

From Mentorship to Leadership: Cultivating Authentic Leaders for Internal Promotions and Staff Retention in the Mayo Clinic in Florida Protocol Development Unit – A Comprehensive Approach to Empowering Front-Line Staff

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1. Background

The post-COVID pandemic 'Great Resignation' underscored the critical importance of developing genuine leaders capable of driving progress, internal promotions, and enhancing staff retention. This abstract examines how the Mayo Clinic in Florida (MCF) Protocol Development Unit (PDU) Mentorship-to-Promotion program directly contributed to a higher rate of internal promotions by creating a pipeline of well-prepared leaders within the PDU.

2. Goals

The MCF PDU Mentorship-to-Promotion Program aims to create a pipeline of well-prepared leaders within the PDU, fostering continuity and stability within the unit. This stability allows for seamless transitions during times of change while maintaining operational efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Solutions and Methods

At MCF, personalized one-on-one mentorship plays a pivotal role in staff development. Supervisors offer guidance and constructive feedback through regular meetings to help mentees overcome challenges and reach their potential. Leadership training is fostered through participation in enterprise work groups, Udemy courses in project management, and communication within an AGILE framework. Supervisors also teach Authentic and Servant Leadership, helping mentees embrace their unique qualities while preparing for future roles. We have team-building activities, such as escape rooms and monthly events funded by Joy and Wellness Grants that promote collaboration and Authentic Leadership. Lastly, to enhance retention, MCF has established a clear career ladder that aligns with the mentorship program. The career ladder starts with Research Protocol Associates (RPAs), continues with Research Protocol Specialists (RPSs) and Senior Specialists (Sr. RPSs), and culminates in Team Lead (TL) roles. This critical strategy for our team aims for long-term success, preserves institutional knowledge, and supports team culture stability. This succession plan is to identify high-potential employees and ensure a strong pipeline of talent ready for promotion.

4. Outcomes

Since 2021, the PDU has grown from nineteen to forty-seven staff members and has had thirty-four promotions, of which twenty-five were internal PDU promotions and nine external to PDU but within Mayo Clinic.

- RPA to RPS: nine promotions (26.47% of the total promotions)
- RPS to Sr. RPS: ten promotions (29.41% of the total promotions)
- Sr. RPS to TL: four promotions (11.76% of the total promotions)
- TL to Supervisor: two promotions (5.88% of the total promotions)
- PDU to other Mayo Clinic positions: nine promotions (26.47% of the total promotions)

5. Learned and Future Directions

By investing in the development of front-line staff through mentorship and leadership programs, MCF PDU has proven that Comprehensive Cancer Centers can build a resilient and dynamic leadership

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pipeline, ensuring sustainable growth and long-term success. Authentic and Servant Leadership, nurtured through personalized mentorship and comprehensive training, will be the cornerstone of a thriving and loyal workforce.