

APPLIED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PROJECTS

The following eight BJBC applied research and evaluation grants supported studies of workplace innovations and public policy interventions aimed at attracting and retaining high-quality direct care staff.

Boston University, School of Public Health

Organizational Cultural Competence Assessment: An Intervention and Evaluation

This study explored cross-cultural relations among long-term care staff in 10 Massachusetts nursing homes and examined how these relations influenced the level of organizational cultural competence. The study also analyzed how cultural competency affects family and resident perceptions of the quality of care, as well as objective measures of care quality. Data were gathered through direct care worker surveys, management team interviews and family member focus groups. The project team also developed, implemented and evaluated an intervention for those nursing homes that were interested. The key features of the intervention were:

- Involving staff at all levels in the organization, as well as residents, family members and board members, in assessing the organization's cultural competency. Separate groups of direct care workers, supervisors and managers were convened in each facility in order to assess their perceptions of the current environment in their workplace.
- Including all stakeholders in developing an action plan based on the facility's unique profile of strengths and challenges.
- Providing assistance with developing site-specific interventions and providing workshops for all participating organizations.

Brandeis University, Schneider Institutes for Health Policy

Improving Institutional Long-Term Care for Residents and Workers: The Effect of Leadership, Relationships and Work Design

This study of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and nurse supervisors in nursing homes examined how organizational and management practices affect job commitment of CNAs and what greater commitment may mean for resident satisfaction. The study took place in Massachusetts nursing homes that were considered by the long-term care community to be good places to live and work. Focus groups with CNAs and interviews with nurse supervisors were used to inform survey design. CNA and nurse supervisor surveys were distributed throughout 15 nursing homes.

Connecticut College

Making Consumer-Directed Home Care a Good Job

This study of California's In-Home Supportive Service (IHSS) workers, that included both paid family and friend caregivers and personal care workers, was designed to determine the impact of wages and benefits on their recruitment and retention. IHSS is a program that allows family members, friends and others to become paid caregivers to the frail elderly and disabled individuals in their homes. Data were collected through a survey of 2,200 direct care workers from eight counties and analysis of a California administrative database maintained for the IHSS program.

Cornell University, Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging

The Retention Specialist Program: Testing a Model Workplace Innovation

This project developed and tested the use of “retention specialists” in 16 nursing homes, compared to 16 nursing homes without retention specialists. The study assessed the specialists’ impact on retention and certified nursing assistant (CNA) assessments of the nursing homes, retention efforts, quality of the home, job satisfaction and intention to quit. Data were collected through interviews of certified nursing assistants, nursing home administrators and retention specialists. Key features of the program were:

- ◆ Participating nursing homes designated a staff person to serve as a retention specialist, allocating at least 20 percent of the individual’s time for retention activities over one year.
- ◆ Retention specialists attended a three-day intensive training institute to review the organizational assessment of their nursing homes (using a tool provided by the program), diagnose their facility’s specific retention issues, review possible evidence-based intervention strategies and develop a site-specific retention plan for their facility.
- ◆ The retention specialist had ongoing access to technical assistance, including a Web site, telephone contact and print materials for information on retention activities from the Cornell team.
- ◆ Retention specialists received information about community resources, such as educational materials and contact information for support on personal issues including financial well-being, healthy lifestyles, parenting, transportation and childcare to share with their employees.

Margaret Blenkner Research Institute, Benjamin Rose Institute

The Impact of Job Preparation, Ongoing Education and Training on Job Satisfaction and Commitment Among Frontline Workers and Their Supervisors

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of direct care workers and nurse supervisors related to education and training, racism on the job, commitment to the field and factors related to job satisfaction. Researchers conducted in-person and telephone interviews with 644 direct care workers and 138 nursing supervisors in certified home care agencies, assisted living facilities and licensed skilled nursing homes in Ohio.

Operation ABLE of Michigan

Older Workers in Direct Care: A Labor Force Expansion Study

This study across seven states set out to:

- ◆ Determine whether older workers are a ready but untapped source to alleviate the direct care worker shortage.
- ◆ Develop a deeper understanding of employers’ perceptions of older workers and their interest in hiring them as direct care workers.

Focus groups were conducted to inform development of telephone surveys and to discuss the meaning of survey results. Telephone surveys were completed with 615 nursing homes, 410 home health agencies and 1,091 Operation ABLE participants. Operation ABLEs are employment and training organizations specializing in recruiting, training and placing older workers.

University of California, Los Angeles, School of Public Affairs

Labor Force Expansion Through Retention of Related Caregivers

This study explored the experiences of California's In-Home Supportive Service (IHSS) home care workers and what might lead these paid family and friend caregivers to remain in the field or return to caregiving from another job. IHSS is a program that allows family members, friends and others to become paid caregivers to the frail elderly and disabled individuals in their homes. The study used the results of telephone surveys of 203 related caregivers who continued to provide home care ("stayers") and 180 individuals who no longer worked as paid caregivers ("leavers").

University of North Carolina, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research

STEP UP NOW for Better Jobs and Better Care: Supporting Training, Education & Payment to Upgrade Performance of Nurse Aides and Other Workers

This evaluation study assessed the impact of the WIN A STEP UP training program for nursing home direct care workers on job satisfaction and turnover. Eight nursing homes participated in the study, compared to 10 matched non-participating nursing homes. Data were gathered through interviews with managers, nursing assistant surveys, supervisory assessments of nursing assistant performance, a coaching supervision participant survey and organizational management surveys. WIN A STEP UP is an ongoing workforce development intervention aimed at improving the working situation of nursing assistants in North Carolina's nursing homes. Key features of the program were:

- ◆ A training curriculum that focused on both clinical and interpersonal skills.
- ◆ Training that was provided on-site in small interactive groups.
- ◆ Direct care workers that committed to attend classes and remain with their employer for an agreed upon time period.
- ◆ Nursing homes that agreed to commit staff time to training and distribute a retention bonus or wage increase to workers who completed the training.
- ◆ Coaching supervision training that was provided to direct care worker supervisors.