

Linda J. Knodel
RN, MSN, MHA, CNABC, CPQA, FACHE
Senior Vice President
Chief Nursing Officer

Linda J. Knodel MSN, MHA, CNABC, CPQA, FACHE is the Senior Vice President/CNO at St. Alexius Medical Center, Bismarck North Dakota. Linda has held this position since 1989. Linda's nursing experience has been solely at St. Alexius Medical Center. She has served in such roles as the director of quality and risk management, the director of the renal dialysis and apheresis unit and staff nurse on medical floor.

Linda has a masters in healthcare administration from the University of Minnesota, a masters in nursing from the University of Mary, and completed a Wharton Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania. Linda is active in the American Organization of Nurse Executives as a past Region 6 Board member, the AHA Regional Policy Board, the American College of Healthcare Executives as a past Regent, and current nominating committee member and past president of the North Dakota ACHE Chapter.

Linda speaks at the local, regional and national level on numerous topics including leadership, patient safety and informatics. She is recognized and published in several journals and manuscripts

Recruitment and Retention

The St. Alexius Medical Center's Magnet Story

Linda Knodel MHA, MSN, CNABC,CPHQ,FACHE

Senior Vice President/CNO

1. Leadership
2. Organizational Structure
3. Human Resource Policies and Procedures
4. Recruitment and Retention
5. Professional Practice and Image
6. Professional Development
7. Measurement
8. Technology
9. Community
10. Communication

Recruitment Strategies

- ▶ Profile in the local newspaper a compelling patient care story in which an RN played a major role.
- ▶ Develop a shadowing program for high school students.
- ▶ Promote nursing as a career that is highly versatile — engage staff in school job fairs.
- ▶ Provide RNS to speak at community events, bookstores, service-oriented clubs, etc., to promote nursing and to recruit.
- ▶ Obtain and promote magnet hospital status.
- ▶ Advertise in local newspapers, community centers, churches, and community-based organizations.
- ▶ Have a recruitment booth and materials at all hospital events for community education, continuing education, seminars, etc.
- ▶ Offer loan forgiveness programs to graduating students based on years of service.
- ▶ Offer nursing scholarships in return for work commitment.
- ▶ Offer cafeteria-style benefits to meet the individualized needs of today's RNS.
- ▶ Pay premium rates to recruit the cross-trained RN who can work in any area within a section (medical/surgical, adult critical care/pediatrics, etc.).
- ▶ Grow your own RNS — provide tuition assistance to entry-level workers for nursing school.
- ▶ Offer paid continuing education days on or off site.
- ▶ Offer “bridging” of benefits — if an employee returns within six months of resigning, all benefits stay intact.
- ▶ Offer flexible staffing options — 4 hours, 8 hours, or 12 hour shifts, weekender, night life, etc.
- ▶ Offer part-time, full-time, and PRN positions.
- ▶ Offer three 12-hour shifts for full-time benefits.
- ▶ Offer nursing faculty summer opportunities for employment.
- ▶ Hold biannual events for nursing faculty to build relationships and provide ongoing continuing education.
- ▶ Offer a new graduate internship.
- ▶ Guarantee each new employee an experienced preceptor.
- ▶ Provide a career pathway for each prospective RN to demonstrate career advancement in the organization.
- ▶ Grow your own specialty nurses by choosing your best and brightest general staff RNS and provide skills and training with an assigned mentor.
- ▶ Highlight nursing involvement in committees, task forces, governance, management, and clinical practice to showcase the nursing voice in decision making.
- ▶ Promote the continuing education courses you offer.
- ▶ Choose creative staff RNS to be on an RN recruitment committee and empower them to develop strategies.
- ▶ Initiate a 48-hour interview-selection timeline.
- ▶ Involve staff in filling openings on their unit, using work of mouth.
- ▶ Offer external clinical specialty continuing education days, with continuing education units (CEU), and offer recruitment services at the event. Capture demographic data on attendees for follow-up.
- ▶ Promote “nurse enablers” as a recruitment strategy. Focus on what you offer, such as point-of-care documentation, order entry, automated medication dispensing, etc.
- ▶ Take a highly personal approach to interviewing and talking with candidates at the recruiter and manager level — involve senior nursing leaders.
- ▶ Expand human resources recruitment services hours to evenings and weekends.
- ▶ Partner the prospective recruit with a staff RN on the unit for a half-day.
- ▶ Hold a welcome party on the unit for new hires, before the employee begins — the word will travel.

Retention Strategies

- ▶ Ask each employee why he or she stays and keep the reasons on file. Check the file monthly to see if you have done your part in retaining the employee.
- ▶ Write thank you notes by hand for employees to recognize their special contributions.
- ▶ Post a thank you Post-It™ note on the employee's locker.
- ▶ Recognize employees in staff meetings, newsletters, and facility forums.
- ▶ Call an employee into your office to thank him/her for something he/she did for patient care or the team.
- ▶ Use certificates of recognition, tailored to the employee's contribution.
- ▶ Create recognition cards. Encourage employees to give them to each other. Be creative with these cards. They may say a phrase that spells out "WOW"," AWESOME," or any acronym you choose.
- ▶ Keep small rewards (\$5.00 value) and catch employees doing something right.
- ▶ Send an e-mail praising the employee.
- ▶ Bake homemade treats for employees and hand deliver them.
- ▶ Hold a departmental mini-retreat with staff; have managers and float RNS staff the unit during the retreat.
- ▶ Have a departmental fun day and let the employees decide what it will be, as appropriate within the clinical setting.
- ▶ Appoint RNS with excellent clinical skills as preceptors and provide rewards, a better schedule, or a differential.
- ▶ Send birthday cards to your RNS at their home addresses.
- ▶ Hold a nursing contest to develop the best theme for Nurses' Week or hold a poster contest and select the best; award pizza parties to the winning units.
- ▶ Hold exit interviews with each employee.
- ▶ Review exit interview data, identify trends and develop action plans.
- ▶ Ensure that each employee has the opportunity for professional development on the job.
- ▶ Train first-line managers as chief retention officers.
- ▶ Monitor turnover by department monthly. Hit the "stop" button if quarterly data show excessive turnover, and use retention improvement techniques. Identify issues with the staff that lead to turnover, and brainstorm ways to promote retention.
- ▶ Provide scholarships for advanced degree completion.
- ▶ Provide loan forgiveness programs — for example, forgive one year of loan payments for each year worked.
- ▶ Provide rewards based on years of service, and let employees choose from a menu of gifts.
- ▶ Offer tuition reimbursement that is very competitive in the market.
- ▶ Send employees to a local specialty conference.
- ▶ Start a recognition fund that may be supported through philanthropic or external grants.
- ▶ Hold quarterly or monthly town hall meetings.
- ▶ Deliver cookies and coffee or pizza to the clinical areas on very busy days when staff have difficulty finding time for lunch breaks.
- ▶ Ask your star RNS to consider promotional opportunities – do not wait for them to apply.
- ▶ Provide lunch coupons for managers to use for rewarding staff.
- ▶ Provide recognition buttons for RNS for Nurses' Week.
- ▶ Award gift certificates for movies, restaurants, book stores, and coffee shops based on a point system in which nurses can earn points for precepting, serving in the charge nurse role, committee work, extra hours, etc.
- ▶ Provide flexible work schedules that meet employees' lifestyle, such as 10- and 12- hours shifts, weekend programs, and night life programs.
- ▶ Provide nursing internships for new graduates and for RNS transitioning into a new area or specialty.
- ▶ Create positions such as sectionwide admission nurse (SWAN) to assist with the admission process between the emergency department and the units to decrease the burden on the nursing staff.
- ▶ Use wireless technology to improve communication.
- ▶ Offer critical incident stress debriefings for clinical units after a significant event.
- ▶ Bring a massage therapist to the unit to provide brief shoulder massages.

Recruitment and Retention Self Assessment Tool

	Score High→Low Positive →Negative				
1. Leadership					
a. What is your leadership style?					
b. Rate your visibility and accessibility accessible?	1	2	3	4	5
c. Do you encourage participatory management?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Organizational Structure					
a. Rate the relationship between administration and staff.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate the level of collaborative decisions made in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate the effectiveness of your joint practice committee	1	2	3	4	5
d. Rate the level of centralized decision making in your organization	1	2	3	4	5
3. Human Resources					
a. Rate the level of staff input into policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate the flexibility of staff schedules (4, 8, 10, 12 hour shifts)	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate the creativity in staffing and scheduling	1	2	3	4	5
d. Rate your perceptions of your staff satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Do you perform regular staff satisfaction surveys?	1	2	3	4	5
f. Rate your responsiveness to differentiated compensation based upon job complexity.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Recruitment and Retention					
a. Do you utilize staff in your recruitment efforts?	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate your social recognition program efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate your recruitment and retention plan.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Quality					
a. Rate your staffs' ability to articulate your organizations quality efforts?	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate your role as teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate the professional image.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Rate the relationship with physicians.	1	2	3	4	5

	Score High-Low Positive -Negative				
e. List 2 of the most important factors contributing to the professional practice and the quality of the practice in your organization: 1. _____ 2. _____					
6. Professional Development					
a. Rate the level of resources available for continuing professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate the level at which these contribute to career advancement.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate the level of your orientation, in-service, continuing and formal education and career development programs.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Measurement					
a. Rate your turnover rate: 1= < 8% 2= 8-12% 3= 2.1-14% 4 = 14.1-19% 5>19%	1	2	3	4	5
b. Fall injury rates against benchmarks.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Medication error rates against benchmarks.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Decubitus ulcer rates against benchmarks	1	2	3	4	5
e. Percent of nationally certified staff against benchmarks.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Percent of baccalaureate prepared nurses against benchmarks.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Technology					
a. Rate the level at which technology streamlines the care provided.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate your medication administration process.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate your clinical documentation process.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Rate your patient call systems.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Rate your wireless systems.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Rate your monitoring devices that interface with clinical documentation	1	2	3	4	5
g. Rate your locator systems.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Rate your materials management systems.	1	2	3	4	5
i. Rate your interactive and self directed staff education systems.	1	2	3	4	5

	Score High→Low Positive →Negative				
9. Community					
a. Rate the role of the community in your planning processes.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate the effectiveness of your community annual report.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate the level of involvement your community has in assisting leadership in achieving its goals.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Rate the interaction your facility has with local schools for recruitment.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Rate the interaction your facility has with colleges and universities for recruitment and planning.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Rate your 5 and 10 year human resource plan.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Communication					
a. Rate the frequency of meetings with staff to articulate your vision, outcomes and opportunities for improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Rate the frequency you invite leadership (CEO, Board Chair, VP etc) to your staff meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Rate whether forums are present for employees to provide open dialogue.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Rate the effectiveness of these forums.	1	2	3	4	5

The scores obtained from this assessment can provide you with an analysis as to where your gaps exist and where programs and priorities can be established. All of these 10 aspects contribute to effective recruitment and retention of our greatest asset.....our employees.

C.Linda Knodel 11/26/06