The 2018 Critical Care Nurse Work Environment Survey Results: Implementing the HWE Standards Matters!

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AACN’s work...
Over time...

2003: No references in literature on HWE
2016: 300 references/year
Healthy Work Environment Six Essential Standards

HWEs Require...

- Skilled communication
- True collaboration
- Effective decision making
- Appropriate staffing
- Meaningful recognition
- Authentic leadership
Skilled Communication

...must be as proficient in communication skills as they are in clinical skills
True Collaboration

...must be relentless in pursuing and fostering true collaboration
Effective decision making

...must be valued and committed partners in making policy, directing and evaluating clinical care and leading organizational operations
Appropriate Staffing

...must ensure the effective match between patient needs & nurse competencies
Meaningful Recognition

...be recognized and recognize others for the value each brings to the work of the organization...

Nominate nurses at local, state, and national levels

Structures & processes to ensure a sustainable focus

Everyone is responsible

Ongoing evaluation

Validate that recognition is meaningful
Authentic Leadership

...fully embrace HWE, authentically live it & engage others...
Implementation of the Healthy Work Environment Standards Matters!
Appropriate Staffing

58% of RNs working in a unit where HWE standards are implemented indicate appropriate staffing occurs vs 33% of RNs working in a unit where HWE standards are not implemented indicate appropriate staffing occurs.
2018 AACN National Survey of Critical Care Nurse Work Environments

Overview of Results
## Critical Care Nurse Work Environment Studies 2006-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Participants</strong></td>
<td>4034</td>
<td>5562</td>
<td>8444</td>
<td>8080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (years)</strong></td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity - % White, non-Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RN Experience (years)</strong></td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work in Direct Patient Care Position</strong></td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certified - %</strong></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree – Baccalaureate - %</strong></td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree – Graduate Degree</strong></td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beacon Unit – Yes %</strong></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magnet Unit – Yes %</strong></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = not asked
Critical Elements of a HWE Scale
Work Unit Environment

• 16 Items Based on Critical Elements of the HWE Standards
• Cronbach’s alpha = .97

For All Elements - Improvement Since the 2013 HWE Survey!
Quality of Communication Between RNs and...

Notes: FNM= Frontline nurse manager; Admin = Administration
Quality of Collaboration Between RNs and...

Notes: FNM= Frontline nurse manager; Admin = Administration
Respect for RNs by...

Notes: FNM = Frontline nurse manager; Other HC Colleagues = Other Healthcare Colleagues; Admin = Administration
Effective Decision Making

RNs are valued and committed partners in making policy, directing and evaluating clinical care, and leading organizational operations.
Meaningful Recognition

Recognition is most meaningful when it comes from...

- Patients and families
- Other RNs
- Administrators/Executives
- Frontline Nurse Managers
- Physicians
- Other healthcare colleagues (other than RNs and physicians)

- 2006
- 2008
- 2013
- 2018
Authentic Leadership

- All ratings of the competencies of frontline nurse managers and chief nurse executives by direct care nurses increased from 2013 to 2018.
- Direct care nurses rating of overall effectiveness of their frontline nurse manager: Excellent 20.5%; Good 40.3%; Fair 26.1%; Poor 13.2%.
- 61% of direct care nurses who are very satisfied with their current position rated the overall effectiveness of their frontline nurse manager as excellent.
- 43% of direct care nurses who intend to leave their current position in the next 12 months rated the overall effectiveness of their frontline nurse as poor.
Appropriate Staffing

RN staffing ensures the effective match between patient needs and nurse competencies.
With regard to staffing for your unit, how often do you have the right knowledge and skills?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Time</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All the time</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 75% of the time</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-75% of the time</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25-49% of the time</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25% of the time</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appropriate Staffing**

**Inappropriate Staffing**
At the end of a typical shift, to what degree do you get the following work done? *Percent (%) who answer 75-100% of the time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>When Staffing is Appropriate</th>
<th>When Staffing is Not Appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Care</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting/talking to patients</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching patients or family</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing/updating care plans</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing patients and families for discharge</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications for patients, nurses, and organizations
Physical and Mental Wellbeing

In the past year, in your work as an RN, please indicate the number of times you personally experienced [sexual harassment, discrimination, verbal abuse, physical abuse].

86% reported at least one of these types of abuse

198,340 Incidences reported by 6017 RNs
## Incidences By Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Verbal Abuse</th>
<th>Physical Abuse</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
<th>Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>59,966</td>
<td>14,520</td>
<td>7,438</td>
<td>8,689</td>
<td>90,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients’ Families/SOs</td>
<td>38,252</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>7,832</td>
<td>3,172</td>
<td>50,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another RN</td>
<td>12,227</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>6,351</td>
<td>1,306</td>
<td>20,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Physician</td>
<td>13,579</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4,309</td>
<td>1,223</td>
<td>19,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Nurse Manager</td>
<td>3,563</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3,443</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>7,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Healthcare Personnel</td>
<td>2,024</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,930</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>4,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Administrator</td>
<td>3,412</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2,130</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>6,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>133,023</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,135</strong></td>
<td><strong>34,433</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,749</strong></td>
<td><strong>198,340</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 6107 RNs responded to this question
Policies Matter!
Average Number of Negative Incidents by Presence of Zero Tolerance Abuse Policy

On average, abuse is less likely to happen when verbal and physical abuse policies are in place.
For those who personally experienced a negative incident, we asked: If you answered one or more times to any of the questions above, did you report the incident(s) to your supervisor?

58% of RNs reported an incident to their supervisor.
Moral Distress
To what extent, in your work as a nurse, do you experience moral distress?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very frequently</td>
<td>6.79%</td>
<td>5.58%</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
<td>10.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>19.41%</td>
<td>17.64%</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>24.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>45.61%</td>
<td>45.29%</td>
<td>42.83%</td>
<td>43.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very rarely</td>
<td>28.19%</td>
<td>31.49%</td>
<td>24.48%</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HWE Standards Unit Implementation:

Has your unit implemented the AACN HWE Standards?

For our purposes, implementation = fully implemented and well on the way
# Beacon Units and HWE - Mean Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SC=Skilled Communication</th>
<th>TC=True Collaboration</th>
<th>ED=Effective Decision-Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beacon Yes</td>
<td>3.16 3.06 3.17 2.79 3.10 3.20 3.12 2.90 2.69 2.98 3.16 3.02 2.97 3.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beacon No</td>
<td>2.95 2.65 2.85 2.48 2.63 2.68 2.87 2.49 2.77 2.51 2.25 2.63 2.93 2.63 2.57 2.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SC=Skilled Communication       TC=True Collaboration                   ED=Effective Decision-Making
AS=Appropriate Staffing           MR=Meaningful Recognition        AL=Authentic Leadership
# Authentic Leadership and Meaningful Recognition Items: Agree % by HWE Standards Unit Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not Implemented</th>
<th>Implemented</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL: Nurse leaders engage others in achieving a HWE</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>+36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL: Nurse leaders fully embrace concept of HWE</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR: RNs recognized for the value they bring to the work of the org</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>+28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL: Nurse leaders receive support for and have access to ed programs</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>+26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR: RNs recognize others for value they bring to the work of the org</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Career and Job Satisfaction
Intent to Leave
Correlations Between HWE Components and Job Satisfaction and Correlation Between Job Satisfaction and Intent to Leave

Note: $p < .01$; RN = registered nurse, FLNM = frontline nurse manager, HWE = healthy work environment
## Intent to Leave
Do you plan to leave your present nursing position?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, within the next 12 months</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, within the next 3 years</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No plans to leave within the next 3 years</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do you plan to do after leaving your present nursing position?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Of the 54.4% who plan to leave their current positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a different position in clinical/patient care nursing</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to school to pursue additional nursing education</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a different position in non-clinical care nursing</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retire</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pursue a job in another profession</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take time out for family or other personal reasons</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How likely would each of the following be to cause you to reconsider your plans to leave your present position?

- Better leadership: 39%
- Higher salary and benefits: 47%
- Better staffing: 46%
- More opportunities for professional development: 31%
- More respect from front line management: 35%
- More respect from administration: 38%
- More meaningful recognition for my contribution: 36%
- More opportunities to influence decisions about patient care: 31%
- More autonomy: 26%
- More/better equipment and technology resources: 28%
- More flexible scheduling: 25%
Please describe a work environment issue in your unit/organization that causes/caused you concern. Also, please indicate if the issue was resolved and how. (3300 responses)

A physician threw an instrument at a tech. Reported to HR. Physician behavior continues.

Staffing ratios do not fit our patient population.

Lack of leadership.

A hospitalist physician would not stop making sexual advances towards myself and other nurses. Nurses and manager met with him. Behavior continues with other nurses, but I made it clear it was unacceptable and he has stopped with me.

Do my work and go home attitude.

The number of inexperienced staff hired for ICU.

We are currently required to take 3 patients in our ICU regardless of acuity.

Lack of breaks.

Decisions are made without input from bedside nursing staff.

Family threatened physical violence against nurses. Family talked to, but no restrictions on their access. We are told to have security walk us to our cars when we leave work.
Please describe a work environment best practice in your unit/organization that others could use to improve their work environment. (2694 responses)

We (the staff) stand together.

We have a morale committee that helps support our nurse.

We have an excellent nurse educator.

Bedside report/handoff report.

Daily huddles.

We do rounds to discuss discharge planning on every patient.

Buddy system for breaks and turning patients.

Supportive manager – always visible and accessible.

Brought in the HWE survey to one unit. Geared improvement efforts on that unit to the standards and saw positive results. Spread to other units in the system.

Treating every patient on the unit as everyone’s patient; working as a team to get work done.
In Summary

- We’ve made progress!
  - Awareness, implementation, evidence/data in literature

- Having policies matters!

- Implementing the HWE Standards matters!

- For more information


Assertions about HWEs....

- There is a direct link between work environment and patient safety
- Creating HWEs requires changing long-standing cultures, traditions and hierarchies
- HWEs do not just happen
“Most times, the way isn’t clear, but you want to start anyway. It is in starting with the first step that other steps become clearer.”

- I. Ayivor

- Review the critical elements that paint the picture for an HWE

- Use the HWE assessment tool to create your baseline

- Make a plan…. (there is no “right” way!)
Remember how you eat an elephant...

- One bite at a time...
Questions/Answers