Ask the Nurse Managers: Job Search & Career Advice for BSN Students  
Monday, October 24, 2011

Panelists

Christina DiMichele, Nurse Manager, Hematology Acute Care Unit/Short Stay Unit, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
- 25 years in the field, 10 years at CHOP, previously at Bryn Mawr and Delaware County Hospitals
- Currently teaching at Penn School of Nursing

Cheryl Maguire, Nurse Manager, Medical Intensive Care Unit, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania
- Began nursing career at HUP as a new graduate in 1984, MICU since 1991
- Became nurse manager in 2007

Betty Ann Boczar, Nurse Manager, Medical/Telemetry Units (Founders 12 & 14), Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania
- 30 years in the field: MICU – 12 years, Previously Surgery/Trauma – 18 years
- Nurse Manager for 11 years

Hospital Specific Information

Christina DiMichele, CHOP
- CHOP requires BSN degree, GPA 3.0.
- CHOP has Pipeline Program, hosts interview day when candidates get screened.
- Christina offers 6 month temp positions from which several are hired into full-time positions
- Recommends connecting with PA State Nurses Association.
- CHOP uses Behavioral Interviewing. Be ready for scenarios regarding conflict resolution, how you communicate effectively, how you work with diverse populations.
- Ask the recruiter when you are setting up an interview at CHOP if you can shadow a nurse.
- CHOP offers tuition reimbursement after 2 years with the hospital. 20-30% of Christina’s staff are enrolled in a graduate program.
- CHOP externship applications due February 2012.

Cheryl Maguire, HUP
- What experience (including clinical rotations) have you had with patients on this unit? ICUs can’t take graduates who do not have at least some critical care experience.
- Make an impression with your preceptor.
- Be sure to ask the recruiter when you are setting up an interview at HUP if you can shadow a nurse.
- Consider every day an interview day at the hospital — no phone or internet, ask questions (don’t merely watch everything), ask to observe things, be curious, make connections, let yourself be known.
- In addition to more immediate availability, openings are generally forecasted out at HUP.
- HUP has July and September start dates.
Betty Ann Boczar, HUP

- Founders 12/14 units have complex patient issues so the hope is that nurses stay and continue up the clinical ladder.
- Ask the recruiter when you are setting up an interview at HUP if you can shadow a nurse.
- Founders 12/14 asks for a 2 year commitment; Orientation is 6 months.
- HUP makes offers pending NCLEX.

Job Search Tips

- Start early, seek out what you like, look for that “Ah ha” moment in school and go for that, find externship in that area.
- Talk with your preceptor about options/best fits for your skills and interests.
- “Get in” with the leadership group at your current hospital.
- Email nurse manager to show interest.
- Build your resume as you experience different clinical units.
- More jobs are available at community/rural hospitals, competition is high for positions at urban hospitals.
- Find a personal connection at your hospital of interest.
- Call recruiting department at desired hospital and ask for the contact information for the recruiters hiring for units of interest. Set up appointment to make interests known.
- Find the nurse manager of a similar unit at your desired hospital - make contact.
- Volunteer as a way of gaining experience on desired unit.
- Find out about Pipeline Program days (or Open Houses) at hospitals of interest.
- Employers place a lot of emphasis on relevant experience during senior leadership clinical and externship as well as volunteer experience on unit.
- 2-3 letters of recommendation – 1 from your clinical instructor.

Start applying in February if you are graduating in May 2012 – get your name out there!

Interview Tips

- Research the hospital
- Ask the recruiter when you schedule your interview if you can shadow a nurse. Not all hospitals offer this option. Both HUP and CHOP do.
- If shadowing, ask for a unit description, show understanding of patient population.
- Shadowing allows clinical nurses to meet you. Be active and engaged. Think about whether the unit is the right one for you. Look at the leadership style.
- Ask the recruiter how many positions are being filled. When will you hear?
- Dress professionally – wear a suit to the interview.
- Be flexible about your preferred shift/don’t overly focus on the schedule. Many new jobs require night shift.
- Clinical nurses included in the interview.
- Be prepared for behavioral interview, “tell us about a time when…”
• Getting the job is not just about a strong GPA, have some confidence and come to the interview prepared with questions:
  o What is your unit like?
  o How does everyone collaborate?
  o What is orientation like?
  o What kind of committees do you have?

• Questions to think about prior to your interview (so you are ready when they are asked):
  o What did you like about school?
  o What is your experience with conflict resolution, problem-solving, teamwork?
  o What are your strengths? What are your opportunities for growth?
  o What is your favorite part of patient care?
  o Is there a specific patient population that “has spoken” to you?

Come prepared with knowledge of what you can give back to the unit. Have goals in mind!