

## **Autonomy Over Practice**

Staff nurses at Massachusetts General Hospital govern and control their practice. Nursing leadership believes that staff nurses:

- are RESPONSIBLE for the nursing care management of a designated group of patients;
- have the KNOWLEDGE to make a difference in quality of care when appropriate conditions for professional development practice are present;
- consistently demonstrate ACCOUNTABILITY to their patients and to one another.

Nursing autonomy is promoted through:

- **Collaborative Governance**

Collaborative Governance, introduced to MGH in 1997 by Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, Senior Vice President for Patient Care and Chief Nurse, is a communication and decision-making model which places authority, responsibility and accountability for patient care with practicing clinicians. See other handouts on Collaborative Governance and Control Over Practice for more information.

- **Unit Culture**

Freedom to act on what nurses know to be in the best interest of the patient is supported, sanctioned and expected. Even when the action is not successful, feedback from nursing leadership is constructive, not punitive.

- **Recognition and Promotion of Autonomy**

Examples of ways nursing autonomy is recognized and promoted include:

- Conversations with the Nursing Director, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Staff Nurse colleagues, and members of other health care disciplines
- Clinical Narratives
- Annual Performance Appraisal
- Stephanie M. Macaluso, RN, Excellence in Clinical Practice Award
- Clinical Recognition Program
- New Graduate RN Development Seminars