

# Scale your Influence and Expertise through Clinical Education

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*Bonsall, Lisa*

Hello, this is Lisa Bonsall, the Senior Clinical Editor for Lippincott NursingCenter. Today, I'm speaking with Candice R. Vaughan Griffin, MS, BSN, RN. Candice is the Executive Director of Clinical Education and Professional Development with Banner Health. In this role, Candice leads strategic direction and execution to align clinical education and professional development resources to best support a large integrated healthcare system. This includes leading an accomplished team providing all aspects of clinical education and professional development, including education for ambulatory, acute, post-acute, home care/hospice, library service, and acute/ambulatory electronic medical record training for clinical staff, nonclinical staff and providers across six states.

Wow, that is a lot. That is a big responsibility. So, thank you very much, Candice, for joining me today for making some time in your busy day.

*VaughanGriffin, Candice*

Ohh, thank you Lisa. I'm so honored to be here. I'm very excited to share my story.

*Bonsall, Lisa*

Wonderful. Can you tell our listeners about your career journey, please?

*VaughanGriffin, Candice*

Sure. It's so funny when you look back on and you get to this point in your career where you're you can look somewhat in the rearview mirror and you're like, wow, I have been a nurse for a really long time now. So I have been a nurse for about 28 years, and I realized why while I was preparing, I'm like, I'm at the pivot point. So I'm at the pivot point where I've been in leadership almost longer than I was a clinical nurse. So I was a clinical nurse for 14 years and loved being a clinical nurse. My background..I started in med-surg, like the traditional pathway, I started in med-surg and most of my career was spent in emergency and trauma -large trauma centers - as well as interventional cardiology. So I had a wonderful clinical career and then around 2006 I went back and got my master's degree and I was doing an interventional cardiology procedure and a really, really wonderful friend of mine came and she goes, "Hey, you know what? There is this clinical educator position that's open." And I'm like, "What, what, what is that? What? What is that going to do?" And she goes "well..." and she started telling me about the position because she was an educator at the time. "You are going to be great at this position." And I

said, “Well, are you, are you sure?” And so we always joke around about that. And one of the pieces of feedback that she shared with me during that time and she said, “You know, as a nurse, you get to impact one patient at a time. As an educator, you get to impact hundreds of people at a time, and then they get to impact their patients and so you really get to scale your influence and scale your expertise.” And that has always stuck with me. So that's how I got into clinical education. That was my first, I was a clinical education specialist for cardiology. And then I got into professional, what we call professional practice.

And professional practice is really what I call the engagement of nursing, enhancing the professional practice work environments. And so it was the oversight of the magnet journey, it was the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators. It was your clinical ladder or what we call a clinical expert here at Banner Health. So it was the nursing engagement programs. And so I got to oversee the data and that's where I started to understand the importance and the value of how we denote the value of nursing practice. What is the value that we as nurses, bring and how can we really amplify that voice, not only within our organizations but within healthcare and national healthcare, because we really have the skill set to influence positive change within healthcare. So that's when I started to realize I'm like, OK, I really need to do this and really need to commit to it at, you know, at the scale in which I can really make a difference.

And so I continued along in my career journey. So I was the senior manager for professional practice at the time and then around 2010, Banner Health decided that they were going to centralize their education resources because we had, you know, 29 different facilities. Each facility had a clinical education team and the power of bringing and centralizing all of those resources and expertise together, was really phenomenal. And so I had the opportunity then to become a director, an education director, and because of my background, I got critical care, medical imaging and cath lab.

So I at that time got an amazing team across the organization and we standardized clinical education resources across the organization. What I didn't realize then, Lisa, that I realized now is we basically enhanced patient care because we forced the standardization of education. So when a nurse comes into Banner Health and we still do this today because we created all that foundation and infrastructure, they all get the same orientation. They all get the same education and that way we can standardize patient care.

The power behind that is phenomenal. So that was a 2010 to about 2014 when I had the opportunity to move into the Senior Director of Clinical Education, we called it clinical education at the time. And so we have all different services that we have, all the service lines as you have read, which is really wonderful and we standardize clinical education and support clinical education for Banner Health.

In 2016/17, we moved into clinical education and professional development. So that's where again we got clinical education. Our professional practice team members as well as our clinical nurse specialist. So it kind of came full circle, which is really cool because as I shared back in the day right around 2010, I had that same team at a facility level. So now I have those team members at an organizational level and it's been just an amazing adventure to be able to see how we can enhance education and thereby enhancing patient outcomes as well as enhancing the professional practice and professional development of our team members and our clinical nursing practice. And it's been very powerful.

*Bonsall, Lisa*

Well, that is some journey and how fortunate for your institution, the organization and patients to have that continuity in the team, because I'm sure that just made the transitions that much more smooth. That's great, Candice. Thank you.

So my next question is, how did you become interested in professional development?

*VaughanGriffin, Candice*

So when I was a clinical nurse, I was training dogs. So I train and show competitive obedience dogs. Which you wouldn't think that that would be aligned with professional development, but I really fell in love with watching them learn.

And it's still a joy of mine, still a passion of mine. So 20 years later and still showing competitive obedience dogs, but the learning aspect of it was what was fascinating to me. And that is why that was my drivers one of my drivers of coming in to professional development, I love the learning aspect. I love enhancing learning. I love thinking about how we can do a better, how we can learn faster, how we can take our team members along that journey quicker to really become experts and provide excellent patient care.

*Bonsall, Lisa*

I did not expect that, that is so interesting.

*VaughanGriffin, Candice*

Yeah, yeah.

*Bonsall, Lisa*

How has professional development changed over the years?

*VaughanGriffin, Candice*

You know, we have been on such an amazing journey in professional development. When I started with the team in 2014, I always say our future is bright, and our future is bright and I will say Lisa, that never has there been a time in which we are needed more.

The pandemic, the experience with COVID, has absolutely flipped our world and our nursing as we know it and it's truly up to us to lay the foundation to get us back. Maybe not back to normal, but back to our new future. So all of us in professional development, there has never been a time in which we're needed more, but we've got new graduates at the bedside. That's our market right now. We've got the complexity of patient care and it's up to us to figure out how we can do that better, enhancing technology, and kind of really, I think balancing, I'm gonna say the old way and the new way. So when we think about the, when I think about the evolution of of professional development and education, I remember when I first started, I have never been one that likes to remain still. And so I always had a hard time with what I called, butt in the chair education, I just, I couldn't do it. I'd be standing up. I'd be popping out. I'd be playing with something. And so when we came together and as a team, I said, you know, guys, we really have to evolve from traditional methodologies into influencing learning and we've got to make sure our learning is the best that it can be and we can decrease that cycle of learning right or in hand. So I should use my positive words, enhance that cycle of learning. So I think how we've evolved is that traditional learning methodology of you know, classroom then we went into what I like to I think what is called sage on the stage right, listening, listening to people talk and then we moved to

guy on the side. And now what we're seeing is really what I what I hope will be our future, and we're certainly seeing this is the team member taking responsibility for their learning journey and being an active participant in their learning journey and really kind of leading that learning experience. So we become more of the coach in that individualized learning experience.

I think I love micro learning. I love it. One day when I grow up, I want to have Lisa clocks in and then Lisa gets a video of like what's changed, Lisa. So what has changed over the last 24 hours? Because in healthcare it's constant change and it's really tough to keep up with that change. So I think we need to get into more of the micro learning approach. Even schools. Right now I'm in my doctorate and you know what? What I learned a year and a half ago is out. It's outdated now. Even when I look at the literature and I'm like, OK, was that before 2020 because our future is different. Our current state is different than it was prior to the pandemic. So micro credentialing, a big fan of micro credentialing, I think that's where we need to go. You know, how can you build upon credentials? And then you can kind of stack them, stack them to get a degree, but really that microlearning bits of information that's really digestible, also infusing technology and learning is I think will be critical moving forward.

So algorithmic learning, artificial intelligence again with that need in healthcare our driver and there's and I certainly feel the importance right and the pressure. To get our nurses up to expert level as quickly as possible, so they have the skills to perform properly and so they're enhancing patient outcomes as well. So we will all feel the need to decrease the transition from novice to expert and to make sure that our team members, our nurses at the bedside actually have the support within that journey.

*Bonsall, Lisa*

Thank you. Ohh my goodness Candice. What a wonderful answer and I agree it's an exciting time with all of the technology available to really enhance our learning. But what I really take away from that is the responsibility of individuals to take control of their lifelong learning. Thank you. What advice do you have for those interested in professional development?

*VaughanGriffin, Candice*

You know, this was my favorite question, actually Lisa, because I'm like ohh boy, I have so many lessons I've learned over the years. One of the first things that I realized is as professional development, we have to run our shop like a business. And while that may feel uncomfortable for leaders and professional development practitioners, that's our responsibility. And the reason I say that is if we run our shop like a business, we will enhance outcomes. So if we have, I always say data wins across the board, data wins and it's not because I like to count numbers. Goodness, I can barely count for goodness sakes. But what I do love is that data shares our story and I will never forget how powerful this was. During the pandemic we onboarded 3762 external contract labor and we were working like mad. And it wasn't that we did anything different than other organizations, but what we did do is we put that in a data story. We were able to digest that story. So if you get comfortable in data, those outcomes, your metrics, you can use that to share your story. And you can also use that to back end into the organizational strategy. So really aligning with the organizational strategy.

And remember when I said earlier I said, you know, NDNQI, it really denotes the value we all need to be looking at how we denote the value and the impact that we make for our nurses and our patients. So the first thing I would say that I learned very quickly is tell your story with data, make sure that you're

aligning your work with the organization. What is the strategy for the organization? Because you definitely need to align with that.

The other piece that is very, very important for me that I think about daily is words matter. Use your positive words. Assume positive intent. Nobody woke up today to not have a good day. We all woke up to have a wonderful day. And so when we're getting in and you're feeling that pressure because we all do, remember that we make a difference, and the answer is just say yes. I'm figuring out what you can do and so many times that you know, we see our leaders reaching out and saying, hey, Candice, can your team change this insert operational thing here? And your first answer is well, no, like we're clinical education or we're professional development.

Flip that on its head. What can you do because that individual is asking for help, and there's always an associated patient with that request. So I will also say always stay relevant. Always be scanning your environment for the next new thing. Partner with your vendors. Your vendors are going to be your best friends because they know what's out there in the environment. They are constantly evaluating their product. That feedback to the vendors to enhance their product is critical. I always say if you can get a partnership with your vendors, you're going to win because you make your on the vendor side. You enhance that experience; you help enhance their product and vice versa.

So like and I will say also the complexity and the future of our health care environment. It's going to take all of us, it's going to take all of our different skill sets. So the interprofessional teamwork is going to take our finance partners. It's going to take data analysts, it's going to take us all to be successful in our future environment.

*Bonsall, Lisa*

Wonderful. Candice, thank you so much for your thoughtful replies to my questions and for your time today.

*VaughanGriffin, Candice*

Ohh, thank you Lisa. Again, I'm very honored to be here and thank you everyone. You all make a difference everyday.

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