**TL 7 How nurse leaders value, encourage, recognize/reward and implement innovation.**

Riverside values the innovation of its professional nurses. Their creativity has led to better outcomes for our patients which reinforces and sustains creative and innovative practices.

**Valuing and Encouraging Innovation and Creativity: Organizationally Supported Expectation**

Nursing leaders demonstrate their support and encouragement of innovation and creativity in multiple ways. For example, creating Unit-Based Councils provided a structure and process for allowing staff to create and explore new ways to old concerns and issues to improve the care and work environment. By virtue of staff being paid and freed up from other work duties to meet in the UBC setting, the UBC structure demonstrates nursing and organizational leadership’s support for creativity and innovation.

In addition, under the Global Competencies for the entire health system for all job roles on the annual performance appraisal, staff receive higher performance ratings (and salary increases) based upon submitting ideas and working to “Improve the Process” throughout the appraisal period. This process and structure creates linkage between daily work for creativity and innovation—and provides a mechanism for discussing how this expectation is being met each year and is part of our pay for performance expectation structure.

**Recognition and Encouragement of Innovation: Senior Management and Board Meetings**

The work of the Unit-Based Councils and their peers in implementing their ideas is recognized by our Board of Directors and Executive Team. For example, nurses from the Unit Based Council on 5 Telemetry (photo below includes Terry Fozzard, RN and Bev Call, RN with their poster and Phil Kambic, CEO) were asked by our CEO, Phillip Kambic, to attend a Senior Management Meeting, a meeting where the CEO meets with the Vice Presidents on a weekly basis. The direct care nurses involved in the project were able to share the Falls Reduction protocols they have implemented as well as their decrease in falls rate. At the meeting, the senior executive team was so pleased to hear of the nurses efforts that they applauded the nurses, asked numerous questions regarding their project, and encouraged them to continue this work that helps improve patient care at Riverside. Following the
meeting, Phil asked Dave Duda, COO/CNO and Deena Layton, VP of Nursing Services, to facilitate sharing this information with our Board of Directors. And, the senior management team asked to hear from other nursing units.

To date, two other poster winners have presented their projects at the Senior Management Team Meeting- ED and MHU.

Dave Duda, COO/CNO and Deena Layton, VP of Nursing, also presented the Poster Fair Winning UBCs’ projects and outcomes at the Hospital Board meeting. The board members enjoyed being updated on nursing excellence and its impact on patient outcomes.

**Recognition and Encouragement of Innovation: Annual Poster Fair and Nursing Excellence Celebration**

Nursing also celebrates the creativity and innovation of nurses at the annual Poster Fair and Nursing Excellence Celebration held in November each year. These posters reflect the year’s culmination of creative and innovative work conducted in the UBCs, by unit. The posters are displayed in the main hospital lobby and staff nurses are able to share their projects and patient outcomes with the fair attendees who include other nurses, hospitalwide staff, physicians and visitors.

The projects and posters are then judged based on their creativity, process and outcomes, with winners announced at the Nursing Excellence Celebration the evening of the poster fair (photo below is of Mona Poskin, RN - MHU, Poster Winner 2009).

Nurses are also recognized for their efforts at the Nursing Excellence Celebration as they are presented Nursing Excellence pins for different areas of participation throughout our entire journey.

Finally, these stories are featured in our weekly Employee Newsletter, The Riverside Connection, for the entire organization to recognize and encourage our direct care nurses’ efforts.

**Encouraging and Recognizing Creativity and Innovation: Videos, Stories-Oh My!**

Nurses are recognized for the creativity by showcasing their stories at our State of Riverside townhall meetings presented each year to all Riverside employees across our health system – whether verbally or in a video format. The State of Riverside is a
meeting where the CEO and Vice Presidents give quarterly updates to employees about
the State of Riverside.

One video shown in 2008 was of Nester Rosales, RN-CVOR, and how he touches the
lives of his open heart patients by singing to them before surgery. A video was shown at
the State of Riverside of him singing “Somewhere Over the Rainbow’ to a patient and
his family (the video features the patient and the patient’s actual family) before open
heart surgery. Little did Nestor know at the time that the song was a family favorite and
was actually the song that was the played at the ‘Father/ Daughter dance” at her
wedding. The family just ‘knew everything would be OK’ when they heard Nestor
singing their favorite song as he wheeled their loved one to surgery.

Another inspirational story of a nurse providing a unique patient experience was verbally
shared at a State of Riverside meeting in 2009. Mindy Cockrell, RN, Evening Team
Leader, on the Mental Health Unit (MHU) took care of a young child who had lost a
tooth while on the MHU. Mindy made sure the ‘tooth fairy’ came to visit the girl who lost
her tooth because the young patient ‘just knew the tooth fairy wouldn’t be able to find
her”. The girl had hidden her tooth in a back of a drawer to see if the tooth fairy would
really come. After the girl went to sleep, Mindy acted quickly and quietly to find the
tooth. This left the patient with an experience she will never forget and was yet another
example of Riverside nurse’s innovation and caring in practice.

And in late 2009, another video was shown at the State of Riverside of a wedding on
the 3rd Medical/ Telemetry unit. The nurses arranged for and coordinated the wedding of
the youngest and only daughter (10 children total) of a terminally ill patient (the
daughter’s mom). A larger church wedding was planned for 2010 but the bride wanted
her mother to be there for the wedding. Several nurses went shopping for wedding
decorations and coordinated with dietary and housekeeping in preparation for the
wedding. The wedding was held at the patient’s bedside. The patient died 3 days later.
Health impacts every step in our patient’s—and their family’s lives. This story is a
moment that took sorrow—and created a celebration of life. At the end of the day, we all
want to feel we have made a difference in large or small ways. And clearly the
teamwork led by nursing brought this mission moment to life. The bridegroom was so
inspired by this experience of caring, that he wanted to be part of our work. He applied
for and now works at Riverside in our Mental Health Unit as a tech.

Encouraging and Implementing Creativity and Innovation: Idea Boards and
Appraisals

One way nurse leaders encourage nurses to identify innovative ways to improve patient
care and the work environment is Idea Boards. Idea Boards came from the Lean
Initiatives on several nursing units. Direct care nurses complete an Idea form explaining
their idea for improvement. The nurse then posts his/her Idea Form on the Idea Board in
the unit break room. The nurse manager/team leader then reviews and acts upon the
ideas and also thanks the nurses for their idea. Nurses are also encouraged to track
their ideas submitted for the annual performance appraisal as they are recognized
under “improving the process’ on the appraisal for ideas submitted. For example, a 5 Tele RN and 2nd Medical Surgical RN have won $50 gas cards for their ideas.

In fact, changing processes and implementing staff idea’s have been found to be so useful that in February 2010, when discussing rolling out the staff’s innovative idea from 2Med-Surg of walking rounds to all units, when the UBC monthly meeting was cancelled due to a blizzard, leaders delayed implementation by two weeks in order to involve staff in implementation. As Amy Memenga, 5Tele Manager, said, “We have to have staff involved in implementing the ideas of their peers. If management says—just do it, it doesn’t work nearly as well because we don’t have that ownership.” And Eileen Krach, 2Med-Surg manager shared, “Walking rounds is only successful today because staff implemented it on our unit and peers held peers accountable for their ideas. Research supports this practice…but ultimately, the staff buying in is what made this work for us.”

**Recognizing Creativity and Innovation: Involvement in Ceremonies and Giveaways**

Nurses were involved in the design and development of the new East Tower construction project. Input was solicited from staff nurses as they know best what design would provide them with a safe and effective environment in order to provide the best care and obtain the best outcomes. Staff nurses who were involved were given their own construction hard hats and invited to attend the Ground Breaking Ceremony on July 28, 2010 with the Board of Directors, media, and other senior leaders. At the ground breaking, staff nurses were recognized in photos for their contribution to the design of the new building and encouraged to put their shovels in the ground in visible recognition of their ideas. (groundbreaking photo shown above includes: Melissa Myers and Cheryl Tyson-3Ortho-Neuro, Sandi Viall, Director of Nursing Services, and Deena Layton, Vice President of Nursing Services).

In June 2009, Riverside received The Joint Commission Certification for Primary Stroke Care. Many nurses worked to obtain this designation along with other interdisciplinary care team members. Direct care nurses were instrumental in changing policies and procedures that lead to good patient outcomes. Nursing leaders and direct care nurses involved with the certification were publicly recognized at the Stroke Certification Celebration in the main lobby with media invited, Riverside leaders and Board members and physicians. An informal follow-up Celebration, planned by the Riverside Celebration Team made up of direct care staff including Mary Kay Renchen, direct care RN of the Cardiac Cath Lab, was held complete with prizes and refreshments.
Another initiative led by nursing is Hourly Rounding. Nursing recently recognized staff who participated in the “Hourly Rounding Roll Out”. The nurse who named the Hourly Rounding Clock; “Punctual Pauly” was given a gift basket for her creative contribution.

In 1999, Riverside’s Educational Services purchased new Learning Management System software that had one component direct care nurses use called OLIE. In 2008, direct care nurses were invited to participate in a contest to draw the face of OLIE and win a $50.00 gift card. The winning entry was submitted by Mindy Cockrell, MHU and every time any employee logs into OLIE, they see Mindy’s innovation—the face of OLIE (shown to the right).

Encouraging and Rewarding Creativity and Innovation: Some Unit-Specific Examples

Mary Newberry, Director of Home Health Care, is a strong believer in public recognition and reads each phone call, survey, or Connection Card nomination during her departments’ monthly department meeting. Nursing staff love this part of the meeting as each story meets with applause. This has probably been the most successful method for recognition for Mary and the Home Health Care nurses. Mary has publically recognized the nurses for several years and the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. The HHC nurses meet on a routine basis to review patient satisfaction. They have developed a process for Connection Card nominations. In addition to Thank You notes, Mary calls her staff to personally thank them for their creative ideas which improve patient outcomes and patient satisfaction issues.

Cheryl Tyson, Manager 3Ortho-Neuro, enjoys recognizing the innovative thinking of her nurses by sending them thank you notes. She sends them thank you notes for many things, including picking up extra shifts and being recognized during patient rounds or on a survey. She recognizes their achievements in the quarterly unit newsletter section called Balloons and Banners. Cheryl recognized the Stroke Certified nurses and awarded 2 Neuro-Certified nurses with their certification pins.

On our Girls Specialty Unit, the manager, Amber Residori, celebrates the creativity of the nursing staff by providing public recognition in the team meetings. Nurses are also allowed to attend trainings and further educational offerings as a means to recognize staff that made suggestions to improve care and to continuously encourage innovation. As Amber said, “Annually the unit has a team celebration where we offer feedback to every team member regarding how they demonstrate our cornerstone values of Honesty, Courage, Care-n-Concern, Responsibility and Growth. This seems to be very
uplifting and drives home the concept of TEAM value. The Girls Specialty Unit also publically recognizes staff in their end of year team meetings to celebrate nurses who displayed exceptional teamwork.

On our Mental Health Unit, nurses are recognized with ‘thank you’ notes including meal tickets and coffee bucks for staff picking up extra shifts, staying over, or coming in to cover; for staff mentioned positively in patient satisfaction surveys; and for staff wishing to recognize a peer for a job well done. At the team meetings nurses are recognized for their contributions to the Unit Based Councils and innovation or obtainment of their certifications. The nurse manager, Mona Poskin, RN, has also framed and hung the RN certifications in their meeting room for staff to see. MHU, like other Riverside departments, submits staff information to the Riverside newsletter for publication and public recognition. With recent unit renovations being made to accommodate the new Boys Specialty Unit, nursing staff were heavily involved in decisions affecting the MHU-Adult, Adolescent, and Day Treatment areas. In appreciation of their meaningful contributions, the mental health manager and director are planning a celebration once the Boys Specialty Unit is completed to celebrate the staff’s teamwork and creativity.

**Measuring Direct Care Nurses’ Perceptions of Leaders’ Support of Innovation:**

To measure direct care nurses’ perception of the many elements of their practice environment including leadership support, an Employee Opinion Survey was conducted during August 2009. This survey was based on questions from the Great Place to Work® survey, and was distributed to all employees of Riverside Medical Center (all corporations in the health system). 82% or 1,869 employees’ participated on the 2009 survey—an increase from the 2007 survey which had 79.5% of staff responding from all job titles and departments, with 481 direct care nurses including LPNs and APNs systemwide participating in the survey from all nursing departments. We are pleased to share our results are consistent with prior years with a majority of our direct care nurses rating their experience as ‘true’ or ‘almost always true’ as shared below on the 3 questions highlighting leadership support of innovation and involvement in decisions impacting their practice environment:

- Management involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment.
  - 60% of Riverside direct care nurses said this was ‘true’ or ‘almost always true’- an improvement over 2007’s results of 54%.

- Management genuinely seeks and responds to suggestions and ideas.
  - 59% of direct care nurses said this was ‘true’ or ‘almost always true’ (same as 2007’s results)

- Management shows appreciation for good work and extra effort.
  - 62% of direct care nurses felt this was ‘true’ or ‘almost always true’ compared to 57% in 2007
Information from this survey has been distributed to staff that are collaborating with management in developing measurable goals for each area. Although these results are not yet where we want them to be, the 2009 results are particularly positive given that 2009 results nationally according to the Great Places to Work Institute (and other employee survey organizations) fell to their lowest levels in over a decade during 2009—attributed to the recession. In fact, from 2007 to 2009, Great Places to Work shared they saw, on average a 9% to 13% decrease per question item on their survey instrument from 2008—which we did not experience.

**Summary: Appreciation of Efforts is Key to Facilitating Innovation**

As described in this story, Riverside’s structure of encouraging and rewarding employee ideas whether through newsletters, on bulletin boards, with giveaways, presenting to senior executives or through having it as an expectation on the appraisal, is all key to setting the tone for employee involvement in generating ideas. And—creating videos to celebrate how direct care nurses make a difference also shows a financial and time investment Riverside made in order to celebrate these nurses’ efforts—with the hope that such recognition would inspire other nurses’ innovations in delivering care.

Without leaders and peers implementing innovative ideas as shared at the annual poster fair, or as responded to on Idea Boards—ideas would be far less likely to be generated to nursing leaders. Innovation at Riverside requires collaboration to sustain this structure and process.