



PENNSYLVANIA ACTION COALITION

A healthy PA through nursing

Strategies to Increase Nursing Workforce Retention

Reasons Why Nurses Are Leaving	Strategies to Increase Retention
Insufficient Staffing Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement Nurse Residency programs for all Graduate Nurses regardless of practice location.• Differentiate levels of nurses based on education.• Add a “helper/runner” role to staffing model (typically non-licensed certificate individuals who can serve as hands and feet).• Expand externships to attract nurse applicants.• Create an internal “travel program” with 6-week assignments. All benefits are comparable to any agency travel organization.• Develop an experienced nurse fellowship program for any nurse who is new to an unfamiliar area of nursing.
Family/Life Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer part time work with full time benefits.• Implement up to 30 days a year of paid time to continue education with a commitment to stay for an additional calendar year.• “Safe Harbor Day”: delineated on the schedule that no one may call the staff person for overtime, come in early, stay late, etc.• “Life Happens”: manager may change a schedule for up to 30 days to help nurses who are facing unforeseen obstacles.• Create a steady night shift (no swing) position.• Develop creative, desirable schedules- shorter shifts, 3- 8-hour and 1- 12-hour, just come in for 4 hours, etc.• Schedule in 1-hour increments (instead of 4 hours).
Physical Toll/Demanding Nature of the Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer a recovery opportunity (like a sabbatical) for staff and add mental health days (2/year) to benefit package.• Institute more breaks during a workday for staff.• Hold rapid improvement process task forces to eliminate waste and low value work.• Create “sleep training” education for staff and offer opportunity for workplace napping.• Provide support to decrease medical illness/disorders nurses face as a result of the nature of the work (sleep and dietary disruptions).• Institute a staffing model for breaks to occur.

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Emotional Toll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create signage that encourages patients and visitors to be kind to staff. • Provide Employee Mental Health Counselors and institute peer to peer counseling for nurses and nurse leader mentorship. • Consider adding a Chief Wellness Officer position (Clinical Psychiatric Specialist) or a Center of Wellness to develop programs and check in on staff. • Expand Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts to enhance feelings of belonging within the profession and create safe spaces for staff to decompress.
Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer tuition reimbursement/forgiveness. • Increase salaries beyond cost of living. • Adjust the Career Ladder to include an expert nurse level. All ladder members receive a pay bump for moving up the ladder. • Consider a retention bonus spread over quarters (up to \$25,000).
Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start each shift with a resilience strategy (“Here is our team today. It’s not ideal but this is what we are going to do to get through the day....”). • Increase daily efforts to recognize individuals for their contributions and invest in frontline leader training/team-building support. • Implement a “Going Home” checklist and ensure that team members have the tools they need to do their work. • Attend to workplace violence issues with counseling opportunities and support when it occurs. • Implement process and technology to prevent workplace violence.

This Toolkit was developed by the Pennsylvania Action Coalition Advisory Board in April 2022.
 For more information as well as links to resources, please see PaActionCoalition.org
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Resources

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