VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Fun Competition Helps Nurses Improve Patient Safety

Challenge

At the VA Boston/West Roxbury Hospital nurses need mandatory training on topics such as patient safety and infection control.

There are over 270 nurses that need to be trained regularly. Retaining the training is critical to the overall performance and safety of the hospital.

Solution

A friendly competition was run between the nursing wards from September to December. Every Tuesday and Thursday, two questions (and explanations) were posted online. Based on how each nurse performed, the question was re-sent over differing intervals of time: 8 days if answered incorrectly and 16 days if answered correctly. After a question was answered correctly twice, it was retired.

Points were awarded when nurses first answered a question and again when it was retired. Cumulative leaderboards were posted weekly showing the relative performance of the nursing wards and individual nurses. Each nurse was randomly assigned a rock band name (e.g. SICU Spice Girls) as a leaderboard identifier.

All nurses in the game received a VA Boston golf umbrella and were exempt from mandatory infection control training. The winners received fleeces.

Results

Of the 270 nurses, **87% completed all 22 questions**.

The nurses on 3 North surged out to an early lead that they maintained to the end, in spite of the efforts of SICU and 2 North nurses to dethrone them.

On a final survey, **90% of the nurses requested to receive other mandatory VA training via Qstream**.

As stated by the nurses, *"Qstream made learning fun and is one of the best team-building tools."*

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