

ALSN Continues the Conversation

Vol 44 Issue 4

ALSN Continues the Conversation guide for October 15, 2020

Technology Solutions for Nurse Leaders

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Nurs Adm Q. 2020;44(4):300-315. doi:10.1097/NAQ.0000000000000439

Abstract

Over the next 10 years, the World Health Organization estimates that there will be global shortage of 18 000 000 health care workers. A perfect storm of an aging demographic, long-term drop in birth rate, and a retiring workforce has all the factors contributing to this impending crisis. In nursing, efforts to narrow the shortage gap through strategies that increase the number of admissions to nursing schools, such as increasing faculty members, clinical sites, preceptors, and scholarships, will likely not be enough to offset the shortfall. Solutions, in part, will be to make nurses more productive by reducing waste through the use of technology. This article evaluates how various types of technology such as electronic health records, data analytics, predictive modeling, artificial intelligence, speech recognition, natural language processing, robotics, the Internet of Things, and others can improve nurse productivity by using a Lean framework to eliminate waste and create value.

Discussion Questions:

1. Dr. Clancy identified poor information flow as a contributing factor to defects in care, otherwise known as medical errors. An important corrective action is to strengthen the design of the electronic medical record. Some organizations have achieved this through the use of a governance committee to design workflow and decision support systems. How can a governance system be designed to reduce defects in EMR systems?
2. Dr. Clancy also recommends the use of early warning detection of deteriorating conditions. Have you incorporated early warning systems into your EMR? What conditions are most amenable to use of early warning systems?
3. Dr. Clancy suggests that robots might be useful to reduce unnecessary movement of healthcare workers. We have seen robots transport laboratory specimens. How could robots be used in nursing?
4. Patients spend a great deal of time waiting to be seen in our healthcare system. How could technology be used to eliminate wait times?