



A Cancer Workforce in Crisis

Repository on Best Practices and Innovations

WORKFORCE RETENTION

Intro: As the demand for specialised skills in cancer care intensifies and the field undergoes rapid advancements, fostering a resilient and committed oncology workforce becomes crucial to maintain continuity in patient care, promote expertise, and address the persistent challenges.

Title: Global Oncology Nursing Recruitment and Retention: A SWOT Analysis

Publication date: PubMed - 2022

Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36621414/>

Example: The absence of a National Oncology Nursing Association poses a significant concern for the promotion and support of oncology nursing. In settings lacking such an association, the retention of oncology nurses is at risk, as they miss out on the benefits of a community of practice and essential support. The lack of a professional advocacy group also leaves individual nurses and oncology nurse groups marginalized, hindering their efforts to drive nationwide practice improvement and voice collective concerns. Shared governance models, as highlighted by Creta et al., offer clinical nurses a voice in cancer care delivery and planning, fostering contributions, relationship development, and expertise expansion.

Another pressing issue is the inadequate onboarding training programs, which fail to provide comprehensive classroom instruction and mentored clinical teaching. This gap in the onboarding process, including competency assessment and ongoing retraining, places underprepared nurses in positions where they may lack the necessary skills, potentially leading to critical nursing errors with severe consequences for patients.



To address these challenges, international partnership models, such as twinning partnerships, offer oncology nurses opportunities for cross-collaboration with well-resourced partner sites. However, these partnerships require sustained commitment, strategic planning, and continuous monitoring.

Additionally, Europe is taking a proactive step with the INTERACT-EUROPE program, an interdisciplinary training initiative for oncology health professionals supported by European Union funding.

Title: Interventions for health workforce retention in rural and remote areas: a systematic review

Publication date: HRH 2021

Link: <https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-021-00643-7>

Implementing effective strategies for retaining health professionals in rural and remote areas involves a multifaceted approach. One successful avenue is the establishment of Rural Pathway Programs, which target students from rural backgrounds, offering training in rural settings through initiatives like rural-focused medical schools and scholarships tailored for rural students. Distributed Training programs further enhance rural retention by providing students exposure to rural practice throughout their education, fostering familiarity with rural healthcare settings.

Mentorship and support play a crucial role in retaining rural health professionals. Programs that offer professional support networks and mentorship opportunities help integrate professionals into rural communities and navigate the unique challenges they may face. Financial incentives, tailored to the preferences of rural health professionals, have shown efficacy. This can include increased salaries, rural skills loadings, or paid locum relief, addressing the financial considerations that may influence professionals to stay in rural practice.

Reducing administrative barriers, such as streamlining licensing and credentialing processes, can simplify the logistics of working in rural areas, attracting more practitioners and



minimizing turnover. Leveraging telehealth and technology is another impactful strategy, allowing healthcare providers to serve rural communities remotely.

Cultural competency training is vital, especially for non-Indigenous health professionals working in Indigenous communities, to build trust and improve retention in rural and remote areas. Finally, community engagement plays a significant role in creating a supportive environment. Involving local communities in the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals fosters a sense of belonging and community, contributing to the overall retention effort.

Title: The Medical Oncology resident mentor: situation and workload

Publication date: PubMed 2019

Link: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12094-018-1923-3>

Example: This research highlights the crucial role of resident mentors in shaping the training of Medical Oncology specialists, emphasizing their significance for the future of the specialty. The study identifies challenges faced by mentors, such as inadequate time for mentoring due to care responsibilities, lack of recognition, and a need for better regulatory frameworks. Key findings include a lack of standardized dedication time for mentoring, with only a few Autonomous Communities specifying such time. The study proposes 29 recommendations to enhance mentor conditions, focusing on regulatory improvements, time allocation, mentor training, and recognition measures.

Title: Examining the Effects of a Structured Mentorship Program on the Nurse Mentor: A Pilot Study Engaging Oncology Nurses

Publication date: PubMed 2022

Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35073292/>

Example: The article investigates the impact of a structured mentorship program on addressing the nursing shortage, particularly in the field of oncology. The United States faces



a looming shortage of nurses, exacerbated in oncology by factors such as poor job satisfaction and high stress levels. The pilot study, involving 11 oncology RNs in a 12-month mentorship program, reveals statistically significant improvements in compassion satisfaction and a reduction in burnout scores among nurse mentors. The bidirectional nature of the mentor–mentee relationship is emphasized, with mentors experiencing enhanced professional growth and confidence in making a difference. The findings underscore the potential of mentorship programs to alleviate challenges faced by oncology nurses, offering a viable strategy to enhance retention and overall workforce well-being.