The influx of patients during the current COVID-19 pandemic necessitated non-critical care nurses to assist in providing care for critical care patients in organizations throughout the world, including the organization at which this DNP project took place. Nurses who care for critically ill patients require specialized training in order to be able to provide care for these patients safely. There is consistent evidence that provision of orientation programs have a positive effect on nurses who care for critically ill patients. At the organization in which this project was implemented, there was no existing educational program to train non-critical care nurses to prepare them to assist in caring for patients in the critical care areas. The Just in Time Critical Care Orientation program to train non-critical care nurses to assist in Intensive Care Units was developed, implemented, and evaluated.

### Background

A 12-hour educational program based on national critical care resources was designed and offered. Thirty-two medical-surgical and step-down nurses were recruited to attend the program. The program delivered information to participants through classroom learning, simulation, and hands-on experience in a critical care unit. Using a pre- and post-test design, participant knowledge, confidence and competence were measured using the Basic Knowledge Assessment Tool (BKAT) and the Perception to Care in Acute Situations (PCAS) tool. Participant satisfaction with the program was evaluated using the Student Satisfaction With Learning Survey Tool.

### Methods

**Increased knowledge:** After completing this program, participants had an increase in knowledge as measured by significantly increased overall BKAT scores (Pre-test mean score 77.19 (SD = 15.08), post-test mean score 92.19 (SD = 7.51), as well as significant increase in answers to questions related to ventilators.

**Improved self-rate confidence and competence:** The PCAS scores showed significant improvement in participants' rating of their abilities with regards to acute situations and care of critically ill patients in the post-test, as compared to the pre-test. Questions that asked specifically about the participants' self-rated ability to care for critical care patients, on ventilators, requiring intubation and critical care medications, saw significant increase in the post-test.

**Satisfaction with the program:** Participants were overall highly satisfied with many aspects of the program, such as the content, teaching styles and modalities, and their ability to apply the knowledge gained. Participants generally "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they were satisfied with many aspects of the program.