

Integrity

Leading an Organizational Culture Change

As the conditions surrounding the current health care environment become increasingly more uncertain, health care systems across the nation are focusing on creating better work environments for their employees, physicians and students. Negative behaviors in health care are a threat to patient safety, staff satisfaction, staff productivity and can lead to high rates of turnover.

A survey was administered to MUSC clinical staff, physicians and residents in January of 2012 to quantitatively and qualitatively measure the presence of unprofessionalism exhibited through negative behavior. The survey demonstrated a high frequency of responses indicating unprofessionalism is a regular issue in our work place, which resulted in our journey towards Professionalism led by Chief Nursing Officer, Marilyn Schaffner, Ph.D., RN, NEA-BC, CGRN.

In November 2012, an inter-professional team was invited to participate in an all-day workshop. The group was divided into four major groups. The groups focused on process, communication and accountability while asking the following questions:

What would our process be for eliminating this behavior?

What would be our method of communicating change to a professional environment?

How would we ensure accountability for professional behavior?

One group focused on developing a code word for unprofessional behavior. In January 2013, three task forces: Process, Communication and Accountability, were developed involving leaders and staff throughout the organization. These groups developed a method to transform culture towards eliminating unprofessional behaviors in our health care organization. Staff coined a code word, U-Turn, to be used to indicate someone is engaging in negative or unprofessional behavior. Videos including staff and physicians were developed demonstrating unprofessional behaviors, the use of the code word and appropriate responses. The MUSC Standards of Behavior were renamed as Standards of Professional Behavior and are now more descriptive of the behaviors encompassing professionalism. Response cue cards were developed to promote professional responses, as well as a pathway to resolution to enforce accountability of staff and physicians.

The expectation that everyone conducts themselves in a professional manner while holding each other accountable for the well-being of all staff, patients and their families is now evident across the organization.

