Overview
At Mary Greeley Medical Center, the nursing department had been requiring staff attendance at Nursing Skills Day annually for over 20 years. The purpose of these sessions was to provide education and assess competence of staff. Units also completed additional unit specific competency checklist completion on the unit. In 2018, the Nursing Skills sessions were eliminated.

Departments identified competency topics most important for their specialty and utilized the validation methods of observation, demonstration and documentation audit for competence assessment. The time devoted to Skills Day attendance was instead utilized to check off competence on the unit. This process continued in 2019.

Purpose
The purpose of moving away from Skills Day in 2018 was to improve the process of competency validation at Mary Greeley Medical Center.

Rationale
• Nursing Skills Day content had not always met the needs of specialty nursing units, who had to also attend department specific skills sessions to obtain their annual education and competency verifications.
• Skills Day content was most pertinent to inpatient Medical and Surgical units. Specialty and outpatient units did not require staff to attend the entire session, which made attendance difficult to manage.
• In 2017, the TJC surveyor suggested a more robust competency validation process be adopted, that would focus on validation through observation, demonstration and documentation audit. This level of assessment requires one on one validation.
• MGMC had previously adopted the competency model of Donna Wright. Her model included the use of other methods for verification including tests, case studies and exemplars along with the more robust methods suggested by TJC.

Improving Competency Validation
Mary Greeley Medical Center
Ames, Iowa

Proposed Changes
Mary Greeley Medical Center has based the competency model for the nursing department on Donna Wright’s model of competency assessment. Skills day sessions were a component of the assessment. However, there had been concerns from speciality units with applicability of content, and attendance issues.

When TJC suggested that competency be validated only through observation, demonstration and documentation audits, the appropriateness of the Skills Day content and format was questioned.

Implementation Strategies
In 2018, Mary Greeley Medical Center moved to on unit completion of competency validation. Each unit determined the topics most important for competency and utilized a more robust validation process on the unit. The validation of competency would include the options of observation of work, demonstration and documentation audits. This process had been encouraged by TJC in 2017 visit. These validation methods are better at determining that the nurse not only has knowledge about a topic or skill, but also applies the knowledge and skill in their practice.

The move away from the Skills Day format was discussed with all managers in 2017. The suggestion by TJC to incorporate more robust methods of competency assessment that better reflected actual practice was explained along with information about how to accomplish this level of competency assessment. Department managers of the specialty units were receptive as the staff in those departments had been expressing dissatisfaction with the content, wanting it to be more specific to their specialty. This change was the biggest transition for the Medical and Surgical units who had previously seen more value in the Skills Day content.

All unit scores rose from 4.64 to 4.80, indicating an improvement in the satisfaction with access to on unit education. This improvement in the satisfaction with access to on unit education. This may in part be explained by the move in 2018, to more accessible competency validations occurring on the unit.

Evaluation
MGMC participates in the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI) survey and as part of the survey the satisfaction of RNs about the access to regular in-service programs is assessed. The survey is taken in September.

In 2018, the all unit score rose from 4.64 to 4.80, indicating an improvement in the satisfaction with access to on unit education. This may in part be explained by the move in 2018, to more accessible competency validations occurring on the unit. We will continue to watch this trend in September 2019.

Facility Profile & Facts
Mary Greeley is a 220-bed regional hospital that provides healthcare to the residents of a 12-county area in central Iowa. The medical center staff consists of more than 1,300 nurses, patient care technicians, therapists and other clinical and non-clinical positions, as well as more than 190 professionals who have expertise in 50 specialties and sub-specialties.

Inpatient and outpatient services offered by Mary Greeley support a continuum of care for our patients, and include: surgery, cancer care, cardiac care, diabetes and nutrition care, orthopedics, obstetrics and gynecology, gastroenterology, mental health services, palliative care, home health care, hospice care, rehabilitation and more.

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