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~The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient. ~

In the nursing field today, there is a shortage of nurses and supplies which is putting strain on working nurses and their ability to protect patient's rights. With a smaller pool of working RN's, the current nursing workforce is facing hardships such as decreased nurse retention, nurse burnout, and increased nurse to patient ratios. These hardships have made it more difficult for nurses to protect patient's rights, health, and safety because they cannot effectively or safely care for the increased workloads that are caused, especially during and after the pandemic. This is a continuing concern in the medical field and without some change it could lead to a serious decline in trust by the population in the healthcare system.

The first hardship the nursing field is facing today is nurse retention, this is a major cause of increased nursing workload. Since the pandemic a large part of the nursing workforce either retired or left the field, this led to a decrease in existing nurses while demand continued to increase furthering the gap. In a response to this increased demand many healthcare facilities began offering larger incentives and increased wages to draw in nurses which then causes a high turnover rate for many other facilities. This has caused many hospitals to work with very low staffing which is leading to nurse burnout and increased patient to nurse ratios.

The next hardship in the nursing field today was increased patient to nurse ratios, this is one of the leading causes of nurse burnout and decreased nurse retention. The current trend of patient to nurse ratios increasing means that each nurse has more patients to care for which is decreasing the amount of time the nurse spends with their patients. This decrease in patient care is leading to a decrease in patient satisfaction, and a decrease in the nurse's ability to promote health and safety. With the increase in workload for the nurses, they are not able to effectively advocate for their patients because they do not have enough time to provide adequate care. This is causing a major role in nursing burnout because nurses do not feel satisfied with their career and the work they are doing.

Lastly nurse burnout is a major concern in nursing practice today. The leading cause of nurse burnout is short staffing and decreased mental health of nurses. The short staffing leads to an increase in the turnover rate of nurses, because they leave to a different facility hoping for a better outcome. This is another concerning hardship nurses face because if a nurse is burnt-out, they are less likely to provide a safe environment and promote health and safety because they are struggling with their own health and safety.

As you can see the complications listed above are all intertwined to create a nursing environment that is unsafe and does not promote patient advocacy, health, or safety. The nursing

field needs major support to get back to a place where patients can be cared for to meet this standard. Prior to the pandemic nurses were able to understand and willing to advocate for their patients' health and safety (Nsiah et al, 2019). But I believe that in the current state of the nursing field most nurses would not be able to dedicate the time or resources to properly advocate for their patients. I believe that patient advocacy is a very important part of nursing and is what promotes adequate healthcare needs for patients, and if changes aren't made then nursing standards will soon fall short.

References:

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