

Hospital nurses dissatisfied with health benefits

14 February 2011, By Joy McIntyre

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania have found that nearly 41 per cent of nurses working in American hospitals and health-care settings were dissatisfied with their health-care benefits. The figure is more than double that of nurses working in other settings and indicates broad-based disincentives for attracting nurses to work at the bedside.

Nurses, totaling nearly 3 million nationally, comprise the largest segment of the health-care workforce.

The survey included 95,449 [nurses](#) in 614 American hospitals and health-care settings.

"This suggests that nurses in care-giving roles are experiencing a distinct disadvantage relative to their peers and others in the broader workforce, a disadvantage that is likely to affect the stability of the nurse workforce in the future," wrote lead author Matthew McHugh and colleagues from the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research at Penn's School of Nursing.

The demand for nurses to work in hospitals is expected to grow as baby boomers age, requiring more [hospital](#) stays and additional days of long-term care and causing a projected shortage of nurses worldwide as today's nurses retire.

The study, published in the policy journal *Health Affairs*, found that, among nurses working directly with patients, 24 percent of hospital nurses and 27 percent of nursing-home nurses reported dissatisfaction in their current jobs, compared to just 13 percent of nurses working in other settings.

The researchers cited previous studies showing the work environment and staffing levels are chronic stressors that cause burnout. Nurses working under those conditions feel over-extended and depleted of emotional and physical resources.

The study by five professors in the Penn School of Nursing found that, among nurses working directly with patients, 34 percent of hospital nurses and 37 percent of nursing-home nurses reported feeling burned out in their current jobs, compared to 22 percent of nurses working in other settings.

Nurses' dissatisfaction also affects patient satisfaction with the care they receive, according to the study.

Researchers found that the percentage of patients who would definitely recommend a hospital to friends or family decreased by about 2 percent for every 10 percent of nurses at a hospital reporting dissatisfaction with their job.

The study also shows that nurses are dissatisfied with their health-care and retirement benefits.

Forty-one percent of hospital nurses and 51 percent of nursing-home nurses who provide direct patient care were dissatisfied with their health-care benefits. Nearly 60 percent of nurses in nursing homes and half of nurses in hospitals are dissatisfied with retirement benefits.

Nursing professors McHugh, Ann Kutney-Lee, Jeannie Cimiotti, Douglas Sloane and Linda Aiken conclude that improving nurses' working conditions may improve the work experience of nurses and the patients' experience in the hospital.

More information: The article is available at content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/...tract/30/2/202?rss=1

Provided by University of Pennsylvania

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