

Riding the COVID-19 Pandemic Waves with Transformations in Staffing with Shared Governance



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Purpose

To increase workforce safety by transforming staffing models and highlighting shared governance on COVID-19 units. Little to no research on staffing models that impact professional governance on nursing practice and patient outcomes exists. This project aims to share new knowledge and the need for further research.

Background

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare had the highest rates of illnesses and work-related injuries among industries (IHI, 2020). Workforce safety is the safety and resiliency of the organization and a necessary precondition to advancing patient safety. Health care organizations require a unified, total systems-based perspective and approach to eliminate harm to both patients and the workforce. As of August 12, 2022, COVID-19 case total for the United States is 92,560,911; death total is 1,031,426, and healthcare personnel COVID-19 cases is 958,539 (CDC, 2022).

Nurses and hospital staff who risk their lives and health to serve the public require workforce safety, to include minimizing exposure to disease. The SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 disease is highly infectious by aerosol transmission. Furthermore, subsequent surges and variations of the virus can be spread by people who have no symptoms and do not know they are infected. It is imperative to maintain a safe and healthy workplace by ensuring safe staffing and robust communication of COVID-19 precautions, policies, and procedures.

Methods

The COVID-19 nurse (RN) rotation required each RN to report and document the last date of their COVID-19 assignment and unit to the staffing office. The Progressive Care Unit, Telemetry Unit, and Medical Unit RNs diligently reported their COVID-19 assignment status. Rotation of COVID-19 assignments were established and monitored by the hospital staffer, charge RN of the unit, and the Assistant Hospital Manager (AHM). By recording all COVID patient assignments, units were aware of assignments at a glance and could maintain a fair and safe rotation among nurses and units. Through the vigilant efforts of the nursing units and departments, shared decision-making for adequate staffing and workplace safety was achieved.

Results

The COVID-19 rotation standard work continues to be an effective strategy for professional accountability and engagement in shared decision-making and governance. Graphics below show the COVID Census Tracking Dashboard effectively used to ensure staff and patient safety. El Camino Health's Mountain View campus earned an 'A' in the spring 2022 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade program, marking the fourth consecutive time the hospital has earned top marks for safety.

Implications / Conclusion

Scant literature exists on how staffing models impact nursing practice and patient outcomes during this COVID-19 pandemic. There is opportunity to assess the impact of the COVID-19 rotation standard work on workforce safety, nurse satisfaction, and clinical outcomes.

References

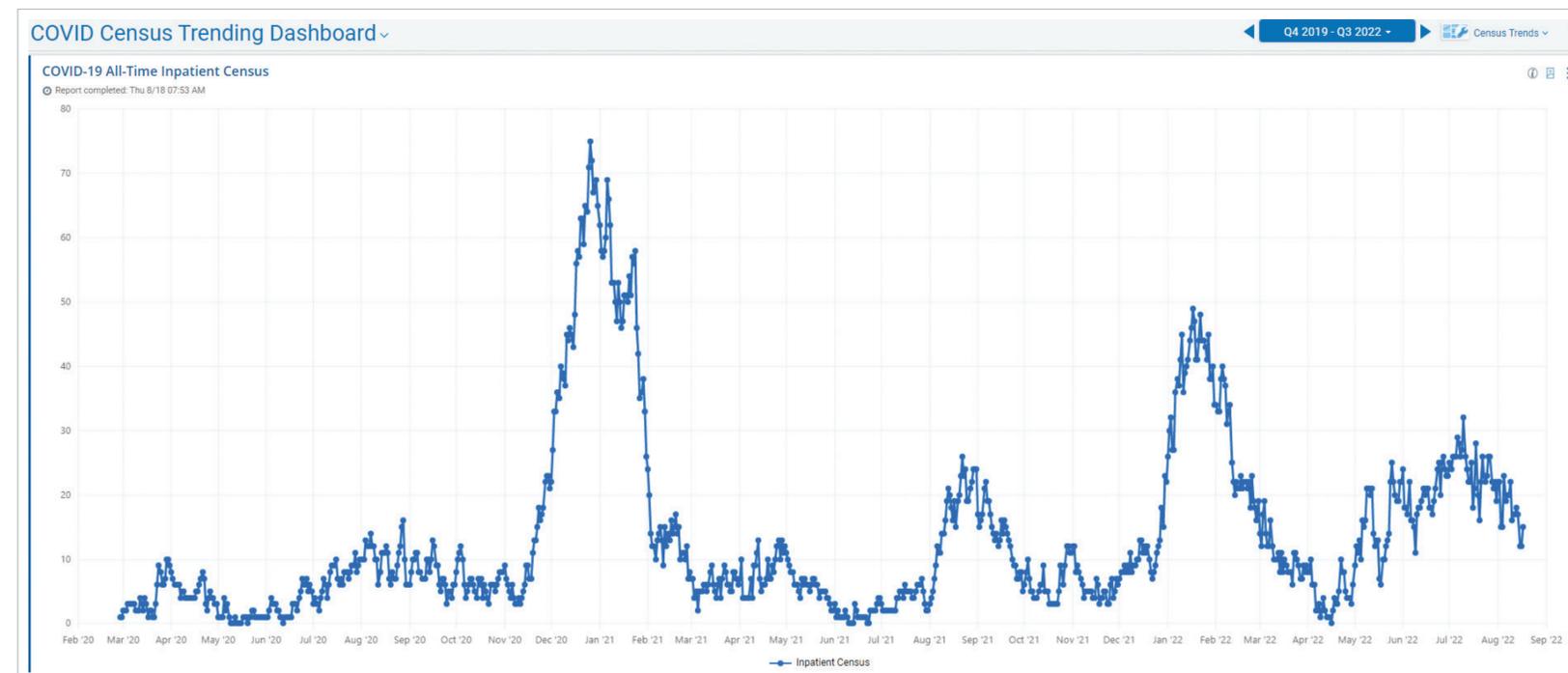
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