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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN THANH HOA PROVINCE

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Abstract

Human resources for health are crucial to the reputation and success of private hospitals. Developing human resources for health, thus, remain the top priority of hospitals' boards of directors and management. This study investigated and figured out the shortcomings related to human resources for health in private hospitals in Thanh Hoa. On such basis, 6 solutions were proposed to develop human resources for health in private hospitals.

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Introduction:-

It is a fact that human resources for health, especially health service quality improvement, have not kept pace with the ever-growing demands of patients and society. In addition to the state-owned healthcare sector, the private healthcare sector plays a significant role. Developing private hospitals is, therefore, a shared responsibility of all people in society. There is great potential for the development of this sector.

By late 2021, Thanh Hoa had 12 private hospitals and more than 1000 licensed clinics. Every healthcare activity in the province has always been agreed upon among members of the Private Health Association of Thanh Hoa Province. Notably, the Association has recently carried out many practical activities to contribute to ensuring the health and safety of the people in the province.

Nevertheless, it is assessed by the Private Medical Association of Thanh Hoa Province that the quality of human resources for health in private hospitals has not satisfied society's expectations. Private hospitals (except for Hop Luc General Hospital) do not have many policies to attract well-qualified doctors and nursing professionals. The percentage of full-time first and second-degree specialist doctors in private hospitals remain low. In addition, nursing professionals are not fully dedicated to their work but always desire to work for public hospitals.

Literature Review:-

Human resources for health

As an integral part of the health system, human resources for health contribute to guaranteeing the quality of health services and the performance of people's health care, protection, and improvement. Thanks to the due attention of the Communist Party and State, the efforts of the Ministry of Health, along with the involvement of relevant ministries, agencies, training institutions, and people, human resources for health have rapidly been strengthened towards meeting the increasing needs of the people. Moreover, after officially joining international organizations such as APEC, AFTA, ASEM, and WTO in the integration process, Vietnam has signed a framework agreement on mutual recognition in the field of health services.

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Human resources for health constitute a part of the national human resources, work in protecting and caring for people's health, and are expressed in quantity, quality and structure in each specific period.

The focus should be put on improving professional ethics and eliminating negative acts in health facilities. It is also necessary to conduct diverse communication to attract all organizations, masses, and people to voluntarily participate in protecting the health of themselves and the community and enhancing the quality of health privatization. (Le Anh Tuan (2011),

Politburo's Resolution No. 46-NQ/TW, dated February 23, 2005, affirmed, "Health is the most precious asset of each person and the whole society. Protecting, caring for, and improving people's health is a humanitarian activity, directly ensuring human resources for the cause of national construction and defense and remaining one of the top priority policies of the Communist Party and State. Investment in this field is an investment in development, showing the excellent nature of the regime. Many essential and legalized policies have been launched by the Communist Party and State to facilitate the development of the health sector in general and human resources for health in particular. Clause 2, Article 4 of the Law on Medical Examination and Treatment 2009 stipulates the State's policies on medical examination and treatment, including strengthening the development of human resources for health, especially human resources for health in extremely disadvantaged areas, deploying a definite-term rotation regime for practitioners at medical examination and treatment facilities from upper to lower levels, among advantaged areas, disadvantaged areas and extremely disadvantaged areas.

The private health sector accounts for 20-30% of Latin America and Asia, 10% in the UK, 24% in Thailand, and 93% in India. Meanwhile, Vietnam's private health sector is deficient at 5.4%. Some provinces have no private hospitals, while some have only one private hospital.¹

The development of human resources for health in private hospitals involves the development of quantity and quality and reasonable structure, specifically:

- Developing the number of human resources for health in private hospitals. The number of human resources for health in private hospitals is shown in the overall size of human resources and the number of different types of human resources to meet the development requirements of each hospital as well as the entire system of medical examination and treatment facilities in Thanh Hoa province. The quantitative development of human resources is crucial, influencing the ability to fulfill private hospitals' medical examination and treatment tasks. It is the number of human resources that determines service quality. The shortage of human resources will lead to higher work intensity, increased work pressure, higher possibility of mistakes and unfortunate incidents. Therefore, this entails lower healthcare and medical examination and treatment quality and performance.

- Enhancing the quality of human resources for health in private hospitals:

- + In terms of professional knowledge: Achieved professional qualifications in human resources; Ratio of each professional qualification to the total number of existing human resources; Annual training and retraining rates for each educational level.

- + In terms of skills of human resources for health in private hospitals: Ability to undertake and complete tasks; Ability to apply knowledge to work operations; Ability to handle cases; Ability to communicate and attract attention; and Ability to behave in internal communication and communication with people and patients.

- + In terms of political awareness and ethical qualities of human resources for health in private hospitals: Sense of discipline, self-discipline, and cooperation; Responsibility and passion for work, and dynamism in work; Satisfaction level of patients and health service customers and professional ethics

- Ensuring a reasonable structure of human resources for health in private hospitals. The structure of human resources for health must be reasonable regarding training level, age, gender, departments, and hospitals. It is vital to employ good doctors and health staff with advanced expertise, seniority, and rich experience combined with young human resources from different generations to foster, train, and build the following human resources and tackle the shortfall in human resources. To determine the human resources structure, it is necessary to rely on the types of tasks and the size of each type of task of the sector, the level of job completion, and material conditions to support working. Also, the human resource structure should be assessed by profession, training level, professional qualification, age, gender, line, and region to effectively employ and use human resources for health in medical treatment and care for people's health.

¹<https://hiephoibenhvientu.com.vn/truc-tuyen-toa-dam-kien-tao-moi-truong-cho-y-te-tu-nhan-phat-trien-nhin-tu-chinh-sach/>

Methodology:-

The study was carried out at several private hospitals in Thanh Hoa province.

The data used for the study was based on annual summary reports (the last 3 years: 2020-2021 and the first 6 months of 2022) of private hospitals and statistics from the Thanh Hoa Department of Health.

The survey into human resource development solutions was conducted with the participation of the Boards of Directors and Management of private hospitals, heads of administrative and general affairs departments, human resources departments, etc.

Results:-

It is reported by the Department of Health that by late 2020 in Thanh Hoa, there were 11 doctors per ten thousand people (both inside and outside the public health sector). The contingent of civil servants, public employees, and workers in the whole industry comprised 14,221 officials, civil servants, public employees, and workers, including 119 Ph.D. physicians and second-degree specialist doctors (0.84 %), 8 second-degree specialist pharmacists (0.06%), 868 M.A and first-degree specialist doctors (6.1%), 75 M.A and first-degree specialist pharmacists (0.53%), 1,967 doctors (13.83%), and 109 undergraduate pharmacists (0.77%). Nonetheless, an unbalanced health human resource structure remains in which most doctors work for a few provincial facilities with developed socio-economic conditions. Meanwhile, high-quality human resources for health are still seriously lacking at the district and communal levels, and specialized hospitals such as psychiatric hospitals, lung hospitals, and the preventive medicine sector.²

The non-public medical and pharmaceutical sectors have been developing rapidly, firmly in quantity and quality, with diverse activities covering all districts, towns, and cities in the province. Many facilities are equipped with modern infrastructure and equipment, and high technologies and provide many quality healthcare services and drug business services, contributing to meeting the people's increasing needs for medical examination and treatment as well as improving the care, protection, and improvement of people's health in the province. The province currently has 1,345 private health facilities (16 private hospitals, 63 general clinics, 713 specialized clinics, 461 traditional medicine clinics, and 92 medical service facilities) and 3,045 pharmaceutical facilities (107 wholesalers; 402 GPP-certified pharmacies; 2,536 GPP-certified drugstores, 4 health station medicine cabinets, and 4 herbal medicine wholesalers).³ Some prominent private hospitals in Thanh Hoa are:

- + Hai Tien General Hospital (Thanh Hoa) with 11 departments, such as internal medicine, pediatrics, surgery, obstetrics, interdisciplinary and functional departments, and over 200 health staff members, doctors, nursing professionals, and technicians, including 45 full-time doctors.
- + Hop Luc General Hospital (Thanh Hoa) with 19 departments and over 500 doctors and health staff members, including many doctors with Ph.D. and second-degree specialist qualifications.
- + Thanh Ha General Hospital (Thanh Hoa), with 290 beds, 15 departments, and more than 230 health staff members.

Some limitations of human resources for health in private hospitals in Thanh Hoa.

- + There is a lack of human resources for health in some health facilities, especially high-quality human resources, thus affecting medical examination, treatment, and care for people's health.
- + The quality of human resources for health in private hospitals in Thanh Hoa is not good enough and has shortcomings.
- + The increase in population has created pressure on district and provincial hospitals. This gives rise to the need for healthcare in private hospitals. However, the structure of human resources for health in private hospitals is unreasonable.
- + The investment in infrastructure, medical equipment, and supplies is not proper and modern enough to meet the increasing requirements of complex diseases and patients' needs.
- + The on-site training and employment of health staff are still unreasonable. The shortfall and unequal quality of health staff among hospitals and departments and a lack of systematic development are also shortcomings.

²<https://baothanhhoa.vn/doi-song-xa-hoi/bai-1-chat-luong-nhan-luc--chat-luong-y-te/133829.htm>

³Summary Report of Thanh Hoa Department of Health, 2020

+ The benefits of human resources for health are not reasonable. No due attention to facilitating medical staff in working and developing their careers has not been paid by industry leaders.

Solutions for the development of human resources for health in private hospitals in Thanh Hoa

Solution 1:

Improving the quality of research and forecast and plans of human resources for health for each private hospital in particular and the entire private health system in general in Thanh Hoa province. To forecast and determine the demand for human resources for health in a private hospital, including the specific number of employees for each job position; quality with the necessary qualities and skills, and time for each job and position, it is required to master the current and future operational goals of the hospital, activities to be carried out, products or services and their size. This is a crucial step to ensure hospitals' human resources for health. Based on scientific and practical forecasts, the Boards of Directors and Management of private hospitals may be more proactive in ensuring human resources for health.

Solution 2:

Attaching great importance to improving professional qualifications for human resources for health; Improving the quality of standardized training to meet the human resource requirements of private hospitals in Thanh Hoa. To be specific:

- Further training additional doctors, pharmacists, nursing professionals, and other professionals for the departments and centers of the hospitals.
- Planning and training undergraduate and graduate staff for specialties.
- Promoting the training of health staff in various forms to satisfy the quantity and quality requirements of private hospitals; Deploying short-term training courses on management for health staff, especially hospital managers.
- Paying attention to launching appropriate remuneration and attraction policies to develop the primary human resources for health, such as doctors and undergraduate pharmacists, especially human resources with hi-tech qualifications.

Solution 3:

Completing mechanisms and policies on recruitment, remuneration, and talent retention to develop human resources for health in private hospitals in Thanh Hoa; Creating a favorable environment and motivation for employees to develop their capabilities. To be specific:

The current allowances should be adjusted and supplemented to suit the actual situation. Some are profession-based allowances, shift allowances, and surgery and procedure allowances. It is recommended to increase welfare to care for and support the lives of low-income employees, especially young ones who have just graduated from school. In addition, the province should launch a separate remuneration policy for health staff in addition to the general remuneration policy of the State. A mechanism to apply the social insurance benefits to cases of occupational accident risk for health staff on duty should be developed.

Furthermore, it is necessary to well implement the emulation and commendation work and promptly encourage exemplary staff who devotedly serve the patients while strictly handling cases of irresponsibility and harassment of patients, affecting the industry's reputation. Doctors' good working style and behavior towards patients and people should be timely rewarded. Additionally, regardless of position, regulations on the medical ethics of health staff must be strictly followed.

Plus, private hospitals should have a system of employee evaluation criteria for timely rewarding and motivating typical groups and individuals to improve their qualifications and practice medical ethics. Leader promotion and appointment standards in hospital-affiliated units should be developed and followed openly and transparently. Attention should be paid to benefit policies for staff such as appointing to positions in line with their professional qualifications and assigning essential tasks so that qualified staff can fully develop their inherent abilities. The arrangement and employment of staff must be capacity and performance-oriented. Arranging the right people in the right jobs will facilitate staff in promoting their advantages and overcoming their weaknesses. Staff should be provided the opportunity to develop themselves and constantly strive towards higher positions. It is also recommended to make the most of the working ability of excellent staff in the industry.

Solution 4:

Enhancing cooperation and affiliation in developing human resources for health among private hospitals and connecting with public hospitals inside and outside Thanh Hoa province. Currently, there is a small number of private hospitals in Thanh Hoa province (24 hospitals), mainly concentrated in Thanh Hoa city and some of its neighboring districts. Therefore, connecting and cooperating with private hospitals is necessary and convenient. In general, the investment in facilities and equipment for medical examination and treatment of hospitals is uneven due to the financial situation of each investor. Thus, once cooperation is executed, mutual assistance will create a "private hospital chain" capable of competing with public hospitals regarding medical examination and treatment conditions.

Moreover, hospitals need to cooperate and link together to form a private hospital ecosystem, thereby supporting each other in exchanging doctors and health staff when needed.

Solution 5:

Strengthening cooperation among medical and pharmaceutical institutions and private hospitals and holding courses on "Scientific Research Methods in Hospitals" at private hospitals. To do this, the Boards of Directors and Management should develop a reasonable policy on working time, study time, and expenses to invite qualified lecturers and doctors to the hospitals to instruct and conduct study and research sessions. In the long run, hospitals need to build a team of highly qualified core doctors to run and conduct scientific research and study sessions for other health staff in the hospitals. Each research and study topic will allow trainees to join a dynamic discussion through which they know how to identify research problems, write a research introduction and overview, identify research topics and methods, process data, and present research results. Through the courses, trainees have access to many new methods, contributing to higher quality and feasibility of topics, initiatives, and applications in medical examination and treatment.

Solution 6:

Pay more attention to communication and development of administrative and customer care staff. This department should be equipped with skills such as customer care and effective communication to understand customers' needs. Particular attention should be paid to complaint-handling skills and coordination with teammates to solve problems quickly and establish a smooth and effective working process.

Conclusion:-

Human resources for health must meet professional and ethical requirements for a special profession like medicine. Therefore, they should be specially selected, trained, employed, and treated. In health activities, it can be said that human resources for health are the most important, being the subject of all activities in the health system. At present, the global health human resource is, yet, facing difficulties due to complex influences such as population problems, disease burden, epidemics, community's healthcare needs, scientific, technological, and financial issues, as well as globalization

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