Unionization

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Author Note

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Unionization carries a number of benefits for workers in any organization. The process of collective bargaining allows unions to negotiate better benefits and wages for workers. It also provides them with a platform to formally process their complains and disputes and to negotiate on the worker's behalf with the management. Thus any grievances, complains and disputes can be handled through formal processes. However, for workers, unions often demand dues while for organizations, they make it difficult to dismiss underperforming staff and raise overall labor costs (Yates, 2009).

In the nursing profession, unionization provides nurses with a voice against health care management. Organizations often require budget-cuts that in turn impact nursing wages while those nurses without union support are often fired-at-will. A union, therefore, can negotiate a better wage for nurses and help provide them career security and longevity. Furthermore, unionization helps nurses bargain for better safety and health measures, higher nurse-to-patient ratios, and demand no mandatory overtime (NNU, 2010). In contrast, nursing unions often ask for a certain percentage as dues. A nurse is often required to skip work upon a union strike and thus not get paid (Marquis & Huston, 2009). Moreover, unionization makes it difficult to fire and replace nurses for incompetence or bad behavior and can impact the manager-worker relationship. The California Nurses Association used collective bargaining to have the safe staffing ratios bill become part of the law despite opposition from healthcare organizations (NNU, 2010).

Among the different initiatives taken by the National Nurses United, the safe patient rations campaign and the safe patient handling program are the most important. Healthcare organizations often put nurses under challenging situations by demanding that a nurse cares for a larger number of patients than what is considered a safe ration. Higher nurse-to-patient ratios, however, are proven to bring improved patient outcomes and prevent nurse injuries, stress, and burnout (NNU, 2010). The safe patient handling program is necessary to address injuries at work, such as strains, sprains, and tears that nurses face in handling patients. The NNU campaign advocates promoting better training, equipment, and education, along with negotiating stronger contracts with the management for this purpose.

# References

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