

## Recruitment and Retention

Research supports the position that competitive compensation alone is not an effective retention or recruitment strategy. Staff Nurses are also looking for control over their practice, collegial and respectful relationships with physicians and other disciplines, opportunities for professional growth and recognition, and effective work-life balance. MGH strives to maintain an environment that promotes and supports these elements, recognizing that effective retention is the key to successful recruitment.

MGH continually reviews salaries and benefits in relation to market forces. The objective is not only to maintain a competitive position in the market for recruitment but also to assure equity for those nurses already on staff. Over the past three years, the average salary rate for incumbents has increased by 19%. In addition, two years ago the differentials for evening, night, weekend and on call were more than doubled, resulting in an even greater effective salary increase. In that same three-year period, the direct care staff increased by 14% with the addition of over 300 Staff Nurses each year. Turnover and vacancy in the Staff Nurse positions remains under 5%.

In addition to negotiating for adequate staffing, the department promotes Staff Nurse control over practice by empowering Staff Nurses to make decisions for individual patients in the clinical area. Through the Collaborative Government structure, Staff Nurses are also involved in decision-making that relates to their practice. Staff Nurses are respected by physicians and colleagues from other disciplines and are full partners in the health care team.

The opportunities for professional growth are many and varied. Of primary importance is the Clinical Recognition Program, a program that enables Staff Nurses to remain in the direct care setting and achieve advanced status and recognition for their excellent practice. With tuition reimbursement, funding for travel and seminars, educational time, and flexible scheduling, Staff Nurses have the opportunity to attend seminars and conferences and to pursue certification and advanced degrees. The Department celebrates Staff Nurses' achievements, recognizing them in Caring Headlines and other publications, and acknowledges their contributions through special events such as the Collaborative Governance dinner. In addition, the department underwrites various awards for excellence in professional practice. The Staff Perceptions of the Professional Practice Environment survey attests to the Staff Nurses' satisfaction in all of these areas. In 2006, the scores for autonomy, control over practice and physician/nurse relationships were at or over 3.0 (on the 4.0 Likert scale) and the Staff Nurses reported an overall job satisfaction rate of 92%.

In collaboration with Human Resources (HR), the Department of Nursing has established a nursing image and marketing campaign. The image campaign is designed to complement our "Nursing at MGH – Simply the Best!" motto, to exemplify our nursing practice, and to highlight some of the many positive and exciting aspects of nursing at MGH. Exposing nursing students to nursing at MGH can also be an effective recruiting tool. The Department of Nursing collaborates with schools of nursing in placing students for clinical rotations, with over 1,200 undergraduate and graduate nursing students rotating through during the year. Students are also recruited for positions as Patient Care Associates (PCAs) and other MGH positions during their academic years. In the past year, over 45 MGH-employed nursing students have been promoted into Staff Nurse positions.

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