

The Next Step

- **Realization of your full potential.**
- **Look outside your comfort zone.**
- **Improve your quality of life**

The nursing shortage is not a secret and most hospitals realize they need to retain and/or obtain experienced nurses to provide their patients with the best possible care. It may seem that a larger hospital has more to offer an experienced nurse when compared with a smaller, isolated community hospital, so how does that experience nurse choose between the large hospital and a small/mid-size medical center? What was it that convinced me to move from the city to this mid-size community hospital with an OR of 6 suites? Technology was a large factor in addition to a strong progressive leadership-management team, positive labor relationships, and a work environment to strengthen and challenge my skills. My former colleagues were shocked with my decision but I would tell them, "It may be a small hospital, but it does not do small cases and it has a "big city" attitude." This facility is unique in that sense. Our resources and technology equal that of any large facility with a commitment to advanced care. In fact, we are moving our OR to the new tower within the year and will have 10 new Operating Rooms.

Still my former colleagues were surprised. Many felt that I was on track to move up with in the large system of management within the facility and really could not understand why I would change direction. I was doing well at my position, but I felt that my impact on nursing practice and the community were muted by the large system in place. It was comfortable, I performed my role, but there was something missing. My first drive "across town" to work took a grand total of 3 minutes. Unlike the 40 minute commute I was accustomed to. I smiled, this was an unexpected benefit. I soon found out that there are nurses at this facility who willingly drive 45-60 minutes and across the state border, past their own local hospital to work at this facility. The hospital will provide overnight accommodations for experienced nurses that live over 100 miles from the hospital. Why do that? This facility simply feels the patients deserve the best possible care and the surrounding community deserves a facility that will deliver a higher level of care. The executive management team supports the commitment to nursing professionalism and excellence. As a result, it draws from miles around. Nurses are keen to make sacrifices to work in a place they are valued, challenged, and have greater control of their practice and work schedule.

It is no secret that experienced nurses are willing to make that extra effort to work where their skills are valued, their ideas encouraged and their efforts sincerely impact their patients and the surrounding community. Imagine actually having an impact on an entire community by: improving healthy positive relationships with physicians drawing in new talent to support growth of the facility, utilizing financial management skills to potentially improve the hospital bottom line and securing its place in the community, and finally employ your leadership skills to mentor staff and colleagues to advance their skill level and therefore improve patient care. If you feel your skills are underutilized or you feel unchallenged in your current position, endure and look to a facility worthy of your dedication and talent.

Know that you have more options than you can imagine. Dare to look outside your comfort zone. Your next career move should be to improve the quality of your life and invigorate your passion for your nursing practice. You may be surprised to find, that

your talents can not only impact a department or hospital, it can impact the whole health of the community. It is true that I wear more hats of responsibility than I use to, but I can see the difference my actions are making and that has made all the difference.