Case Study: A Community Hospital’s Response to a Pandemic

PURPOSE
The purpose of the case study was to analyze the organization’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic to include notable achievements and lessons learned and provide deliverables to assist the organization throughout the pandemic.

BACKGROUND
The organization has policies in place to provide direction in the event of a pandemic. A new type of disaster stressed the incident command (IC) structure beginning in December of 2019 the city of Wuhan reported symptoms of a viral infection that was not responding to treatment as expected with other viruses. Before the end of January, a hospital system in the Southern United States developed protocols preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY
The methodology utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic was the Quality Improvement methodology of Plan, Do, Study, Act. Events were changing rapidly as the pandemic altered plans numerous time each day.

RESULTS
The DNP student was able to assist the organization in developing standard work instructions to assist with hospital staffing and labor pool utilization during a pandemic, a manual reporting tool for influenza-like illnesses to the state, an algorithm to assist with ordering COVID-19 tests, opening additional COVID-19 units, and function in the role of relief incident commander.

IMPLICATIONS
Some key takeaways were discovered during the case study that included IC management for an extended disaster. Additionally, the decision of choosing the Chief Nursing Officer as the incident commander might have been counterproductive since executives generally are not utilized as an incident commander.