

WNA Membership response to Workplace Advocacy Council Survey August, 2009

What are the priority workplace concerns of professional nurses working in Wisconsin? What are current workplace issues affecting care delivery in Wisconsin nurses lived experience? To answer these questions, to guide and support future work of the WNA Workplace Advocacy Advisory Council and inform WNA leadership, registered nurses were electronically surveyed in February and March 2009. WNA members were solicited to prioritize from 14 concerns and potential experiential issues in the workplace environment. Three Hundred seventy-two (372) responded with a majority (45%) practicing in acute care representing a wide breadth of years of nursing experience (0 - +30 years). Nurses in this survey identified the same item of most concern (10.4%) and most frequently experienced concern (11.3%), inadequate or unsafe staffing.

This priority response, inadequate staffing, is consistent with results of many nursing surveys of concerns and barriers and related literature. Inadequate staffing (or fear of) may be a cause for other identified concerns and issues that impede the delivery of safe patient care and contributes to other workplace issues including "floating", inability to maintain standards of practice and burnout/ stress. This survey was distributed early during the current negative economic changes in the health care arena. Possibly the heightened experience and concern over unsafe staffing may be reflective of prior nursing shortage, existing staffing patterns or response to recent changes by health care organizations related to decrease in patient census/ visits or facility financial status.

The second priority concern of nurse competency was ranked as very low in actual experience. Burnout or job stress was ranked as a third ranked concern and as second most commonly experienced nursing workplace issue. Other top ranked issues experienced in nursing workplace included workplace bullying or verbal abuse, "floating" to unfamiliar units and mandatory overtime and scheduling practices. The WNA Workplace Advocacy Advisory Council will consider further study of priority nursing workplace issues and concerns and design activities targeted at these identified priorities for Wisconsin nurses.

The survey results were based upon RN respondent's perceptions of concerns and experiences without benchmarking or definition of the ranked items. No attempts to validate accuracy of perceptions or results were made by the Council.

You will have an opportunity to participate in follow up survey and describe your own workplace experience at the Annual WNA Convention Oct 22-24. Plan to attend the Poster Session and view the Workplace Advocacy Council poster detailing the results of this survey. You may submit your own workplace concerns and experiences. In addition to your experiences we are interested in how your organization is, or is not, responding to your priority concerns.



Workplace Advocacy Advisory Council
Survey of Wisconsin nurses workplace concerns & experiences

Survey of Wisconsin RN's: WNA & non-WNA Members

Conducted by the Wisconsin
Nurses Association Workforce
Advocacy Advisory Council
2009

Survey Methodology

- Timeframe
 - February – March 2009
- Distribution Method
 - Online survey WNA Website
 - Follow up survey handout at WNA Convention

Results - 1

Sample Size: Respondents

Total 372

• **WNA 321 (86%)** **Non-WNA 52 (14%)**

Results

Response to / Have Experienced in the workplace

• Mandatory overtime -	25
• Scheduling practices -	25
• Inadequate or unsafe staffing -	35
• "Floating" or pulled to unfamiliar units-	26
• Unable to maintain standards of practice-	21
• Legal and/or ethical questions -	23
• Occupational hazards -	19
• Workplace violence/verbal abuse from patients/family member-	22
• Workplace bullying/verbal abuse from colleague/physician -	28
• Burnout/Stress -	28
• Nursing competency -	20
• Inappropriate delegation -	21
• Criminalization for unintentional medical error -	8
• Impaired nursing practice -	9

Results - 2

Responses to / Am Concerned About

Mandatory overtime -	23
Scheduling practices -	25
Inadequate or unsafe staffing -	35
"Floating" or pulled to unfamiliar units -	22
Unable to maintain standards of practice -	23
Legal and/or ethical questions -	27
Occupational hazards -	17
Workplace violence/verbal abuse from patients/family member -	22
Workplace bullying/verbal abuse from colleague/physician -	18
Burnout/Stress -	25
Nursing competency -	28
Inappropriate delegation -	18
Criminalization for unintentional medical error -	31
Impaired nursing practice -	22

Survey Demographics

Years as practicing RN

- 9	0-5
-10	6-10
-7	11-15
-9	16-20
-2	21-25
-9	26-30
-14	>30

Survey Demographics

Practice setting

- 7 Academia
- 32 Acute Care
- 0 Ambulatory Care/Day Surgery
- 0 Corrections
- 5 Government/State Agency
- 3 Home Health
- 4 Mental Health
- 8 Nursing Home
- 5 Other Long Term Care
- 0 Parish Nurse
- 4 Primary Specialty Care/Clinic
- 0 Public Health
- 2 School Nurse
- 2 Other (RAC)

