

Employing Imagination to Reduce Fear of Hospitals in Children

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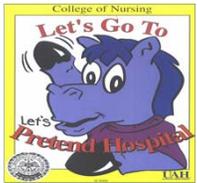
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Background

- In 2009, there were 3.6 hospital discharges per 100 young people aged 1-21 years[1]. The most common causes for hospitalization in children 5-9 are:
 - Diseases of the respiratory system
 - Diseases of the digestive system
 - Diseases of the nervous system
 - Diseases of the sense organs
 - Injury and poisoning
- 2011 Eligibility for Medicaid in Alabama [2]
 - 618, 137children
 - 43.5% of Alabama Children
- Hospitalization is frightening for children



LET'S PRETEND HOSPITAL



Let's Pretend Hospital (LPH) is a 27 year collaboration between the UAHuntsville College of Nursing in Huntsville, Alabama, Huntsville Hospital, and local school systems which serves approximately 3,000 first grade school children annually over a six day period. This health promotion activity is designed to reduce the fear of health care providers and institutions in children.

Children, on a school field trip, come to LPH for a two hour experience which is a university based service learning project staffed by over 300 undergraduate student nurses. During a visit to LPH, children move through a series of rooms which replicate major areas in a hospital and are introduced, during child focused skits, to the activities which take place in a doctor's office, emergency room, operating room, X-ray room, clinical laboratory, patient's room, playroom, and ambulance. During travel between rooms, child friendly entertainment is used to introduce and reinforce messages about safety, nutrition, infection control and exercise. The experience is continued when the child returns home and engages in carefully planned interactive activities with the parents designed to reinforce the messages taught at LPH. Extensive evaluations are performed on teacher satisfaction, children's satisfaction, and effective nursing student management of the event. This powerful experience has been instrumental in recruiting students and parents into health care careers, creating positive publicity for the university, and earning the praise of local physicians.

Community Partners



UAHuntsville College of Nursing, Huntsville, Alabama

-Mission: Prepare clinically excellent baccalaureate and graduate level nurses to deliver healthcare services to a culturally diverse population within a variety of healthcare settings.

-Baccalaureate nursing undergraduate program with 806 students

-Senior level community health course implementing community based clinical service learning projects

Huntsville Hospital, Huntsville Alabama

-881 bed community based not-for-profit hospital

-2nd largest hospital system in the state

-Operates one of only 2 pediatric hospitals in the state

-Serves 33,000 children per year



Participatory Experiences

- Promote reality based interactions
- Implement the role of the nurse as health educator



Benefits of Clinical Service Learning

- Expands nursing student clinical experience outside the hospital setting
- Delivers direct health promotion services to community based clients
- Enhances student leadership experience
- Increases client and student satisfaction
- Promotes the role of the nurse as a primary healthcare provider & agent for social change
- Increases student awareness of unmet client needs within the community
- Promotes critical thinking, reflective thought and self- evaluation for students
- Promotes collaboration among individual and institutional community partners
- Provides opportunities for clinical research
- Promotes a positive humanitarian image of the University in the community
- Enhances marketing success of both university and hospital

Student Leadership Development

- Nursing students and faculty engage as partners in clinical practice
- Senior students manage project

Leadership Challenge - A Quick Review

- 3,000 Children, teachers, chaperones
- 6 Days
- 8 Virtual experiences and associated activities
- 90 Minute cycles



Teach Real World Leadership Skills

- Planning
- Staffing
- Budgeting
- Resource procurement and allocation
- Scheduling
- Coordination of activities
- Personnel management
- Problem solving & crisis management
- Formative and summative evaluation



"I felt that LPH was an important community event, and it was my desire to be on the Management Team since being involved in LPH as a junior....because PEDS is my specialty. I also felt it was important for leaders in the class to step up and be on the management team..." - *Steering Committee member*

"I am lying in bed with my 7-year-old daughter, who had her tonsils out today. She just looked up at me and said - 'you know, Mommy, I knew I would have an IV today, so it was okay.' At which point I asked her how in the world she had known, to which she replied... 'I learned about them at Let's Pretend - so I wasn't scared. But, I am glad it wasn't in an ambulance.' I wanted to say 'thanks.'" - *Parent*



References

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. *Child Health USA*. Rockville, Maryland: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011. Retrieved from (<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa11/hstat/hsc/pages/211h.html#printfriendly>)
- Alabama Medicaid Agency, *Annual Report-FY 2011*, Retrieved from (http://medicaid.alabama.gov/documents/2.0_Newsroom/2.3_Publications/2.3.1.6_Annual_Report_FY11/2.3.1.6_FY11_Eligibles_ALPop+Eligibles+Jobs.pdf)