

NK1

Provide a description, with supporting evidence, of the infrastructure that supports nursing research in the organization.

Nursing Research Infrastructure at WakeMed

Nursing Research Structures

Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice Council

Structures that support nursing research at WakeMed include the Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice Council (NREC), which is part of the Division of Nursing's shared decision-making model at the organizational level. The mission of NREC is to promote formalized structures and processes that develop and support a culture of inquiry and innovation, competency in evidence-based practice (EBP), and delivery of evidence-based care at WakeMed.

The NREC is mentored by the director of nursing research and evidence-based practice, a PhD-prepared nurse who reports to the chief nursing officer. The NREC is led by a chair and chair-elect or two co-chairs, all of whom have completed human subject protections training. Either the chair, chair-elect, or one co-chair must be a nurse with a master's or higher degree or be currently enrolled in a graduate nursing program. Leadership positions are two-year commitments, with the new chair-elect or co-chair elected by standing members of NREC at the end of each fiscal year.

([Evidence NK1-1, NREC Charter](#)) ([Evidence NK1-2, NREC End of Year Report 2023](#))

University Partnership

The East Carolina University College of Nursing (ECU CON) and WakeMed's Clinical Nurse Research Fellowship Program also support nursing research at WakeMed. The purpose of this partnership between ECU CON and WakeMed's Division of Nursing is to stimulate research inquiry while producing nurse scientists early in their careers through an integrated academic, research, and clinical practice experience. Since 2019, newly graduated BSN nurses in the accelerated BSN to PhD program at ECU have been hired by WakeMed as new nurse residents and supported to achieve practice competency while conducting clinical research at WakeMed in pursuit of their PhD degrees. The fellows' unit-based nurse managers, supervisor/educators, service line clinical nurse specialists, and PhD-prepared nurses collaborate with fellows and with ECU faculty as needed to ensure research goals are met. ([Evidence NK1-3, Memorandum of Understanding ECU-WM](#))

Nurse Scientist Role

In 2023, the first ECU-WM clinical research fellow to matriculate with a PhD graduate, Catherine Taylor, PhD, RN, CCRN, Nurse Scientist, was hired into a newly created nurse scientist position at WakeMed. ([Evidence NK1-4, Job Description](#)) The overall aims of the nurse scientist role are to support nursing workforce development through strategic planning and education and to increase the capacity for nursing research and EBP at WakeMed.

Nursing Research Processes

Library Services

WakeMed nurses have access to research literature through the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Digital Library. WakeMed nurses may conduct literature searches or request help from two designated AHEC medical librarians. When requesting an evidence search, nurses complete a structured form that identifies PURPOSE elements per the revised Iowa EBP Model. The structured PURPOSE format and access to librarians to request literature searches saves nurses time and ensures a comprehensive retrieval of the best available research evidence.

IRB and Nursing Research Policy

WakeMed has an Internal Review Board (IRB) that includes a PhD-prepared nurse serving as co-chair and a DNP-prepared nurse as members. The Nursing Research Policy and a Nursing Research IRB Checklist support nurses in successfully submitting IRB applications. The Director of Nursing Research and EBP and IRB nurse co-chair provide regulatory advisement to support nursing research initiatives. The WakeMed IRB Analyst, Catherine Kilday, attends NREC meetings when requested to educate nurses about regulatory considerations in research. ([Evidence NK1-5, Nursing Research Policy](#))

Since the need for research in the practice setting is often identified after a search of the literature reveals insufficient available evidence, NREC hosted a re-review of EBP models in 2023 to identify the best fitting model for WakeMed nurses. The model selection process used Gawlinski and Rutledge's (2008) methods. NREC members selected the Iowa Model Revisited: Evidence Based Practice to Promote Excellence in Health Care (Iowa Model Collaborative, 2017).

When there is a gap in knowledge about how to improve practice, NREC members and PhD-prepared nurses provide guidance, support, and resources as needed to help develop and carry out research studies. This may include coaching and guidance, study leadership, study design, grant writing, protocol and consent writing, research tool development, obtaining informed consent, conducting study procedures, statistical analysis, and reviewing and facilitating dissemination. When research studies are being developed and conducted, WakeMed nurse leaders encourage and support clinical nurses' time to participate in study team meetings, carry out study procedures and collect data, and disseminate the work.