



Professional Nursing Governance – Revisions that Empower Nurses



Northeast Georgia Health System

Purpose

A four-hospital system embarked on a refresh of their Professional Nursing Governance (PNG) structure

Background

Feedback was received about what was working, not working and suggestions for improvement. Each comment was addressed and discussed by the team.

Feedback:

- Prior model and meetings were rigid.
- Content was not relevant and did not feel inclusive of staff.
- The processes were difficult to navigate, and this minimized member participation and engagement.
- There was a lack of trust and staff did not feel safe to speak up.
- Unit practice councils were not functioning well, and the nurses were discouraged.

A gap was identified, and a thorough literature review was utilized to ensure that the new model was supported by the evidence. Revisions were made that included staff involvement and encouraged transparency. By improving nursing engagement, the literature supports an improvement in patient experience and quality of care.

Rochelle M. Tinman, MSN, RN
Melissa Rouse, PhD, APRN, CNS-BC, NEA-BC, CPHQ

Methods

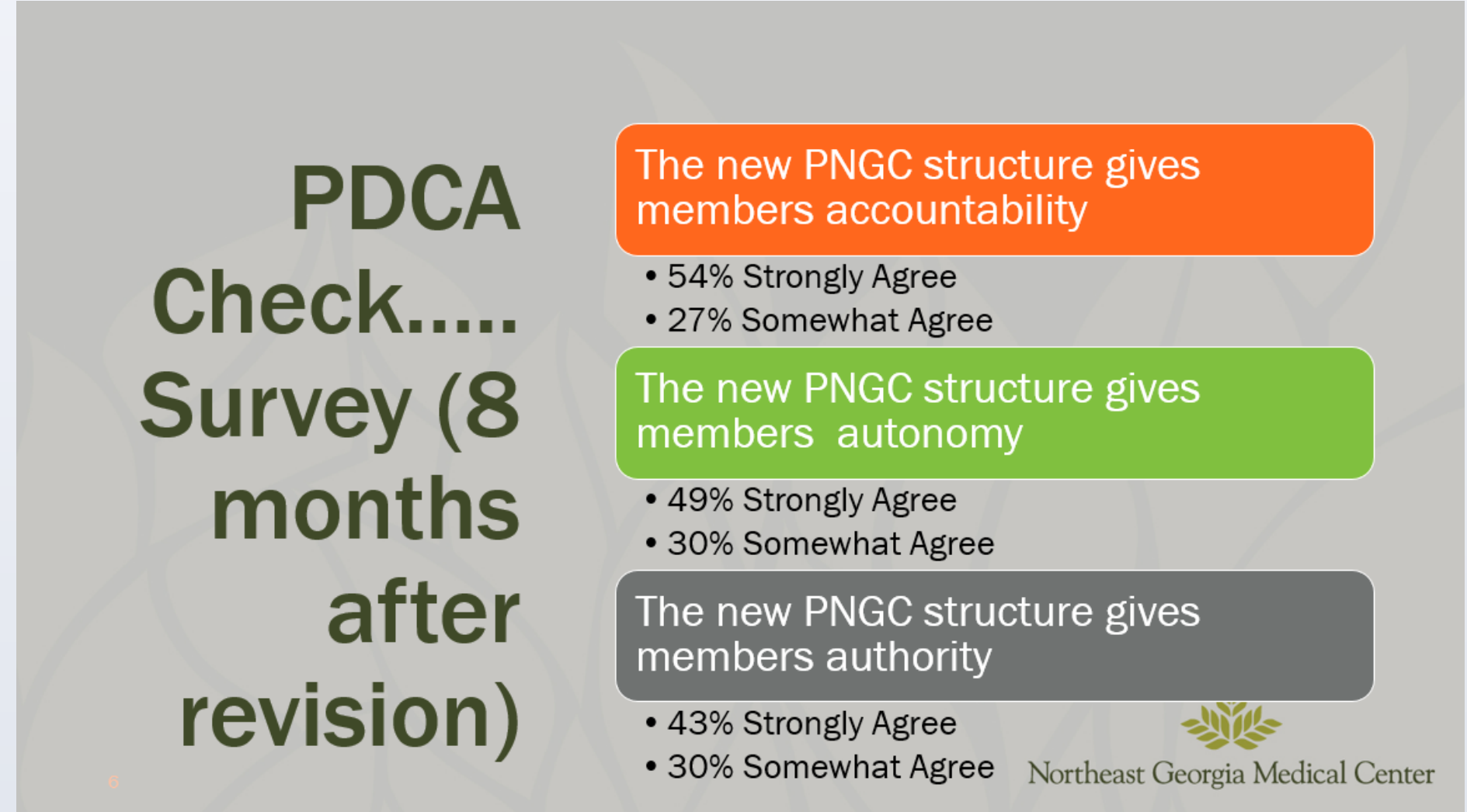
- An Index of Professional Nursing Governance (IPNG) Survey was completed in March 2020.
 - IPNG is a validated tool that measures professional governance for nurses on a continuum ranging from traditional to shared, to self-governance, as it examines the balance of control and influence between staff nurses and leadership.
- IPNG results showed that the model of governance was in the “traditional” category, which means that the RNs of the organization perceived having minimal input in the decisions affecting their practice.
 - The mean total IPNG score for the group was 96.09 (shared governance threshold=100). This score indicates that the nursing group’s perceptions of governance fall within traditional professional governance, where decision-making is made by leadership/management.

Revisions to PNG structure based on focus groups and IPNG

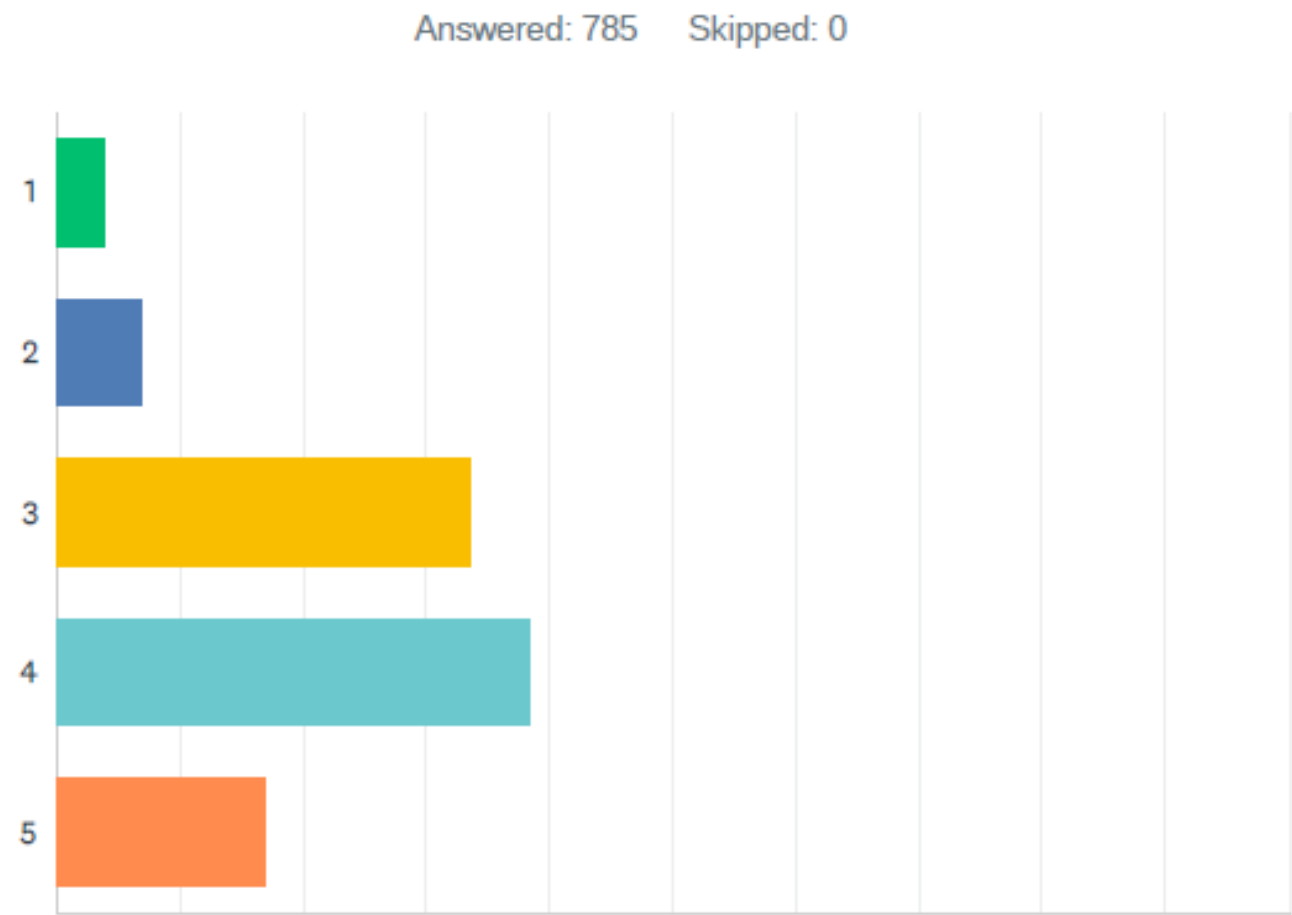
- Modifications were made to the bylaws, membership, agenda topics, main council and sub councils and were brought to a special called meeting of all the unit practice council chairs for feedback and voting.
- Monthly PNG meetings have been modified to include more interactive discussion.
- Authority was given to the sub councils to make decisions that are brought to the large meeting for visibility.
- Networking activities were created to promote teamwork and collaboration and build trust among all attendees including leaders.
- The Chief Nurse Executive addresses questions written on the “What’s on your Mind” board for open communication and transparency.
- Work is currently underway to reinvigorate the unit practice councils.
- Anecdotally, participation and levels of engagement have improved significantly.



Results



Q16 Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Professional Nursing Shared Governance model utilized at your organization: (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)



Practice Implications

PNG is a journey and requires constant commitment from staff and leaders to ensure success. Empowering staff has allowed them to speak up and own their practice. The outcomes and decisions from the sub councils reflect improved engagement and commitment to quality patient care. The IPNG will be offered again, in 2025 which will be 3 years after the restructure.

References

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