

Improving Staff Retention

Why is staff retention important?

Staff who are familiar with a nursing home's resident's routines and practices are likely to provide better care and are more likely to develop bonds with residents and with other staff. Improved staff retention also means that caregivers will likely spend less time teaching temporary staff about residents' care needs, likes and dislikes or nursing home routines. The Advancing Excellence Campaign seeks to make sure "nursing homes will take steps to minimize staff turnover in order to maintain a stable workforce to care for residents."

How nursing assistants can help retain good staff:

- Become a member of or help create a staff retention committee.
- Advocate for a "buddy program" to welcome and orient new employees.
- Check with new staff to see if they have any questions.
- Help new staff understand policies and procedures.
- Help new staff respond to each resident's needs and preferences.
- Be willing to work with/partner with new employees in their first weeks of work.
- Be willing to trade shifts with new employees if emergencies arise.
- Be willing to include new employees in your carpool.
- Be willing to share your meal times or breaks with new employees.
- Be patient, have fun, and be flexible.

How staff can help the nursing home attract good employees:

- Assist with recruiting and hiring of quality staff.
- Assist with training.
- Speak up about things that are both working and not working in the nursing.
- Create an employee council.
- Commit to improving communication between and among all staff.
- Learn about and participate in the nurse's quality improvement (QI) program.
- Answer any staff surveys the nursing home sends to you.
- Have staff social events and do your job the way you want others to do theirs.



Staff Retention Resources

Campaign Resources:

- Staff Stability: Learn to Manage your Resources and Improve Staff Retention
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- "Implementing Change in Long-Term Care"
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- "Campaign Goals and Objectives"
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- "Top 10 Ideas to Involve All Staff in Advancing Excellence"
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>

Best Practice Resources:

- Better Jobs. Better Care
<http://www.bjbc.org>
- Act Now For Your Tomorrow: Final Report of the National Commission on Nursing Workforce for Long-Term Care
http://www.ahcancal.org/research_data/staffing/Documents/Nursing_Workforce_Report.pdf
- What Makes for a Good Working Condition for Nursing Home Staff: What Do Direct Care Workers Have to Say?
http://www.ltccc.org/documents/WorkingConditionsBooklet_000.pdf

Links to Relevant Organizations:

- National Association of Health Care Assistants
<http://www.nahcacares.org>
- National Network of Career Nursing Assistants
<http://www.cna-network.org>
- Nursing Assistant Resources On The Web
<http://nursingassistants.net>
- American Association for Homes and Services for the Aged
<http://www.aahsa.org/>
- American Health Care Association
<http://www.ahcancal.org/>
- National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center
<http://www.ltcombudsman.org/>