

Insights from PH Nurse Leaders Webinar

March 18th, 2026

Session 6 Insights from Public Health Nurse Leaders: Promoting PHN Satisfaction and Retention

Welcome & Introductions

- Speakers: Janelle Lambert, MN; Denise Lozares, San Diego CA; Kyndra Jackson, VA

1. How would you describe the current state of the public health nursing workforce in your organization or jurisdiction?

- **San Diego:**
 - Strong emphasis on frontline nurse input through shared governance councils
 - Culture of innovation (e.g., maternal health initiatives like blood pressure education and distribution)
- **Virginia (VA):**
 - Focus on leadership development and professional growth amid recruitment challenges
 - Addressing aging workforce and retirement transitions
 - Partnerships with academic and community organizations
- **Minnesota:**
 - Workforce in a transition phase
 - Reassessing PHN role and value within the public health system
 - Competitive landscape driving creative recruitment and retention strategies

2. Please share one strategy you have implemented in your organization that has contributed to PHN self-confidence and job satisfaction.

- **Minnesota:**
 - PHN residency programs in partnership with colleges
 - Cohort model fosters confidence and peer connection
- **Virginia (VA):**
 - Piloting residency program (with University of Wisconsin–Madison)
 - Strong mentorship and supervisor feedback
 - Recognition initiatives (e.g., quarterly B.E.A.C.O.N. awards)
- **San Diego:**
 - Evidence-based practice integration through residency programs
 - Increased retention (50% → 77%) and internal promotions (15%)
 - Nurse Leadership Academy focused on finance, strategy, and leadership

3. In your experience, what aspects of organizational culture most strongly influence PHN retention?

- **Minnesota:**

- Support for PHN certification
- **San Diego:**
 - Recognition practices (“wows”/kudos in meetings)
 - Trauma-informed leadership training
 - Culture shift emphasizing compassion and well-being
 - Key messages: *“Rest is not a reward”* and *“Connection mitigates trauma”*
- **Virginia (VA):**
 - Importance of visible and engaged leadership
 - Leaders understanding frontline staff experiences to inform decisions
 - Relationship-building across a decentralized system

4. How do you support an inclusive workplace culture within your workforce?

- Cross-cutting approaches:
 - Promoting psychological safety
 - Creating space for staff voice and engagement
 - Ensuring leadership visibility and responsiveness

5. What is one practical action PHN leaders with us today could take in the next 90 days to improve job satisfaction and retention?

- **Minnesota:**
 - Strengthen onboarding, orientation, and support systems for new nurses
- **Virginia (VA):**
 - Assess internal practices (QI/QA) to identify gaps
 - Foster a culture of safety and non-punitive accountability
- **San Diego:**
 - Implement “just culture” principles
 - Establish employee advisory committees
 - Conduct stay interviews to understand retention drivers

6. What message would you most like frontline PHN nurses to hear right now?

- **San Diego:**
 - Highlight impact, compassion, and innovation in public health work
- **Virginia (VA):**
 - Express appreciation and encourage focusing on small, achievable wins
- **Minnesota:**
 - Encourage reflection on training and practice
 - Support nurses in finding purpose and leadership opportunities, especially in rural settings

7. What gives you the greatest optimism about the future of public health nursing?

- Strong sense of purpose and passion among PHNs
- Continued investment in leadership development and innovation
- Increasing focus on workforce support, connection, and sustainability