

The Impact of Implementing Managed Competition on Home Care Workers' Turnover Decisions

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Abstract:

This paper addresses the question: Did the implementation of managed competition in Ontario increase turnover in home care agencies? This question is addressed through a case study analysis of the impacts of tendering on the exiting home care labour force from three non-profit home care agencies during the period 1997 to 2001 in a mid-sized city in Ontario. These agencies provided 85% of the market share in 1996. Findings showed that 52% of the nurses and personal support workers (PSWs) left their agency over the five-year period. Analysis of the turnover data showed a temporal association between the implementation of managed competition and turnover. Additional support for the argument that the implementation of managed competition increased turnover is provided through analysis of a questionnaire sent to nurses and personal support workers who had left their agency during this period. Respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their pay, hours of work, benefits, heavy workload and lack of support from their supervisors/managers (all factors affected by the marketization of the home care sector) as reasons for leaving. Of those employed, only one-quarter remained in home care; most of those remaining were working in other healthcare fields such as hospitals and long-term care institutions. However, about one-third of employed PSWs were no longer working in the healthcare field.