

Nurse retention: Holding On

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Policy Brief:
Nurse Retention

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Nurse retention: Holding On

- Why poor nurse retention is damaging
- The nurse retention challenge
- A toolkit for NNAs: Framing action



Why poor retention of nurses is damaging

- Linked to nurse over-work and poor working conditions
- *Poor work environments and heavy workload can contribute to medical errors, and can be related to stress and burn-out , and high levels of staff turnover.*
- *This in turn can compromise the quality of care. In contrast, improved work environments can contribute to reduced stress, improve nurses ability to provide quality care, and can encourage nurses “to stay at the bedside*
- Negative impact on care quality
- *Nursing homes with increased retention had lower rehospitalization rate; units with higher RN turnover had increased odds of a patient having a pressure ulcer in the next quarter.*
- Negative impact on costs and productivity
- *Cost of a nurse leaving= at least several months salary*



The retention challenge

- The challenge for NNA s and policy makers is to act to improve nurse retention by reducing unnecessary nurse turnover.
- Improve nurse retention = UHC
improve access, continuity, cost
effectiveness and quality of care.



A toolkit for NNA's: Framing action

- What's the problem?
- Understand the nurse labour market
- Framing action:
Education/regulation/incentives/professional and personal support [WHO]
- Implement policy “bundles”



What's the problem?

What the Evidence Tells us

- There are various definitions of “retention”: e.g turnover, stability, staff engagement , attrition , job embeddedness, intent to leave.....etc **Be clear that indicators are accurate and relevant**
- Factors that contribute to nurse retention may be complex and multi dimensional, but are usually influenced both by **organizational** and **individual / demographic** factors



Which policies?

- Many possible policy options to meet the retention challenge.
- Policies need to be aligned or co-ordinated for maximum impact. Evidence informed, “joined up” approach
- Sustained success in improving nurse retention is related to planned, sequenced, multi-policy intervention- so called “bundles” of linked policies. Be honest- no magic solution
- The most effective balance of policies to improve retention of nurses will be driven by a clear understanding of the work experiences and motivations of nurses. Ask the nurses!
- Evaluation of the impact of interventions should also be an integral part of the approach. Is it effective?
- NNA’s must advocate, act and lead



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