

## **Project Title: Advancing Excellence – A Staff Upgrading and Professional Development Initiative**

### **Introduction**

In response to evolving healthcare demands and the need for high-quality, evidence-based nursing care, the new Nursing Administrator of St. Theresa Catholic Hospital, Nkoranza, after assumption of duty, launched the "Advancing Excellence" project in 2022, a comprehensive staff upgrading initiative aimed at enhancing the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of our nursing workforce. This initiative was designed to promote lifelong learning, increase specialty certification rates, and build a resilient, empowered nursing team prepared to meet the complex needs of our patients.

### **Objectives**

The primary goals of the project were to

1. Improve clinical competence through targeted education and certification.
2. Foster professional growth through structured mentoring.
3. Create individualized development plans aligned with staff career goals.
4. Strengthen retention by investing in continuous learning and recognition.
5. Enhance patient care outcomes through a more qualified and confident workforce.

### **Implementation Strategy**

The project implemented in three key phases:

#### **Assessment & Planning**

An initial needs assessment identified skill gaps, interest in certification, and barriers to professional development. Staff feedback, performance reviews, and patient outcome metrics informed the structure of individualized learning plans.

#### **Program Rollout**

1. Staff schooling without study leave were granted study leave.
2. Enrolled nurses to go for regular courses for effective learning.
3. Monthly in-service training sessions were conducted on specialty areas
4. Staff upgrading for BSc programs are doing so through sandwich courses while those for specialty programs go for regular courses.
5. Financial support given through study leave with pay during the course period.
6. Quarterly monitoring and supervision for progress development.
7. A mentorship program was launched, using experienced nurses.

#### **Evaluation & Sustainability**

The program's effectiveness was evaluated through pre- and post-implementation data, staff

feedback, and clinical outcome trends. Continuous improvement strategies were built into the project, including yearly goal-setting workshops and leadership development tracks.

### **Outcomes and Impact**

Since the project's inception, we have seen substantial progress:

- The number of upgraded certified nurses increased by 60% within 24 months.
- 25 nurses successfully obtained new specialty certifications, including 3 critical care nurses, 1 perioperative nurse, 1 ENT nurse, 3 nurse anesthetists, 7 midwives, and 10 BSc nurses.
- 37 nurses are in school for various specialties.
- Staff engagement scores improved, reflecting increased motivation and job satisfaction.
- Retention rates among nurses with certifications rose by 35%, reducing turnover costs and improving continuity of care.

### **Conclusion**

The "Advancing Excellence" project has proven that investing in our staff is a direct investment in patient care. By equipping nurses with the tools, knowledge, and support they need to grow, we have built a more capable, confident, and committed nursing team. Moving forward, the project will continue to evolve, with plans to expand leadership development tracks and interprofessional learning modules. This initiative not only enhanced professional capacity but also reinforced our hospital's culture of excellence and lifelong learning.

