

**TRANSFORMING THE WORK ENVIRONMENT:
REINVESTING NURSING TIME IN HUMAN CARING INITIATIVES**

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Three Key Words: Caring Work Environment

Purpose: The purpose of this poster presentation is to describe research in progress designed to improve staff nurse satisfaction and retention in a hospital-based, acute care setting. Consistent with IOM recommendations for transforming the work environment of nursing, the overall objective of this project, funded by the Division of Nursing, HRSA, is to develop a model for enhancing patient care delivery by identifying and analyzing the relational dependence among workload intensity, nurse satisfaction, patient satisfaction, and human caring factors.

Method: A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will be used in this study. The efficacy of the proposed model will be measured on four like-specialty units and compared to four control units in an acute care setting. A protocol will be designed and implemented that decreases work intensity through process improvements in key areas of nursing responsibility. The saved nursing time will be allocated to create a “caring” environment in which nurses can provide holistic patient-centered care based on a framework derived from Watson’s theory of human caring. Interventions will include such techniques as: therapeutic touch, visualization and imagery, noise and light modulation, relaxation and meditation, intentionality, and centering activities. Outcome indicators will focus on nurse and patient satisfaction, nurse vacancy, turnover and retention, caring assessments and work intensity measures.

Findings: Preliminary analysis of quantitative and qualitative data indicate four key areas to be targeted for process improvements including: admissions; medication administration; documentation; and patient transport. Interviews with staff nurses verify their frustration with the interruptions, and amount of nursing time spent on work which is not directly related to patient care. Analysis of data collected from timing process steps during the admissions process indicate that significant time savings could be achieved through process improvements in this area alone. It is believed that the cumulative amount of saved time in other areas, together with time saved in the admissions area, will be significant. Preliminary data findings will be shared.

Discussion: The proposed nursing care delivery model and interventions will be designed to save nursing time in the key areas of admissions, medication administration, documentation and patient transport; and to reinvest the saved time in human caring initiatives. Strategies for transformation of the work environment will be described as well as the plan for evaluation of the effectiveness of the human caring initiatives. The implications for nurse satisfaction and retention will also be considered.