

Multifaceted Approaches to Increase Employee Retention

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Goals

A multifaceted approach was implemented to address staff turnover and satisfaction.

Building upon ongoing initiatives, efforts were directed towards approaches which would allow staff to feel that their voices were heard and that they played an active role in developing solutions and processes.

Background

The Clinical Research Services (CRS) department at the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center historically had been plagued by double-digit staff turnover. In calendar year 2022, the CRS annual termination rate was 26.48%, with a termination rate for staff in the department less than one year equaling 29.83%.

These rates were not only financially costly, but costly in terms of increased risks associated with decreased protocol compliance, data quality and timeliness, increased staff burnout, and loss of tacit knowledge.

Results from anonymous institutional and departmental surveys illustrated that the greatest risks related to staff satisfaction included staff growth, development, and well-being, and a departmental culture of safety.

Outcomes

With the successful implementation of the methods described, the overall annual term rate in calendar year 2023 decreased by 52.6% to be 12.55%, with the term rate for staff in the department decreasing by 89.7% to be 3.07% overall.

Response to anonymous feedback is communicated during monthly All Staff meetings through a spotlight slide. Since August 2023 until 13May2024, 348 anonymous submissions were received. Of the 78 actionable matters, 30 prompted action which has been implemented, 28 remain in progress, and 16 were deemed to be not feasible. Feedback related to matters outside of CRS leadership's purview are escalated to the organization's Executive Management Group for discussion and response.

Solutions and Methods

- Staff development concerns were addressed by:
 - Further expanding career ladders while maximizing staff promotional opportunities.
 - Implementing various flexible work arrangements, including 4–10-hour shifts and work from home opportunities.
 - Manager one-on-one touch base meetings and weekly office hours were implemented.
 - Biweekly meetings with human resources facilitated ongoing conversations regarding career ladder development and allowed for employee relation issues to be addressed swiftly.
 - Peer interviews were implemented for all roles prior to hiring a candidate which gave the staff a voice in the decision-making process.
 - Increased scrutiny of staff exit interview surveys identified factors driving dissatisfaction with the organization.
 - The CRS Quality, Education, and Compliance team increased educational opportunities through continued daily office hours and implementation of a refresher series on topics identified through a staff survey.
- Increased awareness of staff workload distribution and staff well being through:
 - The use of the departmental workload analysis tool (**Trial Workload Assessment INSTRUMENT**).
 - Ongoing, regular, and direct communication with senior leadership by implementing:
 - Monthly senior leadership office hours, weekly rounding, quarterly town halls, and monthly All Staff meetings.
 - An anonymous feedback link was created for staff to voice concerns and offer suggestions without fear of retaliation.
 - A series of staff driven feedback surveys and multidisciplinary working groups provided opportunity for staff to provide feedback on common issues, be involved process improvement strategies, and regularly communicate with peers and leadership on topics of concern.

| Suggestions Completed | |
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| 3rd Floor Pavilion women's toilets have had water pressured lowered to prevent splashing. | Create App to allow visibility of community requests to be added to studies – feasibility app being worked on |
| Donut Shoppe Keurig pods will continue to be ordered | Coming in March All Staff- Presentation on how to find training dates in eREG for physicians, CRS staff, etc. |
| Sponsor/CRO emails correspondence on protocol clarifications - adding to eREG | Monitoring calendar updated to no longer require COVID vaccination proof for on-site monitoring requests |
| Suggestions In Progress | |
| Organize on site certification testing – QA working on it | Imaging core updates, current process/flow to obtaining signatures in a more regular fashion |
| Overhaul pre-sub process to make meeting more efficient – pending sponsor program creation | Staff (CRC/RC) cell phones – discussing with IT/HR, additional logistics that must be worked through – Submit Suggestions to the Executive Management Committee here . |
| Review of Survival Follow up and Lost to Follow up process | 2nd/3rd Check review with QA - schedule a time with QA for additional training/support - utilize QA Office Hours for quick questions |
| Cannot Complete at this Time | |
| Discounted Luna Parking – Unfortunately UPMC policies prevent this on a corporate level. However, your feedback is always valued, and we suggest you submit your suggestion to the Executive Management Committee here . | RA WFH – Full Time request - cannot accommodate a full time WFH schedule for RA due to necessary on-site responsibilities associated with this role. |
| | Using SLOPE for chart tracking |

Future Directions

Reducing staff turnover takes a multifaceted approach and an investment in staff from senior leadership and management.

Future directions include further analysis of staff surveys and exit interview data to determine the greatest opportunities to increase staff satisfaction.

Staff working groups will continue to be leveraged to increase staff satisfaction and engagement in departmental processes, with the goal of further reducing staff turnover to less than 10%.