



Minutes October 11, 2023 | 10a – 2p

Externship Program Committee 2024

This meeting was recorded via zoom

**Attending: Hospitals**

Hannah Barrett, North Sunflower Medical Center, Ruleville, (zoom)  
Brandie Beard, Baptist Memorial Hospital Golden Triangle, Columbus (zoom)  
Katreia Broadwater, Memorial Health System, Gulfport (zoom)  
Kaffie Burns Denley, Bolivar Medical Center, Cleveland, (in person)  
Alicia Ciarloni, Baptist Memorial Hospital North Mississippi, Oxford (in person)  
Adriane Crabtree, Forrest General Hospital, Hattiesburg (in person)  
Jennifer Davis, St. Dominic’s Hospital, Jackson (in person)  
Felycia Dear, Merit Health River Oaks, Flowood (in person)  
Jaymie Heard, King’s Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven (in person)  
Linda Holmes, Forrest General Hospital, Hattiesburg (in person)  
Colby Kent, King’s Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven (in person)  
Michelle McCann, Baptist Memorial Hospital Leake, Carthage (in person)  
Marianne Mejia, Memorial Health System, Gulfport (zoom)  
Cassie Montgomery, Delta Health System-The Medical Center, Greenville (zoom)

**Attending: Schools of Nursing**

Vicki Bingham, Delta State University, Cleveland (zoom)  
Lara Collum, Meridian Community College, Meridian (in person)  
Tiffany Cox, Holmes Community College, Ridgeland (in person)  
Sharon Davis, East Central Community College, Decatur (zoom)  
Stephanie Greer, Southwest Mississippi Community College (in person)  
Christy Jenkins, Delta State University, Cleveland (in person)  
Brandy Larmon, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus (zoom)  
Wendy Lingle, Hinds Community College, Jackson (in person)  
Sharon McElwain, University of Mississippi Medical Center SON, Jackson (in person)  
Mary Helen Ruffin, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus (zoom)  
Ira Sewell, Alcorn State University, Natchez (in person)  
Kim Smith, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg (in person)

**Attending Guests:**

Dr. Melissa Temple, Director of Nursing, IHL  
Dr. Anna Grace (A.G) Tribble, Rural Health Extension Specialist, MS State University

**Attending MHA Staff:**

Robin Powell, LaNelle Weems

**Unable to Attend:**

Shirley Evers-Manly, Alcorn State University,  
Natchez

**LaNelle Weems:** L Weems opened the meeting with a welcome, reviewed building information / layout, and asked each attendee to introduce themselves. L Weems thanked the 2024 Chair, Alicia Ciarloni, Baptist Memorial Hospital North Mississippi, for accepting the chair position for the coming year and at the same time, thanked Sharon McElwain, UMMC SON, for her service as chair in 2023.

**A Ciarloni:** Review and approval of minutes dated December 7, 2022. Minutes approved as written.

**A G Tribble:** The 2023 evaluation results were emailed to each committee member. AG Tribble presented evaluation summary percentages for the years 2018-2022 of externship survey results. Presentation attached. AG Tribble can be contacted at [agt51@msstate.edu](mailto:agt51@msstate.edu).

#### **Committee Discussion:**

Open conversation took place from the prompts listed on the agenda. The prompts were taken from issues that were resolved during the 2023 externship year.

**The 320-hour completion requirement** continues to be a struggle to confirm, especially for the funded externs. The processes within each facility need to ensure 320 hours are completed before the student is allowed to take the survey and request their certification of completion. MHA does not have access to the timesheets at the time of the request.

The 320 hours can be confirmed from the extern's paystub – not the planned schedule written out for the extern.

#### **Other topics discussed were:**

How to handle upset family members and hospital policies regarding communication with them.

Dress Code for and attitude of externs during recruiting process (hospital, WIN Job center)

Foreign exchange students: Optional Practical Training (OPT Form) for exchange students must be approved 90 days prior to externship start date. Ensure all externs in this category are aware that this form must be completed within the 90-day timeframe.

#### **2024 Document Review:**

**The Guideline Booklet** with Q&A was reviewed. No changes indicated.

**Participation Applications** for Hospital and SON: Edits to be made to the application to include PDD audit required statements, "This facility evaluates the program each year."

The application process is accessed through survey monkey only. All attachments needed are emailed separately to [rpowell@mhanet.org](mailto:rpowell@mhanet.org).

## Program Guidelines:

- LPN to RN eligibility: These students are eligible to participate in the externship program.
- Psych mental health hospitals would like to participate but the current paperwork does not pertain to their clinical setting. Nursing skills / checklists / procedures must be written specific to the mental health arena. An idea is to have graduate students from universities in education or psych mental health to help write / provide a skills checklist and a curriculum to include for our psych hospital experience.

**ACTION: L Weems** will work on creating an ad-hoc group to further this discussion for resolution.

## Skills Checklist and Exclusion List

- Exclusion list concern: Are externs allowed to manipulate Pitocin or Magnesium Sulfate Drips in L&D. The exclusion of this process is included / covered by #2 of the exclusion list: *Titrate IV medications*.
- The checklist footer was removed accidentally from the 2023 paperwork. R Powell will add the footer back to the checklist for 2024.
- PKU / Glucose sticks on newborns – S McElwain will add this procedure to the Labor & Delivery packet stating that this procedure is acceptable by the extern under the supervision of the preceptor. R Powell will add this item to the skills checklist with the same restriction.

**ACTION: S McElwain / R Powell**

- Discussion took place regarding the issue of different schools communicating differently to their specific students. (AKA Some students had checklists, some did not. Some checklists were signed, some were not. Some students had been told verbally by instructors that they were restricted from certain procedures, but the hospital had no written restriction from the school regarding that procedure.) This topic will be reviewed at the mandatory orientation meeting to be held November 29.
- Discussion took place whether the skills checklist could be converted to a digital platform rather than a paper one. Most hospitals do not allow the student to have their cell phones on the floor and digital signatures on an electronic device are not credible.

## The Letter of Good Standing

- Discussion took place about the definition of “good standing” and the specific clinical location’s regulations that keep a student classified “in good standing” and able to participate in externship as semester grades are confirmed.
- Discussion took place regarding policies that ensure confidentiality between extern and facility (only) and that family members are not included in that confidentiality. Hospital personnel stated that most hospitals have policies in place that prohibit communication with outside family members.
- Discussion took place as to the proper process for alerting the hospital that the student is no longer able to participate due to a failing semester grade received after hire.
  - Final transcripts are required at Orientation to ensure students passed the semester.
  - Hospitals should have alternates ready in case the student does have to drop after being hired due to semester grade.

## Miscellaneous:

- The SONs are asked to communicate their externship start/end dates with the hospital personnel so that the 320 hours can be completed within the available window of time.
- **Coffee & Conversation Zooms to be included with the 2024 program**  
A Ciarloni suggested a quarterly zoom call (Coffee & Conversation) for all hospital and SON representatives to discuss the externship experience at their location, mentor each other in procedures, and resolve issues together. R Powell will set up the zooms in early 2024. Participation in these zooms will be voluntary.

## 2023 Delta Health Systems Implementation Program: The Mississippi EARN (Mississippi [E](#)xternship [a](#)nd [R](#)esidency [N](#)urse [P](#)rogram) – Grant received.

Team consists of:

Dr. Melissa Temple, Director of Nursing, IHL

Dr. Anna Grace (A.G) Tribble, Rural Health Extension Specialist, MS State University

Wendy Lingle, Dean of Nursing, Nursing/Allied Health Center

LaNelle Weems, Director, MCQW

Hospital participation: South Sunflower County Hospital, Indianola, Mississippi

School of Nursing Participation: Mississippi Delta Community College, Moorhead, Mississippi

South Sunflower County Hospital (SSCH) is a 47-bed, not-for-profit, Sole Community Hospital. High chronic disease prevalence plagues community members in Sunflower County, Mississippi. The result is that Sunflower County ranks as one of the least healthy counties in Mississippi, as #71 of 82 ranked counties. While most of the county identifies as only Black or African American (77%), the median household income differs by \$47,300 between Black residents (\$26,500) and White residents (\$73,800). To fully serve the most medically underserved community members in Sunflower County, meaning the low-income Black residents, SSCH staff conducted a community health needs assessment (CHNA) in 2022. An online community survey (N=59) offering insights into the health of the Sunflower County from the perspective of the county's residents. Respondents identified access to healthcare as the most important feature of a healthy community and noted high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity as diseases of concern. Meanwhile, one third of all respondents noted concern regarding racism within their community.

While serving residents within this complex context, SSCH has received prior technical assistance as part of the 2018 cohort of hospitals in the Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program (DRCHSD). Those technical assistance recommendations led to improvements at SSCH in their finances and clinical operations and to additions in service lines needed to address local community health concerns. Of the quality improvement initiatives that have been launched at SOUTH SUNFLOWER COUNTY HOSPITAL, none to date address the issues of high nurse turnover and high nurse vacancy rates, both of which are workforce concerns faced broadly the state of Mississippi.

SSCH requires support in training and retaining qualified nursing staff. Nurse retention can improve quality of care and community trust in the local health system. However, financing nurse student externships can be cost prohibitive for a small, rural hospital with a tight operating budget. Thus, the MS EARN pilot program will provide paid, three-semester long externships to associate degree nursing students matched with SSCH over the 2024-25 academic year. The proposed project builds upon the current MS Summer Student Externship

program by offering a longer period of training with opportunities for extern and hospital staff professional development regarding health equity and community engagement in clinical settings.

In the short term, this project will increase the number of nurses present at South Sunflower County Hospital, equip staff, including nurse externs, to work effectively across diversity in race and cultural background, provide nurse externs with valuable clinical experience in preparation for their NCLEX licensing exam, and enable more efficient patient discharge and bed turnover. These changes will positively impact the hospital in terms of staff turnover and burnout, while improving care available to the underserved, Black/African American population of Sunflower County. In the long term, this project will be used as model throughout the state of Mississippi to improve nurse student externship training in terms of clinical experience and equitable patient advocacy. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected via surveys, interviews, and focus groups to measure the impact of the MS EARN pilot program on metrics related to hospital quality of care and employability of participating externs.

### **Mandatory Orientation Date: November 29, 2023 at the Mississippi Hospital Association, 116 Woodgreen Crossing, Madison, Mississippi | 10a – 3p**

**ACTION: R Powell** will inform all hospitals and schools regarding this date. The meeting will be held at MHA. Attendance is required – one person must attend in person and others from the same facility can attend via zoom. A registration link will be provided very soon.

With no more discussion to take place, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes taken by rpowell | send edits to [rpowell@mhanet.org](mailto:rpowell@mhanet.org)

Attachment: Presentation of 5-year evaluation results from A G Tribble