Creating Healthy Workplaces for All Health Care Workers

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Main messages

• Health human resource and workplace challenges are linked
• Need a system-wide renewal plan
• Championing your ‘healthy workplace’ agenda will meet your needs and improve the health care system
Your challenge

• HSAA represents 12,000 health care employees in 150 disciplines
• System can’t function without you
• Nurses and MDs are setting the HHR agenda
• So need to create ‘healthy workplaces’ that meet diverse needs of ALL staff

Source: Canada’s Health Care Providers CIHI (http://secure.cihi.ca)
GAPS: health workplaces

- How quality of work life characteristics of health workers affects job satisfaction
- How QWL varies between health care providers
- How QWL affects recruitment, retention
- How QWL affects quality of patient care and patient satisfaction with their care

Source: Canada’s Health Care Providers, CIHI.
GAPS: Health Human Resources

“To date, little long-term physiotherapy human resource planning has taken place. Those initiatives that have been carried out are fragmented and limited in scope. These efforts have not addressed planning for a sustainable physiotherapy work force for the future...”


Thinking about this question will help you create a vision of a healthy, high quality workplace...

• What makes you look forward to coming to work in the morning?
Four compelling reasons to create healthier work environments

Innovation and Service quality

Aging workforce, recruitment/retention

Healthy work environment

Skills and learning

Health/disability benefit costs

What workers want

- When asked what they considered important in a job, Canadian workers give high priority to:
  - Respect
  - Interesting work
  - Good communication
  - Sense of accomplishment
  - Work-family balance
  - Develop skills and abilities
- Work environments impact all these factors

Employees’ perceptions of a healthy work environment

INFLUENCES:
- **Most positive**: Good communication and supportive relationships (communication, co-workers, supervisor, recognition)
- **Most negative**: job demands (stressful, hectic, heavy workload, conflicting demands)

OUTCOMES:
- Employees who perceived their work environments as “healthy” had higher job satisfaction, commitment and morale, and lower absenteeism, intent to quit

IMPLICATIONS:
- Supports a comprehensive model of workplace health that targets working conditions, work relationships and workplace organization for health promotion interventions.


Mean Score on Healthy & Supportive Work Environment Scale

Positive impact on quality of work life/career satisfaction

- Challenging, enjoyable work
- Have a positive impact on care
- Professional pride
- Good co-worker relationships
- Satisfaction from working with people
- Able to use skills

Negative impact on quality of work life/career satisfaction

- Increasing work complexity and workloads
- Rising patient/client expectations
- Burnout and fatigue
- Less holistic patient care
- Inadequate service integration
- Inadequate staffing levels
- Limited career prospects


Insights from Ontario hospitals

**Key factors in ‘organizational health’:**

- Leadership
- Relationships
- Culture of respect
- Recognition and rewards
- Involvement in decision making
- Communication

Source: Ontario Hospital Association (www.oha.com), 2002 Healthy Hospital Employee Survey (Data analysis by Brock University, WHRU) n=8,000, 40% response rate
Organizational Satisfaction by Job Type

Healthy Workplace by Job Type

Source: Ontario Hospital Association, HHES
Job Satisfaction by Job Type

![Job Satisfaction Bar Chart]

Source: Ontario Hospital Association, HHES

Sick Days Last Year by Job Type by Healthy and Supportive Work Environment (HSWE)

![Sick Days Line Chart]

Source: Ontario Hospital Association, HHES
Focusing on up-stream factors

- Culture & values
- Leadership
- Relationships
- Work organization
- Job design/content
- HR practices
- Staffing strategies/levels

- Stress
- Injury
- Absenteeism
- Occupational disease
- Comp costs
- Claims adjudication
- Return to work
Healthy organization

- Links employee health and organizational performance
- Health promotion/population health logic
- Addresses individual health risk factors and workplace contexts
- Balances patient/client expectations, organizational goals, employee skills and health needs
- Requires collaboration of health promotion, HR, OHS and OD professionals
- Health is integrated into how the business operates
High quality workplace checklist

- Security
- Trust
- Voice
- Openness
- Healthy
- Balance
- Initiative
- Learning


How does your workplace measure up?

The result is meaningful, fulfilling and productive work.

Knowing vs. doing
Components of high quality health care workplaces

*Environmental Pressures:*
- Fiscal constraints
- Aging workforce, labour shortages, social change
- Complex regulatory and governance structures
- Rapid turnover in political leadership

| Work environment, human resource practices | Management relations with unions and professional associations | Employment relationships, culture, leadership | Job design, organizational structure, technology |

Outcomes for the organization, employees, patients

Different routes to healthy workplaces

- Health care organizations:
  - Magnet hospital; strategic HR; balanced scorecards; cooperative labour relations; employee and work environment indicators as quality measures (CQI); healthy workplace; employer / organization of choice

- Implications:
  - No “one best way”
  - Need guiding principles
  - Each organization needs to develop its own approach
  - This must fit its history, context and mission
Understanding the change process

- Change should provide continuous learning about how to do things better
- The approach needs to be both top-down and bottom-up
- The process determines the outcomes
- Organizational change can be stressful
- Resistance and inertia are common, so most major change initiatives fail

Ingredients of successful change

- Urgency
- Vision
- Coalitions
- Communication
- Participation
- Early wins
- Institutionalization
You can be a change agent

- Focus on your ‘sphere of influence’
- Communicate why changes are ‘urgent’
- Identify opportunities for improvement
- Build on successes and existing initiatives
- Collaborate within and across workplaces

You need a strategy...
**Actions**

- Integrate your agenda within the system:
  - Develop your own models, principles, goals
  - But also take a holistic approach to health care workplaces
  - Adapt models/strategies from nursing into your domains
- Partnerships:
  - CIHI, Health Canada, CHSRF, professional associations, universities
  - Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat (NUPGE)
  - Create “A broad community of interest”
- Local workplace initiatives

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**What employers must do**

- “To address issues of job satisfaction, health districts need to show employees they are valued; they need to treat them with respect; and they need to treat them like professionals. They also need to build organizational commitment among their employees by involving front-line staff in planning and decision-making; by creating and supporting opportunities for professional development and growth; and by showing their appreciation for those on the front-line.”
- Source: Allen Backman, *Job Satisfaction, Retention, Recruitment and Skill Mix for a Sustainable Health Care System.* Report to the Deputy Minister of Health for Saskatchewan. 2000, p. 83
Workplace model example: Magnet hospitals

- Developed in US to address nursing recruitment and retention
- Organizational characteristics account for improved working environments:
  - good relationships with colleagues and supervisors
  - adequate staffing
  - time available to plan and carry out work
  - participatory management
  - team work
  - opportunities for skill development and use
  - good leadership

Partnership Example: Improving the quality of work-life for nurses

- Led by Canadian Nurses Association
- April 2002 multi-stakeholder workshop in Ottawa, unions involved
- Health Canada’s Office of Nursing Policy a major supporter
- Reached consensus on five practical and available Quality of Work Life Indicators for Nurses (www.cna-nurses.ca):
  - full time employment, absenteeism, overtime hours, professional development hours, unresolved grievances
- Indicators being tested by the University of Toronto
- These measures are imperfect, but must start now and build
- Canadian Council of Health Services Accreditation's Indicators 2003 uses these
Action checklist

1. Employees are at the core of values and mission
2. Workforce and workplace renewal goals are in business plans
3. Accountability and incentives for treating people as investments
4. Employees, managers and unions are involved in the change process
5. Progress is measured and communicated
6. Continuously build on strengths, close gaps

Discussion

1. What actions are needed to create a healthy workplace for you?
2. How can HSAA help?
3. What’s working now?