Healthy Work Environments are important to the welfare of nurses, for successful nurse recruitment and retention, and for the safety and quality of care provided to patients. The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses identified six essential standards necessary to create and ensure a healthy work environment (skilled communication, true collaboration, effective decision-making, appropriate staffing, meaningful recognition, and authentic leadership) (AACN, 2005). This evidence-based practice (EBP) project presents an innovative tool created by frontline leaders and staff to be used by unit-based nurse leaders across a complex 12 hospital health system to easily visualize the health of their unit (Brunjes, 2014; Ritter, 2010; Shirey, 2017). The goal of the project was to develop a simple to use instrument to classify nurse sensitive elements necessary to support and stimulate a healthy work environment. A common pie chart completed either electronically or hard copy was designed with healthy work environment labels. Pie chart wedges were standardized for the acute care hospital units with nurse-specific data sources including retention, nurse satisfaction, patient satisfaction, nurse-sensitive clinical indicators, professional development goals, and active engagement strategies. The coloring of each wedge is based on red, yellow, or green standards. Green indicates the indicator is meeting or exceeding goal, yellow is within ten percent of the goal, and red is below the desired goal by more than ten percent. Leaders color a pie chart based on data sources and identify areas of focus. The tool is used to prompt conversation between managers and directors to engage staff in work environment action planning at the unit level. Leaders were surveyed following the launch of this tool in mid-2017 for ease of use and effectiveness. 92% (n=254) of leaders had already used or planned to use the tool. Leaders rated the usefulness of the tool at 72.4% (n=199) somewhat or very useful. Following adoption across the 12 hospital acute care units, the tool was modified and adopted in the emergency departments and surgical services areas with applicable healthy work environment indicators. Staff nurse retention and turnover were measured prior to and following the project and demonstrated a significant improvement from 2016 year end to 2017 year end. Sustainability of the new tool remains a significant strategic imperative for ongoing success.


**Abstract Summary:**

This evidence-based practice project presents an innovative tool used by nurse leaders across a complex health system to visualize unit work environmental health. The goal was to develop a useful visual to classify nurse sensitive unit elements necessary to monitor a healthy work environment.

**Content Outline:**

Introduction, Rationale, Background, Purpose, Intervention, Evaluation, Implications, References

**First Primary Presenting Author**

**Primary Presenting Author**

Susan A. Winslow, DNP, RN, NEA-BC
Sentara Healthcare
Nursing Administration
Systemwide Director of Professional Practice
Williamsburg VA
USA

**Professional Experience:** Dr. Winslow has spent 30+ years in positions responsible for workforce excellence and evidence based practice. She is responsible for professional practice across a 12 hospital health system representing over 8,000 professional nurses. In partnership with executive nurse leaders has provided opportunities to help design, implement, standardize, and sustain system structures and processes to ensure excellence including clinical quality, evidence-based practice, nursing research, and nursing excellence journeys.

**Author Summary:** Functions as System wide Director of Professional Practice to independently and collaboratively help to proactively pursue opportunities for improvement, encourage and inspire innovation and the development of new knowledge. Completion of a DNP in 2013 provided an intimate focus on motivational factors of staff nurse professional development in response to the IOM Future of Nursing report. Functions as health system Magnet Program Director. Serves as an appraiser for the ANCC Magnet recognition program since 2008.

**Second Secondary Presenting Author**

**Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author**
Joani S. Brough, MSHA, BSN, RN  
Sentara Healthcare  
Nursing Administration  
Vice President – Nurse Executive  
Virginia Beach VA  
USA

**Professional Experience:** Forty years as an RN with over twenty years in leadership. System lead of Healthy Work Environment project focused on improvement of retention. Nurse Executive of Magnet recognized hospital.

**Author Summary:** Forty years as an RN with over twenty years in leadership. System lead of Healthy Work Environment project focused on improvement of retention. Nurse Executive of Magnet recognized hospital.

Third Author

Genemarie W. McGee, MS, BSN, RN, NEA-BC  
Sentara Healthcare  
Nursing Administration  
Corporate Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer  
Norfolk VA  
USA

**Professional Experience:** 39 years as a RN with 25 years in nursing leadership. Functions as Corporate Vice President and System Chief Nursing Officer of large mid-Atlantic health system. Leads strategic nursing for 12 hospitals, long term care, home health, hospice, health insurance and nursing college.

**Author Summary:** 39 years as a RN with 25 years in nursing leadership. Functions as Corporate Vice President and System Chief Nursing Officer of large mid-Atlantic health system. Leads strategic nursing for 12 hospitals, long term care, home health, hospice, health insurance and nursing college.

Fourth Author

Cindy A. Parker, MA, BSN, RN, NE-BC  
Sentara Healthcare  
Clinical Education  
Systemwide Director of Clinical Education  
Chesapeake VA  
USA

**Professional Experience:** Cindy Parker has 30 + years in healthcare holding leadership positions in a variety of areas some of which included Hospital Staff Development, Case Management, Accreditation and Regulatory, Behavioral Health Services and Staffing Support Services. She currently functions as Systemwide Director of Clinical Education for an integrated healthcare system. In her role she consults and collaborates with executive leadership and other departments to standardize and optimize clinical education initiatives to enable a clinically competent workforce.

**Author Summary:** Cindy Parker has 30 + years in healthcare holding leadership positions in a variety of areas some of which included Hospital Staff Development, Case Management, Accreditation and Regulatory, Behavioral Health Services and Staffing Support Services. She currently functions as Systemwide Director of Clinical Education for an integrated healthcare system. In her role she consults and collaborates with executive leadership and other departments to standardize and optimize clinical education initiatives to enable a clinically competent workforce.