

Improved and Sustaining Staff Turnover and Vacancy Rates in Combined Preoperative and Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

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Abstract Background Information: Rising staff turnover rates in hospitals lead to elevated work-related stress, fatigue, excessive overtime use, diminished staff focus on delivering quality safe patient care, greater chances of making errors, and a higher occurrence of hospital-acquired conditions resulting in unfavorable patient outcomes. Employee burnout leads to decreased performance and job satisfaction. Staff turnover and fatigue continue to pose a challenge for the nurse leader and the team at the unit level. In fiscal year 2022, the unit's average turnover rate closed at 26.25% with average vacancy rate of 12.4%. Nurse leader collaborated with staff to revitalize unit shared governance council and team huddles, working together on clinical and unit decisions while considering their effects on patient care and fostering a healthy work environment.

Objectives of Project: The goal of the team was to decrease staff turnover and vacancy rates by 20% for fiscal year 2023 and another 20% reduction for fiscal year 2024.

Process of Implementation: Collaborated with the recruitment team to actively seek out qualified nurses. Developed a tip sheet of essential items as a reference for different surgical services and surgeon preferences during onboarding of new staff. Retention committee created and executed quarterly planned off-site team building events. Established a "star of the month" program to enhance employee recognition. Delegated high performer staff as resource champions to improve quality initiatives. Shared governance council revised time off and on call guidelines to promote work life balance.

Statement of Successful Practice: The turnover rate in the unit fell markedly from 26.25% to 11.4%, while the vacancy rate dropped from 12.4% to 1% in fiscal year 2023, and continued to decline in fiscal year 2024, resulting in a turnover rate of 6.4% and a vacancy rate of 0.08%.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Fiscal year 2025 recorded a historic low turnover rate yielded 1.8%, with the vacancy rate staying at 0%. The modification of nurse leader leadership approach and engaging staff in decision-making boosts staff retention and ownership of unit processes and activities. It inspires the team to come up with fresh ideas for enhancing both patient care delivery and the work environment. It fosters trust and mutual respect between the leader and the team members.