



FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOMES FOR THE AGING
The FAHSA Innovation Exchange

Submission

Name/Title of Submitter:	Kevin Smaage, Director of Health Services
Facility/Organization Name:	The Alliance Community for Retirement Living
Address:	130 W. Armstrong Ave., DeLand, FL 32720
Phone:	386/734-6401
FAX:	386/734-9168
Email:	kevinsmaage@shellpoint.org
Date of Submission:	5/15/06
Title of Innovation:	Eliminating Use of Agency Staff/Recruitment and Retention of Staff
Topic for Submission: (Please choose a topic from the list included in the attached submission guidelines which best describes the innovation you are submitting.)	Topic: Workforce Issues
Audience: (Choose one or more, as appropriate.)	<p align="center">HUD Housing Communities</p> <p align="center">X Retirement Communities (CCRC or fee for Service)</p> <p align="center">Assisted Living Facilities</p> <p align="center">X Nursing Homes</p>

- Description of Innovation:** Please succinctly describe the innovative program or service, creative idea or best practice and the resulting benefits to your organization or the consumers you serve. Limit the narrative to 3 pages, excluding attachments such as forms.

In the first quarter of 2003, our facility faced a serious challenge. At that time, The Alliance Community Center for Health Care averaged over 2000 hours of CNA agency each month. This represented a cost of almost \$40,000 per month and was a serious threat not only to the quality of care provided to our residents but also to our financial position.

In order to address this issue a goal was set to eliminate agency use within 3 months. A task force was created and instructed that no policy, procedure or program was sacred and to leave no stone unturned in their search. Their objective was to submit any and all recommendations that they determined would accomplish the goal of agency elimination.

The task force developed 11 recommendations that covered such topics as recruitment, retention,

appropriate scheduling of staff, negotiating agency contracts, creative scheduling (Baylor and Per diem) etc.

Each of the recommendations was implemented in May 2003. As a result, Agency was cut in half by the end of June, cut again in half by the end of July and finally eliminated in August. Since that time, no CNA agency staff person has been used in our facility and Licensed Nurse use has been reduced by 90%.

For a more detailed description of the task force recommendations, please scroll down to the attachment.

2. **Budget:** Provide information about the annual budget or total cost of your innovation (if a one-time expense) and the number of staff or volunteers used to implement it. If your innovation did not require a budget or staff, please indicate.

Attachment

Elimination of Agency Usage at The Alliance Community Task Force Recommendations

GOAL:

To eliminate the use of Agency in the Health Center by August 1, 2003.

1. Ensure appropriate scheduling of staff. (scheduling staff when we need them as opposed to when they want to work) As much as possible, give employees permanent assignments. This helps staff feel comfortable because they know their co-workers and also benefits the residents who become familiar with their caregivers.
2. Consistently enforce Time and Attendance Policies and track call-offs for each employee. Much of OT and Agency use is caused by excessive calloffs. Work with staff members who have attendance issues to determine reasons for calling off. Adjust schedules to meet personal needs if possible. Recognize good work habits. Give away DVD players and other prizes for perfect attendance, or other accomplishments.
3. Develop a sense of urgency in the hiring of staff. Interview them on the day they apply and offer them a job. If we don't hire them today, someone else will. Get them working ASAP so they have an income. Don't make them wait for the next orientation.
4. Ensure that MOD and On Call Nurse send home agency when overstaffed

instead of facility staff. This is a costly mistake.

5. Ensure consistent use of progressive discipline and give employees the opportunity to correct behavior before termination. Try to stay away from a “punitive” environment and move toward a teaching and team building approach.
6. Re-write Policies and Procedures regarding use of agency. In-service Staff scheduler’s and MOD’s so that appropriate decisions are made in regard to agency usage. Limit the number of people authorized to make staffing decisions.
7. Administrator and DON must track staffing ratios daily. This should include agency use. Research overages when they occur to determine what caused the extra hours. Do not wait till the end of a pay period, the research will be hindered since people will not recall the circumstances that caused the overage.
8. Create an environment where staff members enjoy coming to work. Treat the staff with respect and dignity. Have fun with the staff and learn about their families and their goals. Let them know that you are interested in them beyond the work relationship. Try to keep track of significant events in their lives. Birthdays, anniversaries, graduation etc are all opportunities to build a relationship with the staff. Begin writing up people for positive performance and celebrate their achievement. It would be nice to be called to the DON’s office because an employee did something right
9. Review pay scales and offer competitive wages. We do not need to pay the most but we certainly should not be paying the least when compared to other SNF’s in the area. CNA’s and Nurses are out there; they just don’t work for us! Be creative in rate plans. Baylor and PILB programs have been successful in many facilities.
10. Hire and maintain a large number of per diem staff. They should be paid a higher rate since they are agreeing to be available when called and make sure they get some hours. This creates our own pool that we can call when a scheduled staff member calls in sick. It also allows us to fill open full time spots quickly since we can offer positions to the per diem staff.

Renegotiate contracts with the agencies. With the vast number of agencies available use, most agencies are willing to negotiate rates to get business. Read the over time provisions in their contract carefully. Many agencies charge OT to the facility that employed their staff member when they hit 40 hours, This means that an agency staff member could have worked 37 hours in another SNF before coming to work for us, but from their 4th hour on at CHC, we will be charged the agencies OT Rate. Also, don’t be afraid to negotiate the “kill” fee. Many agencies charge as much

as 8 hours if their staff member is cancelled within 2 hours of the start of the shift. It is also important to negotiate out of the contract any statements that limit our ability to hire agency staff. Most agencies have a non-compete clause or will require us to pay them a fee to release their employee.