

## Happy Nurses Improve Outcomes



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According to a study of a team of Kaiser Permanente, nurses have a significant impact on the success of a hospital. The study is published in *Health Care Management Review*.

The Kaiser model is currently in use in eight states. It integrates hospitals, insurance and doctors' offices into one system. Several hospitals have tried and failed to replicate the model mainly because they overlook the level of nurse satisfaction and happiness,

According to lead author Matthew McHugh, R.N., Ph.D, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing, "It turns out that, by and large, nursing differences accounted for much of the mortality difference that we saw in Kaiser Permanente hospitals."

During the study, a survey was conducted at 564 adult, general acute care hospitals in California, Florida, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The objective was to examine whether patient and nurse outcomes were better in Kaiser hospitals. Nurses were questioned about their work environment, level of education, job satisfaction and typical number of patients seen each day. The researchers also referenced mortality data for each hospital.

Out of the 564 hospitals surveyed, 25 were Kaiser Permanente and 56 were Magnet hospitals (those with a proven and cost-effective strategy to improve process of care through investments in nursing). The findings showed that both Kaiser and Magnet status hospitals achieved comparable outcomes. As compared to other hospitals, both Kaiser and Magnet hospitals also presented better patient and nurse outcomes. Mortality rates in Kaiser and Magnet hospitals were 20 percent lower as compared to other hospitals and a large portion of this achievement was attributed to the nursing staff.

Marilyn Chow, R.N., vice president of Patient Care Services and Innovation for Kaiser Permanente explains that the model's success is based on ensuring that the hospitals provide a work environment that nurses would want to be part of. That is why the survey showed that Kaiser Permanente hospitals had better work environments and staffing levels. They also had more nurses with bachelor's degrees as compared to non-Kaiser hospitals.

The findings clearly showed that hospitals that empowered nurses by providing them more opportunities to make decisions and made it easier for them to do their jobs fared better as compared to those who did not. Also, hospitals that had four patients for every nurse as compared to five patients for every nurse also did better.

Source: [Health Care Management Review](#)

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