

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Problem: Ashford General Hospital's Response to Nurse Staffing Shortage

1. The shortage in the number of nurses is one of the biggest problems that many hospitals in America, including Ashford General Hospital, encounter.
2. About sixty-eight percent of the total number of nursing staff is facing retirement, for they are over the age of 45.
3. Nurses' retention rate in this hospital is sixty-one percent, lower than the nationwide retention rate of sixty-five percent.

B. Scope of the problem

1. Many of the nurses find the job to be more physically demanding. They, therefore, also feel burnt-out emotionally.
2. To fill personal shifts and also try to meet the immediate staffing needs that arise from medical leaves and vacations for staff, the hospital has utilized both traveling and per diem nurses. These nurses are contracted on a short-term basis. The process has, therefore, risen hiring costs, and lowered the score on the surveys on patient satisfaction.

II. SOLUTIONS

A. Short-Term Strategies

1. Utilizing Temporary Staff

- i.) The hospital should continue with the use of traveling and per diem nurses. Though this approach is expensive to the organization, these nurses help to fill the gaps arising from medical leaves and vacations of employees (Conway &

McMillan, 2007). We can rely on this strategy especially when the shortage is very severe.

- ii.) We can also employ the use of float pools or internal staffing agencies as a short-term strategy to curb this shortage (Bish, Kenney & Nay, 2012).

Though the internal agency nurses are paid a package bigger than the staff nurses, the amount is less than that given to external agency nurses. Therefore, this approach is cost effective.

2. Financial Benefits and Salary Increment

- i.) The Hospital can also shift on offering competitive salaries to aid in recruiting and retaining nurses in a high-demand environment. The strategy not only targets new recruits but also wage increase for all the nursing staff across the board. It is also a critical approach when targeting long-term solutions since more people will be attracted to the nursing profession, and most especially to this organization.
- ii.) Ashford General Hospital can also implement the use of retention, referral, or sign-on bonuses or even some combination of the rewards. It helps to encourage the staff to join or remain in the organization.
- iii.) We can also begin using self and flexible scheduling programs. Money alone cannot make employees or nurses comfortable and happy. Their demands keep changing now and then, and one of the new demands is to balance between home and work life. Their programs should be made flexible in such a way that a nurse can freely and easily balance these two lives.

B. Long-Term Strategies

1. Nurse Education

- i.) Ashford General Hospital should start a training initiative for current nurses and nursing students. These efforts allow hospital can "grow its" nurses, by running nursing schools and paying fees for nursing students' on condition that the hospital gets work commitment in return. The firm can also offer training and flexible hours to current subordinate staff so that they can acquire nursing degrees (Mhlanga, 2013).
- ii.) We can also give new nurses long and redesigned orientation programs. The approach increases patient care, and also promotes retention and satisfaction among nurses. During this orientation period, the recruit may be rotated through various hospital units for them to find their best fit (Potempa et al 2012). We can also pair, one on one during orientation, with the experienced nurses.

2. Nurses' Work Environment

- i.) We can realize improvement in retaining and also recruiting nurses by changing the working environment in this hospital. If the hospital obtains a status of a good working place, then this can have an immediate effect. But if a long-term impact is to be felt, then investment and commitment in the workplace are paramount.
- ii.) Changes to the nurses' responsibilities and roles that could lead to improved nurse satisfaction and care delivery can also be effective strategies. Examples of these approaches include hiring aging nurses to handle administrative chores and paperwork, and organizing teams of support staff attend to the

patients' personal care needs. A team of clinicians can also be organized to attend to the patients that are in critical conditions.

- iii.) The hospital administration can also make some alterations to hospital units, like decentralizing pharmacies or redesigning workstations for nurses (Zerwekh, 2014). The changes should also include the adoption of new technologies, like increasing automation or incorporating electronic medical records.

III. CONCLUSION

Shortage in the number of nurses in hospitals is not only an Ashford General Hospital's problem, but also a national problem. As the federal government plays its role, Ashford General Hospital should implement new strategies to compete with other organizations. It is clear that money alone is not enough to tie employees to an organization. Increasing nurses' salaries alone will not tie these nurses to this hospital. Therefore, other factors such as investing in nurse education and improving the general working conditions are key strategies in recruiting and retaining nurses.

References

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