### Background

- Traditional nurse manager selection involves appointment of expert clinicians with minimal formal leadership and management education.
- The nursing leadership crisis is compounded by a lack of interest from novice nurses in nursing management and difficulty filling nurse manager positions.
- Inconsistent and ineffective leadership contributes to unhealthy work environments, poor patient outcomes and high nurse turnover rates.
- The predicted nurse manager shortage demands deliberate and strategic succession planning methods.

### Setting and Population

- St. Mary’s Medical Center is a 480-bed Magnet designated acute care hospital located in Evansville, Indiana. St. Mary’s is operated by Ascension Health headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, the world’s largest faith-based, nonprofit healthcare system.
- St. Mary’s mission is dedicated to holistic and spiritually centered care of individuals and the community.
- St. Mary’s Medical Center projects critical middle level nursing leadership vacancies from retirement, resignations and internal promotions. All nurses currently not holding a formal leadership position were eligible to apply to the program.
- This project was designed for mid-level nursing managers (St. Mary’s nurse managers use the title of director.). St. Mary’s Medical Center projects critical middle level nursing leadership vacancies from retirement, resignations and internal promotions. All nurses currently not holding a formal leadership position were eligible to apply to the program.

### Evidence

- The Wilcoxon Sign-Rank tests was used to determine difference between pre and post LPI and NMSI scores
- The LPI scores were all statistically significantly increased in the 5 leadership domains: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (p < 0.05).
- The NMSI indicated statistically significant increases in 52 of the 79 competency statements (p < 0.05).
- 90% of participants (10/11) reported the program met or exceeded expectations.
- Program evaluations demonstrated five resounding themes:
  - Insightful and inspiration
  - Helpful in building resources network
  - Real life experiential learning
  - Caring/health relationship building
  - Improved leadership competency
- 80% of participants completing program have transitioned to leadership positions with the organization.

### Implications for Practice

- Deliberate succession planning increases nurses perception of leadership and management competency.
- Succession planning supports a nurturing environment stimulating intellectual and professional development.
- Succession planning has the potential to increase nurse manager retention through professional development and career advancement opportunities.
- Succession planning creates a systematic and ongoing process for identification and development of intellectual talent to fill a leadership pipeline.
- Nursing leadership succession plan decreases need for external recruiting and increases leadership continuity.

### Methods

- Participants were selected through an objective systematic process by a succession planning council.
- The Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) and Nurse Manager Skill Inventory (NMSI) were used to assess participants’ perception of their leadership and management competency prior to and upon completion program.
- Participants completed the online Essentials of Nurse Manager Orientation (ENMO) educational program. Participants attended monthly workshops and experiential learning activities corresponding to the assigned ENMO modules.