

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

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Background

High turn over rates in hospital create a cycle that affects both staff well being & patient outcomes. When experienced nurse leave, the remaining team absorbs heavier leading to: increased work-related stress & fatigue, greater reliance on overtime which accelerates burn out, reduced focus on quality & safety, high risk of errors & hospital acquired conditions, lower job satisfaction & performance.

In fiscal year 2022, the unit experienced an average turnover rate of 26.25% & vacancy rate 12.4%. These numbers exceed benchmarks for hospital units & signal an urgent need for interventions that stabilize staffing & strengthen team engagement.

Objective

The goal of this project was to decrease staff turnover & vacancy rates by 20% for fiscal year 2023 & another 20% reduction for fiscal year 2024

Improvement Strategies

Revitalizing the unit's shared governance council

- Empowering staff to increase participation in clinical & operational decision making.
- Increase ownership & accountability for unit practices
- Strengthened communication between leadership & front-line staff.

Enhancing daily team huddles

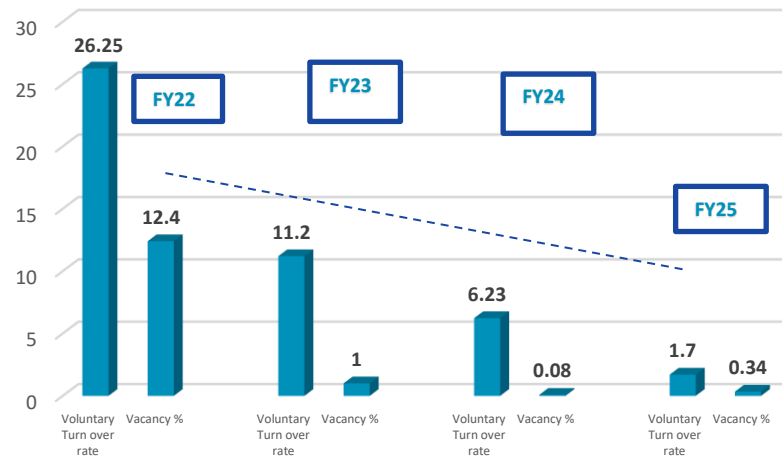
- Created consistent opportunities for real time feedback
- Reinforced a culture of transparency & psychological safety

Implemented Change

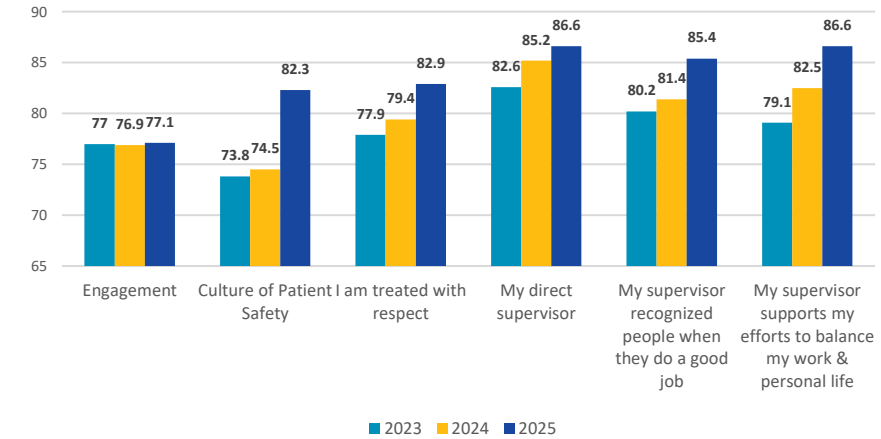
- Collaborated with talent acquisition team to proactively find qualified nurses by enhancing internal recruitment via fellowship program
- Created a reference tip sheet of crucial item of various surgical services & surgeon preferences during onboarding of new staff
- Retention committee established and carried out quarterly scheduled off-site team-building activities
- Created a "star of the month" initiative to improve employee recognition
- Assigned top-performing staff as resource leaders to enhance quality
- The shared governance council updated the time off and on-call policies to enhance work-life balance

Results

Turnover and Vacancy Rates From FY22 to FY25



3 Year Comparison Improved People Survey Scores



Implications for Advancing the Practice of PeriAnesthesia Nursing

- Fiscal year 2025 saw a record low turnover rate of 1.8%, while the vacancy rate remained at 0%.
- Adjusting the leadership style of nurse leaders and involving staff in decision-making enhances staff retention and fosters a sense of ownership over unit processes and activities. It motivates the team to generate new concepts for improving both patient care and the workplace environment.

References

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