

Solution to Nurse Shortage

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### **Introduction**

In the US healthcare sector, nurses play a major role as they are critical in the delivery of quality healthcare services to patients. Nevertheless, just as is the case with most of the developing countries, United States is facing a shortage in number of nurses. As a result, various hospitals and other healthcare facilities across the United States have implemented different measures that are aimed at ensuring that the issue of shortage of the nurses is effectively addressed. This paper delves into the topic of nursing shortage in the USA with the aim of establishing two viable solutions for Ashford general hospital that is facing a shortage in the number of nurses. Specifically, the paper starts by reviewing some of the solutions used by various healthcare organizations across the United States to address the issue. After that, the paper describes two viable solutions for Ashford general hospital to address the issue. A two stakeholder group analyses for two selected solutions is then selected followed by recommendation for the best solution for Ashford general hospital.

### **Solutions Implemented at Five Other Hospitals**

#### **Cleveland Clinic - Making nursing profession more appealing**

In order to ensure that the issue of shortage of nurses is not experienced in Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, the healthcare organization has adopted measures that are aimed at ensuring that it makes the nursing profession to be more appealing and by doing that, the clinic is not only able to appeal to nurses to work for it has also been able to encourage many people to take up nursing as a career. Indeed, in order to appeal to potential nurses as well as existing nurses to work in Cleveland Clinic, the organization

has embraced measures that are aimed at ensuring that the nurses get the impression that they are either working or going to work at the best offices. Precisely, Cleveland Clinic which is based in Ohio has now made it possible for the nurses to work on a shift referred to as a mom shift since it starts on 9 in the morning and ends at two in the afternoon. Apart from that, this specific clinic provides the nurses with summer holidays, and has even collaborated with kindergarten so that the children of the nurses are provided with quality care. By doing that, the clinic has been able to attract many nurses to work for it (Grant 2016).

**Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center - Assisting nurses with their tuition fees while also offering them flexible working hours**

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center which is based in Boston has started to provide tuition assistance to the nurses who are pursuing degrees hoping that once the nurses complete their studies, they are going to work for the organization. In addition, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center also offers other benefits to the nurses such as flexible working hours as well as various allowances as it aims to ensure that the nurses that are employed are satisfied and do even get to think about leaving the organization (HC Pro 2004).

**San Antonio Community hospital - Offering concierge services to nurses**

San Antonio Community hospital which is based in California understand that in order for the nurses to be able to work effectively, the nurses need to have their personal needs attended to. As a result, San Antonio Community hospital offers a concierge service that is aimed at assisting the nurses with their personal errands

(Tarkan 2004). By the hospital offering these kinds of services to the nurses, the nurses feel valued by the hospital and are motivated to do anything to ensure that they give their best to the hospital. Indeed, in San Antonio Community hospital, the hospital has not found it hard to convince its nurses to work on overtime since the nurses feel that it is their responsibility to ensure that the patients visiting the hospital get good services.

### **Spartanburg Regional Medical Center - Bidding for extra shifts**

The ensuing shortage of nurses implies that the hospitals have to devise strategies that are going to ensure that they appeal and retain nurses. As a result, hospitals such as Spartanburg Regional Medical Center have made it possible for their nurses to bid to work on extra shifts. The bids commence at \$40 an hour with the bidder who has the lowest bid ending up being allocated the shift. By making it possible for nurses to bid for extra shift, that implies that the nurses are never forced to work extra shift as they are the ones who choose when to work extra shift and at what price (Koeppel 2004).

### **Virginia Hospital Center - Embracing technological innovations**

With there being unprecedented technological advancements that have had major impacts in almost all aspects of life, various hospitals across the United States have embraced technological advancements in ensuring that they are able to address the issue of shortage of nurse. For example, Virginia Hospital Center is one of the healthcare organizations based in the United States that has embraced technological advancements in order to address shortage of nurses. Specifically, it can be explained that after the hospital realized that shortage of nurses was a country wide issue, it

realized that it had to put in place measures that would ensure that it used technology innovations where possible. As a result, the hospital implemented a system that makes it easy to collect and analyze patient data among other functions. As a result, the hospital does not need a lot of nurses to work on patient data since the work is mainly carried out by the system. Indeed, the system is also capable of carrying out simple diagnostics which makes the work of the nurses working at these hospitals much easier and also quicker (Nurses 2017).

### **Two Viable Solutions for Ashford General Hospital**

After a review of the various solutions that have been implemented by the various hospitals across the US with the intention of addressing the issue of shortage of nurses, it can be explained that there are two solutions that seems to be quite viable. These solutions are explained below.

#### **Embrace technological innovations**

Technological innovations as already pointed out have been used by various hospitals across the US to effectively address the issue of shortage of the nurses. Specifically, this solution has involved healthcare organizations purchasing technological systems that can help in some of the roles that are carried out by the nurses. Thus, by the systems assisting in such roles, the organizations have been able to effectively address the issue of nurse shortage since they do not need many nurses since some of the work that could have been done by the nurses is done by the systems.

In that perspective, in case of Ashford General Hospital, the hospital's management team should consider implementing a system that has the capabilities of

carrying out some of the roles that the nurses working for the hospital carry out. For example, the system should be able to collect patient data, carry out basic diagnosis, and even schedule the appointments for the patients. Thus, with the system being able to execute such tasks, the nurses who are assigned such roles would be assigned other roles. By doing that, the hospital would be able to effectively address the issue since it will no longer need a lot of nurses. Nevertheless, the main shortcoming of this solution is that it can be expensive, and it will also demand that most of the staff working in the hospital are trained on how to use the system and that would be costly and also take a lot of time.

### **Assisting nurses with their tuition fees while also offering them flexible working hours**

This solution as it suggests would involve Ashford General Hospital helping the individuals who are pursuing nursing with their tuition fees and once they have completed their studies, offer them the opportunity to work on flexible working basis. This solution would be ideal for Ashford General Hospital to address the issue of shortage of nursing since once those who are studying nursing have received help with their tuition fees from Ashford General Hospital, they would be required to work for the hospital for a certain period of time after they have completed their studies before they can be allowed to work for another hospital. Thus, the solution is going to some extent guarantee Ashford General Hospital that in each year, the hospital is going to have new nurses join the existing nursing team. Thus, even in the event that some nurses leave, the hospital will be assured that it will have some nurses to replace the

nurses who have left. In addition to that, by Ashford General Hospital ensuring that the nurses are offered flexible working plans, the nurses are going to feel that they have some freedom that they might not get if they left for other organizations and for that reason, there is a high chance that once those who were assisted with tuition fees by Ashford General Hospital have graduated and are working with the hospital, they are likely to work for the hospital for a very long period of time.

### **Stakeholder Group Analyses for Two Selected Solutions**

#### **Stakeholder group analyses for embracing technological innovations**

In this solution, various stakeholders would be impacted. Specifically, the stakeholders would comprise of patients, nurses, IT department, other staff working for the hospital, and the finance department.

Indeed, in order for this solution to be effectively implemented, the mentioned stakeholders are going to be impacted. Thus, it will be important for Ashford General Hospital to ensure that all stakeholders are going to be informed about the solutions and also keep them updated on the progress on the implementation process once the solution has been approved to be implemented by the management. Once the solution has been implemented, the patient registration and diagnosis process is going to change. In view of the fiscal amount, the solution will require the hospital to invest in technology and that is likely to cost the hospital excess of \$100,000. In view of the risk factors, they comprise of hacking of the system resulting to patient information been accessed by unauthorized third parties while some staff working for the hospital might

even illegally attempt to sell patient data to various parties who happen to be in need of this type of data.

**Stakeholder group analyses for Assisting nurses with their tuition fees while also offering them flexible working hours**

This solution is going to impact various stakeholders. Specifically, the stakeholders to be impacted comprises of; nursing students, existing nurses, patients, the finance department, universities where the students studying nursing and are involved with the solution are studying in, HR department and the patients.

Each of the mentioned stakeholder will have a specific objective and it will be important that the hospital ensures that the needs and expectations of each stakeholder are going to be met. The solution even though expensive and might not be a short-term solution is likely to end up been the best solution since it will provide the hospital with the opportunity to adequately address the issue in the long-term.

The solution is mainly going to impact the patient and the nurses while the change process that will be required will involve the recruitment process since once the solution has been implemented, the hospital is going to make arrangements to ensure that the nurses who it assists with the tuition fees are the ones that it recruits. In view of the ethical, legal, and diversity risk factors, the hospital is going to face issues such as discrimination since it will have to give preference to the nurses that it has assisted with the tuition fees. Thus, in order for the hospital to be able to address these issue, the hospital has to change its policy and make it clear that the nurses who it helps with tuition fees are going to be the ones who will be given preference when it comes to



recruitment of nurses. In view of the fiscal impact, it can be noted that the hospital's finance department will have a new expenditure since it will start assisting those studying nursing with their tuition on annual or semester basis. Thus, the financial department will need to put sufficient measures in place in order to ensure that the new expenditure is well funded since if it happens that there will be a time that the hospital cannot be able to provide the financial assistance as promised to those studying nursing, that would then imply that the solution will no longer be effective.

### **Recommendation for the Best Solution for Ashford General Hospital**

From the review of the two best solutions, the best solution for Ashford General Hospital to implement to address the issue would be the second solution that involves assisting nurses with their tuition fees while also offering them flexible working hours. This solution is ideal since it ensures that the issue will be addressed once and for all. Indeed, even though it might end up being expensive than the other solution, it will be the most ideal one since it will ensure that the hospital will be assured of a certain number of nurses joining its nursing team on yearly basis thus ensuring that the issue of nurse shortage will become a thing of the past for Ashford General Hospital.

### **Conclusions**

The only way that hospitals such as Ashford General Hospital are going to address the issue of nurse shortage will be by the hospitals having close and mutual relationship with the nurses. Thus, by Ashford General Hospital assisting nurses with their tuition fees while also offering them flexible working hours, the hospital will be able to effectively address the issue once and for all.

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