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Submission date: 10-Nov-2021 10:50PM (UTC-0600)

Submission ID: 1699498188

File name: Position_Paper.docx (23.43K)

Word count: 709

Character count: 4014

Position Paper

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Nursing Shortages in Healthcare Facilities

In the healthcare system, nursing consists of the largest body of employees. A shortage of nursing services disables the quality of health care provided to patients. The current national shortage of nurses has been a significant challenge to delivering quality and sustainable health workforce to achieve future generations' health needs. Every society's wellbeing and health is dependent on a regulated, confident, and competent health care workforce. For this reason, nursing workforce planning should be considered as a priority matter to afford the future health care needs for our generations. The experience of shortage of nurses in many of our healthcare facilities here in the United States has become a common issue.

Here are my reasons why I am seeking your vote for this position paper;

- Patients are exposed to unnecessary health risks due to a lack of quality health care provisions.
- Health facilities are forced to overwork their nurses to manage the nursing shortages.
- There is the issue of vicarious liability, where healthcare facilities are resorting to allowing employees to undertake tasks beyond their skills.

In particular, most aged nurses' retirements are not getting replaced. The exiting rate from the nursing field is higher than the entry rate. For instance, (Buchan & Aiken 2008) argue that the nursing shortage can not be computed; however, it is identified by the attribute of few nurses who are required to occupy the boundless gap of vacancies in the nursing healthcare field. The primary basis for the significant contemplation is the small number of registered nurses in government healthcare facilities rather than the number of unemployed nurses working in private healthcare facilities (National Association of School Nurses 2020).

It is the role of healthcare institutions to provide care for their patients and ensure they are safe from unnecessary health risks. However, with the current shortage of nursing staff, there is a significant risk to both the patients and staff. Due to a lower nurse-to-patient ratio, there have been records of increased complications and poor patient outcomes. There has been information on increased mortalities from the overwhelming workload, especially in intensive care units (Jarrar, Rahman, Minai, AbuMadini & Larbi 2018).

Health institutions are forced to have their employees work overtime to manage the shortage of nurses and the increasing workload. They are using this approach as a staffing strategy. Overworking of staff exposes them to strenuous working conditions (National Association of School Nurses 2020). Also, work quality decreases when the team is being overworked. Job satisfaction tends to increase when the workload is manageable.

Another implication is vicarious liability. Many healthcare institutions are assigning nursing responsibilities to another team that does not belong to the nursing field. Allowing unskilled and unqualified personnel into the nursing field poses a considerable risk to both the employees and patients (Efendi, Kurniati, Bushy, & Gunawan 2019). There have been increased records of injuries to patients from assistant nurses who have taken over the roles of nurses.

There are two recommendations I would wish to see happen relating to the nursing shortages in healthcare facilities issue. Firstly, establishing a collaborative policy is necessary to increase the number of nurses in the workforce and raise the proportion of registered nurses employed (Park & Yu 2019). Secondly, the establishment of and adherence to nursing retention strategies during recruitment and maintenance of the nursing working force in the country (Efendi, Kurniati, Bushy, & Gunawan 2019).

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