Abstract

Interprofessional shared governance structures provide the opportunity and the expectation for shared decision making among all professionals on the care team regarding interdisciplinary practice, education, quality improvement, and research. Within these shared decision making councils, nurses gain experience and skills in interdisciplinary communication, negotiation, and shared leadership. This skill set is essential to realizing the vision for the future of nursing detailed in the Institute of Medicine’s 2010 report. The report argues that nursing leadership and interprofessional collaboration must become the norm in health care in the U.S. for needed improvements in health care to occur. Direct care providers and the management team of a Patient Services Department restructured a 20-year-old nursing shared governance structure into a fully integrated interprofessional shared governance structure, while empowering nursing’s voice. The journey began with the grass roots recognition that the existing shared governance structure had become stagnant at its best, and disempowered at its worst. This understanding, combined with a new Chief Nursing Officer’s vision of a shared governance structure that reflected the interdisciplinary teams providing care, was the catalyst for a two-year effort to enhance shared governance at this organization. The expected and unexpected outcomes that have occurred since the full implementation of the interprofessional governance structure in 2008 will be shared to ensure participants can transfer knowledge and apply strategies to the development of interprofessional shared governance structures in their home institutions.

Cincinnati Children’s Shared Governance History

1987-1988: Exploration of governance models and design of Cincinnati Children’s nursing structure
1989: Implementation of Nursing Shared Governance
1995-1996: Formation of Patient Services
1999: Implementation of Intragrdisciplinary Shared Governance Structure
2006-2007: Nursing and allied health representatives work together to enhance shared governance
2008: Implementation of enhanced shared governance structure
2010: Measurement of enhancement outcomes

False Assumptions

- If we have shared governance councils, then we have shared governance
- If we have multidisciplinary councils, we have interdisciplinary decision making

Baseline IPG Survey Data

- Nursing and allied health professionals’ perceptions of shared governance were collected using Hess’s (1998) Index of Professional Governance (IPG) in February 2007.
- Mean score of 170.0 (SD 59) indicated that RN and allied health professionals felt there was room for improvement in shared decision making. IPG values indicating shared governance range from 177-352.

Baseline IPG Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Strengths to Maintain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient staffing and time for participation</td>
<td>Decision making authority over practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unclear roles and authority</td>
<td>Staff involvement and autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of connection of shared governance work to organizational initiatives</td>
<td>Systems-level councils that engage staff in decision making outside points of care and/or professions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not enough training and education about shared governance</td>
<td>Strong point of care councils focused on improving processes and patient outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embedded hierarchy</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor communication system</td>
<td>Professional development opportunities</td>
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</tbody>
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Comparison of 2007 & 2010 Findings

Results

The 2010 total sample mean score of 178.6 (SD 61) showed the RN and allied health professionals now perceive that shared decision making is occurring. Change from 2007 to 2010 was significant in the RN and allied health professionals’ total Governance Scores.

Decision Making Milestones

- "Brand" accountabilities and structure
- Interprofessional Shared Governance Charter template
- Interprofessional decision making; where care is delivered and at system level
- Patient and families drive and define the work of shared governance

Summary of Changes

- Interprofessional Shared Governance Bylaws Charter developed and adopted
- Every profession has a practice-driven shared governance structure
- Nursing structure includes decision making at the Cluster Coordinating Councils
- Patient Care Governance Council includes physicians and families in system-wide decision making
- Centralized resources established to support shared governance