

# Staffing issues with nurses essay



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Nurse staffing refers to the ratio of nurses to patients in a particular unit. The current global nursing shortage is simply wide spread and dangerous lack of skilled nurses who are needed to care for individual patients and the population as a whole. A study on the nursing shortage by Linda Aiken of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, found that an estimated 20, 000 people die each year, because they have checked into a hospital with overworked nurses.

The American Nurses Association, Inc. , 2010). The study also found that Americans scheduled for routine surgeries run a 31 percent greater risk of dying if they are admitted to a hospital with a severe shortage of nurses. That's approximately one-fifth of the up to 98, 000 deaths that occur each year as a result of medical errors. Nurse's care for an average of four patients at time, with the risk of death increasing by 7 percent for each additional patient cared for over the baseline number.

A poll was conducted and it was revealed that more than half of Americans believe the quality of health care is affected, " a great deal" by a shortage of nurses. Nursing is a distinct scientific field and profession whose skilled practitioners save lives and improve patient outcomes every day in a wide variety of settings. In the Center for Nursing Advocacy view, the vast gap between what skilled nurses really do and what the public thinks they do is a fundamental factor underlying most of the more immediate apparent causes of the shortage. Fagin, Emerita, Maraldo, Mason, May, 2010) These causes include nurse short staffing, poor work conditions, inadequate resources for nursing research and education, the aging nursing workforce, expanded career options for women, nursing predominantly for women, the complexity

of healthcare technology and aging population. Other studies have shown that an inadequate quantity of skilled nurses in clinical settings has a significant negative impact on patient outcomes.

It was startling to find out that impact includes mortality; the nursing shortage literally takes lives and impairing the health and well-being of many millions of the world's people. In the 1990's, a number of factor's combined to produce a nursing shortage in the United States and many other nations in the world. This was due to money-driven hospitals and the dismantling of nursing. During this time some nursing positions were cut due to the demands.

Many hospital decision makers, who did not seem to understand or value nursing highly, implemented restructuring plans that had the effect of drastically increasing the workloads of individual registered nurses. (Fagin, Emerita, Maraldo Mason, May, 2010) Many of the nurses who remain sadly unempowered in the current health system lacked the resources to fight effectively against these threats to their patients and themselves. Short-staffing and restructuring drove away many nurses who could no longer face their growing burnout and/or the realization that they could not meet their professional responsibilities to their patients.

It is sad to know, by 2005; roughly a million U. S. registered nurses (about one fifth of the national total) had chosen not to work in nursing. Now, the U. S. women have come to enjoy a greater range of career choices than in the past and men are still not entering the nursing program. Men only comprise only about 6% of working U. S. nurses. At the same time, the nursing

workforce is rapidly aging and too few new nurses are being trained. It is still an ongoing process that with poor relations with physicians, including lack of physician respect, physician's disruptive behavior and major communication failures.

I was so surprised that even with a weak economy, more awareness of the nursing program is not made known, the offers are plentiful; there are diverse positions that can offer a chance to a better life, with excellent pay. Many stakeholders within the health care system, especially federal and state government's hospital, hospital organizations, nurse associations, foundations and accreditation organizations, aren't aware of the lack of qualified nursing staff and related problems and are actively seeking solutions, (AHRQ, Feb. 010). On the Federal level, in 2002, congress passed the Nurse Reinvestment Act to improve the recruitment and retention of nurses. The act establishes a service to give scholarships and loans to nursing students if they are willing to serve in hospitals with critical shortages of nurses for a two year period. It is also sets up a loan forgiveness program for nurses receiving advanced degrees, who will teach at nursing schools.

Just to reiterate, the reasons for these staffing issues is not just the economy and inadequate support from financial institutions to train sufficient numbers of nurses, but, it also includes a lack of respect by the physicians, poor work ethics amongst the nursing workforce, lack of good quality recruitment and inadequate pay.

It has been my work experience over the years that you must be happy in your place of employment. It is vitally important that hospital administrations have as strategic plan in place, so that the nursing organization can run smooth and efficient. Strategic planning must be in place to execute important decisions that will affect the company in a positive way in the future. Hospitals and other institutions need to know how to motivate their nurses to keep them from burning out in these tough times, a little motivation can goes along way.