

## Appendix 4.1 Successful Work Environments for Nurses and Nurse Aides Strategy Grid

| Elements of Successful Workplace Environments   | Hospital | State Psych Hospital | Nursing Home | Assisted Living | Home Health | Public Health | School Nursing | Implementation Strategies  |
|---|----------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|--|
| Management support, including the necessary support from CEOs and the organization management team (COO, CFO, Chief Nurse Executive), as well as institutional and unit nurse managers (Note: management also includes state and local officials for state psych. Institutions; public health and school nurses.) | ✓        | ✓                    | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <p><b>Educational Opportunities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Trade associations (NCHA, NCHCFA, Home and Hospice of NC, etc.) should create forums to encourage board members, CEO and/or other management staff to invest in strategies that help create a positive workplace culture.</li> <li>■ Trade associations should develop educational opportunities for management to learn about successful workplace strategies, and create forums where Nurse Executives and other nursing leaders can work with board members and CEOs to develop a positive workplace culture.</li> <li>■ AHEC should convene health care leaders to develop specific regional strategies to create a positive workforce environment. AHEC is working with NC Nurses Association, NCHA, NCCN, magnet hospitals, and other organizations to host a meeting in the fall on “magnetizing your nursing organization”.</li> <li>■ Universities and Community Colleges should include more management, communications, conflict resolution, and interdisciplinary team building training into core curriculum.</li> <li>■ Health care managers can take advantage of training opportunities already offered by national organizations, such as the Nursing Leadership Academy of the Health Care Advisory Board.</li> </ul> <p><b>Duke Endowment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Duke Endowment is a major funding source for many North Carolina hospitals. The Endowment may be able to facilitate training opportunities to encourage Board members and the executives to learn about successful workplace environments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Publications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Another way to reach Hospital Trustees about the importance of focusing on workforce issues is to encourage the Trustee magazine to have Trustees, CEOs and nurse executives write appropriate articles that highlight the importance of this issue, as well as strategies that Trustees can use to support development of a culture that values workers.</li> </ul> |

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|   |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NC IOM report can help highlight the importance of creating a culture that values employees. AHEC, trade and professional associations should help publicize and disseminate the report among nursing employers, policy makers and the public at large.</li> </ul> <p><b>Incentives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Carolina should develop special licensure or other recognition for positive workplace environments, and should tie enhanced reimbursement to those institutions that achieve this special designation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Consumers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCNA should continue to develop consumer advocates so that consumers could be educated about the importance of having a well-educated, adequately staffed workforce in overall quality of care. Consumers should be educated about how to evaluate quality of care and staffing adequacy so they can help push institutional change.</li> </ul>  |
| Positive team relations with co-workers       | ✓        | ✓                    |              |                 | ✓           | ✓             |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Best practices:</b> The NC Organization of Nursing Leaders, NCNA, NCHA, NCHCFA and other trade associations should help develop model programs for shared governance, growth and development of nurse managers, respectful communication, conflict resolution and other key workplace policies among all levels of staff, drawing from magnet principles. The CEOs and CNOs of magnet hospitals and other model healthcare organizations should be integrally involved in this effort. Model strategies should be tied to the differences in various work settings. AHEC will disseminate information about documented best practices through the AHEC Digital Library.</li> <li><b>Professionalism and process standards:</b> Employers should have established professionalism and process standards that include policies on acceptable conduct and communications, with systems to enforce these standards (e.g., accountability).</li> <li><b>Skills training.</b> Training opportunities should be provided to help nurse managers, physicians and other key staff learn conflict resolution, team building, interdisciplinary training, and leadership skills. These educational opportunities should be offered in medical, nursing and other health professional schools, as well as in the workplace. AHEC should continue to provide accessible, cost-effective continuing education programs on these topics using a variety of formats, including distance-learning technology.</li> <li>AHEC and other organizations currently provide numerous CE activities throughout the state; however, attendance is often low. Employers need to take advantage of the opportunities as well as provide input into the planning of CE activities.</li> </ul> |

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|   |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Interdisciplinary teams:</b> To the extent possible and appropriate, different health professionals (i.e., doctors, nurses, nurse aides, social workers, etc.) should be involved in helping develop care plans and work collaboratively on patient care. This can also include interdisciplinary rounds.</li> <li>■ <b>Team incentives:</b> Positive team relations enhance nurse satisfaction; therefore, employers should create incentives to encourage positive team relations (e.g., performance evaluations based on the work of interdisciplinary teams, not just on individual performance).</li> </ul>  |
| Orientation and mentoring                     | ✓        |                      | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Adequate time and resources must be devoted to the orientation process:</b> An adequate orientation is critical to help new employees understand their new job responsibilities. (This is particularly important for new graduates, but is also important for employees who have new job responsibilities). Hospitals may want to consider residency programs for new nursing graduates, beginning in areas that are (or have been) experiencing the greatest or more rapid turnover.</li> <li>■ <b>Management support for mentors and preceptors:</b> Support should be provided (time and pay) to experienced staff to enable them to serve as mentors and/or preceptors. This support should come through Human Resources, senior leadership and unit level leadership.</li> <li>■ <b>Clinical nurse specialists or other peer support:</b> Employers should consider hiring and/or promoting experienced staff to serve as mentors to provide the support needed for new staff; and should help encourage experienced staff to seek certification as clinical nurse specialists.</li> <li>■ <b>Training for preceptors:</b> AHEC should continue to offer continuing education courses for preceptors, as well as assist health care agencies to develop preceptor and mentor programs. Employing agencies should support/require preceptor attendance at these courses.</li> <li>■ <b>School to work transition models:</b> The NC Board of Nursing should convene a work group to study options to improve the school-to-work transition. The work group should include, but not be limited to representatives of: nursing education programs (e.g., NC Community Colleges, public and private university nursing programs, and hospital diploma programs), nursing employers (e.g., NC Hospital Association, NC Health Care Facilities Association, NC Association of Nonprofit Homes for the Aged), NC Center for Nursing, AHEC and the NC Organization of Nursing Leaders. The work group shall explore and recommend options to ensure that newly licensed nurses are adequately prepared to assume independent clinical responsibilities.</li> </ul> |

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|  |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Research:</b> Academicians and other health services researchers should help evaluate and quantify the impact of dedicated orientation time in employee retention, and the role that clinical nurse specialists play in providing clinical support to newer staff.</li> </ul>   |
| Ensure Workplace Safety  | ✓        | ✓                    |              |                 | ✓           | ✓             |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Employer strategies to ensure workplace safety:</b> Employers should take the steps necessary needed to ensure workplace safety, including but not limited to: hiring security guards, creating locked wards, installing alert systems, and training staff in appropriate physical and verbal de-escalation techniques.</li> </ul>  |
| Involve nurses in policy and decision making at institutional and unit level | ✓        |                      | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Leadership support:</b> Employers should actively encourage nurses and nurse aides to participate in policy and governance committees at unit and institutional level, and should pay their salary and provide time for this participation.</li> <li>■ <b>Best practices:</b> The NC Organization of Nursing Leaders, NCNA, NCHA, NCHCFA and other trade associations should help develop model programs for shared governance, growth and development of nurse managers and respectful communication among all levels of staff, drawing from magnet principles. The CEOs and CNOs of magnet hospitals should be integrally involved in this effort. Other trade associations should also be involved in this effort, while tailoring the strategies to the differences in their workplaces. The AHEC Digital Library should disseminate documented information about these best practice management models.</li> </ul>   |
| Competitive salaries and benefits  | ✓        | ✓                    | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Competitive salaries and benefits:</b> It will be difficult to attract qualified nurses and nurse aides without competitive salaries and benefits, but these are not sufficient to create a successful workplace.</li> <li>■ <b>Wage equity:</b> Employers must be careful to examine how changes in the salary structure effects wage equities (i.e., bonuses for new hires may create frustration and resentment among existing staff).</li> <li>■ <b>Wage enhancements:</b> North Carolina General Assembly should appropriate funds as wage pass-through to enhance nursing and nurse aide salaries and/or number of staff in nursing facilities and other organizations heavily reliant on Medicaid, or should otherwise modify the Medicaid reimbursement system to reward institutions that hire more nursing staff and/or increase salaries/benefits.</li> <li>■ <b>Health insurance:</b> Employers should examine the adequacy and affordability of the health insurance offered.</li> </ul> |

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|   |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Creative benefit packages:</b> Employers may want to consider offering flexible benefit packages to address the needs of employees (i.e., some employees may need help with dependent care, others with pay instead of benefits).</li> </ul>   |
| Reasonable staff loads                        | ✓        | ✓                    | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Workload studies:</b> Employers should conduct workload studies that incorporate information about staff mix (staff skills and experience, inclusive of all staff), numbers of patients, acuity level and patient mix.</li> <li>■ <b>Activity Ratios:</b> Employers should consider using activity ratios, developed by the American Nurses Association, to measure the impact of multiple admissions, discharges and transfers on activity on a specific nursing unit.</li> <li>■ <b>Solicit input from existing staff:</b> The workload studies should also include input from existing staff to determine if the organization has sufficient staff to address patient needs. Staff input should be solicited to determine if there are better ways to address workflow issues.</li> <li>■ <b>Slack capacity:</b> Reasonable staff loads should include some capacity to address swings in demand for nursing (for example, the patient census in small hospitals may vary considerably from hour to hour or day to day).</li> <li>■ <b>Management support:</b> Research has shown that higher RN nurse staffing ratios, in particular the RN hours per patient day, lead to decreased patient errors in hospitals and better outcomes in nursing facilities.</li> </ul> |
| Limiting work hours to reasonable levels      | ✓        | ✓                    | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Employers should limit the number of hours that nurses can work:</b> Institutional leaders should develop policies to prevent nurses who provide direct patient care from working longer than 12 hours in a 24 hour period, or 60 hours in a 7-day period.</li> <li>■ <b>Regulatory changes:</b> The NC Board of Nursing and the NC Division of Facility Services within the NC Department of Human Services should implement regulations to prohibit nursing staff from providing patient care in any combination of scheduled shifts, mandatory or voluntary overtime in excess of 12 hours in any given 24-hour period or in excess of 60 hours per 7-day period.</li> </ul>  |
| Opportunities for advancement                 |          | ✓                    | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Career and clinical ladders:</b> Health care institutions/organizations should help create career and clinical ladders for nursing staff and nurse aides.</li> <li>■ <b>Recognize and promote internal staff:</b> Leadership at all levels should seek out, recognize and support staff that are particularly caring and compassionate, and those who demonstrate great knowledge and skills, regardless of what position they currently hold. Employers should make special efforts to nurture and promote these staff.</li> </ul>  |

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|  |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Accessible courses:</b> University, community college and AHEC degree programs and continuing education courses/classes should be made as accessible as possible (e.g. online courses, evening hours, locations that are accessible throughout the state).</li> <li>■ <b>Support for ongoing skills training and/or educational advancement should be provided at the unit and institutional level:</b> Health care institutions and organizations should provide funding and/or time to allow nurses and nurse aides to take classes to improve skills and/or credentials.</li> </ul>   |
| Minimize paperwork and administrative burdens                    |          | ✓                    | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Advocate for changes with regulatory agencies:</b> Trade associations should work with federal and state regulatory agencies and other organizations to advocate for changes in paperwork/administrative burdens that are not directly linked to patient care.</li> <li>■ <b>Support staff:</b> Health care facilities that reduce “support personnel” to save money should examine the impact on existing nursing staff (e.g., increased paperwork and administrative burdens that will reduce direct clinical care).</li> <li>■ <b>Involve nurses and nurse aides in work redesign:</b> Meaningful work redesign should be one of the focuses of nurses and nurse aides operating within a self-governance structure.</li> </ul> |
| Nurse as patient care integrators                                | ✓        |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Authority and responsibility:</b> Institutional leadership, from the senior level to the unit level, must give nurses the authority to address resource issues and to ensure that care plans are followed.</li> <li>■ <b>Training:</b> Universities, Community Colleges and AHEC should provide accessible, affordable classes and continuing education courses in facilitation, conflict resolution and the appropriate responsibilities of an “integrator”.</li> </ul>   |
| Professionalism and process standards                            | ✓        |                      |              |                 |             |               | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Professionalism and process standards:</b> Employers should have established professionalism and process standards that include policies on acceptable conduct and communications, with systems to enforce these standards (e.g., accountability). These requirements should be included in personnel manuals.</li> <li>■ <b>Encourage participation in professional associations:</b> Employers should encourage nurses and other health care professionals to participate in professional associations, and take advantage of continuing education opportunities.</li> </ul>   |
| Diversify the workforce to broaden the base of potential workers | ✓        | ✓                    | ✓            | ✓               | ✓           | ✓             | ✓              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Recruitment efforts:</b> Trade and professional associations, AHEC and other partners should provide health careers activities for NC school age children, especially minority and disadvantaged students, including shadowing and mentoring,</li> </ul>   |

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|  |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <p>summer health careers camps, health careers fairs, and programs that offer math and science enrichment. AHEC should continue to produce and distribute the NC Health Careers Manual to middle and high school students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Cultural sensitivity training:</b> Health care employers, trade associations, professional associations should offer cultural sensitivity training to health professionals and other staff in order to encourage a more diverse workforce and to provide culturally appropriate services to the state's diverse population. The University, Community Colleges and AHEC should offer classes and continuing education that addresses cultural competence and strategies for diversity in the workplace.</li> </ul> |
| Flexible scheduling  |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Flexible scheduling:</b> Employers should offer a variety of scheduling options to meet the needs of their workers, including but not limited to: allowing employees to self-schedule, work weekend only hours, be assigned to permanent shifts, or part-time positions.</li> </ul>   |
| Recognition of personal and professional achievements  |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Workplace recognition programs:</b> Nurse managers and other management staff should recognize staff for their professional and personal successes and milestones. Health care providers should create systematic, objective reward programs to reinforce core values and behaviors and accomplishments.</li> <li>■ <b>Nominate staff for state and national recognition awards:</b> Employers should seek opportunities to recognize staff through state and national professional and trade associations.</li> </ul>  |
| Involve existing nurses and nurse aides in addressing nursing shortages and recruitment  |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Staff participation:</b> Health care facilities should use a variety of incentives to encourage nursing staff to participate in community-based events that foster public appreciation of nursing as a career.</li> <li>■ <b>Recruitment Events:</b> Health care institutions and volunteers should take advantage of prepackaged resources available from the NCCN, AHEC and NCNA for use in recruitment events and in elementary and middle schools.</li> <li>■ <b>Refresher Programs:</b> Health care institutions, regional AHECs and trade associations should actively promote refresher programs, which include both classroom based and self-study options.</li> </ul>  |
| Adopt information, ergonomics, and other technologies designed to improve workflow and safety and reduce risk of errors and injuries | ✓        | ✓                    | ✓            |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Use of technology:</b> Employers should pay for information, ergonomics, and other technologies designed to reduce paperwork, improve workflow and safety and reduce risk of error and injury.</li> </ul>   |



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|   |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Philanthropic financing:</b> Philanthropic organizations should help provide technical assistance and otherwise assist healthcare organizations make the changes necessary to improve the nursing workplace environment and enhance patient care. Financial assistance should be targeted to those institutions that would be unable to make the necessary changes without financial support.</li> </ul>  |
| Improve public relations—view of work place and job of nurses/nurse aides |          |                      |              |                 |             |               |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Public relations campaigns:</b> Philanthropic and/or state funding should be made available to help promote image of nurses and nurse aides, and to improve the image of nursing in certain job settings (e.g., hospitals and/or long-term care).</li> <li>■ <b>Outreach efforts:</b> The state, health care employers and health professionals should continue and expand outreach efforts to encourage people to become nurses and nurse aides. This includes work in elementary and middle schools to encourage students to consider careers in nursing and as nurse aides.</li> </ul> |

