

## Registered Nurse Clinical Advancement Program – RN-CAP

### BYLAWS

**Purpose:** To reward and recognize exemplary professional nursing practice, to provide the Registered Professional Nurse the voluntary opportunity for growth and advancement, and to acknowledge clinical expertise at the bedside/clinical setting.

**Objectives:**

- To enhance patient care through clinical excellence.
- To improve job satisfaction, encourage recruitment, aid retention efforts, and to improve the nurse's engagement to the institution.
- To provide opportunities to enhance professional development and encourage the development of clinical expertise.
- To provide an outcomes-based model that accurately demonstrates the expertise of the bedside nurse.

A RN-CAP Committee will be established at each campus which is governed and administered by the Registered Professional Nurses who have achieved RN-CAP status. For the start of the new program, this shall be RN's that are current members of their existing clinical ladder program. For campuses that do not have an existing clinical ladder program, this shall include RNs that have experience in the past with a clinical ladder program. In addition, a system-wide RN-CAP Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review policy and outcomes of the program and make system-wide recommendations. The Steering Committee will be advisory in nature and will have no direct jurisdiction over hospital campus committee function. The Steering Committee will include the Chairpersons of the RN-CAP Committees of each hospital campus, the RN-CAP Coordinator, RN staff members, and representatives from management and nursing education.

Each campus will designate and make known to all RN staff a specific location or locations for portfolio applications to be submitted. Portfolio applications will be retained for 3 years or until an applicant advances or retires from the program. Review forms will be returned to the applicant.

- All nominees for elected positions must be RNs in good standing without any discipline in their file for the past year.

The members of each campus RN-CAP Committee shall elect three (3) officers per campus:

1. Chairperson
2. Vice Chairperson
3. Secretary

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson share all responsibilities including:

- Administration of the campus RN-CAP and presiding over all the committee meetings.
- Review of all RN-CAP maintenance applications with assistance as needed from members of the committee.
- Send action forms to the coordinator for final review and processing
- Maintain a record of all applications submitted and the outcome.

Secretary

- The Secretary shall maintain the attendance sheets and minutes of all committee meetings.

Administrative Representatives

- An Administrative Representative, the RN-CAP Program Coordinator, shall serve as the administrative liaison with full voting rights. Nurse managers and nurse educators will be invited to participate as needed.
- The campus Magnet Program Director will serve on the campus RN-CAP committee as an advisor.

### **RN-CAP Program Representatives**

Each hospital unit will designate at least one (1) Unit Representative/Champion who has experience with a Clinical Ladder Program. The RN-CAP representative will be the unit resource for educating their unit team members about the RN-CAP process and who may attend meetings. The committee officers, in addition to volunteer Unit representatives/reviewers/appraisers will be elected/selected by the RN-CAP program representatives to review clinical applications and make recommendations for RN-CAP. The appraisers shall be limited to two (2) members from the same unit except for the Committee Officers. These appraisers should be working toward reaching the Clinical Level IV. Appraisers are expected to attend 75% of the meetings, will be reimbursed or granted time to attend meetings, and will receive credit for maintenance of their own RN-CAP status.

### **Meetings**

RN-CAP program meetings will be held monthly from November through May or as deemed necessary by the campus. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss changes in policy and criteria, and to provide a forum for the assessment of registered nurses who are seeking RN-CAP. All registered nurses who participate in the RN-CAP program may attend RN-CAP meetings. Appraisers are expected to attend all meetings and must attend a minimum of 75% of meetings.

### **Officer Election Process**

A nominating committee shall be established consisting of two (2) members from the RN-CAP committee (not running for officer position) to represent staff nurses, and the RN-CAP program coordinator representing administration:

1. The administrative liaison (RN-CAP Program Coordinator) will send out self-nomination ballots to all RN-CAP program members.
2. Officer elections will be held at the December meeting of the RN-CAP Committee.
3. The election will be held by secret ballot at the December meeting.

### **Term of Office**

The term of office for the chairperson will be 2 years plus one year to mentor a newly elected chairperson. The term of office for all other elected officials will be for three (3) years. In the event that an elected official cannot complete the term of office, the members of the RN-CAP Committee shall appoint a new officer.

### **Sub Committees**

Subcommittees will be formed and will meet as needed.

### **RN-CAP Status for Chairpersons**

The Chairperson/Vice Chairperson shall be exempt from submitting renewal applications for their RN-CAP status during their term of office, and for one year after completing/resigning their term of office.

## **ADVANCEMENT ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligibility for Current RN Staff**

1. All current full time and part-time with standard work hours greater than or equal to 20 hours per week clinical RN staff are eligible to participate in the RN-CAP program.
  - a. First time applicants may apply to whatever level they desire, if they meet the minimum experience and educational levels.
  - b. Registered Nurses who were advanced on previous HMH clinical advancement programs may apply at the same level, regardless of degree status. All other requirements to qualify must be met.
    - i. Cannot advance to the next level until new education and experience requirements are met.
  - c. Registered Nurses may advance to a higher level at a minimum of twelve (12) month intervals.
2. A nurse who returns to a clinical staff position may apply at the next advancement period to the appropriate RN-CAP level as long as they meet all the criteria for that level.

3. Per Diem nurses are not eligible for RN-CAP, however, a per diem RN who transfers to a full time or part-time status may apply to the appropriate RN-CAP level as long as they meet all of the criteria for that level and have completed their probationary period.
4. Per Diem nurses transferring back to a full or part-time status greater than or equal to 20 hours per week must reapply.
5. RNs with a Level II, gross infraction or on probation may not apply or advance for 1 year from the date of the infraction

### **Eligibility for Newly Hired Registered Nurses**

1. Newly hired Registered Nurses with a minimum of fifteen (15) months of experience may apply for the most appropriate RN-CAP level at the next advancement period.
2. Newly Graduated RNs may apply for Level II after fifteen months during the next advancement period.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

RN-CAP is a professional program and all documents **MUST** be submitted accordingly:

1. Complete the on-line application or manually type the application form.
2. Submit the completed application with the required documentation of activities.
  - a. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to submit their application to the designated application drop off at their campus.
3. Submit the application prior to deadlines
4. Failure to comply with the preceding steps may result in the rejection of the application and delay advancement until the next scheduled advancement date provided that the application is resubmitted completed and timely.

### **Application Documents:**

The application form will be available on the HMH intranet and internet. The application will contain links to all appropriate forms, including but not limited to:

- the attestation form for the Nurse Manager verifying that the candidate meets the performance criteria and all unit competencies
  - the attestation form verifying that the applicant has had a peer review within the past 12 months (if applicable)
  - By-Laws
  - Appeal request
1. Nurses who are interested in applying are strongly encouraged to seek guidance and any necessary educational counseling at least (2) months before the proposed application date. RN-CAP Resources include:
    - The RN-CAP Coordinator, Chairperson or Vice Chairperson

- Designated RN-CAP educator
  - RN-CAP officers or members
2. Applications will be reviewed monthly from November through March or as designated by the campus. All applications must be submitted by the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of the month to be reviewed in that month.
  3. Applications submitted November through March that do not meet criteria will be returned to the applicant with deficiencies noted.
    - The applicant may reapply through May 1 if deficiencies are rectified.
  4. No applications will be accepted after May 1.
  5. The RN-CAP bonus will be paid during the month of July.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Responsibility**

1. Two RN-CAP Committee representatives/reviewers/appraisers will be assigned by the Chairperson to review each application/portfolio.
  - a. Members of the RN-CAP Committee will not review their own documents, nor will they vote on the acceptance or rejection of their own application.
2. The appraisers will review each application/portfolio and verify the information contained in the portfolio.
3. The appraisers will present the application and their recommendations to a Review Panel of the RN-CAP Committee for approval/disapproval of the application.
  - a. Deficient applications will be returned to the applicant with specific deficiencies noted.
4. Committees will send all actions to the Coordinator who then reviews for accuracy and records in database.
5. The RN-CAP Coordinator reviews all advancement, maintenance and demotions, maintains an accurate database and sends action excel spreadsheet to HR.

## **APPROVAL OF APPLICATION**

The RN-CAP Chair and Co-Chair will send each approved applicant a notice of approval (certificate).

## **DENIAL OF APPLICATION**

An RN may not apply for RN-CAP within six (6) months of the application date, or advancement within twelve (12) months if he/she has received a documented discipline notice for a Level II gross infraction, performance appraisal, or has in his/her file of an incident due to a major error, as determined by the applicant's Manager. Denial of support by a Manager may be appealed. The RN-CAP Committee Chairperson in consultation with the RN-CAP Coordinator, committee Officers, and/or Administration, Human Resources and/or HPAE representative will review cause for denial by a Manager.

If the appraiser team finds that the applicant has failed to meet one or more requirements, the team will cite the specific shortcomings noted, and will submit its findings to the Review Panel of the RN-CAP. A review form will be utilized. The committee chairperson will return the application with a copy of the review form to the applicant with suggestions for improvement. The Committee and RN-CAP Program Coordinator will also offer the unsuccessful candidate any educational assistance, counseling and/or other help needed to meet the required criteria. Unsuccessful candidates may re-apply at the next scheduled application date but no later than May 1 for advancement in that year.

If, during the review process, it is found that the applicant has plagiarized or falsified documents, the application will be denied, and the applicant will be prohibited from applying for the RN-CAP for a period of one (1) to three (3) years.

## **APPEAL OF DENIAL**

Unsuccessful candidates have the right to appeal an unfavorable decision from the RN-CAP committee as follows:

1. Appeals must be made within 30 days of notification of denial.
2. They may appeal to the RN-CAP Committee. This appeal must be made in writing. To hear an appeal, at least five (5) members of the committee must be present. A two thirds (2/3) majority vote is required to reverse the denial of application.
3. They may appeal to the Chief Nurse Officer to review the decision.

## MAINTENANCE OF CLINICAL LADDER STATUS

- **ALL APPLICATIONS FOR MAINTENANCE MUST BE COMPLETE AND SUBMITTED ON TIME.**
- Failure to submit an application during the required submission period will result in immediate loss of status.
- RN's who are unable to meet some or all the criteria for maintenance of status because of prolonged illness, military service, or a similar compelling reason, must notify the Committee of this in a timely fashion and must furnish documentation of maintenance activities achieved and the cause for incomplete maintenance. The Committee will determine whether to recommend an extension of the RN-CAP status on a case by case basis. The Coordinator will receive all requests for extension & determine validity. Final approval of an extension will be determined by the campus CNE.
- Maintenance of RN-CAP level status will be reviewed every three years.
- RN-CAP status is maintained and transferred from unit to unit and hospital campus to hospital campus.
- All nurses who wish to advance to a higher level, and have met the criteria for advancement, may do so at any point after 12 months, during the three-year maintenance period at the regular submission periods.
- Applicants are responsible for keeping track of their renewal dates and sending a completed application/portfolio packet to the committee for review prior to the expiration date.
- At the Chief Nurse Executive's (CNE) discretion, a review may be triggered for any RN who has been placed on probation or received a Level II gross infraction. This review committee shall consist of the CNE, RN-CAP Program Coordinator and committee officers. The maximum penalty that may be imposed is demotion of no more than one RN-CAP level for a maximum of one (1) year. Applicant's situation will be determined on a case by case basis. This in no way waives the employee's right to grieve any discipline.

## LOSS OF STATUS

A. Level II, III, IV RN's may be re-classified under the following circumstances:

1. A RN-CAP II, III, or IV who feels he/she cannot maintain criteria for the position, which may include adverse life circumstances, may voluntarily request to be re-classified without prejudice and without precluding future reinstatement.

A letter requesting re-classification should be sent to the Chairperson of the RN-CAP Committee as soon as possible. Should he/she decide to reapply for advancement, a completed application will only be accepted on the submission dates as specified in section: Application Process.

2. A level II, III, or IV RN who does not meet the criteria set forth under Maintenance of Status or who fails to submit a maintenance portfolio may be re-classified by the RN-CAP Committee who will send to the Coordinator, who then sends action notice to HR
3. RN's who have been re-classified and wish to reapply must wait until the next application period. Applications will be accepted in accordance to the dates set forth in the Application Process. All criteria and requirements must reflect the new application date.

**B. There will be no appeal of the decision**