

**CASE 13-1****CONTROLLING ABSENTEEISM:**

Anna McIntyre had been named head nurse of the university hospital pediatrics department the previous day. She would officially begin her new job in one week, when Carla Smith, the present head nurse, would move to a new department. Anna reflected on the conversation she had with Gail Sutherland, director of nursing, when Gail offered her the position. "Anna," Gail said, "you'll be taking over a department that has 8 percent absenteeism compared to 2 percent for other nursing units in the hospital. This has always been a problem and Carla never could handle it—that's a major reason she was transferred. I want you to make it your number 1 priority."

Anna reflected on Carla's performance as head nurse. Carla was a skilled, competent nurse, but since being

promoted to head nurse in pediatrics, she had been too soft. Many nurses took advantage of her good nature—Carla found it impossible to discipline—and the situation in pediatrics began to deteriorate. Anna knew from her own experience absenteeism was high in the department. This was especially true of weekend work. Carla never took action, even when it was obvious that personnel were making petty excuses.

**CASE QUESTIONS**

1. What additional information should Anna attempt to obtain regarding the absenteeism problem?
2. Advise Anna on the steps she should take to control absenteeism.
3. What types of standards should she use?
4. What strategic control points should she establish?