

## INTRODUCTION

*When there are not enough nurses in a hospital to monitor patients and provide therapeutic care, hospitals are forced to close beds, restrict admissions, and divert patients in need of emergency services, and patients are placed at risk. Good health care requires a nursing work force appropriate in size and expertise, and unconstrained in its ability to provide patient care safely.*

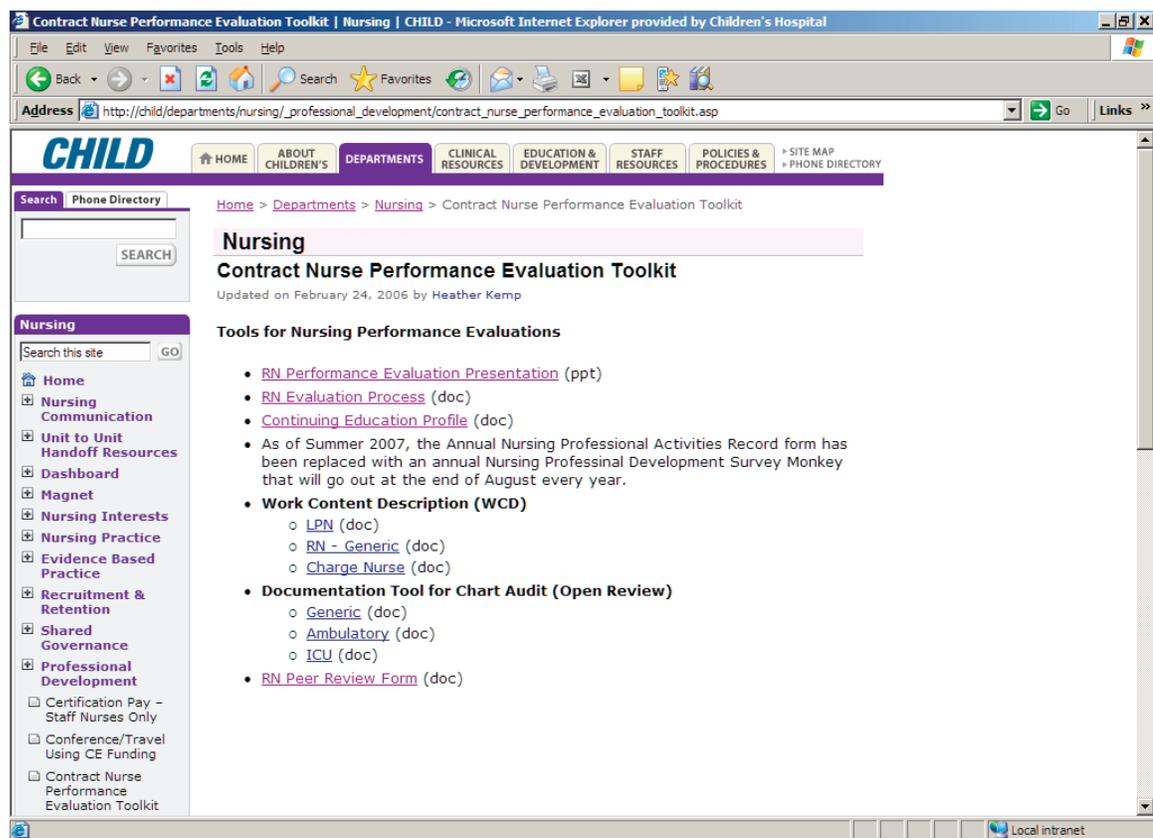
**—Harvey V. Fineberg, MD, PhD  
President, Institute of Medicine  
November 4, 2003**

This quotation from the foreword of *Keeping Patients Safe: Transforming the Work Environment of Nurses* (Ann Page, editor; The National Academies Press, Washington, D.C., 2004) succinctly ties the issues of adequate staffing and expertise directly to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement goal to save lives by improving the safety of our health care systems. An organization's personnel policies and programs are the underpinnings of a work environment that supports nursing practice, recruits smart and compassionate people to the profession, and enables an organization to retain its nursing staff because they feel satisfied with their work and supported by the leadership. They believe they can practice safely and that they have opportunities for personal and professional growth. The following narrative describes programs and policies at Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center (CHRMC) that support nurses striving to provide their best care, that protect patients by putting enough of the right nurses at every bedside, and that recruit the best nurses to pursue their careers with us.

## SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

1. Describe the formal and informal performance appraisal processes used in the organization, including self-appraisal, peer review, and 360° evaluation (as appropriate) for nurses at all levels of the organization.

Formal performance appraisals are provided within the first three months of employment and annually thereafter. A toolkit available on the nursing page of CHILD, the CHRMC internal Web site, guides all nurses covered by the bargaining agreement between the Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA) and CHRMC through the annual performance appraisal process and provides an easy link to all necessary forms.



The goals of these formal appraisals are to review the nurse's own practice, receive peer input, have a process for input on performance and goal setting, explore professional growth opportunities on the basis of personal goals and career interests, and build relationships with peers and managers. Additionally, the appraisals ensure that all nurses are provided with formal clinical performance feedback and that they understand their job requirements and