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Implementing a Clinical Advancement Program in Nephrology Nursing - The Pain and Gain

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Registered Nurses begin a journey of professional development and career satisfaction when they are hired to provide care for patients with CKD. Nurses need to understand their professional obligation to base their practice on knowledge acquired through education and experience. As a result, Nephrology Nurses should be rewarded for their valuable contribution in advancing their specialty and differentiating themselves as practice experts a long the way.

The American Nursing Association (2003) described nursing to include protection, promotion and optimization of health and abilities which requires nurses to use clinical reasoning and decision making models for effective planning and evaluation of the care they provide. Practicing as a RN Nephrology Nurse requires a specific body of knowledge and demonstrated clinical expertise. It goes beyond what is taught in required nursing programs and enters the professional practice arena.

With the development of a Clinical Advancement Program, Registered Nurses in Nephrology are able to build on their experience and education and advance their performance as nursing professionals. There is significant literary evidence that working in an environment that exhibits and support clinical excellence is instrumental to professional nursing satisfaction. In addition clinical advancement programs have been cited in the literature since the 1970's as a way to recognize, reward, recruit and retain nurses. Additional positive outcomes include reduction in health care expenditures, patient satisfaction, physician nurse relationships, and quality of expert nurses.(Drenkard, 2005).

With this presentation the learner will be able to grasp the challenges in the development, piloting and organizational complexities with implementing a Clinical Advancement Program for Nephrology Nurses. In addition it will provide the financial and professional return on organizational and nursing investment.

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