Staffing – Baby Boomers to Millennials, Finding the Balance

Margaret Macmahon MBA, BSN, RN, CNOR, CSSM
Margaret_G.Macmahon@lvhn.org

Jillian Laudenslager BSN, RN, CNOR
Jillian.Laudenslager@lvhn.org

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Complex staffing schedules for a Level One Trauma Center, including staff rotations to nights, weekends, and holidays, can be a source of stress for perioperative leadership. In addition to this complexity, a community hospital in Allentown, Pennsylvania provided senior staff members exemptions to all rotations to support retention. Compounding the staff dissatisfaction, the schedule was “published” two weeks prior to start date causing the inability for staff to make plans causing a lack of work-life balance.

The group presented the following recommendations:

- Self-scheduling for staff, call, weekend and night rotation
- Holidays divided evenly among all staff.
- Creation of weekend and holiday Cohorts to provide staff with the ability to maintain a work-life balance.
- Cohorts remain together for all scheduling purposes on an on-going basis.
- Limit the senior options; only 15 options, including no night rotation, no weekend rotation and no holiday rotation
- Re-evaluate process on annual basis

Recognizing a change was necessary, the staffing committee voted on a self-scheduling trial and distributing a staff survey to determine the continuation of the senior options.

The survey results came back overwhelmingly indicating the desire for self-scheduling, but were divided evenly to maintain the senior option or remove it.

A new group, including the original work group, new employees and leadership were brought together to discuss the last year’s progress with scheduling. The group agreed self-scheduling, Cohorts, and the revised retention menus were working for the staff and the unit. Re-evaluation of night coverage was needed, as well as the holiday option. The extension of the holiday option was unanimously passed and the night coverage process was brought back to leadership for consideration.

THE TEAM:
Staffing Committee, Management, Scheduler and Organizational Development

PREPARATION AND PLANNING:
A survey was sent out to all staff requesting their input on self-scheduling, including their view on the senior staff option allowing those with 20 years’ seniority to opt out of rotation to nights, weekends, call and holidays.