



FOUR LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES THAT IMPACT RN RETENTION

Presented by
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Alarmed at the high turnover rate of registered nurses (21.5%), the WakeMed Emergency Department leadership team initiated a quality assurance project in 2009 to identify the causes, put strategies in place to ameliorate them and create a culture that prevents a resurgence of RN turnover in the future.

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Poor nurse retention results is an enormous, and often unrecognized, cost to an organization which can be measured in more than just dollars. Barriers to staff retention include:

- Personal life changes
- Colleague callouts
- Unpredictability of staff on leave
- Toxic behaviors
- Challenging environment of urban emergency departments

GOAL

The purpose of this quality assurance project was to:

- Recruit talent
- Respect talent
- Retain the best and brightest



SETTING

The project was conducted between FY 2008 and FY 2013 in the WakeMed Level I Trauma Center, which is supported by a 59-bed Adult Emergency Department. The busiest emergency department in the state of North Carolina, the WakeMed Adult ED is staffed by a total of 250 professional and ancillary staff that coordinates care for nearly 80,000 patients per year. The Adult ED also serves as the safety net health care provider for the service area.

PARTICIPANTS

- Adult Emergency Department Leadership Team
- Human Resources
- Emergency Department Staff Nurses

METHODS

The new Emergency Department leadership conducted focus groups with shared decision-making representatives. Potential drivers of RN turnover were identified and action plans were identified, implemented and evaluated. Four key leadership principles were identified and adopted.



The Four Leadership Principles

1) All Hands on Deck

This is an approach to daily staffing in which a member of leadership is assigned as an on-the-floor resource. Now a leader is visible and available 24/7.

2) All Staff Members have a Voice

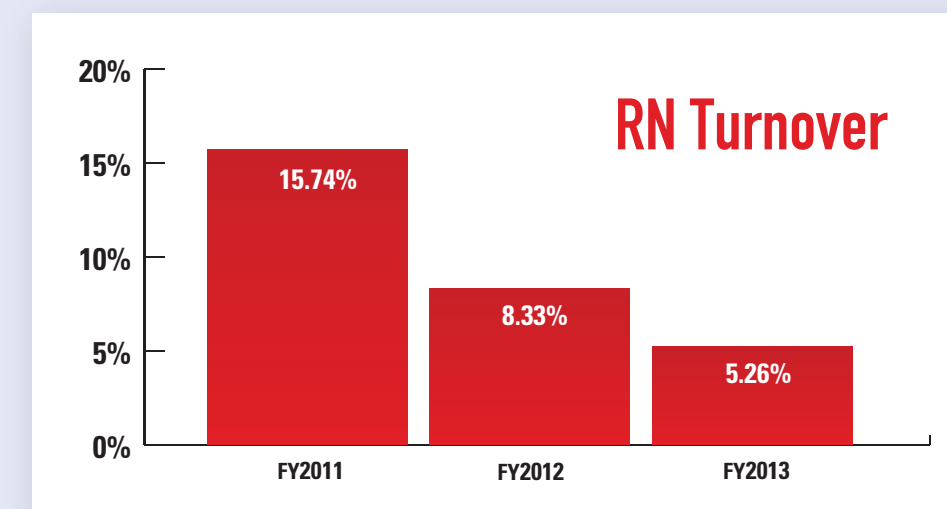
Shared decision-making meetings are now scheduled near shift change while leadership covers patient care.

3) All Staff Members are Family

Daily rounding by leadership promoted individualized support for staff both personally and professionally. Daily reports include “kudos” for outstanding care which is followed up with real-time feedback from leadership.

4) Care for Self

Leadership encourages work-life balance via adopting self-scheduling. A respite room has been located within the department for staff to use during their shift. (See photo, left)



RESULTS

The result of the leadership team’s focus on turnover has been phenomenal. RN turnover has steadily decreased each year. While the national benchmark for emergency departments in hospitals of similar size is 15 percent, our latest results indicate an RN turnover rate of 5 percent and an overall employee turnover rate of 4 percent..

IMPLICATIONS

Losing an experienced, highly skilled staff member can negatively affect a team’s efficacy, cultural dynamics, and subsequently, patient safety and satisfaction. Using staff input to develop targeted leadership principles has proven to positively impact staff retention.

