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Implementing a pediatric registered dietitian (RD) residency program

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Clinical Nutrition and Lactation Services at CHOC Children's, Orange, California, implemented a pediatric registered dietitian (RD) residency program in 2013 to provide training for dietitians new to pediatric nutrition. The program has been extended from 16 to 18 weeks and is offered twice yearly. To date we have held six sessions. Residency rotations include a variety of specialty areas in both the inpatient and outpatient settings. The outpatient areas include: Gastroenterology, Diabetes, Pulmonary and Cystic Fibrosis, Ketogenic and Metabolics. The inpatient areas include: Medical/Surgical, Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant and Intensive Care Units (Pediatric, Cardiac and Neonatal). Curriculum for each specialty area includes text and/or journal references, a slide presentation providing an overview of the area, and a pretest to assess baseline knowledge. During each rotation, the RD resident works alongside the preceptor and is given opportunities to provide medical nutrition therapy with increasing autonomy. Each specialty rotation ends with a post-test or case study and monthly evaluations are used to review feedback from each preceptor. To further assess competence and autonomy, staff relief is used throughout the program. In addition, the resident completes a project for the department. Our experience shows a pediatric RD residency program is beneficial to both the hospital and the dietetics profession. The organization has been able to train and evaluate an individual in the clinical setting before potentially hiring them for an internal candidate. Funding for the residency was obtained through a variety of sources who had donated to the CHOC Children's Foundation.

Biography

Mary Sowa has received her BS in Dietetics and Food Administration and MS in Sports Nutrition at California State University, Long Beach. She has credentials in Pediatric Nutrition (CSP), Nutrition Support (CNSC) and Lactation Education (CLEC). She has worked as a Pediatric Clinical Dietitian at CHOC Children's Hospital for over 20 years and currently covers the metabolic service. Along with working as Clinical Nutrition Director, she organized and implemented the hospital's RD Residency Program.

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