

Resilience: Key to the Future Nursing Workforce

[VIDEO TRANSCRIPT – September 8, 2021]

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Hello, I'm Dr. Anne Dabrow Woods, Chief Nurse of Wolters Kluwer Health Learning, Research and Practice and I'm here to talk to you today about resilience: the key to the future nursing workforce. We all know that COVID-19 has tested the nursing workforce like never before. Prior to COVID, we had adequate time to take care of our patients. We were energized and innovated and excited to come to work, but COVID-19 changed that for a lot of us. We're exhausted, we're burned out, we simply don't have the resilience we had before. We know that COVID-19 put a lot of pressure within our healthcare institutions from increasing the patient load to having to rapidly onboard and train and cross-train nurses and all of this affected our resiliency. And coupled with that is the nursing shortage and this shortage is of global proportions and the things that are adding to it are the fact that our population is growing and aging. And we know that nurses are leaving the profession due to retirement, but they're also leaving the profession due to burnout and there simply is not enough faculty or clinical sites so that we can bring more students into the profession.

We do know that if staff are overworked, feel unsafe in the work environment and undervalued by the organization, they're going to burn out and leave the institution and worst yet leave the profession. So we need to ask ourselves the question, "How can healthcare institutions and academic centers foster resiliency in their workforce?"

So, let's talk about resilience. So how do we do that how do we foster workforce resiliency? First of all, our institutions need to invest in workforce well-being and promote self-care because if nurses don't start taking care of themselves, they're not going to be there to take care of those of those who are in need. We need to make sure the environment is safe and that means having adequate resources time off and staffing; and our staffing needs to be based on severity of illness and nurse competency not on numbers alone. We need to make sure we implement alternative care models that make it easy for our workforce to be agile and efficient and we need to start monitoring and support nurses for moral distress and burnout. And we need to use employee assisted programs that are easy to utilize. When nurses are at work, we need to support the basics like providing healthy food, adequate breaks and if they're worried about their family or childcare, we provide that as well. We need to invest in our talent and keep it within our institutions and to do that we need to provide continuing professional development and career growth opportunities. And bottom line we have to appreciate the staff and our leaders need to be up on our wards and they need to be seen by the nurses who they represent. We need to grow our nursing workforce and to do that we really need to understand and address the nursing shortage. We need to start growing the number of students and change the perspective and let people know what a great profession we have. We need to develop and grow faculty and educational experiences and that means having enough clinical sites for our students to go to as well as using

simulation appropriately. We need to leverage transition to practice, and we need to develop practice/education partnerships. And we need to engage our students early and often.

In a healthcare system the most valuable asset is the workforce who cares for the patients. Patient outcomes are optimized if the healthcare workers are valued, have adequate resources, are properly trained and they feel safe in their care environment.

So, I just want to say thank you for supporting the front line of care and thank you for fostering resilience within your health care institutions. That will provide for the future of the nursing workforce.

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