

The strategy of a multisite hospital to counter risks of nursing staff shortage

1) Nursing Practice Development Center; 2) Nursing Research Center; 3) Nursing Director; Nursing Department – Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale – Ticino - Switzerland



Background

The multisite hospital Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale (EOC) represents the public health structure of the Canton Ticino and has about 1000 beds and about 4000 employees. Having an adequate number of Health Care Professionals is therefore essential.

Problem

The Canton trains many nurses, but the number is not yet sufficient to reach the number of health professionals needed. To work against this difficulty, there are still two different nursing training programs (diploma and bachelor) and the recruitment of professionals from other countries (23%). The risk of a shortage of qualified health workers remains significant. To counter this risk the nursing department aims to increase staff satisfaction increasing working time in direct contact with patients.

Objectives

1. To increase working time with patients and promote relationship-based care (RBC)
2. To plan the professional career of nurses and support their professional motivation
3. To promote the professional image of nurses also among the resident population



Approach

A systemic and effective approach was adopted with various interventions. Both organizational and professional ones. In defining this strategy, the continuous involvement of nurses and their context were significant.

Gradual insertion of the "Primary Nursing" model in each department to facilitate and intensify the relationship between nurse and patient. Introduction of the culture of relationship based care (RBC)

Introduction of administrative assistants, to remove improper administrative activity from nurses and monitoring of nursing workloads with a specific methodology (LEP).



Standardization and computerization of the professional documentation. The computerization process has been adapted to the needs of nurses and made more streamlined and functional.

Keeping a strong partnership with nursing schools (700 students on stage every year).



An open public advertising campaign was implemented based on photos and words of nurses working at the EOC

Act to promote the public image of nurses



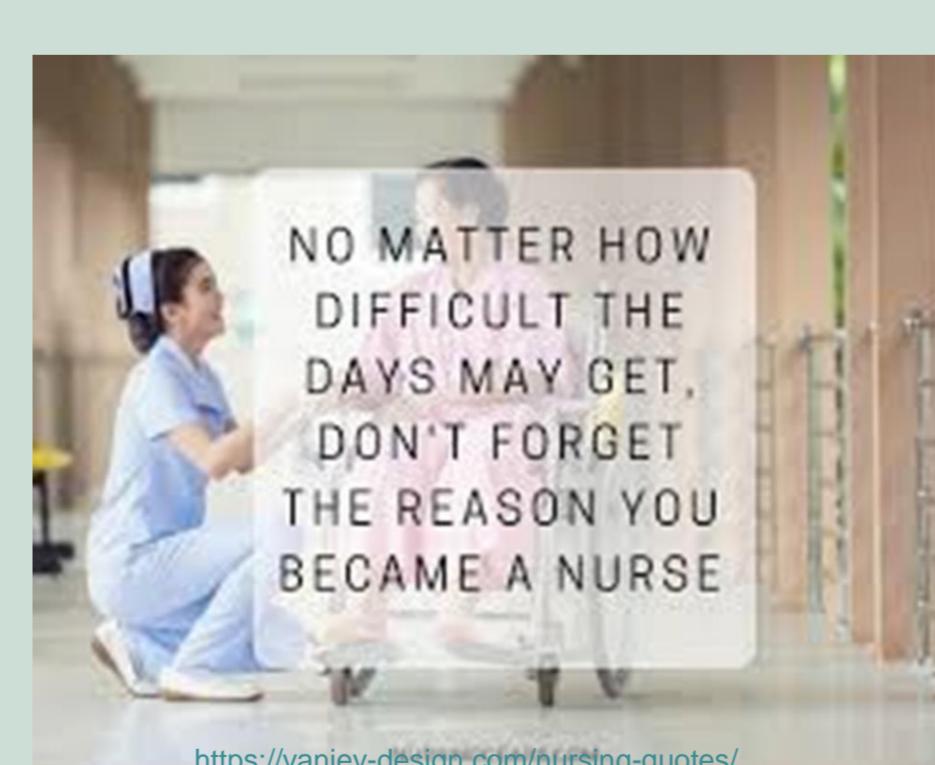
Act to increase nurses working condition

Action plan

Act to change nursing careers and support their motivation



Specialization and training of clinical nurse specialists to improve and standardize clinical practice in the various departments has been facilitated.



A career path has been defined for nurses on several levels, based on their training and years of experience.

A course called "Re-Igniting the Spirit of Caring" has been activated to motivate the Health Care Providers.

Conclusion

The shortages of health workers is a latent risk for many health care facilities and could become worse in the future. The literature has already demonstrated the consequences of the shortage of health care workers. We speak about burn out, moral distress or dissatisfaction. The implicit rationing of treatments is directly connected with morbidity and mortality. To counteract these risks, our experience has shown that it is important to have a systemic and multiple approach to this problem.