

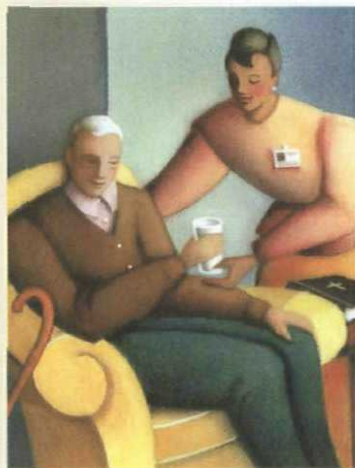
Workplace Issues

“With the nursing shortage, we have the elements of a perfect storm brewing.” Thus spoke a participant in a symposium sponsored several years ago by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).^{*} The coming nursing “storm” has three elements, the speaker said:

- An explosion of baby-boomer patients
- An aging nurse workforce (and nursing school faculty)
- A shrinking number of nurse recruits

Add to this the problem of turnover among nurse aides and it becomes clear that the United States faces a health care crisis that cannot be solved through technological advances. “We must collectively create organization cultures of retention,” Dennis S. O’Leary, MD, the JCAHO’s president, said during the symposium. To recruit more nurses and nurse aides and to retain more of those it has, the nation must somehow make its nursing workplaces more attractive.

Hence our special section for this issue. Aimée DeVoll, a CHA communications specialist serving as guest editor, has brought together a half-dozen articles suggesting strategies for improving workplace cultures in Catholic health care. We hope our readers find them useful.



^{*}The speaker was Marilyn Chow, RN, vice president, patient care services, Kaiser Community Health, Oakland, CA. The symposium, titled “Call for Action to Solve America’s Nursing Shortage,” was held August 7, 2002. A transcript can be found at www.jcaho.org/news+room/press+ kits/nursing+transcript.htm.

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