

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW



Acuity-based Staffing: Allina Health proposed to convene a workgroup to explore an electronic acuity-based staffing system. An acuity system would enable us to set staffing levels based on patients' acuity.

Overview

An acuity system identifies the amount of nursing care needed for each patient on a unit based on the level of intensity, nursing care and tasks needed for each patient. The system allocates resources based on patients' needs, not according to raw patient numbers.

Benefits include:

- Charge nurses spend a great deal of time assessing staffing needs and developing assignments. An acuity system would help the charge nurse determine what the appropriate staffing level should be. The system would provide real time information from Excellian* and the staffing and scheduling system.
- It would also help the charge nurse predict staffing needs for subsequent shifts so that staff can be called in ahead of time.
- Because the acuity tools work with an electronic medical record system, it would free up the charge nurses' time to be a resource to support unit needs.
- An acuity tool is superior to the current staffing matrixes. It allows us to match staff to patients' needs. It doesn't treat every patient as equal.
- With the connection to Excellian, it would allow for constant awareness of therapies, interventions and high intensity workloads.
- The data produced out of an acuity based system would support accuracy in our core staffing and target numbers by shift and by day of week.
- The acuity system would better predict the needed staffing for specific patient populations and would adjust staffing appropriately.

**Excellian is the name of Allina Health's electronic medical record system.*

What does an acuity system do?

- Captures, in real time from Excellian, the variability in patient care needs as well as the impact of admissions, discharges and transfers on nursing workload.
- Focuses on objective criteria in assessing staffing needs and minimizing use of subjective criteria.
- An acuity system could reduce workload for a charge nurse by helping with patient assessment and assignment, including:
 - recommending balances to assignments; and
 - providing credit for admission, discharge and transfer workload.
- Accumulation of data improves prediction of future staffing needs (near-term and long-term). It also captures gradual changes in patient populations.



Electronic acuity systems have matured significantly since we first explored them nearly a decade ago.



Employees can learn more on the Negotiation News page of the employee AKN intranet site.