Commitment to Professional Development SE5

a. Provide a description with supporting evidence of the organization’s action plan for registered nurses obtaining a baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing.

Include:
➢ How the target was established
➢ What strategies were utilized to achieve or maintain the target (>80%)
➢ How the nurses are supported to achieve a baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing.

Action Plan and How the Target was Established
In 2012, WakeMed initiated an action plan to meet the goal set by the 2010 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report recommending that 80% of registered nurses be prepared with a baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing by 2020. In October 2012, 41% of WakeMed RNs held a BSN or higher degree in nursing.

In 2012, the North Carolina Future of Nursing Action Coalition (FONAC), acting on data from the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research (Sheps Center) at UNC-Chapel Hill, extended the North Carolina goal to 2025. The date for achieving the goal was extended because of the rural nature of North Carolina and the disparity in educational preparation along with the volume of associate degree programs in the state. There are 27 BSN and 57 ADN programs in North Carolina, so the vast majority of RNs in the state are graduates of ADN programs. Cindy Boily, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer; Janice Neff, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Nursing Administration Specialist; and Elizabeth Woodard, PhD, RN, Consultant, Nursing Administration, represent WakeMed Health & Hospitals on the Executive Committee of FONAC.

Each year, Harriet Stephenson, MSN, BA, RN-BC, Director of Nursing Education, and Lori Piatt, Director of Talent Acquisition, Human Resources (HR), review strategies, current year data and workforce projections, and based on these recommend a goal for the next fiscal year. This recommendation is then presented to a group of nursing directors for feedback, discussed with the CNO, and presented to the Nurse Executive Committee (NEC) for an official vote.

The recommendation for FY 2018 was presented to NEC on October 25, 2017. The NEC did not approve it at that time, instead asking that additional departmental data be considered. Stephenson reviewed all available departmental data and met with Boily on January 3, 2018 to review and recommend an updated FY 2018 goal. This recommendation was emailed to NEC membership for a vote, and the FY 2018 goal of a BSN or higher rate of 66.49% (1% increase) was approved on January 5, 2018.

(Evidence SE5-1, Nurse Executive Committee Minutes and Process)
All information regarding nurses’ academic preparation is tracked in the HR Lawson database. HR Recruiters enter this information in Lawson for each employee upon hire. After initial hire, a member of the employee’s management team is responsible for entering updated degree information as it occurs. Lawson reports are sent to nursing management monthly for review and to update as needed.

**Strategies Used to Achieve the Target**
In May 2013, WakeMed initiated an Employment Agreement that is signed by all new hires with an associate degree or diploma in nursing. It states that the employee must be enrolled in a BSN or graduate program within two years of their employment date and that the degree must be obtained within five years of this date. (Evidence SE5-2, Employment Agreement)

The Education Preparation of Nurse Leaders Policy was revised to state that, as of June 2015, nursing management at all levels must have a minimum of a BSN. This policy covers new hires as well as incumbent nurse leaders. (Evidence SE5-3, Educational Preparation of Nurse Leaders Policy)

**Organizational Support to Achieve the Target**
WakeMed has long provided tuition reimbursement for eligible employees. Full-time employees are eligible for up to $2,000 for undergraduate study and $2,500 for graduate study per fiscal year, and part-time employees are eligible for up to $1,000 and $1,250, respectively. (Evidence SE5-4, Tuition and Specialty Certification Reimbursement Policy)

The Helton Scholarship Endowment Fund was established by a grant from the Helton Family Foundation. Scholarships foster professional development by providing financial assistance to qualified individuals for continuing academic education. Scholarships range from $500 to $5,000.

WakeMed has a longstanding partnership with Winston-Salem State University to bring an RN to BSN program to the WakeMed Raleigh Campus. This on-site program averages 25 students per cohort and has proved to be a valued and successful means of increasing the number of BSNs at WakeMed and in the community.

WakeMed’s Workforce Development Department and Nursing Education Department have partnered to provide an annual Education Fair for all WakeMed employees. The Education Fair features representatives from local, state and distance learning programs.

In 2017, Stephenson began offering monthly Back to School information sessions at all campuses to answer employees’ questions about returning to school. She answers questions about the programs that are available, the tuition reimbursement process and how to get started. (Evidence SE5-5, Organizational Support Fliers)