

The Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund supports training programs that address workforce skill needs identified by health care providers as they work to improve patient care and reduce costs. Commonwealth Corporation administers this fund on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

Anna Jaques Hospital (AJH) is an independent, not-for-profit community hospital serving 17 cities and towns in the Merrimack Valley, North Shore and Southern New Hampshire areas. Anna Jaques is recognized for delivering high quality, low cost community health care with an emphasis on patient satisfaction. They are clinically affiliated with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.



Workforce Challenge:

AJH is experiencing an increase in the severity and illness acuity of their patients, requiring increasingly complex care. Simultaneously, health care quality improvement and cost reduction policy includes a strong emphasis on moving patient care to local, community hospitals instead of larger institutions. In order to remain competitive, respond to an increased flow of medically-complex patients and provide high quality care, AJH needs to attract and retain nurses who have a higher level of education and can perform at the top of their license.

“ Our grant-funded RN to BSN program in 2014 stimulated three post-grant cohorts and 34 newly minted BSNs. From 40% pre-grant, we now have nearly 60% of our nurses with bachelor’s degrees or higher. We have also benefited from the new simulation mannequin. It helps us to prepare our clinical staff to save lives by exposing them in a training setting to a range of both common and unusual scenarios they may encounter in the hospital.”

-Sarah Belise, RN MSN CNL, Director of Education

Training Strategy and Expected Outcomes:

In partnership with Bay State College, AJH brought an RN-to-BSN program to the hospital campus. During a two-year period, 15 AJH nurses enrolled in and completed the program, earning a BSN while they worked. This helped to bring the hospital’s overall percent of RNs with a BSN or higher from 40% to 54%. In addition, AJH trained 25 nurses to serve as preceptors to newer nurses. AJH reported that nurses participating in the initiative have become leaders, challenging the status quo, looking for best practice and process improvement and encouraging co-workers to do the same. AJH also reported that investment in higher-level credentials and skills and the development of a larger number of staff serving as preceptors was instrumental in advancing the organization’s objectives related to reliability and strengthening a culture of safety. As a result, AJH has launched three additional RN-to-BSN cohorts and anticipates establishing an on-site BSN-to-MSN program in the near future.