

# Collaborative Health Human Resource Planning: A Retention and Recruitment Initiative – Full time, Shared and Unionized Positions

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Kemptville District Hospital entered into a partnership with the Queensway Carleton Hospital, a larger urban centre, to develop a framework for a shared, full-time, unionized nursing position. Both hospitals were experiencing nursing shortages in their emergency departments, but Kemptville, a small rural hospital, had an added recruitment challenge in that the ER nurses must be highly skilled and comfortable assuming responsibility when working alone. A new and shared full-time position would help alleviate the staffing crises for both hospitals. It would create a full-time position for a nurse who might otherwise be getting only part-time hours, and it would enhance interorganizational professional practice through the exposure to and sharing of best practices.

The Kemptville District Hospital and Queensway Carleton Hospital worked with their respective Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) bargaining units and the labour relations officer to develop the tools required to implement a shared position spanning two employers and two bargaining units. The nurse managers from each hospital, the directors of human resources, staffing clerks, ER nurses, union representatives from each ONA Local and the labour relations officer worked together, and through their collaboration and commitment developed an innovative employment framework. Resources developed included a memorandum of agreement, job description, job posting and an innovative full-time ER schedule.

The interorganizational collaboration and framework have significant relevance for future healthcare planning in a unionized environment.

**Lessons Learned**

- Involve nurses and unions from the start. Stakeholders must be included to ensure all concerns are addressed and to foster a successful working relationship.
- Successful partnerships require a win–win relationship. All parties had something to gain in this endeavour. Filling staff vacancies would help both the hospitals and the nurses.
- Commitment to any project is crucial. Both organizations remained committed to this initiative and committed time and resources as needed to ensure success.

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