Nursing Leadership in Rural Settings: Challenges and Strategies

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Purpose

• Texas Team Rural Action Coalition identified challenge
• Chief Nursing Officers functioning in rural and critical access hospitals need support regarding networking and mentoring
• Challenges – educational preparation for the CNO, Affordable Care directives, value-based funding, lack of networking system
• Patient safety and management issues impacted
• Stroth (2010) identified difficulties in the areas of
  • Reduced networking opportunities
  • Challenges to advance professionally
  • Static communities
  • Lack of resources
  • Lack of support
  • Inadequate recruitment and retention activities

Method

• Qualitative research study
• West Texas rural hospital CNOs
• Sample - Nine out of the fifteen potential CNOs (60% response rate)
• Phone call interview conducted
• Twelve semi-structured questions
• Analysis completed on all data by research team members

Results

• Demographic data (N=9)
  • Four – MSN; four – BSN, one – AD
  • Five – 8-15 years nursing experience
  • Four – 21+ years nursing experience
  • Four had mentors to help
• Commonalities
  • Wearing multiple hats
  • Budget oversight for all departments
  • Quality measure reports
  • Employee evaluations required
  • Time constraints
  • Staff training
  • 24/7call
  • Requires greater flexibility
  • Pay rates
  • Lack of respect for rural nursing
  • Difficulties to access further educational opportunities

Conclusions

• Rural CNOs must be provided with support and resources.
• Strategies
  • CNO support system
  • Help with organization of job duties
  • Education on CNO leadership
  • Resources to help keep current on policies, procedures, rules, and regulations
  • CNO meetings using a variety of venues

Future Opportunities

• Year long leadership development project in collaboration with Texas Hospital Association and Texas Team Rural Task Force
• Dissemination to nursing journals

References available upon request.
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