

# Strengthening Pharmacy Technician Organizational Commitment: Contribution of Training Programs and Stay Interviews

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## INTRODUCTION and OBJECTIVE

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the US healthcare workforce. In the pharmacy sector, this is felt with a severe shortage of pharmacy technicians.
- A recent ASHP survey of pharmacy administrators report pharmacy technician turnover rates of at least 21% in 2021, and nearly 1 in 10 noting they had lost 41% or more of their technicians.<sup>1</sup>
- The impact of this level of attrition is further exacerbated by a lack of qualified applicants seeking employment, long training lead times, loss of highly skilled and more senior health care workers, who are also needed to train others. This is consistent with 76% of healthcare industry reporting entry level hourly positions being the most difficult to fill in a labor survey.<sup>2</sup>
- Nuance Health continues to have open positions for pharmacy assistants or pharmacy technicians across all pharmacy locations.
- The purpose of the study was to understand the impact of a strategic pharmacy technician retention initiative on affective organizational commitment. The retention initiative involved development of pharmacy technician training programs and engagement of direct supervisors in the conduction of stay interviews and follow-up stay plans with pharmacy technicians.
- Affective organizational commitment strongly correlates with the desire to remain part of the organization and is a predictor for employee turnover.<sup>3</sup> It is used here as a surrogate measure for retention.
- Training and development is associated with employee retention through changes in work attitudes (employee engagement, job satisfaction, change related anxiety).<sup>4</sup>
- A stay interview is an informal discussion between a supervisor and employee about the employee's level of job satisfaction and specific ways the supervisor can help to maintain or enhance it. This can help avert the turnover process, enhance the supervisor-employee relationship, increase employee productivity, and strengthen organizational commitment.<sup>5</sup>

## METHODS

- Likert scaled affective organizational commitment surveys were provided to pharmacy technicians pre and post implementation of the retention initiative.
- Pharmacy technician training involved establishment of a perpetual organizational pharmacy technician board certification program, continue education to maintain certification, and involvement of pharmacy technicians in educational activities provided for pharmacists.
- Direct supervisors were engaged to conduct an informal discussion – a stay interview – with their pharmacy technicians. Direct supervisors were provided 5 questions to guide the stay interview toward identifying stay factors, concerns, and requests. Stay interviews were followed with stay plans which document the interview and any agreed-on action plans.

### Stay Interview Questions<sup>2-3</sup>:

1. What do you look forward to each day when you commute to work?
2. What are you learning here, and what do you want to learn?
3. Why do you stay here?
4. When is the last time you thought about leaving us, and what prompted it?
5. What can I do to make your job better for you?

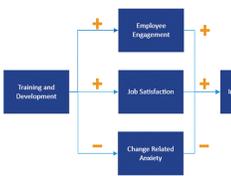
## RESULTS

### Affective Commitment as a Surrogate Measure for Retention

#### COMPONENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT



### Training and Development to Maintain Organizational Commitment



Connecting technicians with their work on a level that makes them feel fulfilled and satisfied

### Nuance Health Certified Pharmacy Technician Training Program

Initial Recognition Date: 04/26/2022  
 Attestation Deadline: 04/30/2023  
 Application Status: Approved

### Stay Interviews and Stay Action Plans to Avert the Turnover Process

A **Stay Interview** is a structured discussion a leader conducts with each individual employee to learn the specific actions he/she must take to strengthen that employee's engagement and retention with the organization.<sup>2-4</sup>

A stay interview allow direct supervisors to intervene on the turnover process. Pharmacy technicians are engaged to share:

- Stay Factors:** positive work characteristics that impact their job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment
- Concerns:** problematic work issues that impact their job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment
- Requests:** specific actions they seek from the supervisor to resolve their concerns.



More recognition, more training, and improvements to workflow were the most frequent concern and request of pharmacy technicians.

## IMPLICATIONS

- It is expected that increased training opportunities and implementation of proactive stay interviews will maintain and perhaps increase the baseline affective organizational commitment of pharmacy technicians.
- Stay interviews are more immediate and ongoing actions that are expected to strengthen supervisor-employee relationships and address individualized concerns surrounding organizational commitment.
- Training and development is a more long-term strategy to engage the pharmacy technician, enhance their skillsset, strengthen social exchange relationships while indirectly averting turnover intentions.
- This retention strategy can be applied to other healthcare disciplines.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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