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***2021 NCSBN Scientific Symposium - Work Satisfaction Intent to Stay: A Mixed Methods Approach to Inform Policy and Regulation Video Transcript***  
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**Event**

2021 NCSBN Scientific Symposium

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**Presenters**

Patricia Moulton Burwell, PhD, Executive Director, North Dakota Center for Nursing

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- [Woman] Dr. Patricia Moulton Burwell is the executive director of the North Dakota Center for Nursing, and the director of the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers. She graduated in 2002 with her PhD in experimental psychology. She has conducted healthcare and nursing workforce research for the past 19 years and has led many grant-funded and policy-oriented projects.

She is also an adjunct faculty member of the University of Jamestown where she teaches public and healthcare policy classes for the master's in leadership program. Dr. Rhoda Owens is an assistant professor at the University of North Dakota College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Dr. Owens' research focus is with adult learning theory, nursing education, professional identity, and nursing formation, and nursing workforce retention, recruitment, and intent to stay. She has published her work in several peer-reviewed journals and presented at state, regional, national, and international conferences.

- [Dr. Burwell] All right. Well, thank you so much for inviting us to present at this conference. I'm Patricia Moulton Burwell. I'm the executive director of the North Dakota Center for Nursing. And with me today, I have Rhoda Owens who is an assistant professor at the University of North Dakota College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines.

Our presentation today is going to focus on a grant-funded study from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Work Satisfaction and Intent to Stay. As I mentioned, I'm from the North Dakota Center for Nursing where our mission is, through collaboration, guide ongoing development of a well-

prepared and diverse nursing workforce to meet health care needs in North Dakota through research, education, recruitment and retention, advocacy, and public policy.

And Rhoda is our partner who is from the University of North Dakota where they're preparing future leaders to advance human beings, improve quality of life in diverse populations with an emphasis on rural communities in North Dakota. Today, our presentation is going to focus on a study that first originated from the North Dakota Governor's Nursing Shortage Taskforce.

Three years ago, our governor here based on all of the concerns he had heard about the nursing shortage assembled a task force to look at and develop strategies to alleviate the nursing workforce shortage. This task force, which I co-led, looked at three primary areas and developed 15 strategies. The three primary areas included maximizing entry into nursing programs, expanding capacity with a focus on rural areas, and the third and the focus of our study is to retain nursing program graduates and practicing nurses.

The strategies related to this particular focus included to develop a framework for organizations to assess and improve workplace culture along with a designation acknowledging that they retain this, and to study the reasons for post-graduate nurse exits to determine why they're departing the state and why they're leaving the workplace.

We assembled a large group of stakeholders across the state that decided that the very first step in addressing this strategy was to develop a grant to study more intensely these reasons in Strategy 14. And that is the focus of our study we are talking about today. So the very first thing we had to talk about was, if we wanted to learn why nurses are leaving, we kind of need to know why they would stay.

Their intent to stay and intent to leave are two items you'll find in the research. Typically speaking we're talking about, you know, the individual attitude towards why they're staying with their employer or why they're leaving their employer organization. And research has found multiple reasons that could cause this, and they're beyond salary and your typical work satisfaction.

However, there has been a lot of research that has shown that these items are very important in decreasing turnover rates and retaining their employees. So what is found in the literature when we talk about new registered nurses? Well, certainly behavior is complex, but there are many reasons and it's really a multivariable, complex topic as to why nurses stay especially new nurses.

And like I said, it extends beyond pay and benefits. It includes management, work opportunities, and other factors. As far as other practicing nurses, there is a strong relationship between intent to stay between turnover, job satisfaction, their commitment to the organization, and the demographic characteristics such as age and experience.

So for our study, we proposed to explore and identify factors that influence graduating nursing students, so those students are just getting ready to go out into the field, and practicing nurses' intent to stay in North Dakota and also in their workplaces. And we wanted to develop policies to encourage nurses to stay in the state and in these workplaces but ultimately also to inform our designation system.

So our research questions included, what factors influence graduating nurses and practicing nurses? What policies and best practices influence them? And how do the quantitative and qualitative findings

converge? Because this is a unique study in which we didn't just collect survey or quantitative information, but we also did focus groups with nurses, so we could collect both sides in a mixed method design.

I'm going to talk about the quantitative surveys and Rhoda is going to talk about the qualitative component of the study. So we sent out a call to all of the graduating nurses in North Dakota. Both surveys were completed online, and we also sent out an email to all the practicing nurses in North Dakota and nurses in bordering counties in Minnesota.

We ended up with 201 graduating nurse participants and 763 practicing nurse participants. You'll see that the average age is of course as expected quite different. 27 or so for the graduating nurse and 48 for the practicing nurse. So it is a sample from North Dakota.

They are primarily white. They are primarily female. And all the graduating nurses most of them were not married and didn't have children. Whereas practicing nurses was the opposite. So as far as our online surveys, they included a set of standardized instruments. The first was the Intent to Stay instrument. This particular item, and it's actually on the slide, asks new students or the practicing nurses to circle a number that most clearly indicates how they feel about several statements.

The statements include: I would like to leave my present employer. I would like to leave my present employer as soon as possible. I plan to stay with my present employer as long as possible. Or, under no circumstances would I voluntarily leave my present employer. So they are asked to indicate from 1 to 7, agree to disagree. The same questions were altered to also include if they would leave North Dakota as well.

We also used a variable called Why Work in North Dakota. It was a question that we added and a question that I utilized in my research for the last 18 years. It was derived through a number of surveys and focus groups that I've done in the past. But it's basically a list of reasons for why they would want to work in North Dakota.

And so we added up these particular reasons, and that was one of our variables. Another instrument we used was the Stamps Index of Work Satisfaction. This is 44 statements about characteristics of the work environment. It has several subscales. So it looked at pay, autonomy, tasks, organizational policies, professional status, and interaction.

And so these are some examples of some of the questions on the Stamps Index of Work Satisfaction. It asked them to agree from 1 to 7 to disagree the questions. And there are some of the examples. The Professional Quality of Life, the ProQOL, is the most commonly used measure of negative and positive effects of providing care to those who experience suffering and trauma.

So this is for caregivers. We're one of the few studies that have collected this particular instrument on nurses. It includes 30 questions where they rate from 1 for never to 5 for very often. It includes three subscales. One, compassion satisfaction is the pleasure they derive from being able to do their work, and compassion fatigue is actually broken into two parts—burnout, which includes the associated feelings of exhaustion, frustration, anger, depression, hopelessness, and secondary traumatic stress, which includes

work-related secondary exposure and exposure to traumatic stressful events which by the way I should mention we collected this information in the fall of 2019.

So this data actually precedes before COVID. So it would be interesting to see how some of these factors are different after the pandemic. On the screen are examples of the questions where they answer between 1 and 5 on the ProQOL. So when you look at the results for practicing nurses, when you look at the intent to stay question, you find some pretty interesting findings.

So it looks like when you look at the graph, that, great, most of them want to stay at their employer. However, if you look at the percentages, there's about 11% that plan to leave their employer ASAP and 27.4% that want to leave their present employer. So this adds up to roughly 39% of the practicing nurses that really want to leave their employer. That's a pretty big chunk of your workforce.

If you look as far as leaving North Dakota, very similar results. About 48% want to leave as soon as possible or they want to leave North Dakota when they're able to. So it's really important for us as we look at our other results and we look at our strategies to figure out what we can do to try to change these numbers to bring them to, "I want to stay and I don't ever want to leave my employer."

When we conducted the Multiple Regression, we did a simultaneous multiple regression using the 12 predictors that we mentioned from the different instruments along with age, and we used the Why Work in North Dakota. In the red, multiple regression used the dependent variable, intent to leave employer. So what we found across, you know, all the nurse satisfaction indexes and the compassion satisfaction burnout secondary to stress, etc., that those nurses that show a higher level of burnout, they had a greater intent to leave their employer.

And in those with higher levels of pay, autonomy, and organizational policies which are some index items of the nurse satisfaction index, they result in lower levels of intent to leave. So we did find that those nurses that were burned out were wanting to leave more often, and those that felt like the policies were in place to support them as employees have a lower level of intent to leave.

They want to stay. The blue multiple regression table is looking at intent to leave North Dakota. And so for this particular one, the ones that were significant were age. So the older nurses and more reasons to work in North Dakota were associated with lower levels of intent to leave.

So we did find that age, you know, particularly interacted with intent to leave employer, what we did with to leave North Dakota. As far as the Graduating Nurse Survey, there's much fewer nurses that were nursing students currently that were planning to leave their employer or that were working. So our sample was much smaller in this, and we only collected the ProQOL items from these individuals.

But what we found when we look at intent to leave employer, the higher compassion satisfaction and the more reasons they work in North Dakota, the lower was their intent to leave their employer. So certainly they identified that there was a lot of reasons why they were there. They had family. You know, they had a background, and this is where they're from. And they felt like they had good compassion satisfaction. They were more likely to stay with their employer while they were going to school.

As far as the intent to leave North Dakota, again, the more reasons why they work in North Dakota, the lower was their intent to leave. So the more items that were keeping them here, that connected them to North Dakota, they were more likely to indicate they weren't planning on leaving North Dakota. And so I will turn it over to Rhoda.

- [Dr. Owens] So our qualitative data collection was comprised of utilizing focus groups. And so as Dr. Moulton commented earlier, we also did focus groups on students and also practicing nurses throughout the states. So we sent emails to all the North Dakota nursing programs. We were able to have 11 North Dakota programs agree to do focus groups.

So we did a total of 29 student focus groups with a total of 228 students. And you can see the demographics there. You know, the mean age, 27 years. There's some male, female. Pretty much the ethnicity is comparable to what is in North Dakota. Also, we used different programs, Bachelor of Science, Associate Degree, Practical Nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and PhD.

We were unable to get any of the master's students to participate. Nine practicing nurse focus groups with a total of 48 participants were done throughout the state, and you can see our mean and our female, male, and some of the other demographics. We were able to have focus groups with all areas of practice, RNs, LPNs, advanced practice nurses, and then also varying degrees.

And so all these focus groups were also done face to face and then recorded and transcribed verbatim. So as far as our data analysis, we used Braun and Clarke's method for qualitative data analysis. Our data analysis was done separately by the two research team members which is actually Dr. Patricia Moulton and I. And then together and we did agree on the final data analysis.

So the research questions were, what policies and best practices influence graduating nurses' intent to stay in their workplaces and in North Dakota? And then the second question was, what policies and best practices influence practicing nurses' intent to stay in their workplaces and in North Dakota?

Four themes emerged from our analysis. The first was competitive pay and benefits. The second was positive work environment. The third was career goals. And the fourth was personal goals and reasons. So our first theme, the competitive pay and benefits. Most of the groups talked about the importance of having tuition reimbursement, good health insurance, flexible staff scheduling, very competitive shift differentials for different shifts, sign-on bonuses, retention bonuses also for years of service.

So this really was a discussion that practicing nurses and even the students discussed how there's a need to recruit nurses or, I should say, retain nurses that have been working at the workplace or at the employer for a while to help retain those and just encourage longevity.

Also, available of on-site daycare. New graduate nurse residency programs were important. Both the nurses and the graduating nursing students commented on how it's so important to have transition to practice programs, relocation expense support, and also support for professional development such as attending conferences and also to obtain certification in different specialties.

Theme 2 is positive work environment. So it's so important they felt that the healthcare facility's leadership promoted and maintained a positive work environment. They also valued supportive leadership and management and also the providers they worked with. Feel valued and appreciated.

They wanted career advancement opportunities. They associated that with a very positive healthy work environment. Safe nurse/patient ratios providing safe patient care was very important to them. Also, they value interprofessional teamwork and so having good, collaborative relationships and also good communication between other team members was very important. Preceptor and orientation programs for new nurses.

And also the APRNs, RNs, and LPNs desired autonomy and also the ability to work in the full scope of practice based on their state's nurse practice acts. And something interesting they came up to North Dakota is we are a full-practice state for advanced practice nurses but there are places where nurses are not or the advanced practice nurses are not able to work in their full practice.

And so being able to work in full practice was really associated for them to have a healthy workplace environment. This is true, too, for those practicing as LPNs. They want to be able to work in their full practice as what's allowed by the state and so they felt that they weren't always being able to do that in different settings.

Also, an education-focus environment that facilitates transition to practice and so this is of course having those transition to practice programs. Then also having collaborative relationships between nursing education programs and the clinical facilities. Then active recruitment of new graduates. And also a large piece of this healthy positive work environment was promoting civil work environments.

Pretty much all the nurses and the students talked about how a civil work environment is very important. And experiencing incivility as a nurse or a student was just something they encountered, and that was the main reason why they maybe left a unit or that they would not go to work at that area.

So as far as career goals, being able to participate on committees, they really liked that idea of shared governance, being able to work at a specific clinical area that they want to work at.

So if they want to work at ICU, surgery, pediatrics, so forth, that was granted to them when they were looking for a job. Promote further skill and knowledge development, very important. They all want to be lifelong learners, so they wanted to be able to pursue more education, advanced degrees. They wanted time also to pursue those certifications for their specialty. Opportunities for career advancement.

Full-time position. Most of them want to work full-time. And also some desired to work at a rural healthcare facility due to various reasons, and one is they were maybe from a rural area. Maybe they have family there. They decided the rural lifestyle. Many of them had worked as CNAs, LPNs, RNs in a rural facility and that is why they wanted to continue to work there because they liked that environment.

So theme 4, personal goals and reasons. So both the nurses and students that wanted to work in either rural or urban, a lot of it had to do with being close to their family. Maybe it's from their hometown. They want to stay at their home. The rural nurses preferred that rural lifestyle.

The urban, they wanted to live in a larger community and no desire to live in a rural area. They like that lifestyle. They like the community amenities. And they did not like the rural lack of privacy, confidentiality, and they felt there were less housing options in a rural area. As far as reasons they desired to work in North Dakota, it was job availability, affordable housing they felt, lifestyle and recreation opportunities, they loved to work in North Dakota.

Again, family were living in North Dakota. And just a lack of a desire to move to another state. And also they probably had a significant others or spouse, member that actually was living in North Dakota and working already and had a job. So they had to stay in North Dakota, too. Sometimes the spouse maybe was in the military and so that caused them to move from North Dakota, too, because they had to relocate with that spouse or significant other.

So the fifth research question we had had to do with our mixed-methods study. And so this involved the convergence or the integration of the data. And so that question was, in what ways do the quantitative and qualitative findings converge? So this table, it looks really busy, but it displays how the two sets of data converged and

[inaudible] reinforced each other and just strengthened as far as strengthening the themes. So the four themes were around the far side there in the first column. And as mentioned earlier, the themes were consistent. It was interesting. Both nurses and graduating nursing students, there were four similar themes with the focus group data analysis.

And so another interesting piece was as far as their reasons to work in North Dakota that practicing nurses gave but they did not necessarily want to leave their employer. So, you know, what those reasons... And I know that Dr. Moulton went over those reasons that were on that survey. So that was interesting.

But with our graduating nursing students who were practicing as RNs or LPNs, the reasons that they selected to work in North Dakota, the more they desired that, the more of course they would stay in North Dakota, which is in that fourth column. And then also that would help them stay with their employer, they would be less likely to leave their employer, you know, if they recognized that they...the more reasons they had to stay in North Dakota.

You know, other interesting pieces of our analysis of this, you know, combining or convergence of the data had to with the practicing nurses' intent to leave in that middle column. So as Dr. Moulton mentioned earlier with pay, you know, if they felt the pay was much more competitive and satisfied it, they were less likely to leave.

And so that supports theme 1, competitive pay and benefits. Another one was the autonomy, the organizational policies and burnout. You can see that reinforces the need for a positive healthy work environment. And so, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of those...that content or the statements they made had supported those parts of the online survey, too.

And then theme 3, the career goals, as far as organizational policies, much of the content or items on that organizational policies category also reinforce the need for career goals. And one last piece of the

compassion satisfaction for graduating nursing students, the more compassion satisfaction they felt, the less likely they were going to leave their employer.

And so the literature does show and support that compassion satisfaction if nurses are experiencing compassion satisfaction is probably they have a healthy workplace environment. So you can see how we had some convergence of the data. And, again, this table only included those significant quantitative findings, which is what you do in a mixed methods study when you're converging the data.

So implications for education practice and policy, you know, the study supports that healthcare facilities must have competitive pay and benefits policies in place. It's very important for the recruitment and retention of nursing staff. They must implement policies to support a positive work environment.

So they must value education, career advancement programs. They should do partnerships between nursing programs and facilities. You know, supportive nurse residency programs, preceptor and orientation programs promote that interprofessional care, and all those items that we talked about for a positive work environment is very important.

They must look at statewide recruitment benefit programs such as loan repayment. Educating practicing nurses and students on promoting a civil work environment. Facilities should implement no tolerance programs for incivility. That's really important and have those policies in place.

And leaders must also lead by example with these civil work environments. APRNs should work with state policymakers on efforts to maintain their state as a full practice state and/or pursue policy changes to allow them full practice. All levels of nurses must be allowed to practice as dictated by their licenses and states' scopes of practice.

So this is also RNs and LPNs. And there must be policies for recruitment and retention of rural nurses. You know, we discussed briefly as far as, you know, what types of policies rural nurses, you know, desire. You know, they want relocation. They want tuition assistance. And it's also important for facilities to try and recruit rural nurses to work in their areas that they know that they're from rural areas and maybe even help support the expense of going to school.

And, you know, maybe there's a CNA or LPN that wants to become an RN and provide them some tuition reimbursement for agreeing to stay in the rural area. So what are our next steps? So what we have done so far in the state is we have developed a "North Dakota Nursing Culture of Excellence Designation" program based on the research results of the study and also best practices and it's very specific to North Dakota.

So what the overall goal of this program is it does provide the opportunity to employers to work together with all levels of nurses to promote a positive workplace culture and environment to support the formation of Professional Identity in Nursing. So obtainment of this designation signifies an environment that promotes nursing recruitment, development, and retention.

So we have actually developed the standards and the education modules. And we've actually a group of committee members throughout the state of North Dakota in many different practice areas. So right now



we're in the process of recruiting healthcare facilities to pilot test this designation system. And we actually put together an action research study that has received IRB approval.

And we will continue to collect similar data with our online survey and focus groups as we did for this study and looking at factors of work satisfaction. We'll use ProQOL to look at compassion fatigue, burnout, that type of thing, also incivility, and looking at turnover rates, retention rates.

So thank you for listening to our presentation. And if you have any further questions about our study, here is our contact information. You may contact us by email at these email addresses. Thank you. Hello, I'm Rhoda Owens, and it was a pleasure for us to present at this year's NCSBN's Scientific Symposium.

We failed to mention that this research was funded and made possible by the NCSBN Center for Regulatory Excellence Grant Program funding. And also one other thing I see we have one question. We don't have a lot of time, but you can actually find the results of the qualitative analysis for this study in the January 2021 issue of JNR and we are in the process of trying to publish the mixed methods study to the results of that and that article is currently under review.

So just to get a... We have one minute to go here. Annmarie Munana [SP] said, "Thank you for the valuable presentation. Were nursing faculty included in this study?" Yes, they were. We don't have the breakdown of nursing faculty but I know that some of them were in the focus groups and some of them did answer the online survey.

And, you know, it just seemed to not really matter. I know, on behalf of the focus groups, they seemed to give a lot of the same types of answers. So thanks for your question. Alice and Chenkov [SP], I guess we are done. We are at the end of our minutes, and I'm sorry I did not get to all the questions. But our contact information are on the slides so please do not hesitate to contact either Patricia Moulton or myself with any of your questions.

Thank you.