

# *Let's Get It Right*



**Understanding the Keys Behind What  
Makes Staff Engaged—and Happy—in  
Post-Acute Environments**

My InnerView by



**NATIONAL RESEARCH  
Corporation**

# *Let's Get It Right*



## Understanding the Keys Behind What Makes Staff Engaged—and Happy—in Post-Acute Environments

↑ **EMPLOYEE**  
SATISFACTION

=

↑ **RESIDENT**  
SATISFACTION

### **ARE PEOPLE REALLY OUR MOST IMPORTANT ASSET?**

If people are considered the most important asset of a workplace, then why do retention rates continue to be a struggle? Why do long term care providers battle high turnover? What ultimately happens to the residents when their care isn't being met because employees aren't engaged enough in providing such critical care? What happens to the employees?

### **THE FINDINGS**

According to 2014 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends research, 78% of business leaders rate retention and engagement as urgent or important workplace factors. This urgency prompts organizations, like AHCA/NCAL, to make sure that, indeed, people are being taken care of in the post-acute workplace, both employees and residents alike.

## AHCA/NCAL QUALITY INITIATIVE: STAFF STABILITY

By now we are all aware that AHCA/NCAL expanded the Quality Initiative to target four core areas with measurable goals in staff stability, customer satisfaction, hospital readmissions, and antipsychotics. All of these goals are set to be achieved by March 2018, and while that deadline appears to be futuristic, **post-acute providers should already be gearing up to make organizational changes.**

Long term care providers are asking themselves how to reduce turnover below 40% on a provider level when their front-line staff is already turning over at an alarming rate. That's a fair question. According to 2013 statistics from AHCA/NCAL, resident caregivers and CNAs had the highest median turnover in the nursing category on a national average of 36.4% and 13.6%.

**High turnover translates into a poor environment for residents, their families, and employees.**

In order to achieve staff stability and provide high-quality care to the more than 12 million elders utilizing long term care services, *staff must be positively engaged in the work they perform.*

when nursing home, assisted living, and other long term care providers make employee retention a priority by improving the work environment and employee satisfaction, better retention rates develop even without higher compensation or benefit levels.

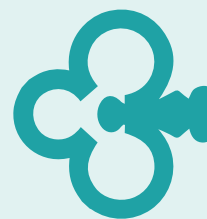
**There are positive correlations between employee satisfaction and engagement with higher resident and customer satisfaction.**

The 2014 National Report by National Research, "Empowering Customer-Centric Healthcare for Post-Acute Providers," reveals this eye-opening insight to satisfaction:

- *Skilled nursing* providers with high employee satisfaction correlates with higher CMS Five-Star Ratings and fewer survey deficiencies.
- *Assisted living* communities with higher staff satisfaction also achieve higher resident and family satisfaction.
- The primary drivers of employee satisfaction in *independent living* communities are identical to skilled nursing and assisted living employees, demonstrating similar concerns and challenges across the three care settings.

passionate advocate for long term care front-line staff, often shares how strong employee morale is directly correlated to a higher quality of life for long term care and senior living residents. "I always say if you care for your staff, they will care for your residents." Residents even rate the quality of relationship they have with their direct caregiver of higher importance than the quality of food.

Understanding what drives strong staff stability needs to be broken into two components: understanding the *quality of leadership* and understanding the *quality of the workplace*.



## QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP

Strong leadership needs to drive the culture of the organization. Staff rely on their leaders to promote a sense of positive work performance and overall well-being. My InnerView has identified several factors that go into strong leadership:

- Someone with a core vision or mission
- Someone who sets standards and keeps accountable
- Someone who listens to others and spends time on the resident floors
- Someone who values contributions and work of others
- Someone who is open to new and non-traditional ideas

In addition to utilizing strong leadership skills, leaders must engage with their employees. The Temkin Group, an organization devoted to

*"If you care for your staff, they will care for your residents."*

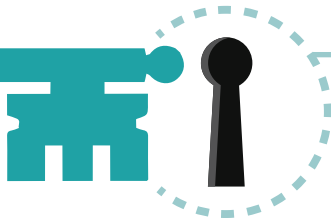
– Mary Tellis-Nayak, Vice President of Quality Initiatives,  
National Research Corporation

## STAFF STABILITY = STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Stabilizing staff turnover is about understanding the role that staff play in the facility and *giving value to it*. Happy employees lead to happy residents. According to survey solutions by My InnerView,

Furthermore, everything about staff—from availability to quality of work to decisions about how to employ services—has a direct and critical impact on the success of healthcare and senior service providers. Mary Tellis-Nayak, Vice President of Quality Initiatives for My InnerView and a





improving the customer experience, lists the Five I's of Employee Engagement that are applicable to the long term care industry:

1. **Inform:** give employees the information needed to understand the organization's mission and values
2. **Inspire:** connect employees to the organization's mission
3. **Instruct:** provide employees with the right training and resources to do their jobs successfully
4. **Involve:** help employees design their jobs, improve work processes, and solve problems through customer or employee feedback
5. **Incent:** give employees appropriate rewards and recognition to help reinforce positive work behavior and motivation

These leadership rates are resonating well in the hospitality world, particularly with the Ritz-Carlton, where the turnover rate is only 20%—the lowest in the industry. Here, senior leaders believe in engaging their workforce through sharing “wow” stories of exceptional service and empowering employees to resolve

customer complaints directly versus escalating to higher management. High-quality leadership directly provides employees, especially front-line staff, the ability to do their jobs successfully and perform person-centered care.

## QUALITY OF THE WORKPLACE

A My InnerView survey completed by CNAs (~78K CNAs and ~144K family members) showed that quality leaders produce a quality workplace. In fact, **a quality workplace earns higher staff recommendation, family recommendation, and quality of life, care, and service for residents.**

Some indicators of a quality workplace include competitive pay, safety of workplace, adequate equipment/resources, co-worker alignment, fair performance evaluation, and help with job stress and burnout.

Adequate resources and training for staff are critical components to ensure a quality workplace. The National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care and Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement, a partnership CMS is undertaking with federal and state agencies, published research on this topic: staff who received a six-week specialized training on dementia care felt more comfortable caring for residents with

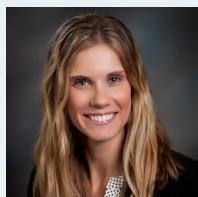
behavioral disturbances; these residents were also less likely to take antipsychotic medications (another QI goal) because their caregivers were more engaged in their treatment. This supports the notion that staff who receive adequate training in the workplace are more engaged and report less turnover, producing stronger staff stability. Furthermore, according to Temkin research, highly engaged employees are 2.5 times more likely to stay at work late if something needs to be done beyond normal work hours; this is especially critical for long term care and front-line employees when unforeseen circumstances and longer hours may be required.

## WHERE DO PROVIDERS GO FROM HERE?

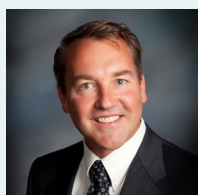
It's evident that staff stability is imperative to the success of post-acute providers, but where do providers go from here?

Getting data that measures the experience of long term care stakeholders—residents, their families, *and employees*—is essential to uncover what tactics and improvement solutions are needed to empower organizations to deliver the best care possible. When the data is in place and benchmarked against other national providers, it becomes much easier to meet—and exceed—your customer's expectations and stay on top of industry initiatives.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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