ABSTRACTS

Innovative Practices to Sustain and Renew Service and Patient-centered Outcomes

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Background and Objectives: In integrating HeartMath into our culture at Gundersen Health System, we have a shared focus on delivering workshops and sustaining our HeartMath practices through a variety of innovative approaches. This presentation provides examples of our success in keeping the HeartMath practices alive for our staff.

Gundersen is a fully integrated delivery system of 6500 employees. More than 700 medical, dental, and associate employees are distributed throughout 41 clinic locations, a 325-bed tertiary medical center, a Level II Trauma Center, Gundersen Medical Foundation, residency and medical education programs, and a clinical research program. Our service area covers 19 counties in three states, Western Wisconsin, Southeast Minnesota and Northeast Iowa. We are a physician-led organization embracing a strong administrative/medical partnership.

Three parts of the 2012-2016 strategic plan apply to this initiative: Innovate to achieve service and patient-centered experience outcomes that are best in class (Outstanding Patient Experience); create a culture that embraces a passion for caring and spirit of improvement (Great Place to Work); and engage our staff to create a safe, injury-free, and healing environment for themselves, our patients, and visitors (Great Place to Work).

Rollout Method: Between February 2011 and February 2013, more than 1200 employees completed HeartMath training. This initiative started with two staff members becoming HeartMath-certified trainers in January 2011. To promote leadership support for the program, the department chair MDs received HeartMath education in May 2011. Several units were identified to be the first to receive the training. As positive reviews circulated, requests for trainings were received from other departments. These included requests to customize the HeartMath offerings for leadership summits, manager meetings, new leader on-boarding, and physician and associate staff and to offer HeartMath appetizers. The reception from both senior leaders and staff warranted two additional trainers becoming certified in August 2011. The administrative leaders completed HeartMath education in March 2012 through our Leadership Academy.

Sustainability Method: The importance of sustainability of this type of training and project cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, we adopted a wide-ranging strategy. A HeartMath website was incorporated into our GundU Renewal Center. We set up organization-wide user groups that met regularly and organization-wide self-care events. The participants were made aware of sustainability resources and daily visual reminders (HeartQuotes). Monthly articles and participants' stories were placed in the Gundersen newsletter. Recognition posters were awarded to departments showing the percentage of their employees that have attended the trainings. When Jean Watson was adopted as the nursing theorist, an executive decision was made to strategically align her Caring Theory with the HeartMath program.

Results: Using a 1-to-10 scale (1 = not recommend, 10 = highly recommend), 86% rated 7-10 they would recommend this program to colleagues. A post-workshop research survey pilot consisting of 20 questions sent to 122 participants 3 to 6 months after completion received a 54% response rate, with 86% indicating regular use of techniques.

The following Figure illustrates the results of sustainability and impact research.

Figure Sustainability and impact research.