

Active and Inactive Nurses: Understanding Evidence-Based Retention Strategies
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PROBLEM:

The healthcare work environment faces many challenges: increasing demand, slow growth in supply and the aging workforce. These multiple factors, if left unchecked may escalate into a national healthcare crisis by the year 2010.

EVIDENCE:

The challenges are well documented. Best practices to retain nurses also support professional nursing practice and include such strategies as Magnet Hospital recognition, preceptorships and residencies, refresher courses, differentiated nursing practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Without attention to the work environment and an understanding of why professional nurses are leaving, strategies may fall short of the expected outcomes.

STRATEGY:

Initial research in this southeastern state was to have a better understanding of why nurses were no longer active in professional nursing. Continuing this work, quality of work life and satisfaction tools, focus groups with active and inactive professional nurses and interviews with nursing administrators are current methods being used. These strategies will provide information in which retention strategies can be developed that is organizationally specific using evidence-based interventions from best practice.

PRACTICE CHANGE:

The practice change focuses on improving retention outcomes as well as providing useful information for creating a professional nursing practice environment.

EVALUATION:

Initial results were measured using job satisfaction and quality of work life tools. Themes from focus groups and interviews, as well as scores from a variety of satisfaction tools will continue to be evaluated and identified for area hospitals in two southeastern states.

RESULTS:

Initial results revealed inactive nurses dissatisfaction with their work environment. As we continue to collect data regarding job satisfaction, quality of work life and intent to stay (or leave), best practices for creating a professional nursing practice environment will be advanced to participating agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Identification of areas that are dissatisfiers for professional nurses as well as interventions which may be useful in creating positive work environments.

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