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EXAMINATION OF STAFFING STABILITY IN LONG-TERM CARE
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Background: Long-term care (LTC) homes in Ontario, Canada face challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified staff prepared to address resident care needs. Objectives: To gain knowledge of the barriers and facilitators associated with recruiting and retaining nurses (RPNs/RNs) and personal support workers (PSW) in LTC. Method: Online survey questionnaires were distributed to staff working in a municipal home, and to PSW and nursing students. Staff participants (n=93) ranked how they perceived their work in LTC during COVID-19 to inform staffing stability efforts, and were invited to elaborate further on their responses using open-ended questionnaire. Nursing student participants (n=11) ranked how they perceived working in LTC. Results: Findings revealed that staff participants (57%) reported intentions to remain in their LTC employment, leaving about 43% of the workforce at risk of leaving. Four themes emerged from this study: (1) Embracing resident centred care as the top priority; (2) Rebuilding a health workplace through enhanced leadership and organizational support; (3) Promoting quality of care through open communication and professional development opportunities; and (4) Transforming work scheduling policies and staffing practices to support workforce retention. Conclusion: Senior leaders and LTC organizations play a critical role in refocusing staffing stability efforts. To help make LTC a workplace of choice, major changes must be considered to include greater visibility and presence of leadership, ongoing training and education, and revisit scheduling policies and practice with input from part-time and casual staff.