

A Collaborative Approach in the Waterloo Region Supporting Health Human Resources Planning

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Introduction

Organizations in the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) will require an additional 926 Registered Nurses (RNs) and 413 Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) in the hospital sector alone by 2017 (Smith 2008). This distressing finding emphasizes the immediate need for a community-wide approach to developing sustainable nursing retention strategies. As a result, nine healthcare organizations and one community college collaborated, communicated and committed to working on three health human resources planning demonstration projects.

Aim of Projects

The first project was to support the development of mid-career point-of-care nurses through the implementation of a leadership development program. This program included educational sessions, being part of a mentoring relationship and participating in project work. The aim of the project was to explore leadership practices and the experience of program participants. The second project was to identify preferred scheduling options for nurses currently in the workforce and new graduates about to enter the workforce. The aim of the project was to identify flexible and innovative scheduling options that contribute to work–life balance and the recruitment and retention of nurses. Lastly, the managerial span of control project was to modify and test an existing span of control tool across the WWLHIN. The aim of this project was to make recommendations for an optimal span of control for participating organizations.

Lessons Learned

- *Collaboration:* It is essential for healthcare organizations to prepare for nursing shortages by collaborating on health human resources planning with other organizations from their LHINs.
- *Communication:* Every organization has its own methods of communication and systems. It becomes crucial for members from working groups to communicate on health human resources plans.
- *Commitment:* Effective health human resources planning requires time and commitment. Organizations and group members need to commit time to attend meetings and to work on projects.

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Reference

Smith, L. 2008. *Demand for Healthcare Workers in Waterloo Wellington 2008–2017*. Waterloo Wellington Training and Adjustment Board.