

WHY BOTHER TO FILL IN A NURSING WORKLOAD/STAFFING REPORT?????????

WORKLOAD STAFFING REPORTS A MAJOR FACTOR

For the past couple of years, nurses working on the Geriatric Rehabilitation Unit at the Seven Oaks General Hospital have raised concerns over inadequate staffing and increased acuity on the night shift.

In October 2014, the nurses wrote a letter to the management team and chief nursing officer and then followed up with more than 250 workload staffing reports in 2015.

"The nurses were diligent and consistent in documenting their concerns," said Karen Fleming, labour relations officer. "They refused to accept the status quo and used all the tools and resources at their disposal to push for change."

The employer representatives from the Nursing Advisory Committee (NAC) agreed with the nurses' concerns and together they wrote and co-signed a letter referring the issue to the Independent Assessment Committee (IAC).

The IAC hearing was held on March 9 and March 10, 2016.

Both the employer and union presentations were brief, as it was understood that both parties were relying on written submissions. Furthermore, both parties had already acknowledged the staff concerns and had agreed to work together to resolve the issues.

"This IAC was a very positive process and some progress was made," said Fleming. "It's a great example of what can be achieved when the employer is supportive and open to working with the nurses on finding solutions."

There were five nurse witnesses who testified at the hearing.

"The nurse witnesses did an incredible job in sharing their experiences, highlighting the demands they faced nightly in trying to keep their patients safe," said Bev Fisher, NAC chair. "The testimony given was honest and emotional, but it was also extremely concise in explaining what a typical night shift looked like."

The chief nursing officer presented on behalf of the employer and three nurse managers as well as the regional geriatric rehabilitation director provided testimony.

One month later, the IAC members provided their report, which included the following six recommendations:

- 1 Support the parties' positions and fund an additional health-care aid (HCA) on the night shift for both 3U1-3 and 4U10-12.
- 2 Continue to fill the unfunded evening position until permanent funding is secured.
- 3 Review the admission criteria for the program.
- 4 Continue current efforts to review elder-friendly care approaches.
- 5 Continue to work on LEAN projects to improve efficiencies.
- 6 Develop defined criteria for of-service patients.

The employer committed to implement the recommendations and announced that the facility had already received permission to post unfunded HCA term positions.

"The IAC process, the findings and the recommendations, all came as a direct result of the nurses' commitment to providing safe patient care," said Glen Stobbe, local president. "This is great news for the nurses because it ensures that there will be two HCAs for each of the sets of units on the night shift."

The employer has requested additional time to work on the remaining recommendations, and the parties have agreed to meet in the fall to evaluate the status of the recommendations.