

# Nursing should not unionize

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Nurses Should not Unionize Nurses Should not Unionize The unionization of nurses has been a matter of high debate. According to studies, (AS CITED IN Marquis & Huston, 2009, P. 519), nurses join unions for various reasons ranging from increased individual power, increased role in organizational decision-making, reduced possibility of discrimination and favoritism, and better accommodation of social needs. There are many nurses who do not want to join unions. They point out various reasons. The first reason they point out is that unions are against the concept of free enterprise as unions tend to promote the welfare state. It seems that there are various strong arguments against the unionization of nurses.

The first argument, in the opinion of Anne Shields and Kathleen Rice, is that unionization of nurses goes in stark contradiction with the Florence Nightingale Pledge to “devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care” (Shields & Rice, 2000). It is very evident that a nurse needs to be able to think, speak, and act independently in order to serve this purpose. However, unions often come between patient and nurse. This takes away the professional freedom and status of nurses.

To illustrate, it is very common for unions to adopt strike and walkout as the strategies to achieve their targets. In such cases, all the nurses in the union will be forced to do so because of their affiliations. However, unlike other professions, all healing professions are first and foremost servants of the patient. Unionization often comes with common issues like collective bargaining, political action, and litigation. When such economic considerations are given importance, the quality of patient care goes down. Another adverse impact of unions will be on the effectiveness of supervision.

Admittedly, the reality of nursing is that the ones who are highly dedicated and perform exceptionally are appreciated and better compensated by the nursing supervisors. However, the presence of a contractual agreement will make it impossible for the supervisors even to think about giving different compensation to different people violating the agreements. Things turn even worse when it is about incompetence. To illustrate, it is possible for a supervisor or management to remove such nurses who are 'good enough' or who are incompetent regardless of their seniority. However, such actions invite the wrath of unions. Thus, managers lose the power to argue for the welfare of the patient. Thus, AS Sbinga (2008) points out, instead of providing the best possible care to the patient, the attention turns towards being in harmony with the unions. In other words, patient safety will have to be compromised for unionization.

Yet another argument against the unionization of nurses is that it kills initiative and innovative thinking. To illustrate, when there is union to protect a nurse, people lose the interest in achieving excellence and instead mediocrity comes into play. There are times when one nurse realizes that the collective bargaining weapon of unions can seriously harm the interests of patients. However the fear of getting ostracized will prevent a nurse from doing what is morally and professionally ethical. Moreover, the new recruits will not show interest in gaining valuable knowledge from the more experienced ones and the latter will not consider it as an important duty to share their knowledge with the new ones.

Thus it becomes evident that unionization of nurses will adversely affect the quality of care provided to the patients. This is so because the sole purpose

of unionization is to ensure economic and general welfare of nurses. Firstly, nursing is an activity that requires a great degree of individual thinking, motivation and dedication. This noble profession requires sacrifice of ones own interests for the interests of the patient. However, when the nurses are made to engage in collective bargaining, they are burdened with a lot of responsibilities First of all they are forced not to compromise their own rights, welfare and gains, and secondly, they are forced to fight for the rights of their peers too. As a result, the quality of nursing goes down.

Lastly, it is seen that most of the unions are led by male leaders who are more interested in political action; not patient welfare. Thus there is a contradiction in the fact that while nurses are more concerned about the welfare of patients the unions are forcing them to be more concerned about themselves. In total, it becomes evident that unlike all other professions, the health care profession requires a lot of sacrifice. In this noble profession, self interests and economic gains are second to the welfare of patient. So, unionized activities have nothing to do with this noble profession.

#### References

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