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# Senior *A Better Quality of Life for Seniors, Our Staff and Others* Minutes

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## Job Satisfaction in Nursing Homes: Certified Nursing Assistants Leave Jobs But Often Stay in Long-Term Care

Certified nursing assistants in long-term care who leave their jobs are most likely to do so to pursue better opportunities with other LTC organizations, not because they dislike direct-care work and want to leave the field. Among the CNAs who left their jobs but stayed within the industry some of the reasons cited most often were: Other job opportunities, scheduling issues and pay/benefit. These findings come from a survey conducted by Dr. Jules Rosen, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh. Understanding and supporting what CNAs find most meaningful and enjoyable about their work could help administrators tackle the large and growing problem of CNA recruitment and retention and keep qualified CNAs from seeking “better opportunities.”



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## Job Satisfaction in Nursing Homes Continued...

Focus groups conducted at the beginning of the survey provided insights into how CNAs perceive their work: CNAs who stay in their jobs tend to view their work as a “call to service” and others feel that their work helps make “the world a better place,” “They don’t want to be LPNs or RNs. They really look at those caregivers as pill pushers,” said Dr. Rosen. “They see themselves as the ones that know the residents and really know what’s going on. How to reward them in terms of benefits, pay and advancement is really the challenge.”

A key finding is that CNAs do a large amount of “fudging” or “discretionary work” on the job “not because they are dishonest or don’t care about residents but that they just don’t have the time to do all of the tasks that are expected of them,” said Dr. Rosen. However, the study also revealed that many “very nice things get done that aren’t in the care plan” as well. The CNAs take great pride in this aspect of their work and perhaps would respond positively if this work on unofficial tasks were acknowledged and appreciated by their supervisors. Dr. Rosen responded, “This is where I think we can do better. The personal feeling that the supervisor is looking out for me...and that we’re in this...together seems to be lacking.”

Speaking to nursing home administrators, Dr. Rosen said, “It behooves you in each of your organizations to know what they consider being empowered. If they could have the physical tools, support and a workload that is manageable in an 8 hour shift, that’s tremendous empowerment.” A truly empowering environment for CNAs must be less concerned with the organization pecking order and more focused on sharing ideas. As those with the most direct patient contact, CNAs have knowledge of their patients that could serve as an excellent resource but only if the organization is willing to give direct care workers a voice. “When CNAs see that somebody is really listening to them...there is tremendous satisfaction with that,” Dr. Rosen said.

Summarized from:

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**Disclaimer:** The information presented in this newsletter is intended for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for practical medical advice on any specific situation.

