

A Day in the Life: College of Nursing Liaison

Contributing Authors: Kaitlyn Kolcun, DNP, APRN-CNS, AGCNS-BC, CNE and Sarah Susi, DNP, RN, NPD-BC

Nurses recognize the critical role of nursing students' clinical placements, but the process for making these experiences possible is often invisible. At The Ohio State University College of Nursing and The James Cancer Hospital at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, an innovative liaison role bridges academic and practice settings to strengthen clinical education, support recruitment and retention, and cultivate the future nursing workforce.

While each day looks different, the work follows a consistent rhythm across each semester. Here is a snapshot view of what a day in the life as a college of nursing liaison looks like.

Supporting and Expanding Clinical Placements

A significant portion of the liaison's work revolves around collaborating with unit leadership and colleges of nursing to create and operationalize meaningful clinical placements. Ongoing communication with nurse managers and nursing professional development practitioners (NPDP) aka nurse educators supports hospital units' identification. Such collaboration leads to welcoming and hosting nursing students thereby providing new clinical experiences in a variety of practice settings and specialties, such as oncology. Additionally, the liaison supports clinical instructors by offering practice setting and cancerspecific onboarding resources. Overtime, this approach has resulted in notable increases in clinical placement capacity. To demonstrate, in autumn 2022, 8 clinical groups and 11 precepted students were placed within The James Cancer Hospital; in fall 2025, 18 clinical groups and 39 precepted students were placed. The liaison role and collaborative approach to

clinical placements delivered 2.25 times increase in clinical groups and 3.5 times increase in precepted students.

Rounding with Students and Gathering Feedback

With the implementation of the innovative liaison role, intentional rounds on units with student clinical groups and their instructors as well as precepted students are scheduled throughout the semester. These rounds help to ensure students have a positive learning experience and strengthens connections between learners and the health system. The rounds also support organizational recruitment efforts by allowing the liaison to share employment opportunities, including steps for applying and highlighting benefits of becoming a nurse at The James Cancer Hospital.

Furthermore, rounding provides the liaison with the opportunity to collect real-time feedback from students about their placement experiences. This feedback is then shared with unit leaders to reinforce positive practices and address opportunities for improvement. Insights from these rounds directly led to the development of a standardized tool for clinical student assignments, which ultimately expanded from The James to the entire medical center (Kolcun & Susi, 2025).

Facilitating Purposeful Senior Precepting Experiences

Throughout the semester, the liaison collaborates with the student nursing associate (SNA) program leaders to coordinate intentional senior SNA precepting placements. When possible, senior SNAs are assigned to units where they have already accepted or are likely to accept a future role as a new graduate nurse.

This intentional alignment strengthens the academic-practice transition, supports unit onboarding processes, and offers students an early sense of belonging in their future work environment (Baharum et al., 2023).

Engaging the Future Nursing Workforce

This liaison also plays an active role in nursing pipeline development by coordinating hands-on outreach activities with middle and high school students. Over the course of the academic year, these events might include wound care simulations, medication administration activities, CPR practice, intake and output challenges, and virtual reality safety scenarios.

These nurse workforce pipeline initiatives are carried out by on-site student field trips, career days at schools, and interactive classroom presentations across central Ohio for middle and high school students. Additionally, this liaison facilitates the design and organization of nursing shadowing opportunities for high school students within the medical center to provide authentic exposure to nursing careers. Since the initiation of the work described above in spring of 2023, the liaison has assisted with coordination and/or facilitation of on-site student group field trips to the medical center (each group ranging from 25-75 students), 1:1 student and nurse on-unit mentoring experiences, in-person classroom experiences and presentations at middle and high schools, and external workforce pipeline events (student participants ranging from 50-1800), ultimately reaching thousands of students.

Table: Nursing Workforce Pipeline Initiatives Summer 2023-Fall 2025

On-site field trips	11
1:1 on unit mentoring experiences	45
In person classroom experiences	17
External pipeline events	15

Strengthening Communication Across the Academic-Practice Partnership

The liaison may be called for assistance to troubleshoot onboarding issues, answer faculty questions, clarify placement processes, or share updates between The Ohio State University College of Nursing and the Wexner Medical Center.

Because this role operates both in the academic and practice sides of the organization, communication flows efficiently. Faculty, staff, and leaders quickly learn they have a dedicated connection point

for all things related to clinical education.

The Impact

Described activities enhance clinical learning, support student satisfaction, increase placement availability, strengthen recruitment pathways, and expand interest in nursing careers among future learners. Embedded directly within both the College of Nursing and the hospital, the liaison role exemplifies how academicpractice partnerships can meaningfully enhance nursing practice today while building

the workforce of tomorrow. ■

References

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