General Information - Rural Hospital Experience [1954]

DOCUMENT NO. NCHH-123-002
This item is part of the North Carolina History of Health Digital Collection. Some materials in the Collection are protected by U.S. copyright law. This item is presented by the Health Sciences Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for research and educational purposes. It may not be republished or distributed without permission of the Health Sciences Library.

The North Carolina History of Health Digital Collection is an open access publishing initiative of the Health Sciences Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Financial support for the initiative was provided in part by a multi-year NC ECHO (Exploring Cultural Heritage Online) digitization grant, awarded by the State Library of North Carolina, and funded through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

For more information about the collection, or to search other volumes, please visit:

http://hsl.lib.unc.edu/specialcollections/nchealthhistory
Hospital:
Johnston Memorial Hospital, a 100 bed general hospital in Smithfield, N. C., is providing rural hospital experience for students from the University of North Carolina School of Nursing. The hospital is located on Highway 301 just west of the main business district in Smithfield.

Personnel:
Mr. Lloyd Gilbert, Administrator
Mrs. Ethel Silver, Director of Nursing

Experienced graduate nurses are in charge of nursing service on a 24 hour basis. They are assisted by Practical Nurses and Aides.

Registered Nurse Anesthetists and Laboratory Technicians are members of the professional staff.

Living Arrangements:
Room, meals, and laundry of uniforms will be provided by the hospital for University of North Carolina students during their stay in Smithfield. Rooms are furnished with linens, blankets, towels, spreads, and drapes.

Beginning of Program:
Students should plan to arrive at the Nurses' Residence on Sunday afternoon or evening preceding the date of assignment. Arrival after 9:00 p.m. will cause inconvenience to those planning to meet you. Orientation to the hospital begins at 7:00 a.m. on Monday.

Social Regulations:
The Residence Director is Miss Julia Rose who will be glad to give you any assistance possible. The residence closes each evening at 11:00 p.m. Students will assume responsibility for their own conduct while living in Smithfield. It is expected that you will not keep late hours or indulge in behavior which would reflect unfavorably on the Hospital or the School of Nursing. Should you find it necessary to return to the residence after a reasonable hour, the matter should be discussed in advance with Miss Rose.

Residents of the house have established informal rules, the observance of which make life more pleasant for everyone. It is your responsibility to learn and observe these rules.

Hours on Duty:
Students will follow the same pattern as the graduate nurses who work a 44 hour week. Classes and ward assignments for students will total 44 hours each week. Holidays will be given according to the policy of the hospital for graduate nurse staff. It will not be possible, therefore, for all students to have a long Thanksgiving weekend.
Clinical Rotation:

Each student will spend 3 weeks on a general medical-surgical floor and 1 week on obstetrics. Some time within this plan will be spent on the first floor where there is opportunity to see admissions, emergency room, and out-patient activities. One morning will be spent in the office of a private physician.

Nursing Duties:

This hospital presents a different situation than the one to which you are accustomed in Chapel Hill. Some dietary, secretarial, and housekeeping responsibilities must of necessity be assumed by the nurse. For example, you will carry and collect trays, fill water pitchers, clean units of discharged patients, and assume complete responsibility for your patient's chart. You will find that the nurse must take responsibility for the total activities of the floor as well as for the direct bedside care of her patients. It is important to have time for personal contact with your patient in order to better meet his nursing needs. However, you should make every effort to plan your activities so that the total needs of the unit are also met. For example, a patient might indicate a great need to tell you about his forthcoming operation. Listening and trying to help him express his fears and anxieties is part of good nursing care which may result in easier acceptance of surgery and more rapid recovery. However, you would not plan to spend the necessary time with this patient when you are needed to help with trays. It is equally important that you not forget to see the patient at another time.

Procedures:

Procedures, of course, vary with the type of equipment available. You will follow the procedure dictated by the equipment which is available. In all instances, the basic principles underlying nursing procedures should be followed. It is not necessary to seek supervision for procedures which you have performed in your own hospital. A copy of the procedure manual will be available. You should review the principles for catheterization, douche, and enema since these are frequently used. Graduate nurses will always be glad to give you assistance or information.
Medications:

Students will continue to observe the following principles taught:

1. Medications may be given on the basis of written orders only. Graduate nurses may take verbal orders.

2. No drug, aspirin included, may be given without a Doctor’s written order. Dosage may not be altered from that specified by the physician.

3. A student should not ask another nurse to give medications which she herself has poured. Errors are less apt to occur if the same person pours and administers the medication.

4. Great care must be used to identify the patient properly. The student should not call the patient’s name, but should ask the patient to give her name. Students could be of great help to the graduate in carrying out the job of keeping name cards on beds.

5. Intravenous fluids and intravenous medications may not be given by students. Because of the legal implications involved in North Carolina where this activity is defined as medical practices, students cannot safely assume this responsibility.

6. The use and action of medications given should be known. Reading material will be provided in the conference room. It is suggested that students list the drugs with which they are unfamiliar and study them on the first Monday afternoon.

7. Errors should be reported immediately to the nurse in charge. A written report of the incident should be made by the student.

Supervision:

Students are directly responsible to the nurse in charge of the floor, and in turn to the Director of Nursing. Your patient assignment will be given to you each day. Sometimes you will have a specific group of patients at other times you will carry out certain responsibilities for all patients. Changing conditions on the floor may make it necessary for you to help someone else or meet an emergency. You should be alert to what is happening in the total unit. You will be expected to plan your nursing care activities without direct supervision. Do not hesitate to ask for advice and information if you really need it.

Advisers:

Miss Mitchell, Miss Shoaf, and Miss Whitaker are members of the graduate nurse staff who are serving as advisers to groups of students. They will be available to assist you in your adjustment to the clinical situation.
Graduate Nurses:

All members of the graduate nurse staff participate in the student program. You have a real opportunity here to learn some of the skills which these experienced nurses possess.

Classes:

Classes have been planned to give you an understanding of the community and the hospital. Your adviser will inform you of the dates and topics.

Community Activities:

Participation in community activities is an important part of this experience, and will be evaluated along with nursing performance. You should plan to enter into these activities to the fullest extent. A Local Advisory Committee in Smithfield has assumed responsibility for preparing a calendar of events so that graduates and students will know of activities planned in the community. You should try to attend a wide variety of events. Miss Mitchell and Miss Shoaf will give you detailed information.

Have you heard of the "suitcase teacher" who leaves her community every Friday at 3:00 p.m. and returns on Monday a.m. in time for the school bell?

Don't be a suitcase nurse!!