

Developing Organizational Policies and Practices

Student's Name

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## 2-2 Assignment: Developing Organizational Policies and Practices

### **Addressing Competing Needs in Healthcare**

In the dynamic healthcare landscape, competing needs often emerge as a significant challenge, impacting care delivery, resource management, and workforce satisfaction. This paper will explore these competing needs within a healthcare setting, focusing on staffing ratios, mandatory overtime, and resource allocation. We will also examine relevant organizational policies, critique them for ethical considerations, and recommend policy changes that balance these needs while promoting ethical practices. Evidence from scholarly resources will support the analysis and recommendations.

### **Identifying and Describing Competing Needs**

In healthcare, two prominent competing needs are staffing ratios and mandatory overtime. Staffing ratios refer to the number of patients assigned to a nurse during a shift. High patient-to-nurse ratios can lead to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and compromised patient care quality. For example, a nurse handling too many patients might miss critical signs of patient deterioration, leading to adverse outcomes. This need conflicts with mandatory overtime policies, which require nurses to work beyond their scheduled hours to cover staffing shortages. While mandatory overtime ensures patient coverage, it exacerbates nurse fatigue and burnout, ultimately affecting patient care quality and workforce retention.

### **Describing Relevant Policies or Practices**

An existing policy within our organization that influences these competing needs is the staffing ratio policy, which mandates a specific patient-to-nurse ratio. This policy aims to ensure adequate patient coverage and safety. However, due to chronic staffing shortages, the organization often enforces mandatory overtime to meet this ratio, creating a cycle of nurse

burnout and turnover. Leadership is critical in shaping these policies, prioritizing patient coverage over workforce well-being. This practice impacts healthcare by increasing nurse stress levels and reducing overall job satisfaction, leading to higher turnover rates and compromised patient care.

### **Critiquing the Policy for Ethical Considerations**

Ethically, the staffing ratio policy presents several challenges. While it aligns with the principle of beneficence by aiming to ensure patient safety, it often falls short in promoting justice and fairness for the nursing staff. The mandatory overtime component places undue stress on nurses, violating the ethical standard of nonmaleficence, which emphasizes "no harm." The policy's strength lies in its intention to maintain patient safety. However, its implementation through mandatory overtime creates ethical shortcomings by compromising nurse well-being. For instance, nurses working extended hours may experience physical and mental fatigue, leading to errors and decreased quality of care.

### **Recommending Policy or Practice Changes**

To balance the competing needs of resources, workers, and patients while addressing the ethical shortcomings, the following policy changes are recommended:

**Implementing Flexible Staffing Solutions:** Introducing part-time and per-diem positions can help alleviate staffing shortages without over-relying on mandatory overtime. For example, part-time nurses can fill gaps during peak hours, reducing the need for full-time staff to work overtime.

**Enhancing Workforce Support Programs:** Developing support programs focused on nurse well-being, such as mental health resources and stress management workshops, can help mitigate

the negative impacts of mandatory overtime. These programs should be integrated into the organizational culture to promote a healthy work environment.

Adopting Technology for Efficient Resource Management: Leveraging technology to optimize shift scheduling and patient assignments can improve efficiency and reduce the workload on individual nurses. For instance, automated scheduling systems can ensure fair distribution of shifts, minimizing the need for mandatory overtime.

These changes are specific, feasible, and ethically sound, addressing the current policy's operational and ethical challenges. The organization can improve nurse satisfaction, reduce turnover, and maintain high-quality patient care by implementing these recommendations.

Supporting these recommendations, evidence from scholarly resources underscores the importance of balanced staffing policies. According to a study by Aiken et al. (2018), lower patient-to-nurse ratios are associated with better patient outcomes and higher nurse job satisfaction. Additionally, research by Dall'Ora et al. (2019) highlights the adverse effects of mandatory overtime on nurse health and patient care quality, advocating for alternative staffing strategies.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, addressing competing needs within a healthcare setting requires a nuanced approach that balances workforce, resources, and patient care demands. By identifying and describing the impact of staffing ratios and mandatory overtime, examining relevant policies, and proposing ethically sound changes, organizations can create a more sustainable and supportive environment for healthcare providers and patients alike. The key takeaway is the importance of implementing policies that ensure patient safety and promote workforce well-being, ultimately leading to better healthcare outcomes.