

TL5b

Provide one example, with supporting evidence, of a nurse's(s') (exclusive of the CNO) advocacy for and acquisition of resources specific to nurses' well-being at the unit or department/division level.

Example b: Nurses' Advocacy for Resources Related to Work-life Balance

The 2023 Magnet Application Manual defines work-life balance as "providing employees with greater flexibility in when, where, or how often they work" (p. 206). In summer 2021, Julia Russell, BSN, RN-BC, Nurse Manager 6B Orthopedics/Oncology, proposed a creative idea for a scheduling option that would support staffing and scheduling while also supporting staff members' work-life balance by meeting their individual needs. Russell suggested that WakeMed support staffing and scheduling by encouraging inpatient nurses to work off any existing attendance occurrences (absences), essentially instituting a "pardon" for attendance issues. Russell proposed the attendance pardon concept to Dianna Knight, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, Executive Director of Patient Engagement and Medical/Surgical Nursing. Knight agreed with Russell's proposal and advocated for operational leadership support in a systemwide Nursing Operations meeting on August 26, 2021. ([Evidence TL5b-1, Nursing Operations Minutes August 26, 2021](#))

The operational leadership team recognized that a "one size fits all" solution is not appropriate for acute care staffing and scheduling in the inpatient nursing division. Because of this variability in staffing issues, numerous interventions had been employed to meet the needs of individual staff members and clinical departments. This new opportunity, however, enabled inpatient clinical nurses a "pardon" when willing to work an extra shift. Doing so promoted individual nurses work-life balance as well as efficient unit-based operations.

The process was simple: clinical nurses had the autonomy to determine whether the occurrence pardon was a practice that would benefit them. If so, the nurse selected the shift they wished to cover and the existing absence (occurrence) they wanted removed from their file. Human Resources Employee Relations staff needed to review the details of the pilot since the proposed option would be a change from existing practice. Knight summarized the details of the pilot that Russell advocated for to Susan McFarland, Director, Employee Relations, on that same day. ([Evidence TL5b-2, Email Knight to Susan McFarland, HR](#)) McFarland and Knight discussed the potential impact of the new program, and McFarland obtained verbal approval from Human Resources. McFarland was thereafter kept apprised of the program details and responses via nursing leadership communications.

The initial occurrence pardon pilot ran from August 28, 2021, through September 19, 2021. ([Evidence TL5b-3, Email Knight to Nurse Leaders](#)) During this time, 169 registered nurses from inpatient units covered 233 shifts, and 83 non-RN staff from inpatient units covered 149. A total of 382 occurrences were removed from employee records, significantly decreasing attendance violations while enabling nurses to choose

the shifts that best fit their schedules to support work-life balance and preventing the inpatient nursing division from working short or losing nurses due to disciplinary action.

Nurse Acquisition of Resources for Inpatient Nursing Division

During the October 2021 Clinical Nurse Council meeting, clinical nurses requested that the occurrence pardon program be offered again in winter 2021. During this second offering, occurrence pardons for working major holidays counted for double relief. That is, two occurrences would be removed from their HR file when clinical nursing unit/division staff members elected to work a holiday. During the second round, 324 inpatient RNs covered 119 major holidays and 308 non-holiday shifts, and 167 non-RN inpatient staff members covered 82 major holidays and 156 non-holiday shifts from November 2021 to January 2022. This program was subsequently offered again in winters 2022 and 2023 (table 1).

Occurrence Pardon Results – Inpatient Nursing Division						
	# RNs	Choose 2 option, major holidays	Choose 1 option	# Non-RNs	Choose 2 option, major holidays	Choose 1 option
Aug. – Sept. 2021	169	N/A	233	83	N/A	149
Winter 2021	324	119	308	167	82	156
Winter 2022	373	210	284	178	129	151
Totals	866	329	825	428	211	456

On January 11, 2024, patient volumes were such that the Winter Occurrence Pardon Program was extended to February 2, 2024. The “two for one” deal was also accepted for January 15, 2024, Martin Luther King Day, and February 14, 2024, Valentine’s Day.

This innovative approach to cover critical staffing in the inpatient division of clinical nursing, which supported staff members’ work-life balance by enabling them to select shifts and have attendance occurrences removed, benefitted staff members, the organization, and patients.