



Healthcare Retention Rates are Flatlining...Here's Your Rx!

What do low staff head counts, too few training resources, and longer shifts lead to? High burnout rates, and that is the underlying issue behind the attrition epidemic in healthcare. With attrition levels at 16%, nurses are hit especially hard. Burnout is a problem because it leads to executives and administrators seeing reduced levels of everything from HCAHPS scores to word-of-mouth patient care reviews. In addition, it can drain 5% or more off your operating budget.¹

So what's the Rx? Check out this 3-step plan to make sure healthcare's most talented and passionate minds stay at your care center, not on job boards hoping to be found by other hospitals:

¹ Rossheim, John. "Stop the Bleeding: Healthcare Employers Focus on Employee Turnover." Monster.com. Date published: N/A Date accessed: Dec. 14, 2015. <http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/workforce-management/employee-retention-strategies/healthcare-employee-turnover.aspx>

² Colosi, Brian. "2015 National Healthcare Retention & RN Staffing Report." Nursing Solutions Inc. Date published: March 2015. Date accessed: Dec. 14, 2015. <http://www.nsinursingsolutions.com/Files/assets/library/retention-institute/NationalHealthcareRNRetentionReport2015.pdf>

³ O'Brien, Ellen. "The Cost of Attrition." Healthwyse.com. Date published: April 22, 2015. Date accessed: Dec. 14, 2015. <http://www.healthwyse.com/blog/cost-attrition>



Step 1: Admit you have an attrition problem.

Look at the attrition data. If key stakeholders feel like they have an attrition problem, then chances are the historical data will back them up, and it may even reveal a problem that is worse than it seems. To figure out why staff keep leaving, just ask them. Surveys and exit interviews, especially when leveraging open-ended questions, can help you get into the minds of your practitioners. Currently, though, just 36.4% of hospitals have some sort of retention strategy in place.²



Step 2: Identify why people leave.

Burnout occurs when hospital staff become strained and overworked, often due to healthcare executives' tendencies to cut costs. This leads to hiring slowdowns and teams that get overworked, tired, and stretched to the brink. They may also lack the resources to perform, which reduces their ability to provide quality patient care.

The result is they're more likely to start looking for a role that has fewer hours and is more sustainable to their physical and mental health. Replacing just one nurse can cost hospitals upwards of \$88,000,³ so avoiding burnout and high attrition helps the bottom line.



Step 3: Develop a treatment plan to reduce attrition.

Once care centers admit their attrition issues, and understand why they have them, there are a number of treatment paths administrators can take. Hiring more people will reduce the extra burden on existing staff. Increasing resources for knowledge and technical skills training will lead to a more prepared staff. Also, your hospital will gain the reputation of being staff-friendly, which will attract more top talent.

Summary

Attrition, fueled by the burning out of overworked staff, poses a challenge for executives, but is also avoidable. Stakeholders first must study the data and determine whether the numbers are above industry average and show a tangible problem. Next, they should gather honest, meaningful insights from employees to determine why they have a problem. Last, care centers must strategically allocate their budget to address their reasons for attrition, whether that be increasing hiring, training, or both.

Worried your care network might have an attrition problem?
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