

Bon Secours Health Care

Health care has used flexible work arrangements for years as managers try to provide round the clock care for patients. Recently it has become even more difficult as shortages in the health care workforce have required creativity to attract and keep people.

Bon Secours Richmond Health Systems uses a variety of flexible scheduling innovations for hard-to-fill evening and weekend shifts at its hospitals. Employees can choose from compressed work weeks (four 10 hour shifts or three 12 hour shifts), weekends only with extra pay, four- or eight-hour shifts, and seven days on followed by seven days off.

Women make up 85% of the workforce, and flexible schedules work well for them. Depending on life stage, employees may make different choices. A new employee just out of college may prefer working full time with a rotating schedule, but workers with children may need a fixed schedule that doesn't rotate. Some employees with several children may want to work part time. Part time is made attractive by providing full benefits and employer-assisted housing for those scheduled for as little as 16 hours per week.

Bon Secours' flexible work arrangements are credited with lowering first year employee turnover

rates from 50% to 10% in four years. The national benchmark average is 28%. Employee engagement scores have risen from 3.6 to 4.55 on a 5-point scale, and employees can read success stories in the employee newsletter that may provide solutions to any dilemmas they may have with regard to scheduling. In small lunches with the CEO, employees have confirmed that they value having more control over their time.

Eighty-five percent of Bon Secours employees use a flexible schedule either formally or informally. Forty-five percent use a compressed work week and 10% job share. Twenty-five percent work a temporary or part-time work schedule, and 3% do telework.⁶⁷

QUESTIONS

1. How well could this level of flexible scheduling work in another industry? For example, consider scheduling in a steel mill.
2. Identify other potential flexible work ideas that Bon Secours might use.
3. Flexible scheduling is common in health care. What would be the likely result without flexible scheduling?