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

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AACN Chief Clinical Officer

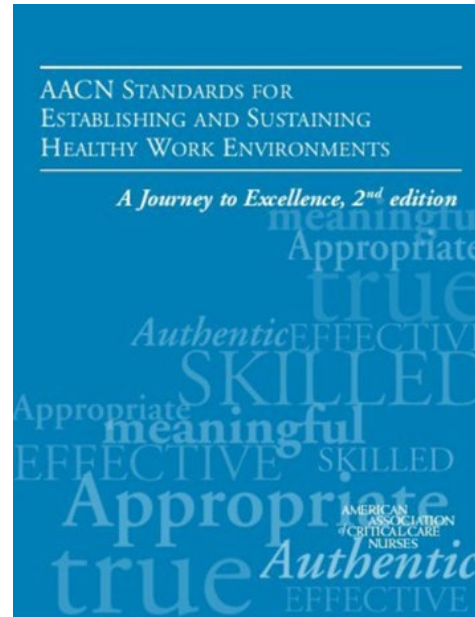**Linda Cassidy**, MSN, EdM, RN, CCNS, CCRN-K
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AACN's work...

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

ACT BOLDLY

CERTIFICATE OF COMMITMENT

AACN STANDARDS FOR ESTABLISHING AND SUSTAINING HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENTS

A Journey to Excellence, 2nd edition

Critical Care Work Environment National Surveys

AACN healthy work environment ASSESSMENT
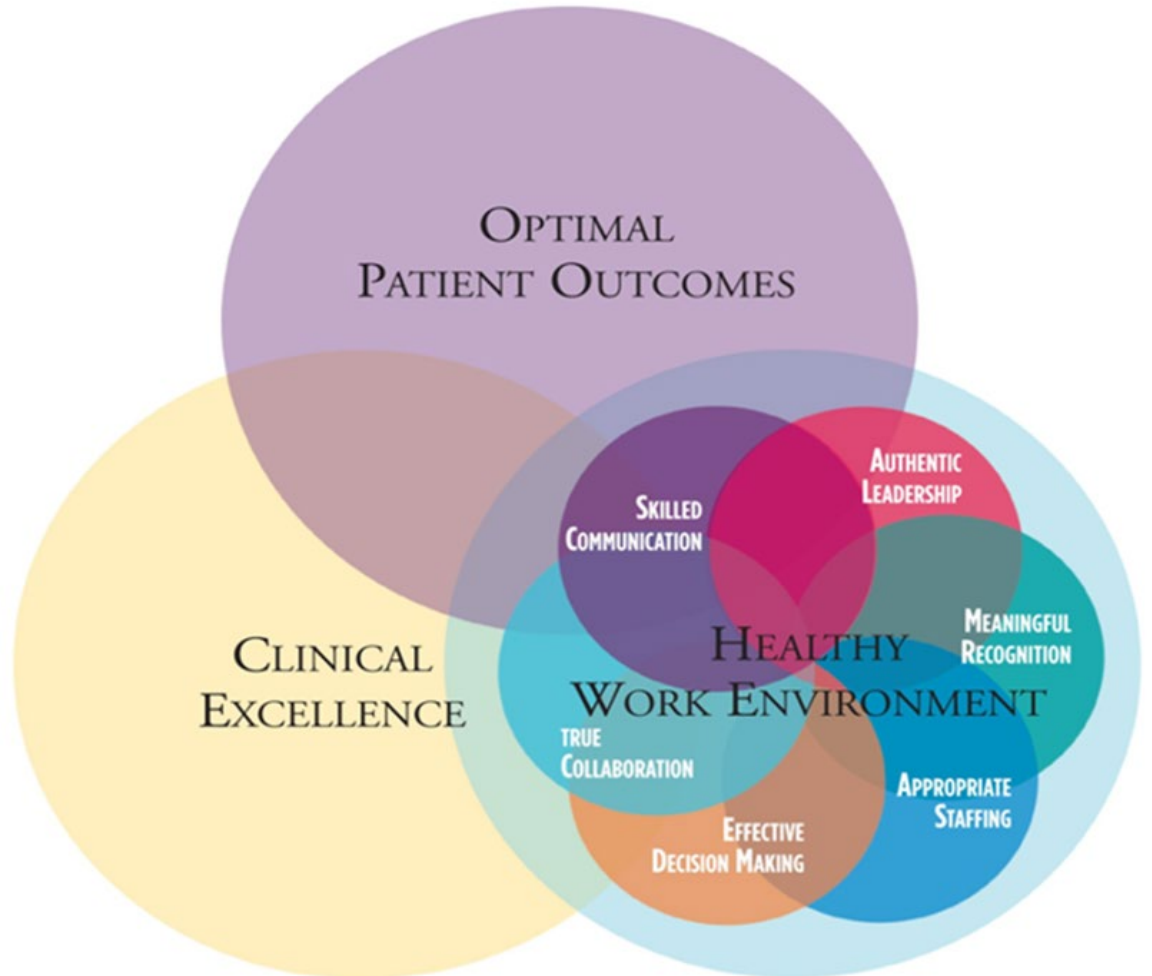
Team Assessment Results

Over time...

2003: No references in literature on HWE

2016: 300 references/year
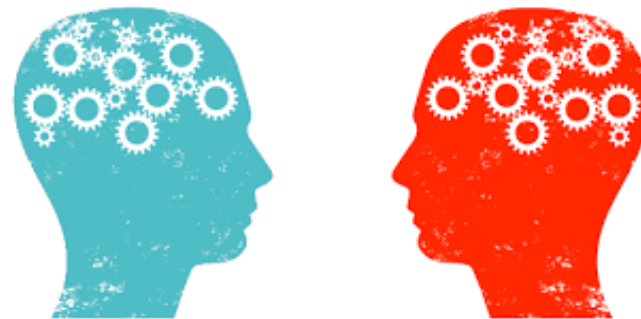
Healthy Work Environment Six Essential Standards

HWEs Require…

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

True Collaboration

Structures & processes

Leaders as role models

...must be relentless in pursuing and fostering true collaboration

Access to education & coaching

Demonstrated competence

Sustained culture of collaboration

Embraced by all team members

Structures & deliberate processes

Assess results of decisions

Effective decision making

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

Data-driven decisions

Nurses in all levels of decision making

All team members master relevant content to inform decisions

Staffing policies

Processes to evaluate

Appropriate Staffing

…must ensure the effective match between patient needs & nurse competencies

Nurses participate

Support services

Technology helps

Structures & processes to ensure a sustainable focus

Everyone is responsible

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

Ongoing evaluation

Validate that recognition is meaningful

Visible enthusiasm

Measure & evaluate

Authentic Leadership

...fully embrace HWE, authentically live it & engage others...

Performance appraisal

Role models of HWE

Education & coaching

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

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

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!
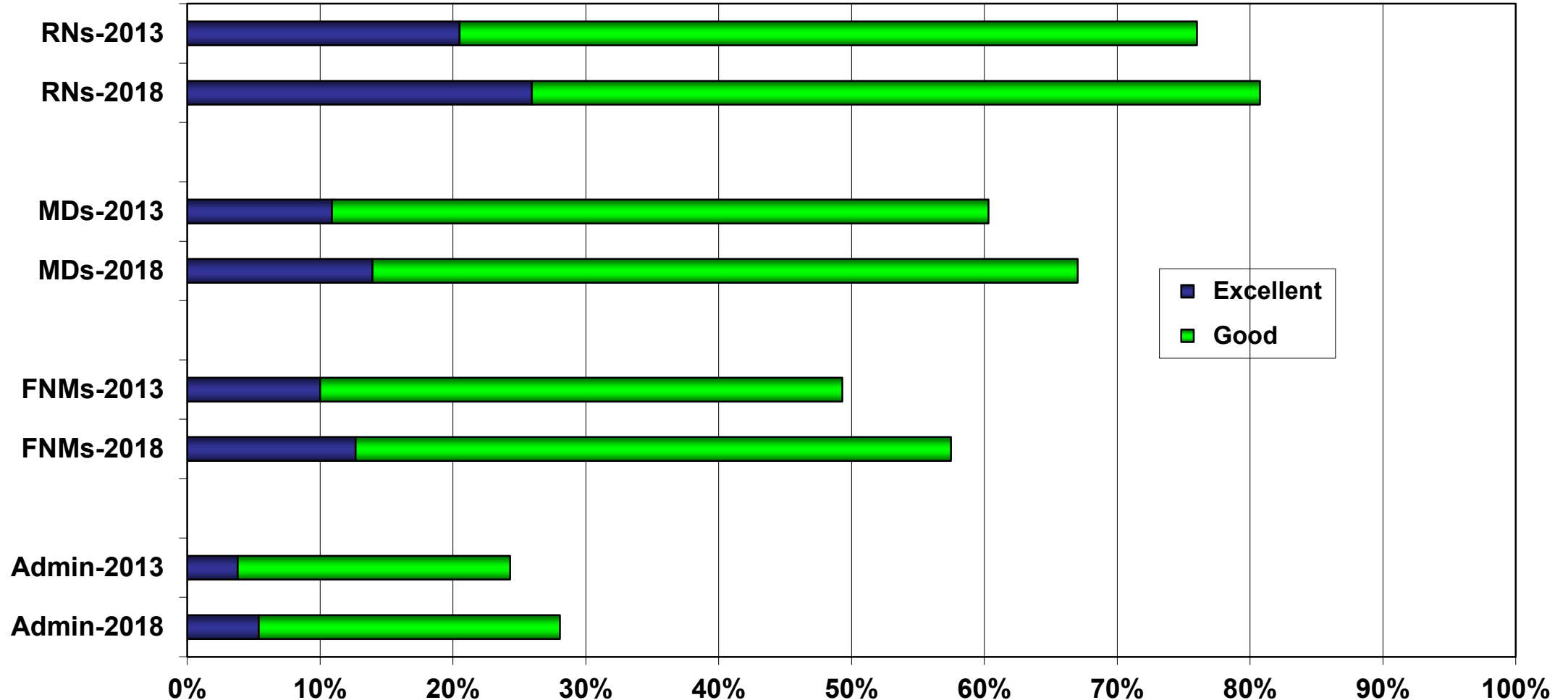
Quality of <u>Communication</u> Between RNs and...
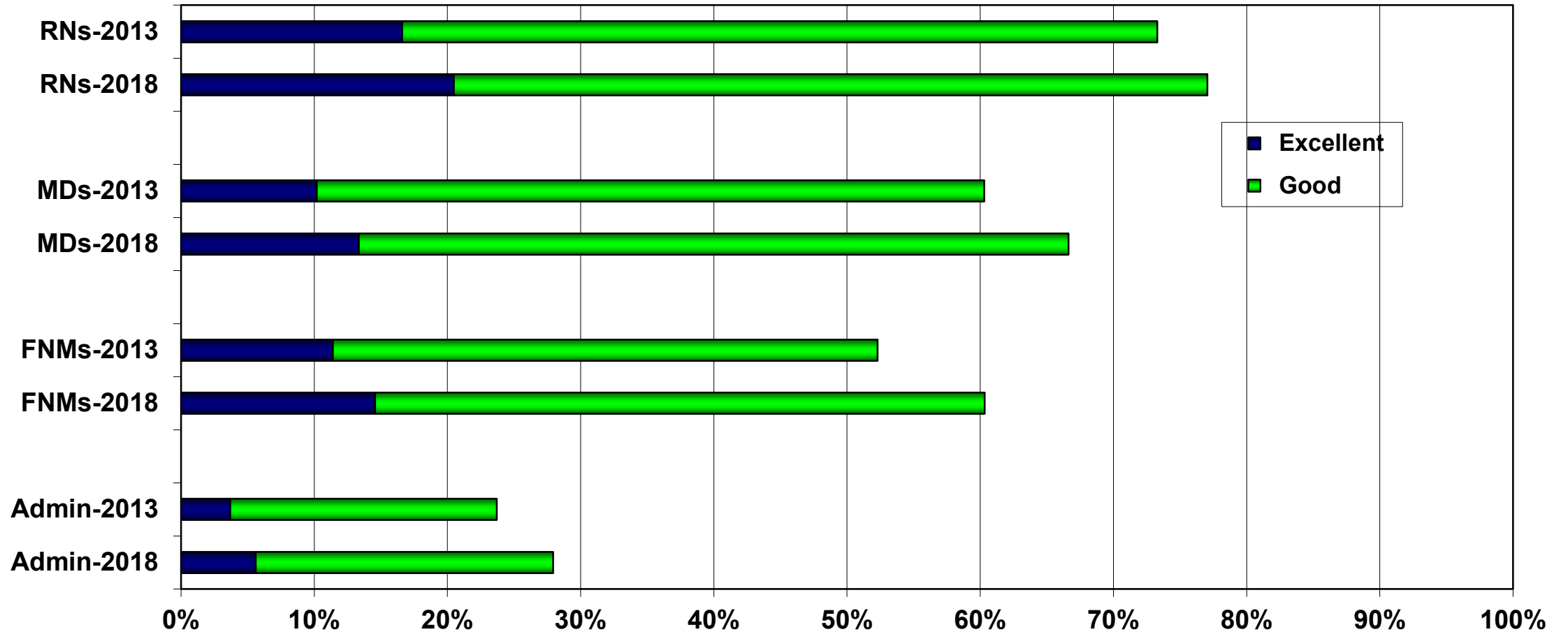
Notes: FNM= Frontline nurse manager; Admin = Administration

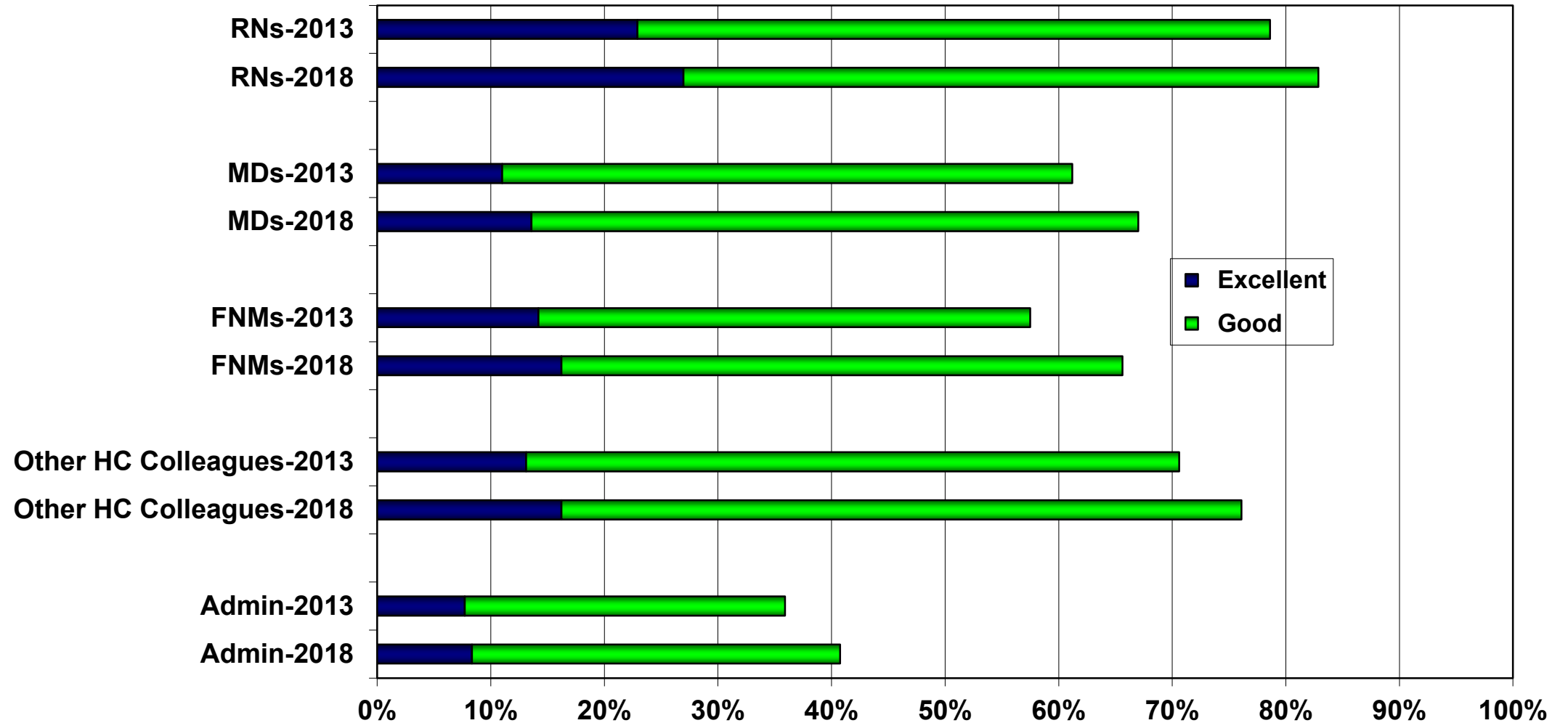# Quality of Collaboration Between RNs and...

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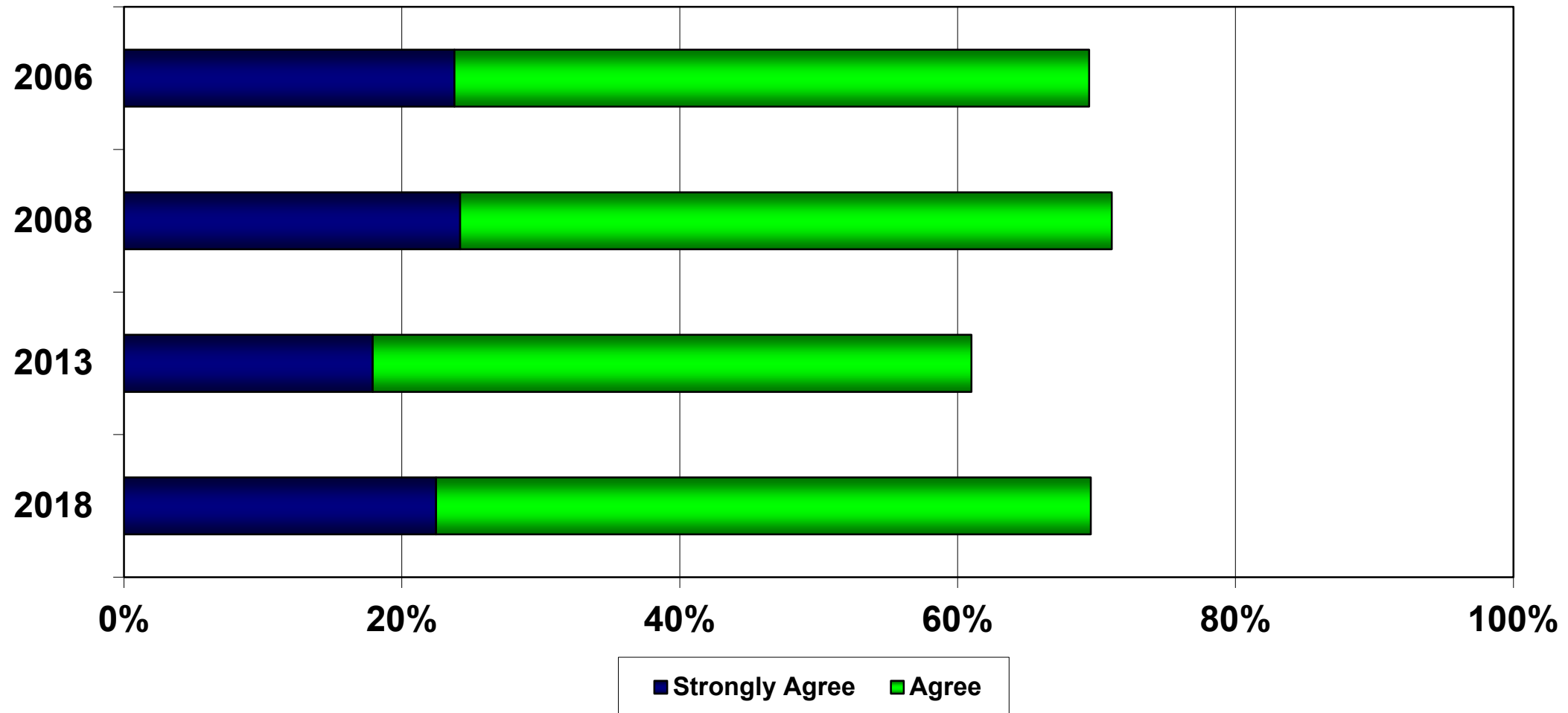
Respect for RNs by...

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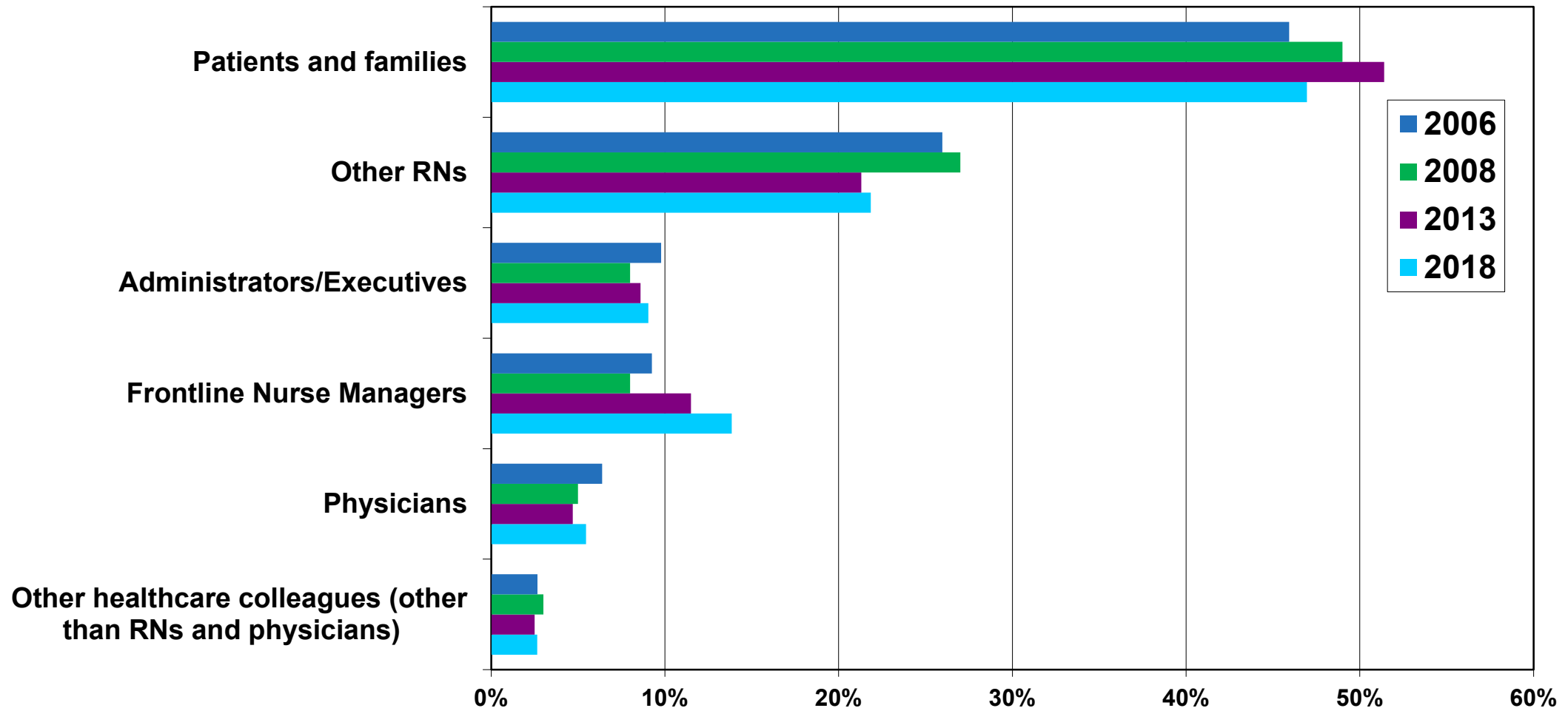
Effective Decision Making

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…

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.
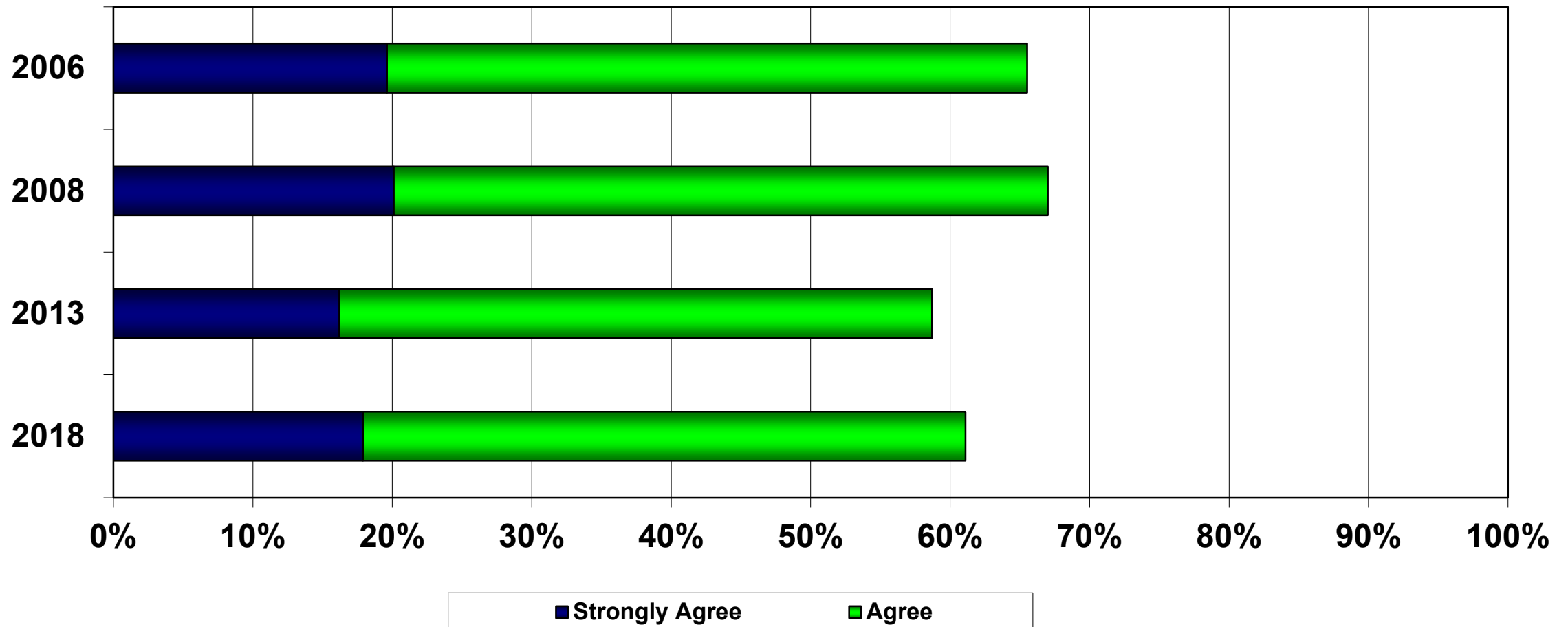
With regard to staffing for your unit, how often do you have the right knowledge and skills?

All the time **5%** *Appropriate Staffing*

More than 75% of the time **34%**

50-75% of the time **29%**

Between 25-49% of the time **21%**

Less than 25% of the time **11%** *Inappropriate Staffing*
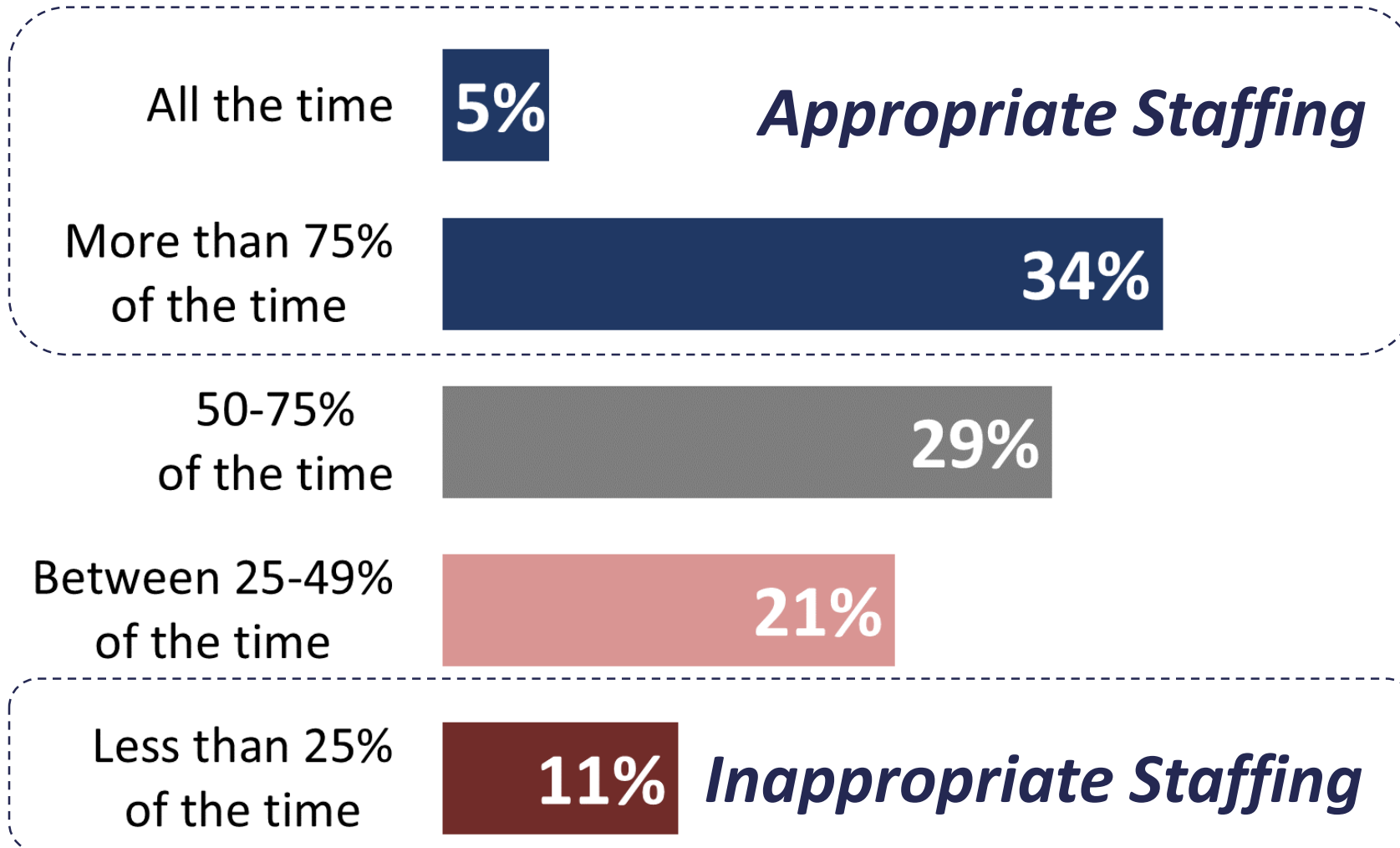
At the end of a typical shift, to what degree do you get the following work done? *Percent (%) who answer 75-100% of the time*

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

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

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

Note: 6107 RNs responded to this question

Policies Matter!

Average Number of Negative Incidents by Presence of Zero Tolerance Abuse Policy

■ Sexual Harassment   ■ Physical Abuse   ■ Discrimination   ■ Verbal Abuse
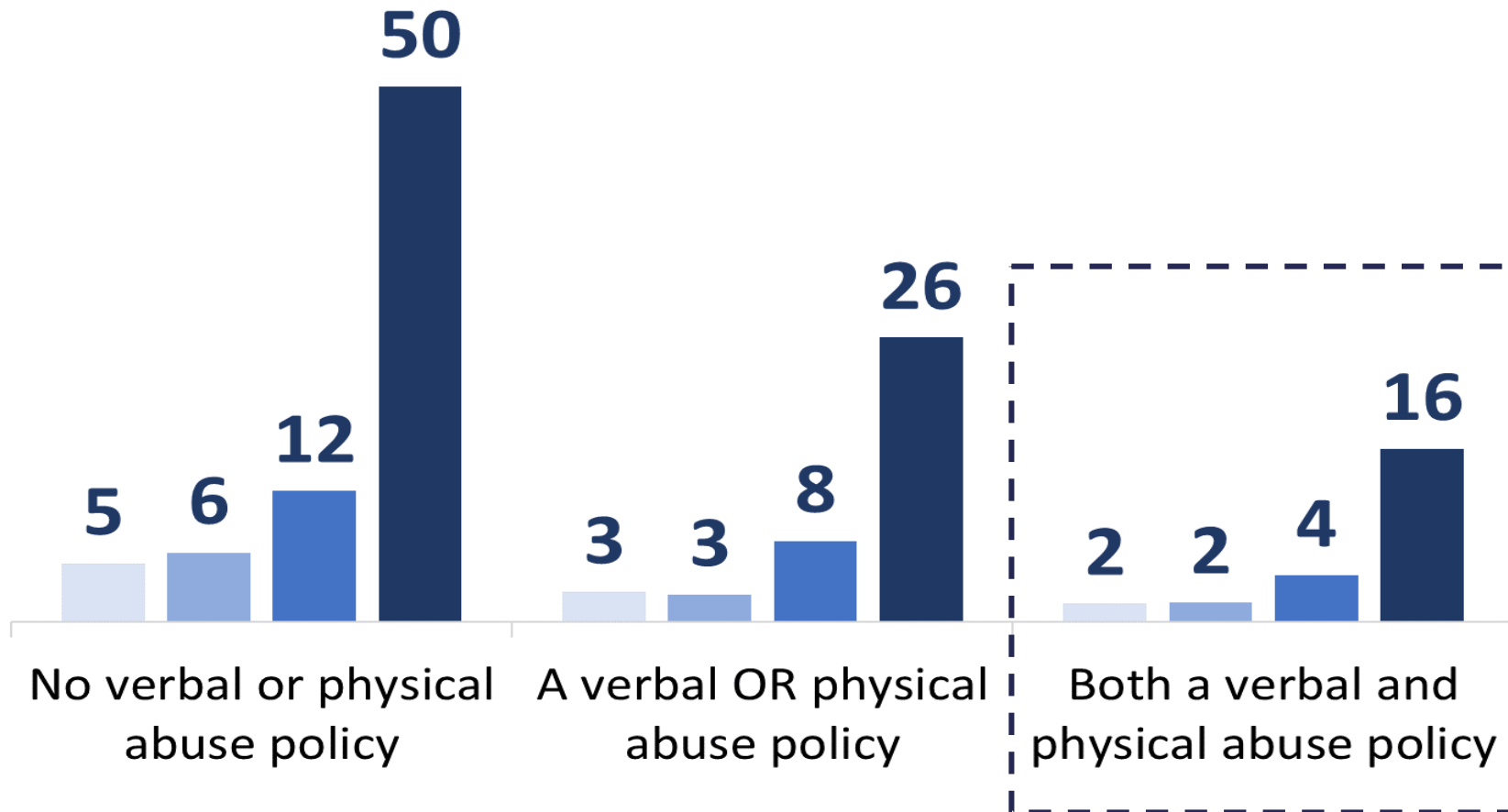
On average, abuse is less likely to happen when verbal and physical abuse policies are in place.

	No verbal or physical abuse policy	A verbal OR physical abuse policy	Both a verbal and physical abuse policy
Sexual Harassment	5	3	2
Physical Abuse	6	3	2
Discrimination	12	8	4
Verbal Abuse	50	26	16

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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?

	2006	2008	2013	2018
Very frequently	**6.79%**	**5.58%**	**9.36%**	**10.60%**
Frequently	**19.41%**	**17.64%**	**23.33%**	**24.34%**
Occasionally	**45.61%**	**45.29%**	**42.83%**	**43.63%**
Very rarely	**28.19%**	**31.49%**	**24.48%**	**21.43%**

HWE Standards Unit Implementation:
Has your unit implemented the AACN HWE Standards?

Not at all **56%**

Just beginning **21%**

Well on the way **18%**

Fully implemented **5%**

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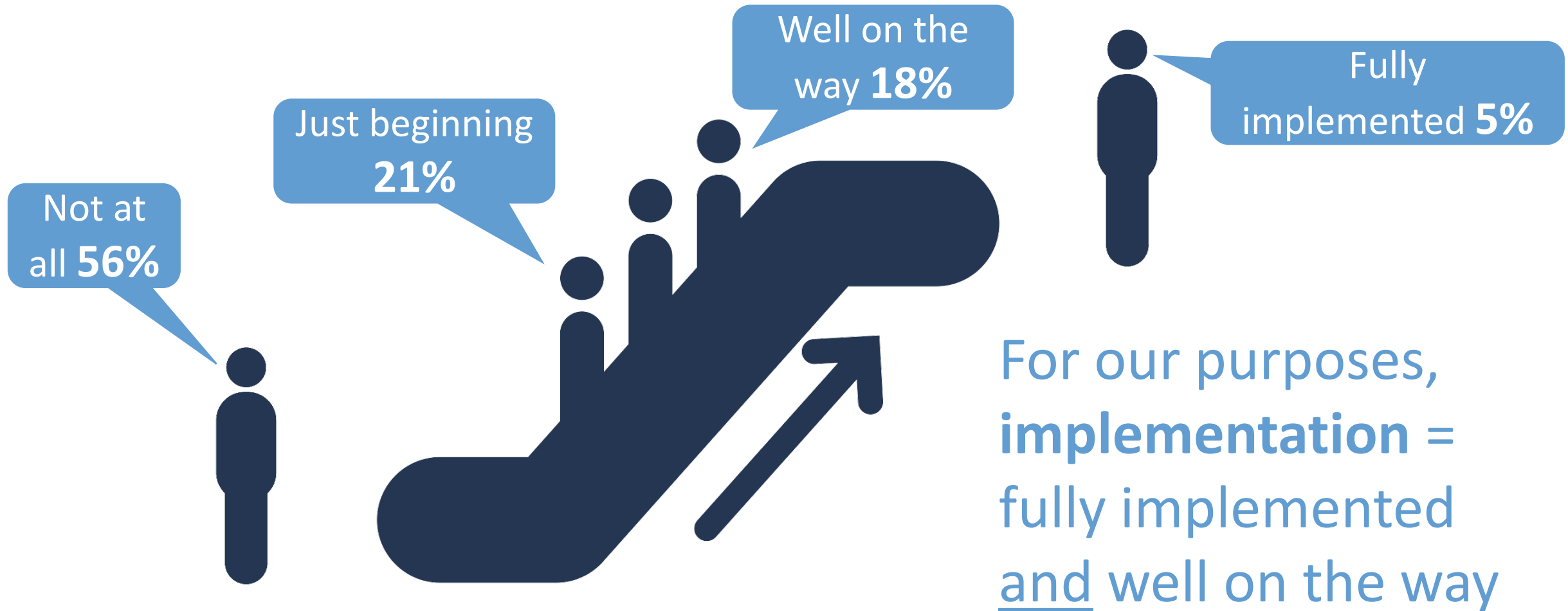
Beacon Units and HWE - Mean Ratings

SC=Skilled Communication   TC=True Collaboration   ED=Effective Decision-Making
AS=Appropriate Staffing   MR=Meaningful Recognition   AL=Authentic Leadership

	SC1	SC2	TC1	TC2	TC3	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4	AS1	AS2	MR1	MR2	AL1	AL2	AL3
Beacon Yes	3.16	3.06	3.17	2.79	2.92	3.10	3.20	2.89	3.12	2.90	2.69	2.98	3.16	3.02	2.97	3.01
Beacon Journey	3.14	3.12	3.18	2.86	2.98	3.17	3.24	2.94	3.24	2.92	2.72	3.08	3.23	3.15	3.06	3.11
Beacon No	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
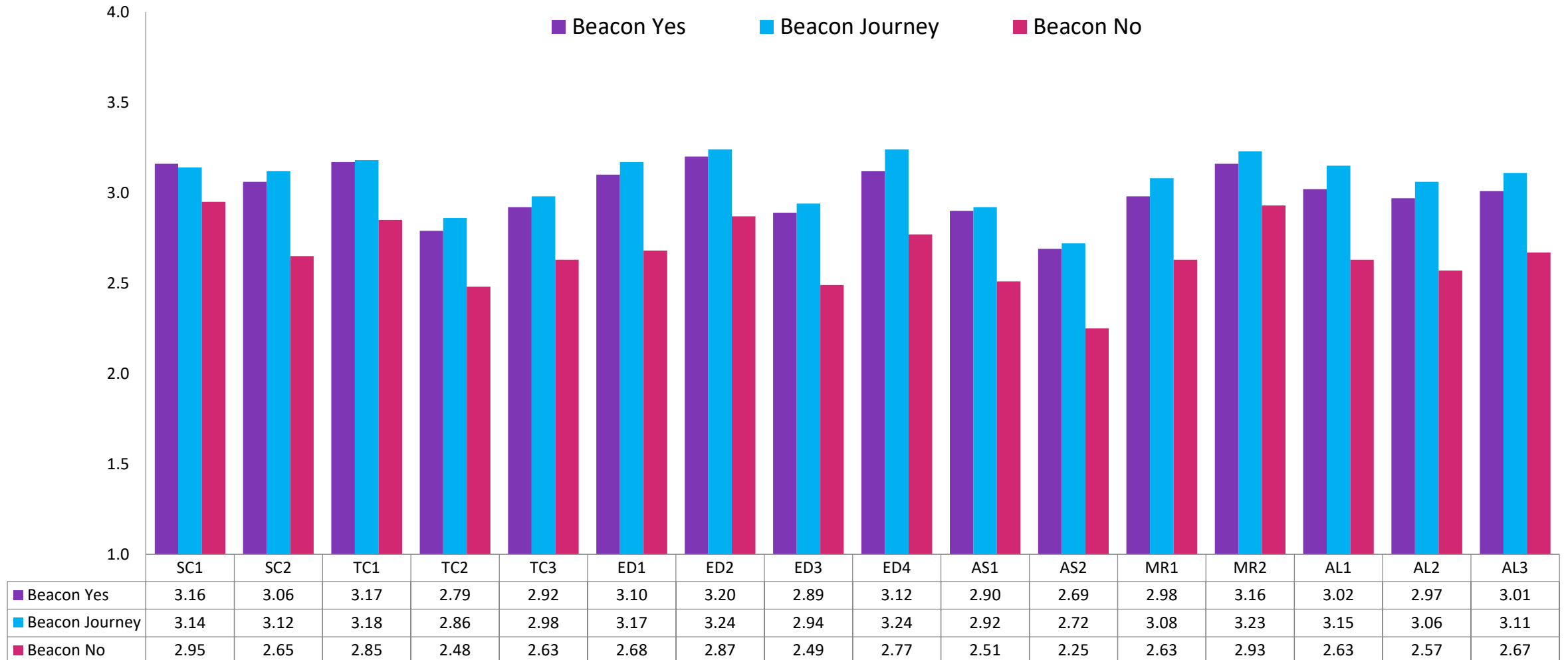
Authentic Leadership and Meaningful Recognition Items:
Agree % by HWE Standards Unit Implementation

	Not Implemented	Implemented	
AL: Nurse leaders engage others in achieving a HWE	56%	92%	**+36**
AL: Nurse leaders fully embrace concept of HWE	60%	92%	**+32**
MR: RNs recognized for the value they bring to the work of the org	61%	89%	**+28**
AL: Nurse leaders receive support for and have access to ed programs	65%	91%	**+26**
MR: RNs recognize others for value they bring to the work of the org	77%	93%	**+16**

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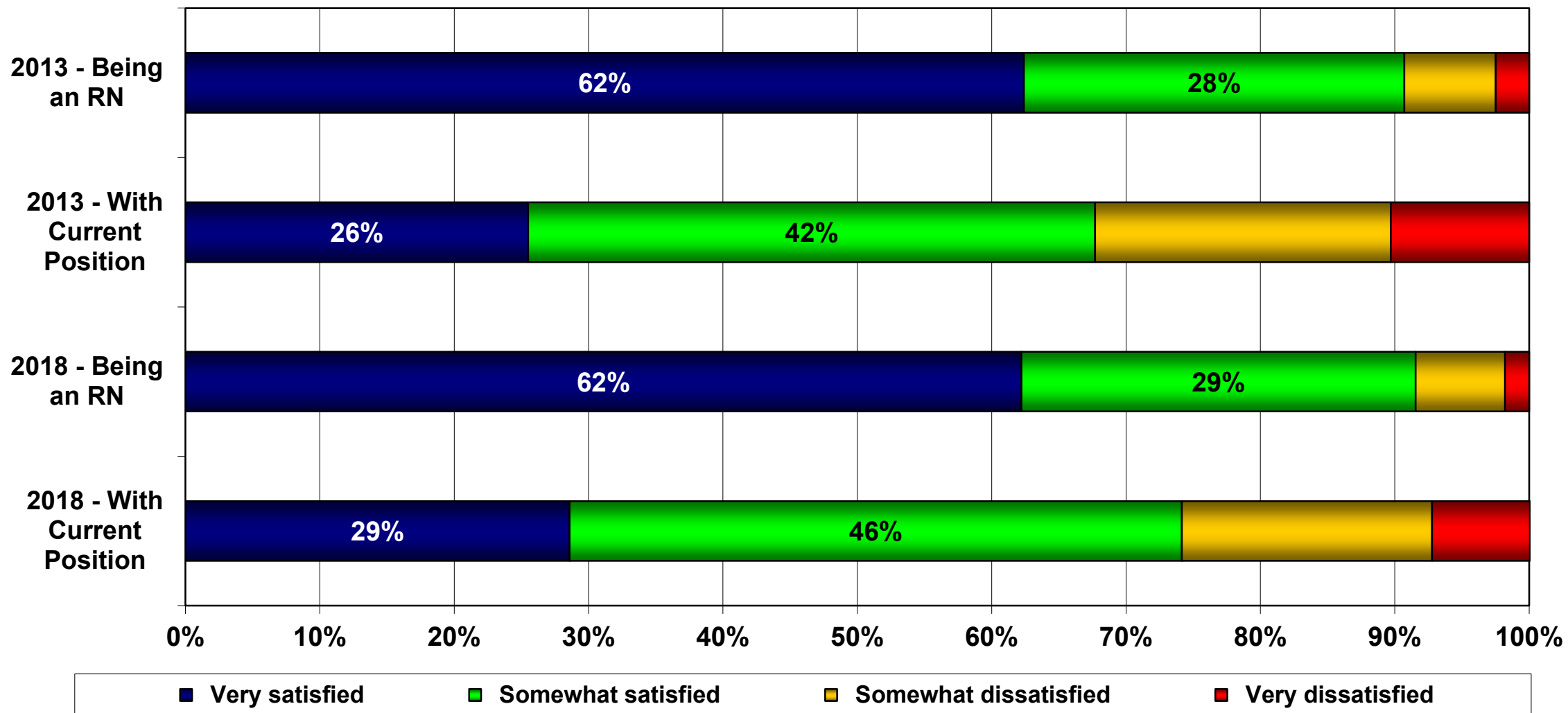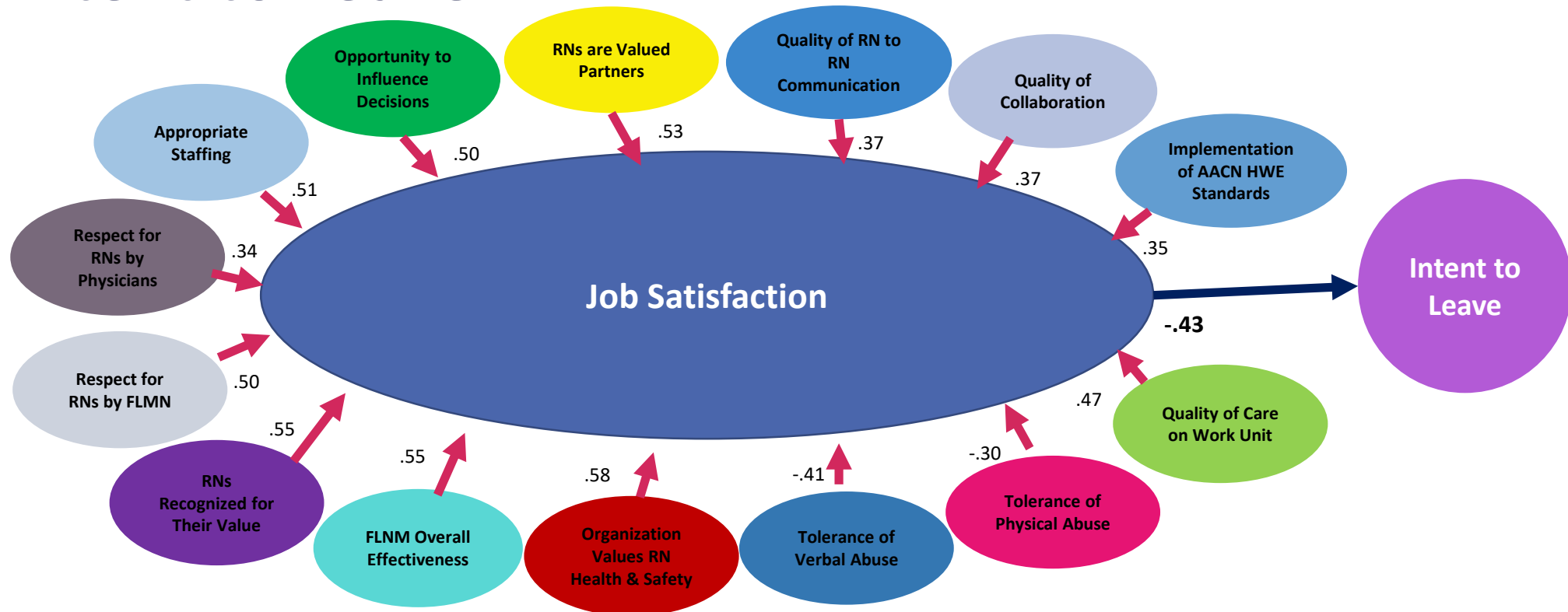
Career and Job Satisfaction
Intent to Leave

Satisfaction

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?

	2006	2008	2013	2018
Yes, within the next 12 months	**19.6%**	**16.5%**	**21.3%**	**32.6%**
Yes, within the next 3 years	**28.6%**	**27.3%**	**29.2%**	**21.8%**
No plans to leave within the next 3 years	**51.9%**	**56.2%**	**49.6%**	**45.5%**

54.4% !

What do you plan to do after leaving your present nursing position?

	Of the 54.4% who plan to leave their current positions
Take a different position in clinical/patient care nursing	38.4%
Return to school to pursue additional nursing education	17.3%
Take a different position in non-clinical care nursing	15.5%
Retire	12.2%
Pursue a job in another profession	3.2%
Take time out for family or other personal reasons	2.4%
Other	11.1%
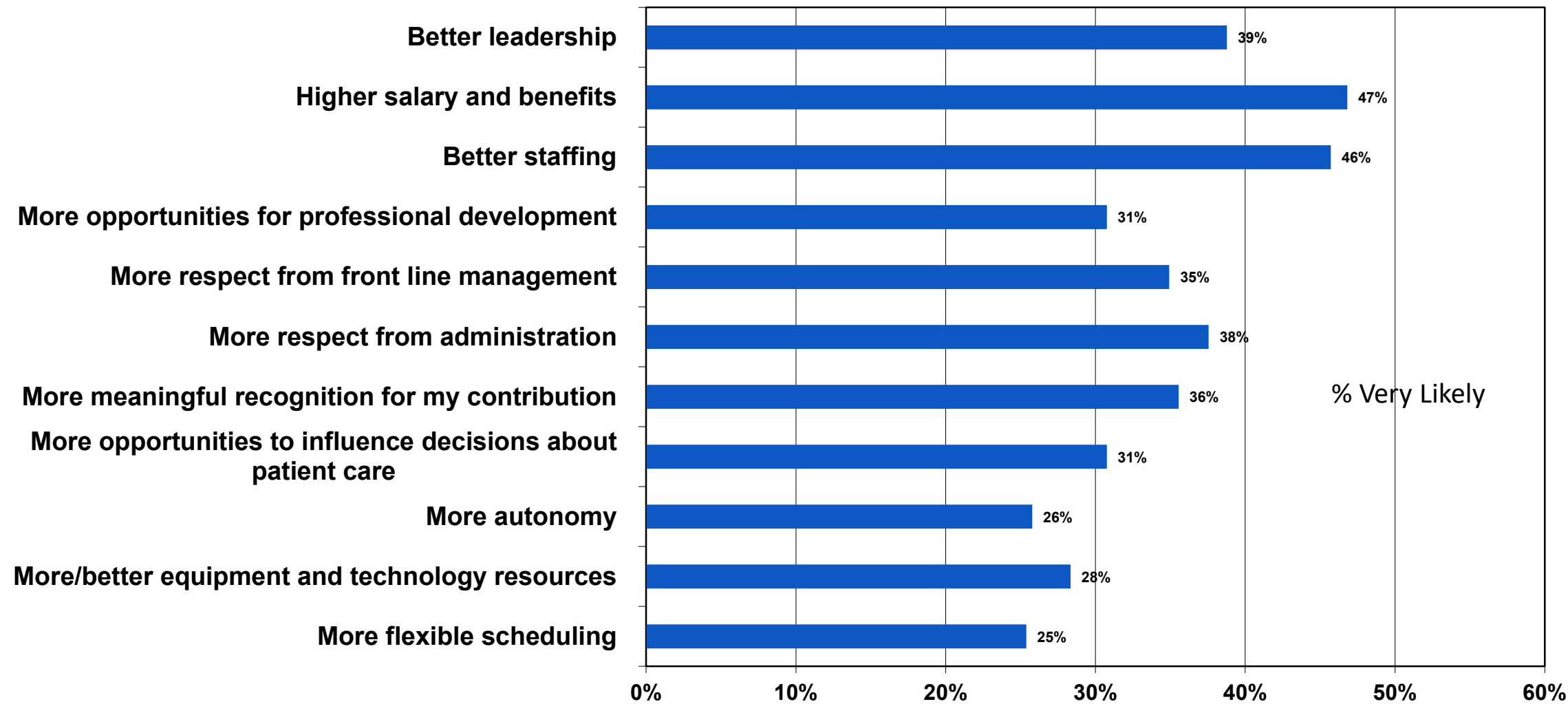
Please describe a work environment issue in your unit/organization that causes/caused you concern. Also, please indicate if the issue was resolved and how. (3300 responses)

We have no patient lifts.

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.

Do my work and go home attitude.

The number of inexperienced staff hired for ICU.

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.

Lack of breaks.

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

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.

Decisions are made without input from bedside nursing staff.

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.

Bedside report/handoff report.

Daily huddles.

We do rounds to discuss discharge planning on every patient.

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

Buddy system for breaks and turning patients.

We have an excellent nurse educator.

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.

In Summary

- **We've made progress!**
    - → **Awareness, implementation, evidence/data in literature**

- **Having policies matters!**

- **Implementing the HWE Standards matters!**

- **For more information**

Ulrich, B., Barden, C., Cassidy, L., & Varn-Davis, N. (2019). Critical care nurse work environments 2018: Findings and implications. *Critical Care Nurse*. Published online ahead of print.

Ulrich, B., Barden, C., Cassidy, L., & Varn-Davis, N. (2019, in press). Frontline nurse manager and chief nurse executive skills: Direct care nurses' perceptions. *Nurse Leader*.

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!)**

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Questions/Answers

THANK YOU