Improving Nurse Retention and Turnover through Transforming the Recruitment and Interview Process


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Poster Summary

With Nurse Executives spending considerable time and resources addressing nurse retention and turnover, this presentation builds upon the business case of improving these items by demonstrating an approach to recruiting and interviewing. An improved hiring and recruiting process may result in not only improved retention and reduced turnover, but also several positive benefits including financial, patient satisfaction and quality of care.

Objectives

• Explain how hiring and recruitment contribute to increased nurse retention and reduced nurse turnover

• Modify interview process to better meet the nursing work needs of your organization

Content

Is there a Nurse Executive that does not have nurse turnover and nurse retention keeping them awake at night? As a recurring problem for most health care organizations, considerable time and energy is focused on addressing these areas of anxiety. With projected nursing shortfalls in the hundreds of thousands for the United States, it is logical to implement strategies to maintain the nursing workforce an organization already employs. Nurse Executives are also reminded of the financial impact nurse retention and nurse turnover have on the organization’s bottom line with each nurse costing tens of thousands of dollars to recruit and train. But are there any proven solutions that work in the real world? At Baptist Health, our experience indicates at least one proven approach: changing how we recruit and interview.

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<th>Nurse Turnover Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advertising and recruitment</td>
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<td>• Vacancy costs (e.g., paying bonus, overtime, unusable beds, etc.)</td>
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• Hiring
• Orientation and training
• Decreased productivity
• Termination
• Potential patient errors, compromised quality of care
• Poor work environment and culture, dissatisfaction, distrust
• Loss of organizational knowledge
• Additional turnover

Nurse Retention Benefits
• Reduction in advertisement and recruitment costs
• Fewer vacancies and reduction in vacancy costs
• Fewer new hires and reduction in hiring costs
• Fewer orientees and reduced orientation and training costs
• Maintained or increased productivity
• Fewer terminations and reduction in termination costs
• Decreased patient errors and increased quality of care
• Improved work environment and culture, increased satisfaction, increased trust and accountability
• Preserve organizational knowledge
• Easier nurse recruitment

Nurse Retention Cost:
A specific strategy to address nurse retention is development of a nurse residency program. Such programs are very useful, and require significant investment of time, money and resources, and have limited success without a structure in place to foster and support the development of new nurses while meeting the existing demand for trained nurses to care for patients.

It is important to provide nurses a suitable and satisfactory work environment so that they wish to continue to be a part of an organization’s workforce. Addressing those items regularly, we also allocated our attention on the precursor process to make sure the right nurses were being added to the team. The restructuring of our recruiting and interview process involved all levels of nursing leadership. Using proven behavioral interviewing techniques and an objective screening tool, applicants that make it to an interview start with the local clinical unit or department manager and then the unit team, followed by service lines directors and culminating with the Nurse Executive. This expense of time and resources for all registered nurses and certified nurse assistants is considerable, and it makes sense given the business
Impact nursing retention and turnover can have, solidifying this investment as a key initiative in the success of our organization’s future.

Structure: All bedside nurse candidates follow this process from job posting to offer:

- Online application with online survey/screening tool
- Recruiting screening
- Interviews with
  - Peer group
  - Nursing Manager
  - Director of Nursing (service lines include Adult Medical/Surgical, Cardiac Services, Perinatal, and Surgical Services)
  - Vice President of Patient Care (hospital nurse executive)
  - System Chief Nursing Officer (for nurse manager candidates)

Interview: At the start of this new recruiting and interviewing process, our organization changed from traditional interviews to peer- and behavioral-based interviews.

Peer Interviews are led by peers (bedside nurses and certified nurse assistants). All staff interviewing receive training on the screening tool and what the scores mean, and what types of questions to ask.

Behavioral interviewing is a style of interviewing developed in the 1970s by industrial psychologists. The theory behind behavioral interviewing is that “the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.” The questions are focused on identifying past performance and behaviors to predict performance for the job in question. This means a shift away from hypothetical questions (i.e. what would you do...) to story sharing (i.e. tell us about a time...and what you did).

Thus far, the results are promising. From an annualized turnover rate of almost 15%, our organization has seen a steady improvement having achieved a recent rate of 11%, the lowest level in several years at Baptist Health. This corresponds to more staff staying employed and breaking the cycle of turnover yielding more turnover, and providing a solid foundation for training and recruiting additional nurses without having to worry about replacement of existing
staff as we grow. The financial impact is noteworthy, estimated at about $1 million per year for full-time and part-time nurses alone.

Observed benefits have gone beyond improved nurse retention and turnover. Employee engagement scores are up considerably over the last 2-3 years, putting Baptist Health at the top of Healthcare Organizations according to Towers Watson. Improved retention has also assisted with efforts in improving patient safety and quality of care to reduce hospital associated complication, infections and safety incidents while maintain above state and national average nursing-related patient satisfaction. Research has shown that care providers that are engaged create a better healing environment for patients and fellow team members.
This success with nursing is being spread to other areas as this approach can work for respiratory therapy, imaging technicians and rehabilitation therapists, to name a few. By stressing the mission and values of the organization at the very start of the process, retention and turnover headaches on the backend disappear, and just maybe, Nurse Executives can sleep more soundly.

References


