

Human Resources in U.S. Healthcare

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Abstract—Whether clinical or non-clinical, staff involved in the delivery of healthcare are part of the sector's workforce and human resource. When a healthcare system is funded by the private sector, the workforce dynamics are often affected by the financial flow of these private entities. As such, any cuts in funding would mean limiting the ability to hire and sustain a skilled healthcare workforce. Nations have their own healthcare system and their workforce conforms to the needs and demands of that system. As in the U.S., its healthcare workforce is dictated by the uniqueness of the system. As such, some problems have risen and as perceived by the author, they are as follows: 1) recruitment and retention of professionals, 2) compliance with new standards, 3) incomplete data on migration of healthcare workforce in the U.S., 4) inadequate production levels to ensure workforce supply for future needs, and 5) the privatized nature of the U.S. healthcare system. Globalization has affected the workforce dynamics of the U.S. healthcare. It now sources employees from a global pool. This has opened the doors for people from all nations to jump at employment opportunities in the U.S. However, part of what these prospective employees look for is the wide room for growth often embodied, not just by promotion and incentives, but also by continuous learning and trainings. Because of this, many healthcare agencies have upped their programs on training, equipping people, and improving their current workforce and this has made them more attractive to the global pool of prospective employees. The downside is that, after having trained these employees, healthcare organizations are left on constant lookout for new employees as those they have trained usually move out for better opportunities, elsewhere. The same scenario prevails in the U.S. healthcare sector.

Index Terms—Workforce, Human Resources, U.S. Healthcare, Healthcare System, Workforce Dynamics in Healthcare, Workforce Issues in Healthcare, Globalization, Global Healthcare Workforce, Continuous Training in Healthcare

1 INTRODUCTION

Human resources, when pertaining to healthcare, can be defined as the different kinds of clinical and non-clinical staff responsible for public and individual health intervention (Kabene, Howard, et al., 2006). This means that even the office and support staff in the healthcare system is also included in the human resource of the healthcare sector.

There is a difference when the healthcare system is publicly funded and when it is privately funded. When the healthcare human resources are publicly-funded, they are affected by the flow of finances—drastic cuts in finances can severely affect the ability to hire and sustain a skilled healthcare workforce (Kabene, Howard, et al, 2006).

Each nation has a healthcare system workforce that is unique to the needs and structure the nation has. This is prevalent even if there is global standard set by the World Health Organization (WHO). Each country has unique needs and demands from its healthcare system. This paper will examine the unique situation of the workforce under the United States Healthcare System. A discussion of the system, its past data and workforce will be touched on, as well. Further, the national standard as set by the U.S. and the WHO for the U.S. will also be discussed. It is from this national standard that programs for recruitment and training have been set. Thus, the paper needs to enlighten on this.

There are perceived problems in the healthcare workforce of the U.S. These perceived problems include: 1) recruitment and retention of professionals, 2) compliance with new standards, 3) incomplete data on migration of healthcare workforce in the U.S., 4) inadequate production levels to ensure workforce supply for future needs, and 5) the privatized nature of the U.S. healthcare system.

It is stressed over and over again in this paper that the healthcare system and workforce of any nation is unique to the needs and requirements of that nation. The aforementioned perceived problems are the ones the author has identified to be unique to the U.S. setting. Those perceived problems are discussed, and recommendations to address them are also given.

2 HUMAN RESOURCE IN THE U.S. HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Organizations are facing great challenges in hiring, training, and retaining people (Goldsmith, 2008). This has been a perennial problem for most organizations, but more so now that globalization is in full force. Where the workforce used to be sourced from the local citizenry, there now is no limits as to where the workforce may come from. This means the pool for possible employees is bigger, but there are also costs for the bigger pool of employees.

Part of the cost of having a global pool of employees is the global opportunity for employment. Although not everyone is predisposed to go abroad for work, there are times when one has to do it in order to find the right job fit. This trend has forced organizations to continue improving their programs for training, equipping people, and improving their current workforce.

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The continuous training a job offers is important, especially in the healthcare sector. Employees are forever on the lookout for job opportunities that are accompanied by wide room for growth. The growth most would look for are not limited to promotions and financial incentives, but also increasing learning and training, which would enable one to climb the ladder faster.

By providing continuous learning and training for their employees, organizations become attractive to prospective employees. However, organizations in all industries and sectors bear the risk of hiring employees and training them, since the movement of workforce cannot be limited with globalization. In a number of cases, organizations are left constantly looking for new employees since those that they have trained moved on to other organizations that offer higher pay and incentives. The healthcare system of the U.S. is no exemption from this scenario.

3 CONCLUSION

The workforce under the U.S. healthcare sector conforms to the nation's unique needs and demands. Because of this, its problems are unique to the system, as well. They include: 1) recruitment and retention of professionals, 2) compliance with new standards, 3) incomplete data on migration of healthcare workforce in the U.S., 4) inadequate production levels to ensure workforce supply for future needs, and 5) the privatized nature of the U.S. healthcare system. One thing that has affected the workforce in the U.S. healthcare is globalization. Not only are American healthcare agencies left to reckon with a local job market, they can also source from other nations, which they often do. But even as many potential employees would take advantage of employment in America, they still select jobs that offer wide room from growth, usually in the form of continuous learning and trainings. As such, healthcare organizations in the U.S. are constantly pushing their programs on training, equipping people, and improving their current workforce in order to maintain their attractiveness to the global pool of employees. Sadly, many employees opt to leave in search of better opportunities, after they received good training. Many healthcare organizations are then left constantly in search for new employees to buff their workforce.

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