Commitment to Professional Development SE3

a. Provide a description and supporting evidence of the organization’s action plan for registered nurses’ progress toward obtaining professional certification.

Include:
➢ How the target was established
➢ What strategies were utilized to achieve or maintain the target (> 51%)
➢ How the nurses are supported to achieve or maintain the certification

Professional Certification for Nurses
Action Plan and Target
Each year, Harriet Stephenson, MSN, BA, RN-BC, Director of Nursing Education, reviews current strategies, trended certification data and workforce projections to recommend the certification goal for the next fiscal year (October 1 - September 30). The WakeMed Health & Hospitals’ organizational goal is communicated to each nursing director, who translates the organizational goal to individual nursing units. Stephenson seeks feedback from Cindy Boily, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President, nurse directors, and the Nurse Executive Committee (NEC) for an official approval vote.

Certification goals are set based on job descriptions that require a nursing license. The goal and rates include nurses at all levels: all full-time, part-time and PRN clinical nurses in all settings, educators, supervisors, coordinators, APRNs, clinical nurse specialists, managers, directors, assistant vice presidents and the CNO. New nurse graduates hired during the fiscal year are excluded from the calculations as they are not yet eligible for national certification. Lori Piatt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, Director of Talent Acquisition, provides the data on which the calculations are based and serves as a key partner in setting the organizational goal for the next fiscal year.

Stephenson presented the recommended goal for FY 2018, (October 1, 2017-September 30, 2018) to the NEC on October 25, 2017. The NEC discussed it, requested additional data and tabled the final vote. Stephenson reviewed individual department data and presented it to Boily on January 3, 2018. The new FY 2018 goal of 40.37% was a 2% increase from the certification rate at the end of FY 2017. The goal for FY 2016 had been set at 33.5%, which represented a 2% growth from FY 2015, and the FY 2017 goal had been set at 37.45%, which represented a 3% increase from FY 2016.

The final recommendation was emailed to NEC members for a vote, and the FY 2018 goal of 40.37% was approved by email vote on January 5, 2018. This was discussed at the February 2018 NEC meeting, as there was no meeting in January 2018. (Evidence SE3-1, Nurse Executive Council)
All certification information is tracked in Lawson, the Human Resources (HR) database. Nurse managers and nursing supervisor educators are accountable for keeping each nurse’s certification information, including the initial certification and renewals, updated in Lawson. Lawson certification reports are sent monthly to nurse managers and nursing supervisor educators for review. Nurse directors work with nurse managers to monitor the monthly numbers of certified nurses per unit. This monthly review promotes ongoing awareness of progress toward the annual certification goal. Nurse directors also receive quarterly updates from HR to ensure accuracy in trending unit-level data.

**Strategies Used to Achieve the Target**
Several strategies are used to achieve the annual specialty certification goals:

- **Setting Expectations and Requirements**
  All nurse leaders are required to hold a certification as defined in the Educational Preparation of Nurse Leaders WakeMed Policy. For the purposes of this policy, the title “nurse leader” includes nurse directors, nurse managers and supervisor/educators. The policy includes incumbents in these positions as well as those newly hired into a nurse leader position. However, new nurse leaders have up to one year to obtain a specialty certification. *(Evidence SE3-2, Certification Policies, pages 1 and 6)*

- **Support and Guidance**
  In 2014, WakeMed engaged the ANCC Success Pays Program, which is coordinated through the Nursing Education Department. Participants in each cohort are required to attend an information session prior to the test access code being distributed. These sessions provide each nurse with a point person to assist with the application, answer questions about the reimbursement process and help celebrate their accomplishment. An average of approximately 120 nurses per year apply for Success Pays, including clinical nurses, nurse leaders, APRNs and other eligible nurses.

  In addition, a certification resource intranet webpage was designed and is maintained by the Professional Development Council, whose mission is to promote excellence in professional development activities. The webpage identifies the preferred specialty certification(s) for each nursing unit. It also provides a point of contact at the unit level, the name of the certification, the credentialing organization, the credential received and a link to the certification website.

  Nursing Grand Rounds, a monthly offering coordinated by the Nursing Education Department, reserves March to focus specifically on certification. The presentation, targeted to WakeMed nurses, provides support and resources for obtaining a specialty certification. Several certified nurses share their experiences and the personal benefits of achieving certification. *(Evidence SE3-3, Certification Support, Website Screenshot and Nursing Grand Rounds Flyer)*
Organizational Support

**Financial Support**
WakeMed provides certification reimbursement of $300 per fiscal year for eligible nurses. ANCC Magnet-recognized certifications are eligible for reimbursement. (Evidence SE3-2, Certifications Policies, page 2)

**Recognition and Celebration**
National Certified Nurses Day is celebrated at WakeMed throughout the month of March. The month begins with all certified nurses receiving a personal, signed letter from Boily recognizing their achievement. Boily also sends a “Nurses in the Know” email to all nurses in the WakeMed system to highlight the value of certification to patients and families and acknowledge the accomplishment of all certified nurses.

Julia Russell, BSN, RN-BG, Interim Manager 6B Orthopaedics & Oncology, partnered with Becky Scolio, Marketing and Communications Specialist, to create and standardize Walls of Honor that display the names of certified nurses in each unit. Russell’s innovative idea to standardize the display of professional excellence in nursing specialties instills patients and families with confidence in nursing care. Individual units celebrate and recognize certified nurses in a variety of ways, such as Walls of Honor, luncheons, celebration parties and other activities. (Evidence SE3-4, Certified Nurses Day March Support)

**Endowment Fund**
In 2009, Dr. Helton, a WakeMed physician, donated $1 million to the WakeMed Foundation to establish an endowment for nursing education and development. The Helton Scholarship Endowment Fund assists nurses with education costs related to securing basic or advanced degrees in healthcare-related fields, and with the costs of certification in areas of specialized care. The Helton Awardee Program is an arm of the Helton Scholarship Endowment Fund that focuses specifically on supporting specialty certifications for nurses. Funding is provided for review course preparation for a group (department or collaborative group) defined as three or more nurses seeking education or training to prepare for a certification exam. Three Helton Awardee applications were approved in 2017, providing review courses for approximately 100 clinical nurses for the Certified Brain Injury Specialist, Certified Emergency Nurse and Low Risk Neonatal Nursing certifications. Three additional Helton Awardee applications were approved in 2018 to provide review courses for Cardiac Vascular, Critical Care and Medical Surgical clinical areas. In 2018, 91 participants participated in these review course offerings. (Evidence SE3-5, Helton Awardee Program)

One aspirational goal in WakeMed’s strategic plan is to Recruit, Retain and Develop an Extraordinary Team. Developing nurses by helping them obtain specialty certifications supports this strategic goal and, more importantly, supports a high-level of care being provided to patients. It is very important to WakeMed to continue to grow specialty
certifications, as it raises the bar for higher standards of care and improved patient outcomes.

WakeMed began FY 2016 with a baseline of 31.82% certified nurses; as of 3rd Quarter FY 2018, this had grown to 41.27%. WakeMed is proud of the continued growth in specialty certifications and the support through resources and recognition provided by the organization.