Virtual Nursing FAQs

**What are the first steps in setting up a virtual program?**

**Needs Assessment and Goal Setting:**

* + Conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify the specific challenges, gaps, and opportunities within the healthcare organization that could be addressed through virtual nursing services.
  + Set clear and measurable goals for the virtual nurse program, aligning them with the organization's strategic objectives and priorities.

**Stakeholder Engagement:**

* + Engage key stakeholders, including hospital administrators, clinicians, nurses, IT staff, and patients, to gather input, build consensus, and ensure buy-in for the virtual nurse program.
  + Solicit feedback from stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation process to address concerns and optimize the program's design.

***How do I get buy-in from stakeholders?***

* Provide clear and understandable data to the team. Show other programs currently in the works and doing well ie. Oncology Care Partners, Mayo Clinic
* Provide evidence-based writings to show the benefit for the patient and organization.

**What technology is used in a virtual nurse program?**

* Technology used in virtual nurse programs may include telehealth platforms, remote monitoring devices (e.g., wearable sensors), secure messaging systems, video conferencing tools, and electronic health records (EHR) systems.

**What should I look for in a Virtual Nurse?**

* + Virtual Nurses practice “at the top of their license” thus the nurse should be well educated with at least 2-4 years’ experience in the specialty. They must be able to assess a patient without touching them so they must depend on other skills.
  + If your organization is spread across the U.S., the nurse must be licensed in the state your patients reside in or have a compact license if that applies.
  + Virtual Nurses should have the ability to conduct skilled communication, be collaborative, have excellent advocacy skills, and the ability to function autonomously – as well as have a high level of emotional intelligence and situational awareness.

**How does a virtual nurse program integrate with existing healthcare services and workflows?**

* This is an important step in the stakeholder buy-in. Building the workflow in the beginning and ensuring the nurses and other staff who will be affected are included in the development and implementation. Be flexible and know there will be changes in the workflow as your organization determines what works best.

**What are the legal and regulatory considerations specific to virtual nursing practice, such as licensure requirements across different states or countries?**

* Nurses must hold valid licenses in the jurisdictions where they provide care, adhering to Nurse Practice Acts and telehealth regulations.
* Compliance with cross-state practice regulations, including adherence to the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) for practicing in multiple states in the U.S.
* Awareness of international regulations when providing care across borders, ensuring credentialing, privileging, and malpractice insurance coverage are in place.

**What are the staffing considerations for virtual nurse programs, including nurse-to-patient ratios, workload management, and on-call availability?**

* Determine appropriate nurse-to-patient ratios based on patient needs and acuity levels.
* Establish protocols for on-call availability and continuity of care to ensure patient access and consistency.
* Provide comprehensive training and support for virtual nurses and implement quality assurance measures to monitor performance and outcomes.