RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AMONG FRONTLINE STAFF AND PATIENT SATISFACTION: EVIDENCE FROM COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

by

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The health care sector is a major part of a community’s infrastructure attracting new organizations and jobs. Job satisfaction among those in health care is lower and there is more work related stress than other types of organizations. The role of frontline staff (FLS) is vital to the success of medical practices as they are the first impression for visitors and the first to find out about patient problems. Despite their importance, little research has been conducted regarding their significance and job satisfaction. FLS have the highest burnout rate in medical practices and high turnover rates which are costly affecting operations, patient perception, and staff satisfaction. This study focuses on community health centers (CHCs) as they play a critical role as a safety net provider providing services to millions of individuals in medically underserved communities and vulnerable populations. The purpose of the study was to determine the level of job satisfaction of FLS in CHCs in South Carolina, the factors leading a FLS to be satisfied or dissatisfied, and if there is a relationship between FLS job satisfaction and patient satisfaction. To achieve these objectives, two surveys were utilized. Initial survey data was collected from existing patient satisfaction surveys conducted by CHCs in South Carolina. A second cross-sectional survey was created for this study to examine the job satisfaction of the FLS in the participating CHCs. The level of satisfaction of FLS in CHCs was found to be less than optimal. FLS were also found to be dissatisfied with pay, benefits, advancement opportunities, recognition, and appreciation. Finally, a significant relationship between patient satisfaction and job satisfaction amongst FLS was not found however FLS remain important to ensuring optimal patient satisfaction. FLS are the primary source of feedback regarding the patient experience and satisfaction, they are the main source of patient contact, and FLS know what is going on in all areas of the practice. The findings of this study provide insight into how health care organizations, especially CHCs, might improve FLS turnover, which can lead to improved morale, patient and staff satisfaction, and more stable practice operations and financial position.