

Creating a Healthier Workplace Environment in an Era of Rising Workforce Pressures

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Abstract:

Challenges in the nurse work environment, particularly those resulting from nurse shortages and the retirement wave, can affect the health and well-being of all Americans, not just nurses themselves or the health care organizations where they work. Many of the solutions to significantly expand the number of nurses in America will take many years to realize. However, there are some important changes that health care organizations can put into effect relatively quickly to enhance the work environment for nurses, which can improve care quality and safety, patient satisfaction, and the well-being of nurses. The biennial Survey of Registered Nurses by AMN Healthcare, which polled nearly 20 000 RNs, found that nurses are eager for many workplace changes that would create a healthier workplace while enhancing their professional and personal lives. These institutional changes also create opportunities for improving the health of the organizations themselves. Analysis of survey data found that improving professional development, flexibility and work-life balance, safety and team engagement, and organizational response to workplace violence can create a healthier workplace for nurses. These are known solutions that have yet to be fully engaged.

Discussion questions:

1. According to the nurses in this study, the #1 priority for retention was flexible scheduling and maintaining work-life balance. In your organization, talk with your nurses. How do they define flexibility? What strategies are you using to promote work-life balance?
2. The authors reported a *correlation* among nurses who are satisfied with their organization and organizational support of diversity. How does your organization build a diverse workforce?
3. The authors reported a *correlation* between job satisfaction and organizational response to workplace violence. Workplace violence exists on a continuum ranging from incivility and bullying to physical and psychological harm. How is your organization building a safe work environment? What additional strategies have you seen reported in the literature?