

# Rotation Nurse: An Innovative Approach to Onboarding Graduate Nurses

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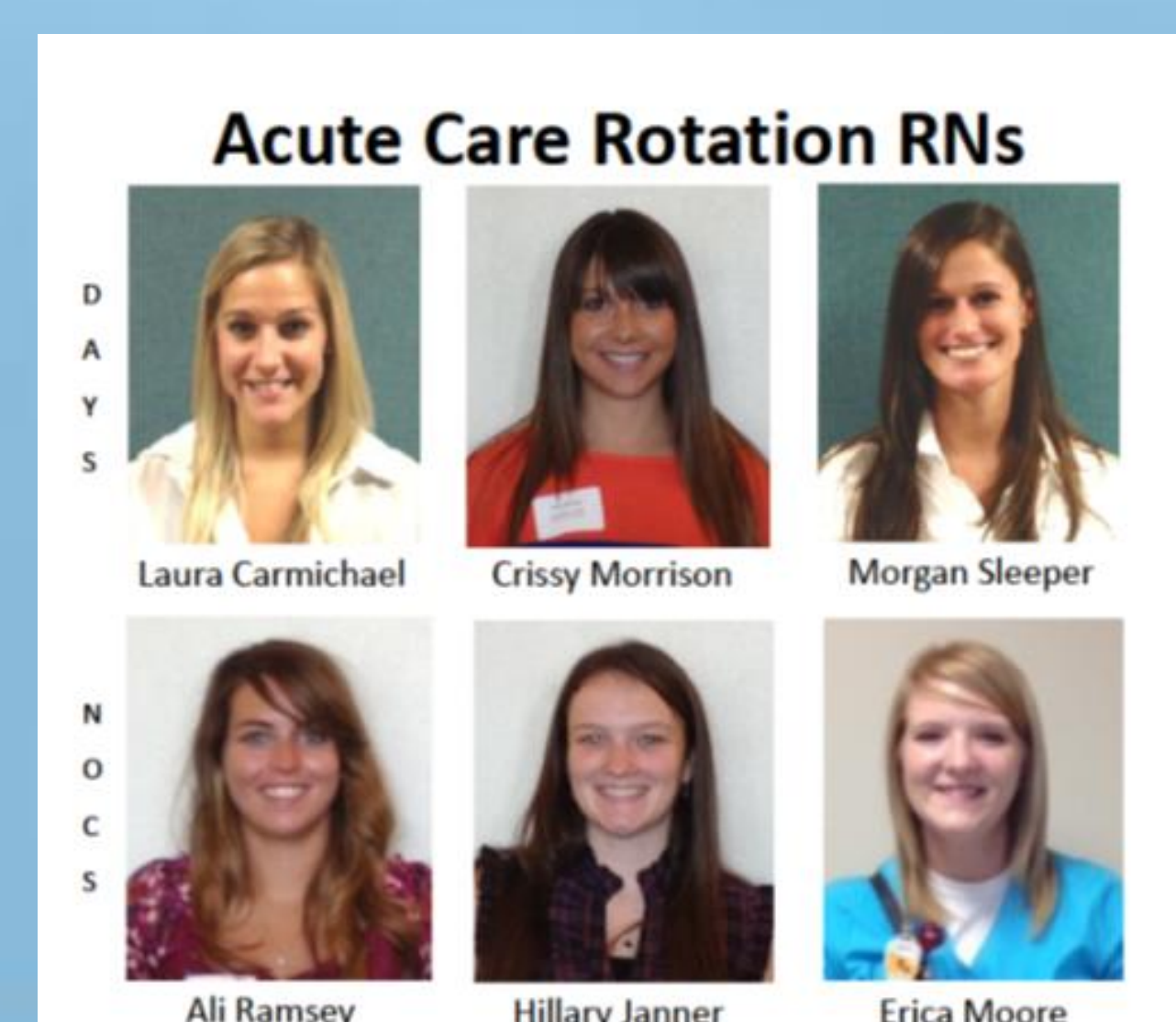
## Background/Methods

In order to provide exemplary care to our patients and support organizational initiatives, The University of Kansas Hospital (TUKH) looks for innovative strategic methods to manage nursing resources, knowing that creative leaders produce or invent new solutions by using imagination and skill while referencing relevant concepts and organizational need.<sup>1</sup> The Rotation Nurse program was implemented as a strategic plan to engage new staff, creatively meet staffing needs, and promote a supportive learning environment.

In the Spring/Summer of 2012, six new graduate nurses, Clinical Nurse Entry (CNE), were hired into the inaugural Acute Care Rotation Nurse position. This innovative position allowed for a different approach to staffing 12 Acute Care units. The Rotation Nurses report to one Nurse Manager to enable the new RN to have a “Core Unit” and a strong support system. The orientation plan was customized for this group of nurses to gain exposure to all of the unit types and specialty patient populations.

Over the course of the first year, rotation nurses are assigned to various units for a block of time, 2-6 weeks, based on vacancy rates. This allows for consistent staffing, and provides an appealing, unique, and diverse experience for the graduate nurse. To promote understanding and support to the new nurse, posters were displayed on all units introducing them to the program and the nurses who were involved.

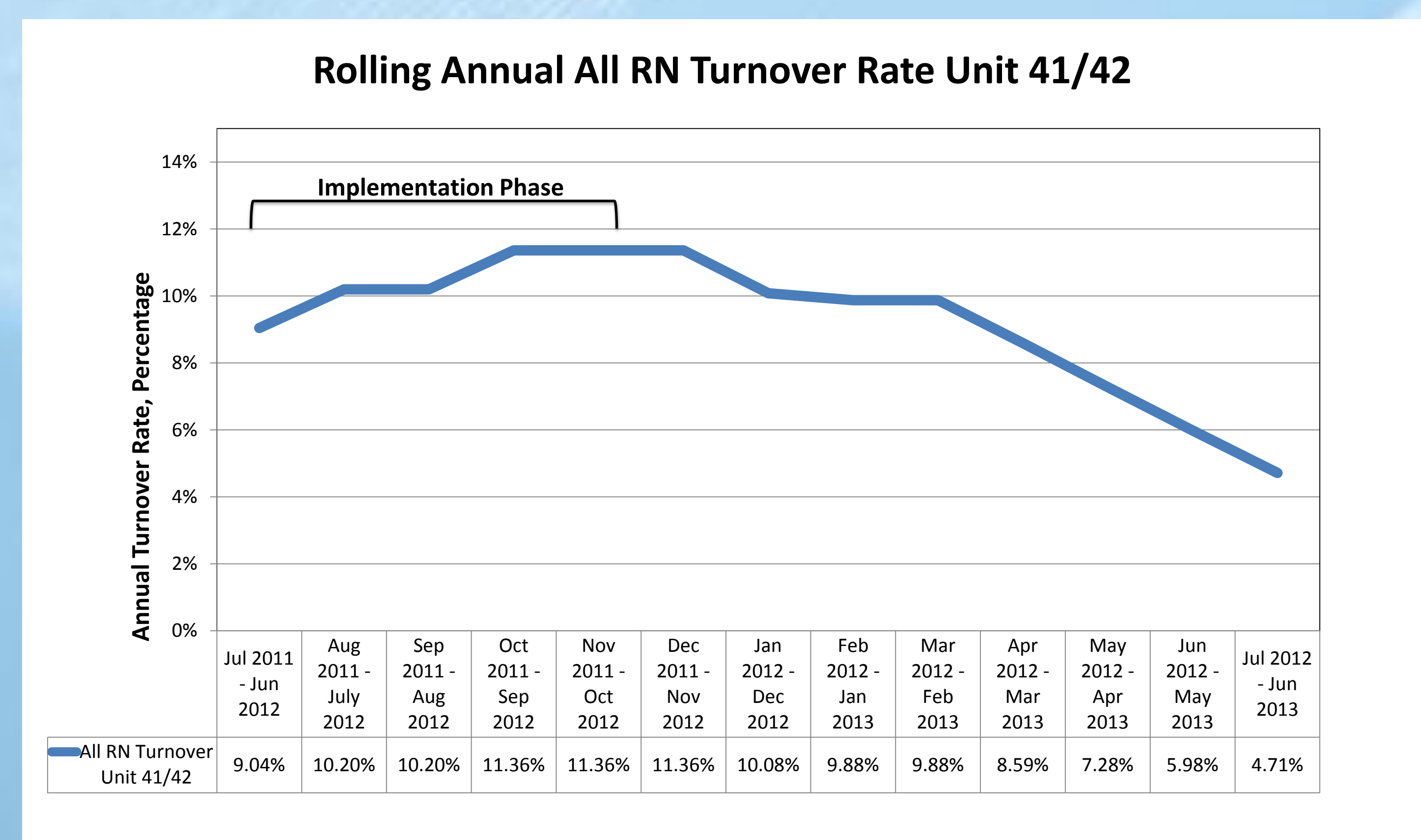
Each Rotation Nurse is asked to commit to 18 months in the program, after that time, they may opt to stay in the role or seek full time employment on a unit they have developed a passion for.



## Results

The success of the program has proven beneficial for both TUKH and the RNs hired in the position. The successful implementation includes:

- Fostered personal and professional growth which enhances frontline nursing leaders
- Increased Rotation Nurse confidence in a broad clinical skill set
- Developed stronger, more agile and resilient clinical nurses
- Improved recruitment and retention of exceptional new graduate nurses
- Improved nursing and patient satisfaction during acute staffing changes
- Decreased trended turnover data
- Stabilized core staffing by utilizing contingency staff to maximize resource utilization
- Improved interprofessional relationships throughout the organization
- Annualized cost savings



## Conclusion

The Rotation Nurse position provides CNEs an opportunity to experience many different units and patient populations within a division during their first year of nursing. It provides increased clinical knowledge, promotes critical thinking, improves communication and leadership skills, and provides networking opportunities. This solid foundation enhances confidence and allows staff to find a permanent home unit they are passionate about, increasing patient and nurse satisfaction.

Pooling attrition planning across several units maximizes resource utilization and allows for better nurse to patient ratios which has been linked to better patient outcomes.<sup>2</sup> The program leads to: increased nurse retention, decreased burnout by staff during times of higher vacancy rates, cost savings, and staffing consistency for temporary coverage needs.

This program has been expanded to the Progressive Care and Critical Care Divisions. Currently, TUKH has 12 Acute Care Rotation Nurses, 6 Progressive Care Rotation Nurses, and 6 Critical Care Rotation Nurses.

“This position exposed me to a number of patient populations within nursing which broadened my experience more than I could have imagined when I graduated with my BSN. There were areas which I was either completely unaware of or had prematurely shut myself down to. This exposure opened my eyes to areas I may have never had a change to experience. It also gave me a very broad skill set due to varying patient needs in different areas. I think it prepared me to think on my feet and per prepared for anything. It also fostered independence and teamwork skills that were needed for this position.” – Acute Care Rotational RN

## References

- 1.Clark, C. C. (2009). *Creative nursing leadership & management*. Sudbury, Mass.: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- 2.Nelson, S., & Gordon, S. (2006). *The complexities of care: Nursing reconsidered*. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press.

Savings from a 12 hour shift covered by Rotation RN vs. Clinical Nurse I= **\$105.60**

Annualized savings for Rotational RN covering shifts vs Clinical Nurse I working overtime shift= **\$16,473.60**

Annualized savings for shifts covered by 6 Rotational RNs= **\$98,841.60**



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