**BACKGROUND**

- Research shows that clinical ladders programs result in:
  - Improvement in staff and patient satisfaction
  - Increase in number of expert nurses
  - Improvement in healthcare expenditures
  - Decrease costs, sick time, and turnover.
- The Vanderbilt Professional Nursing Practice Program (VPNPP) is a performance-based career advancement program for nurses.
- VPNPP goals include:
  - Rewarding nursing performance
  - Providing opportunities for promotion
  - Attracting and retaining clinical nurses in direct patient care
  - Achieving consistent standards and pay equity

**PROBLEM**

In the H/R & PACUs, only 14% of nurses were level 3 and .04% were level 4. Many nurses who are qualified do not challenge the ladder.

**PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

- Survey sent to nurses in the H/R and PACUs at VUMC.
- Survey data presented to chairs of VPNPP Steering Committee.
- A comparison survey was done with the NICU.

**RESULTS OF SURVEYS**

Barriers identified:
- VPNPP process
- VPNPP website
- 5-pillar interview
- Leadership
- Lack of understanding about the process.

Implications:
- Nurses received information from a variety of sources
- Knowledge gaps about each step in process
- Need for clear, direct instructions and information given for advancement process in a scheduled and timely manner

New Developments:
- VUMC Website has been updated
- Perioperative Services Website has links to VPNPP, and a presentation challenging myths about the process
- PowerPoint-Steps for Challenging the VPNPP
- Challenging the VPNPP Checklist
- Examples of level 3 and 4 questions
- Perianesthesia- VPNPP Clinical Ladder Freeform
- VPNPP4 Committee—meets with nurses to aid them in the VPNPP process

**CONCLUSION/ IMPLICATIONS**

A number of nurses have advanced on the clinical ladder. Areas for improvement were identified and specific improvements made. One of the other areas still needing to be addressed are education for the managers.