

Originally created by Healthcentric Advisors

A Guide to Staff Stability for Leaders

A Competency-Based Approach



About the IPRO QIN-QIO

The **IPRO Quality Innovation Network–Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO)** is a collaboration of three organizations with decades of experience serving as Medicare QIOs.

The collaboration is led by **IPRO**, and joined by two other established and respected Medicare QIOs: **Healthcentric Advisors** and **Qlarant**.



A Guide to Staff Stability for Leaders

A Competency-Based Approach

Table of Contents

Core Competencies for Achieving Staff Stability	4
Competency Map	4
Domain 1: Develop high-quality leadership throughout all levels of the organization	5
Domain 2: Value staff in practice, word, and deed	6
Domain 3: Grow high-performance, high-investment human resource policies and practices	7
Domain 4: Work design that supports staff's intrinsic motivation.....	9
Domain 5: Ensure a Sufficiency of staff and supplies to care humanely	10

A Guide to Staff Stability

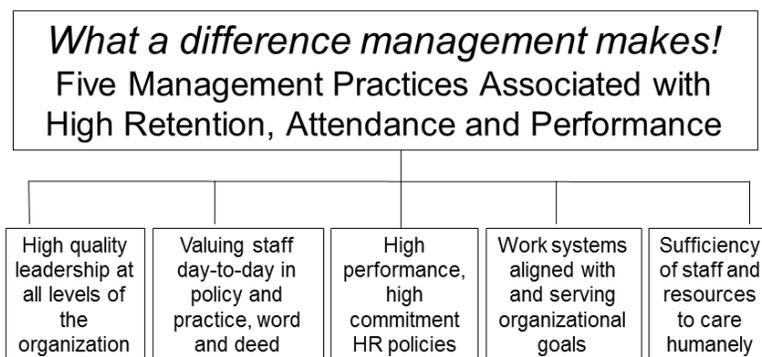
A Competency-Based Approach

Reducing turnover by 15% (RN, LPN/LVN, CNA) is a strategic goal for many organizations, designed with the intent of strengthening the workplace practices and skills related to staff that lead to better care.

This guide applies concepts and practices based on the work of Susan Eaton, Ph.D. who, in 2002, completed a CMS funded study, *What a Difference Management Makes!* Dr. Eaton's study compared practices at high and low turnover nursing homes in the same labor market. The study examines the link between human resource management (HRM), work organization, and patient care quality in US long-term care settings. The study proposed a key role for both management philosophy and improved front-line staffing arrangements in delivering consistently higher quality care, defined to include both physical and psychological outcomes.

The original research includes case studies conducted in twenty facilities in California and Pennsylvania, USA. Strategies and techniques based on her findings have been successfully piloted in Better Jobs Better Care - Vermont (BJBC-VT); a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) funded Improving Nursing Home Culture Pilot (INHC); with nursing homes nationally through the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) program and in New England through workforce development programs.

Using Dr. Eaton's study, this guide identifies the following competencies leaders would demonstrate to support staff stability and reduce turnover.



Eaton, 2002

Core Competencies for Achieving Staff Stability

Figure 1 – Model Version 1.0

DOMAIN	COMPETENCIES
1. Advance high quality leadership throughout the organization	Competency 1.1 Cultivate leadership among mid-level supervisors and non-supervisory staff
	Competency 1.2 Build skills and systems to support and encourage self-direction and shared decision-making
2. Value staff in practice, word and deed	Competency 2.1 Manage by walking around
	Competency 2.2 Demonstrate a willingness to pitch in
	Competency 2.3 Provide genuine appreciation
	Competency 2.4 Demonstrate empathy and understanding for the issues staff face in their personal lives
3. Institute high performance human resource practices	Competency 3.1 Demonstrate trust and respect for staff through the HR policies
	Competency 3.2 Ensure benefits, training opportunities, and attendance policies reflect an investment in staff
	Competency 3.3 Ensure hiring practices and policies reflect an investment in staff
	Competency 3.4 Develop attendance policies that take into account the challenges staff face in real life
	Competency 3.5 Support new employees as they become acquainted with residents, staff and the environment
	Competency 3.6 Offer workplace training programs to help staff grow in their skills and professional development
4. Align work systems	Competency 4.1 Implement consistent assignment to maximize teamwork and relationships
	Competency 4.2 Establish team autonomy and self-directed teams
	Competency 4.3 Enhance team’s ability to problem-solve
	Competency 4.4 Reward team success with increased responsibility
5. Ensure a sufficiency of staff and supplies to care humanely	Competency 5.1 Reduce call outs so there are fewer shifts worked short
	Competency 5.2 Maintain staffing levels that allow staff to provide the quality of care that draws them to this work
	Competency 5.3 Ensure sufficient responsive supervision and support
	Competency 5.4 Ensure adequate supplies are available for employees to complete their jobs

Competency Map

	High Quality Leadership Throughout the Organization	Valuing Staff in Practice, Word, and Deed	High Performance Human Resource Practices	Work Systems Alignment	Sufficiency of Staff and Supplies to Care Humanely
Competencies	2	4	6	4	4
KSA	7	17	35	16	10

Domain 1: Develop high-quality leadership throughout all levels of the organization

Definition: Refers to the commitment of administration to support, develop, and enhance the leadership skills of all staff.

Competency 1.1: Cultivate leadership skills among mid-level supervisors and non-supervisory staff	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Ensure a dedicated program supporting the development of leadership skills	x		
Provide opportunities for staff to take on project and committee responsibilities	x		
Provide education and support in developing staff skills that are consistent with leadership	x		

Competency 1.2: Build skills and systems to support and encourage self-direction and shared decision-making	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Create self-directed work teams		x	
Provide support for staff to conduct self-scheduling within their teams	x		
Promote the use of learning circles		x	
Establish mid-shift huddles		x	

Domain 2: Value staff in practice, word, and deed

Definition: Refers to the empathy and appreciation that leaders and managers demonstrate to others in what they say and do.

Competency 2.1: Manage by walking around	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Spend time on the unit daily			x
Get to know staff, their issues, their work habits		x	
Know the pulse of your organization at different hours of the day	x		
Learn and understand who helps drive the work and well-being on the unit	x		
Discover and support the informal leaders			x

Competency 2.2: Demonstrate a willingness to pitch in	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Implement an “all hands on deck” policy to support difficult or burdensome times	x		
Have a “one for all policy” that mandates all staff answering call lights (This includes finance, social services, department heads etc.)	x		
Be a visible presence at employee events			x
Model servant leadership			x

Competency 2.3: Provide genuine appreciation	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Inquire among staff the types of rewards that have meaning for them (a gas card over a pizza party)	x		
Provide in the moment appreciation for a job well done	x		
Go out of you way to thank people			x
Write thank you notes		x	

Competency 2.4: Demonstrate empathy and understanding for the issues staff face in their personal lives	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Recognize the burdens staff face	x		
Create organizational systems that are flexible enough to respond to staff personal issues and crisis		x	
Allow moms with kids at home to use a cell phone to ensure their child’s whereabouts			x
Live on a CNAs salary for one week			x

Domain 3: Grow high-performance, high-investment human resource policies and practices

Definition: Refers to the ability of an organization to create supportive and responsive human resources that reacts to the changing needs of staff.

Competency 3.1: Demonstrate trust and respect for staff through the HR policies	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Accommodate requests for time off		x	
Allow employees to switch days	x		
Anticipate needs after stressful times	x		
Respect an employee's reality			x
Create a high absence trigger providing an alert to talk with the employee to understand the problems they are having and how they might be resolved		x	
Develop a "no-fault" absence policy		x	
Plan ahead for a 2nd day's absence ahead of time (in cases of the flu or death etc.)		x	

Competency 3.2: Ensure benefits, hiring practices, training opportunities, and attendance policies reflect an investment in staff	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Ensure direct involvement by the charge nurse and unit staff		x	
Focus on traits not tests when hiring	x		
Develop your own CNA training class or a link with one		x	
Do more hiring through word of mouth		x	
Develop responsive managers			x
Reward the staff that helps a new employee to stay			x

Competency 3.3: Ensure strong hiring practices and policies that involve others	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Strengthen your receptionist's role with job applicants	x		
Always be prepared for the walk-in applicant and, if possible, interview them immediately	x		
Have an effective screening process with multiple appointments		x	
Start with a more informal conversation while walking through the building		x	
Have two or three mandatory appointments to test timeliness and reliability		x	
Involve others in the hiring process including front-line staff, residents and families	x		

Competency 3.4: Develop attendance policies that take into account the challenges staff face in real life	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Build flexibility into scheduling	x		
Reward guaranteed hours with better pay	x		
Make full/part time hours a better financial deal than working per diem with bonuses for last minute assignments.	x		
Target substantial wage increases to non per-diem employees so their pay rate is better than the hourly rate for per diem staff		x	
Fund the wage increase by eliminating the last minute assignment bonus		x	
Encourage per diem staff to convert to full-time status	x		
Have meetings with per diem staff that you want to convert. Explain to them that you are moving towards more full-time committed staff to create more stability, and you want to offer them the option of coming on staff full-time.			x
Spell out the financial advantages to them for not working per diem	x		

Competency 3.5 Support new employees as they become acquainted with residents, staff and the environment	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Extend orientation	x		
Allow for each new hire to learn at their own pace	x		
Ensure a mentor supports a new hire	x		
Have new hires meet weekly with DoN	x		

Competency 3.6 Offer workplace training programs to help staff grow in their skills and professional development	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Develop a career ladder		x	
Offer outside training to staff	x		
Have an on-going schedule of educational events to which staff can attend	x		
Learn from staff the topics and areas of personal interest they seek			x

Domain 4: Work design that supports staff’s intrinsic motivation

Definition: refers to the skill of leaders and managers in developing, manipulating and adjusting workflow for the best possible outcome in ways that make sense to those carrying out the plan.

Competency 4.1: Implement consistent assignment to maximize teamwork and relationships	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Have a strong and defensible argument for moving to consistent assignment	x		
Support the effort but let staff create it			x
Explore several ways to divide up a floor before jumping in		x	
Start small and slow	x		
Do the math and utilize staffing schedules based on your setting (Ex. 4 days on 2 days off)		x	

Competency 4.2: Establish team autonomy and self-directed teams	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Support staffs opportunity to learn about self-directed work teams			x
Find examples locally and visit sites to view and understand	x		
Support the movement to self-scheduling	x		

Competency 4.4: Enhance team’s ability to problem-solve	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Create opportunities for staff input around the care and running of their unit/neighborhood	x		
Utilize learning circles		x	
Invite and encourage solutions from frontline staff		x	
Acknowledge all suggestions	x		
Reward staff for solutions that are utilized	x		

Competency 4.5: Reward team success with increased responsibility	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Acknowledge successful teams	x		
Highlight achievements in newsletters and promotional materials			x
When establishing new projects, have implementation start with the high achievers.		x	

Domain 5: Ensure a Sufficiency of staff and supplies to care humanely

Definition: Refers to the ability of leaders and managers to assure sufficient staff and materials consistently.

Competency 5.1: Reduce call outs so there are fewer shifts worked short	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Develop strategies to ensure the lowest number of call-outs possible		x	
Anticipate times when call outs are higher (summer, holidays)	x		
Watch for signs of burn-out and fatigue caused by short staffing and absences			x

Competency 5.2: Maintain staffing levels that allow staff to provide the quality of care that draws them to this work	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Ensure that staffing schedules reflect enough time for staff to interact with residents		x	
Rethink traditional staffing patterns (neighborhoods and households)	x		

Competency 5.3: Ensure sufficient responsive supervision and support	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Develop responsive managers		x	
Ensure that managers are responding to the concerns of front-line staff related to patient care	x		

Competency 5.4: Ensure adequate supplies are available for employees to complete their jobs	 K Knowledge	 S Skill	 A Attitude
Inquire of staff whether there are adequate supplies	x		
Ensure supplies are in easy to access places	x		
Inquire if staff have full access and can get needed supplies at any time across shift	x		