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Press release

Switzerland can learn from other countries

The workforce shortage in the healthcare professions challenges the healthcare systems of many countries. In Switzerland, the Competence Network Health Workforce is meeting the challenges. In 2018, the network initiated the first international conference on the strategy to counter the workforce shortage. Experts discussed the possible causes of high staff turnover and measures to promote job retention in the healthcare system.

«The CNHW offers, for the first time in Switzerland, space for international exchange and thus promotes cooperation to enhance job retention in the healthcare system. » (Conference participant)

The aims of the project are to create networks and generate a data basis on the workforce shortage resp. job retention. From these findings, effective strategies and measures are to be derived that contribute to alleviating the shortage of human resources in the health care system. By 2020, a Competence Centre of the Universities of Applied Sciences participating in the network is to be established, which will promote and support the implementation of the proposed measures.

Switzerland can learn from other countries in which the need for human resources is much more precarious. The CNHW would like to benefit from international experience and has therefore set up an international committee of experts. They enriched the conference with their contributions.

Integrating research findings into policy and practice

Anne Marie Rafferty, Professor of Nursing Policy in the UK, calls for scientific findings to be increasingly heard in policy and practice. This requires personal commitment on the part of the researchers. For example, Anne Marie Rafferty demonstrated that she was elected President of the Royal College of Nursing in 2018 thanks to her own political engagement.

To be heard, practical solutions must be evaluated and communicated in addition to political commitment. In Canada, for example, a new, promising approach to enhance job retention has been investigated: students are coached by experienced healthcare professionals in their change of role during the transition from university to working life. The results show that close cooperation between practice, teaching and research considerably facilitates the entry into everyday working life. This also increases the probability of remaining in the job.

The conference is held every two years. The next international conference will take place on 19 and 20 November 2020.

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The workforce shortage of health care professions presents one of the most important challenges in providing good quality in health care for the Swiss population. Initiatives which promote the optimal utilization of human resources are in demand. The CNHW, which is being run by various universities of applied sciences (Berne University of Applied Sciences BFH, FHS St. Gallen University of Applied Sciences, HES-SO University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland, SUPSI University of Applied Sciences Southern Switzerland, ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences), the Health Conference (FKG) and Swiss and international experts from research, education, practice and politics, serves this purpose.

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