable for community-based Hospice and Palliative Care NP roles because there is such a large Hospice and Palliative Care nursing home population.

Marcia Merboth brings a unique mix of adult clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner skills with expertise in stroke management, pain management, and other advanced practice clinical expertise. Her personal experience of care for her own mother suffering with Alzheimer's has sensitized her to the value of gerontology. We are proud to announce Marcia Merboth as the first to move forward towards this new dually certified role as a geriatric nurse practitioner.

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**Attention Long Term Care
Administrators'**

To become a PARTNER in
*The RWJ Midwest Partners
For Geriatric Nursing
Quality Improvement*

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Upcoming Events:

**Gerontological Nurse online Continuing Education
Courses:**

- July 12
- October 11
- January 10

Leadership Academy Events:


- September 20–23 New Member Induction

Nurse Executive Course:

- October 4

Visit:

www.geroleadership.org



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UNMC College Of Nursing: Focus On Funded Grants That Improve Geriatric Nursing Care In Nebraska

**Upcoming
Events for
APRNs**



- **2010 Annual Scientific Meeting GSA's 63rd Annual Scientific Meeting**
November 19-23, 2010 Hilton, New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, LA
GSA's Annual Scientific Meeting brings together more than 3,500 of the brightest minds in the field of aging. This meeting is the premier gathering of gerontologists from both the United States and around the world. They participate in over 400 scientific sessions including symposia, paper, and poster presentations.
- **Annual Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurse Association (GAPNA) Conference.**
Coming Together to Meet the Evolving Needs of Older Adults at Albuquerque, New Mexico on September 22 to 25, 2010.