

TRANSITION-TO-U.S. PRACTICE ONLINE PROGRAM BRIDGES THE GLOBAL GAP



Global expansion required a new approach for Shearwater in assessing and developing internationally prepared nurses for work in the United States.

For decades, nursing programs in the Philippines have produced a wealth of BSN-prepared nurses. In fact, historically, the country has prepared an excess of qualified nurses. Many, then, seek work abroad to expand their opportunities.

These experienced health professionals are a perfect match for opportunities in the United States — and a perfect solution to the progressing shortage of qualified nurses here.

However, nursing in the United States requires knowledge of certain terms, standards, and protocols with which Filipino — and other internationally educated — nurses may not be familiar. As a result, they require assessment and development in these competencies, as well as support in passing the NCLEX exam.

Shearwater Health historically bridged that gap by offering a strong “Transition-to-U.S.-Practice” program that helped internationally trained nurses adjust more quickly to nursing practice in the U.S.

The program was initially provided via nurse educators onsite in the Philippines. But as the company began expanding into other countries — the Caribbean, Africa, and other parts of Asia — Shearwater realized it needed to evolve to a technology-based platform.



Shearwater's “Transition-to-U.S.-Practice” Success

Challenge:

Effectively assess and develop internationally prepared nurses in specific aspects of U.S. patient care, such as:

- Assessing/developing clinical-judgment skills
- Electronic documentation and regulatory standards
- Effectively teaching and engaging patients/families.

Increased challenge:

Evolving into a global company not reliant on local nurse educators.

Solution:

ATI's Online “Transition-to-U.S.-Practice” Program:

- Online access anywhere in the world
- Interactive, up-to-date development/assessment modules
- Weekly progress reports from nurses' coaches.

Expected outcomes:

- More confident and competent internationally prepared nurses requiring less orientation time
- Stronger clinical-judgment skills
- Reduced costs of on-site education in nurses' home countries
- Ever-increasing number of nurses who thrive at and remain at U.S. client hospitals.

A program with comprehensive solutions

“We needed to find an education partner who had interactive, up-to-date, online assessment and development modules our nurses could use anywhere in the world,” says Winnie Fritz, MSN, EdD, NEA-BC, Clinical Advisor to Shearwater Health. “We had developed the curriculum. Now, we needed a partner who understood adult professional education and could help deliver interactive education to our nurses worldwide.”

Shearwater initiated a rigorous evaluation process to find the right partner. Variables included:

- Global connectivity
- 24/7 content availability
- Annual content updates
- Alternative and interactive teaching formats
- Remediation options
- Online coaches
- Detailed weekly performance reports
- Immediate access to help
- Modules to implement the curriculum.

Dr. Fritz adds, "We also wanted a partnership relationship — two organizations working together to continually improve outcomes."

She says Shearwater initially vetted 12 different U.S. businesses. From those, the company invited three to visit and demonstrate their offerings. ATI's comprehensive approach was a perfect fit.

"ATI had examined our curriculum and came prepared with a demonstration matching its interactive modules with Shearwater's curriculum — a proposed full package," Dr. Fritz says.

Working in tandem, facing every challenge

"From the beginning, ATI has been an engaged, readily available, collaborative partner," Dr. Fritz says. Before implementing a pilot program in November 2017, she

ATI's Online Transition-to-Practice Program

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Winnie Fritz,
BSN, MSN, EdD, NEA-BC
Clinical Advisor,
Shearwater Health
(Nashville)

adds, "ATI worked many hours with us to sequence the educational modules with our curriculum." The final product is a 140-hour "Transition-to-U.S.-Practice" Program with weekly assigned modules.

A nurse-educator coach leads the innovative, online program, which offers access to numerous interactive resources, virtual simulations, and tools that improve critical thinking, clinical reasoning, leadership skills, and professional communication.

Shearwater's program launched in January 2018. "ATI continues to work with us to enhance reports and messaging with our nurses," Dr. Fritz says. ATI is also actively engaged in helping with challenges such as internet connectivity — a common issue in underdeveloped parts of the world.

Extremely high expectations

Shearwater keeps close track of the success of its nurses once they are placed in U.S. hospitals. "More than 80 percent have chosen to remain at their initially assigned U.S. hospitals indefinitely," Dr. Fritz says. "That is our goal: That each nurse thrives and becomes a permanent staff member in his or her U.S. hospital."

With ATI's help, Shearwater's expectations for the future have risen. "We want the quality of our nurses to be enhanced through this education, while also reducing the costs of onsite education in the nurses' home countries," Dr. Fritz explains. "We also expect that U.S. client hospitals will identify the quality and the retention of our nurses, thus serving to differentiate us and increase our market share."

While it's too early to have statistics about the success of the program, Shearwater is already hearing positive feedback on aspects such as the flexibility of accessing courses based on work schedules. "The nurses really appreciate this," she explains. "We've received many positive comments from our latest cohort who are truly driven to be prepared for U.S. practice."

The company's expectations extend to the happiness and success of its nurses once they are placed in U.S. jobs. "We expect the confidence of the nurses will be enhanced, thereby reducing their stress during the transition," Dr. Fritz says. "We expect orientation time to be positively impacted, too."

The company will be measuring and tracking outcomes, such as 90-day, 6-month, and annual evaluation scores.

"We expect our nurses will meet or exceed the performance of their U.S. colleagues at annual evaluations," Dr. Fritz says.