AHA TRANSFORMATION TALKS

STRATEGIES FOR REIMAGINING HEALTH CARE

Connected Care: Improving the Health Care Ecosystem

America's nursing shortage is rippling throughout the field.

The number of nurses changing professions or leaving their employers rose sharply over the past year, notes a recent study by the electronic health record company Epic. The report, based on data from more than 26 million 12-hour nursing shifts across 189 U.S. health care organizations, found that between March 2020 and March 2021:

Median nursing tenure fell 19.5%.

Shifts covered by nurses new to the organization in the last 30 days rose in all regions of the country.

The number of 12-hour shifts filled by nurses new to the organization within the past year rose 55%.

At least part of this shift can be traced to the growing pressures nurses faced during the height of the pandemic. The data also illustrates the importance of providing nurses and other front-line caregivers with the proper tools to support clinical workflows while reducing cognitive burden associated with documentation and navigating digital health devices and platforms.

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Easing the stress on bedside caregivers

Simplifying clinical workflows and making caregivers' jobs easier by deploying technologies like smart beds that can sense patients' conditions and unified mobile communications and nurse call platforms can go a long way toward shaping whether nurses will be able to work smarter, not harder.

Other approaches such as developing virtual nursing units to answer questions and support staff offer the potential to enhance bedside response rates, increase patient and nurse satisfaction and positively impact quality and safety.

Amid this shifting landscape, health care leaders are challenged to deliver a more connected, interoperable digital health ecosystem to collect information, improve nursing communications, and provide more time for patient engagement. This can reduce stress on nurses and physicians and makes it possible for clinicians to intercede earlier when patients' conditions begin to decline.

> To help your organization transform, visit the AHA Transformation Talks **resources page**.

Discussion Questions:

1. **How is technology impacting clinical workflows today and the nursing team's ability to engage with patients?**

2. **How can a connected digital health ecosystem relieve some of the stress and cognitive burden on caregivers and improve the ability to identify and respond to patients' needs faster?**

3. **How has your organization connected its clinical platforms and data to provide a more efficient and safer environment and what has been the impact on nurses?**

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