

August 22, 2014

Dear Leann and Nursing Colleagues,

I am writing this letter to tell you how excited and thrilled I have been with *SelfCare for Healthcare*! In November 2013, MaineGeneral moved into a new replacement hospital that combined two hospitals twenty-two miles apart. Although we were very excited about the move into a new space, there was considerable anxiety and stress associated with the magnitude of change we were experiencing. All private rooms and no central nurses' station created a sense of isolation and intensified loss of friends and colleagues. As one might expect with a new hospital, we were immediately at capacity on the med/surg units 90% of the time, we were backing up in the Emergency Department—and you get the picture. In addition, the winter of 2013-14, seemed to go on and on. Prior to the move and immediately after, our patient experience scores dropped and we started experiencing turnover among our nursing staff. Employee engagement scores in these areas were lower than in previous years. We began to see an increase in absenteeism and work-related stress.

I am a firm believer that all nurses must care for themselves before they can fully care for others. Nurses were not taking breaks and frequently were not getting to lunches as they should. I had spoken to Leann about her new program and really felt this could be the gift we needed. I spoke with my CEO and he agreed to help support the program. We brought Leann on site in January to meet with the managers and other clinical leaders. Our managers were so impressed they felt that we should start the program immediately. After starting *SelfCare for Healthcare*, our nurses are taking breaks and looking out for themselves as well as their colleagues. I have received many notes and emails thanking me for bringing this wonderful gift to MaineGeneral.

Some of the responses we have had are: "I'm staying now. I'd thought of leaving, but you brought Leann and now I know you care. I am staying".

We re-surveyed our nursing units in May and the engagement scores have increased to the higher levels than we have seen prior to our move. Our patient experience scores have also increased. I receive comments daily commending the great nursing staff we have, how responsive they are and how caring. "*SelfCare for Healthcare* filled a gap that other programs could not. We are a Studer Client hospital and have been working on our patient experience, but until we focused on our staff, we were unable to reach our goals. We were holding charge nurses and managers accountable for patient experience, but they were frustrated and feeling desperate. We needed to get out of being task driven and moving back toward a true caring culture, which included caring for self. LeAnn, with her wonderful caring manner was able to bring that to us".

We introduce the program during nursing orientation and get our new nurses started off right! The investment in this program has more than paid for itself by helping us to reduce turnover and proving to our nurses that we do care and appreciate them, every day. Thank you, Leann, for your wonderful support and insight into the soul of the nurse and other healthcare providers. I could go on and on, I am so pleased with this program and highly recommend it to any healthcare organization that is undergoing acute change, and who isn't!

Sincerely,

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