



## New Residency May Improve Retention of Nurses in Rural Facilities

Rural nurses are required to have a breadth and depth of knowledge unparalleled in other specialty nursing fields. The rural nurse is often required to manage complicated patient conditions using limited equipment or technology while simultaneously coordinating care within a variety of social and cultural networks unique to the rural community. The immense generalist role of the rural nurse often leads to early burnout and high turnover rates when compared with more urban nurse roles (up to 65% in the first year of practice). On the other hand, residency programs have been shown to be an effective means of reducing the turnover of new and transitioning nurses. When a nurse participates in a residency program, they are provided with extended support and training which helps to reduce stress while increasing their confidence and proficiency.

And so, it is with great excitement that Idaho State University (ISU), in partnership with health organizations throughout the West, has developed the Northwest Rural Nurse Residency (NWRNR) program. The NWRNR is a unique program for many reasons, not least of all is that residents and preceptors can receive all of their training 'at home' in their own facilities and communities. Using new technologies like web-conferencing, and high tech simulation make it possible for the program to be offered at no cost to participants. Additionally, because of this innovative technology, participants don't have to travel to an urban center, or even across town to benefit from the 64 hours of seminars and continuing education electives. Additionally, all 104 hours of the supervised clinical experience are completed in the nurse's 'home' facility. Both residents and preceptors receive top-notch training by rural nursing experts from across the country. Program faculty and staff provide a supportive and informative role for preceptors, residents and nurse administrators to help ensure successful completion of the 12-month program. While resident's benefit from increased training, accelerated skill acquisition and reduced 'new role' stress, preceptors are supported with training, mentorship, certification, an honorarium and regional recognition.

Due to the high tech convenience of the NWRNR training, participating facilities are required to have high-speed internet available to both the residents and preceptors as well as systems in place to support nurse education. Preceptors must be experienced rural nurses with at least two years in the facility and a license in good standing. Residents must have less than one year at the facility and be a new RN graduate, re-entering the profession, or transitioning from an urban setting. The next sessions of NWRNR will be starting in January 2010. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, so apply today! Be one of the first facilities in your area to boast the employment of rural nurse specialists while enjoying the benefits of lower nurse turnover. Call the ISU Office of Professional Development for an application or more information at (208) 282-2982, email at [nurseopd@isu.edu](mailto:nurseopd@isu.edu) or visit the NWRNR website at <http://www.isu.edu/nursing/opd/nwrnr.shtml>

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