AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
Please read the entire application before completing.

TITLE OF PROJECT: **Retention of Heath Care Employees: A qualitative case study research emphasizing what long term employees consider as factors important to them remaining employed with their current organization.**

TITLE ON CONSENT FORM (if different from above):

The title on the consent form is not different

~~:~~ **FUNDING SOURCE:** Any necessary funding will be

provided by the Principal Investigator. ~~**NA**~~

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Name: Andrew Blake Hendrickson

I have completed Basic Human Subjects: Social and Behavioral CITI Ethics Training

Status:
Faculty_x__

Staff____

Graduate Student___

Undergraduate Student__

Department:

Phone:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

PROJECT CLASSIFICATION (check one please)

Class Research Project Involving Human Subjects (required by course instructor for grade in a course)

Course Project Information: Academic Department and Course Number

*Note for Class Project: Results from project cannot be published or presented outside of the classroom in any professional venue. Project may not be completed for any reason other than for a learning experience resulting in a grade for a course. No more than 25 subjects outside of the course enrollment can be used for class projects.

Research Involving Human Subjects x

Researching Involving Historical Data about Human Subjects

FACULTY SUPERVISOR

I have completed Basic Human Subjects: Social and Behavioral CITI Ethics Training

Name: Department: Dr. Timothy Leszczak Health and Human Performance

Mailing Address: Dr. Tim Leszczak, Health and Human Performance, Austin Peay State University Box 4515, 601 College Street, Clarksville, TN 37044

Email: Phone: Leszczakt@apsu.edu Phone: 931-221-6111

All of the questions below should be answered using lay language. The IRB is comprised of individuals from diverse scientific and nonscientific backgrounds. You should avoid all jargon and assume that IRB members have no prior knowledge on the research topic, theoretical or methodological approaches, or measurement techniques or instruments. The best way to avoid unnecessary delays is to provide the IRB with as much information about your study as possible. **You will need to attach a copy of all demographic forms, survey instruments, and other data collection systems.** If you are unable to attach the above please contact irb@apsu.edu for advice. It is important to remember that informed consent is a process, not a document. Informed consent begins with recruitment and ends only after a study is completed.

1. **Describe the purpose of this study.** Be sure to clearly indicate the research question or hypothesis being studied.

   The purpose of the study is to develop a better understanding of the relationship between variables in the workplace such as pay, benefits, camaraderie, and other factors and the impact they have on employee retention.

   The primary research questions to be explored are:

   Q1. To what degree is pay a key factor in retaining employees?

   Q2. What other factors do employees express as most important in their satisfaction with their current employer?

   Q3. What are the most significant benefits if lost, might lead an employee to look for work with another employer?

   Hypothesis: Healthcare employees tend to stay with the same employer if they believe their wages are fair and competitive compared to other alternatives.~~The purpose of the study is to develop a better understanding of the relationship between variables in the workplace such as pay, benefits, camaraderie, and other factors and the impact they have on employee retention.~~

   ~~The primary research questions to be explored are:~~
   ~~Q1. To What degree is pay a key factor in retaining employees?~~
   ~~Q2. What other factors do employees express as most important in their satisfaction with their current employer?~~

~~Q4, What are the most significant benefits if lost, might lead an employee to look elsewhere for work?~~

~~Research to generate a hypothesis regarding patterns found before examining the patterns collected can lead to bias in the evaluative lens of study, and thus is not generally used in qualitative studies.~~

2. **Briefly describe the research that has already been conducted in this area.** The IRB needs to understand how this study adds to the knowledge on this topic to be able to judge the risks and benefits to participants.

Previous research in this area has identified nursing to be one of, if not the largest discipline that needs to be focused on related to retention strategies. Some other research, identifies a lack in research in the area of an impending shortage of nurse managers and directors in addition to regular nursing staff (Whitney-Dumais & Hyrkas, 2019). According to Duru and Hammoud (2022), nurse retention continues to be a major difficulty for all healthcare organizations worldwide. The authors note that many nurses have either left or are planning to leave not only their organizations but their profession. According to Edmonson, Anest, and Gogek (2022), a recent AMN study shows that nearly 1 million Registered Nurses have left or are considering leaving the nursing profession due to stress, burnout, and other challenges.

Duru and Hammoud (2022) also used a qualitative study but only interviewed 6 senior leaders in one hospital US hospital and then reviewed documents and websites to gain an understanding of staff retention strategies. They mention effective communication, respect, and competitive financial benefits as the top three factors influencing retention. This small sample size is a limitation and creates a lacunae in the research.

This contrasts with our study as we will conduct interviews with a variety of staff in various disciplines at a variety of healthcare organizations to gain a better overall understanding of factors influencing retention. Other articles discuss staff burnout, emotional and psychological safety, and lack of support as key reasons for healthcare staff turnover (Rangachari and Woods, 2020).

Another component to our study that will add to the knowledge on this topic is that while nursing is important and makes up a large portion of the healthcare workforce, we found limited studies on the retention of other disciplines in healthcare. Many of these studies we've found were from the UK, Iran, Malaysia, etc but limited US studies. We believe this is where our study will help add to the current body of knowledge. Our study will also include the collection of data from nursing as well as other disciplines to gain a better understanding of retention and will not just be specific to nursing.

Other articles have discussed excellent leadership as a factor for retention as well as poor leadership as a factor for turnover. Whitney-Dumais (2019) completed another qualitative study with a small sample size from one hospital with interviewing 5 nurse manager and 6 directors. The major factors identified for retention from this small study included maintaining work-life balance, growth toward leadership, and managing people. The recurrent theme that we have identified is that while there is a good bit of information collected from leadership regarding

nursing through supervisors, directors, and executives, this leaves out the collection of information and data from many boots on the ground/hands on employees.

Our study would be able to contribute to the knowledge in this area as well as collect information from a more diverse group of healthcare workers rather than specifically nurses or senior leaders, which is what much of the research appears to gravitate towards.

Duru, D. C., & Hammoud, M. S. (2022). Identifying effective retention strategies for front-line nurses. *Nursing Management - UK*, *29*(1), 17–24. Nursing & Allied Health Collection: Comprehensive.

Edmonson, C., Anest, P., & Gogek, J. (2022). A Profession Disrupted: Looking Back to Go Forward.NurseLeader:*June2022*,*20*(3),281–285. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2022.02.010

Rangachari, P., & L. Woods, J. (2020). Preserving Organizational Resilience, Patient Safety, and Staff Retention during COVID-19 Requires a Holistic Consideration of the Psychological Safety of Healthcare Workers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(12). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124267

Whitney-Dumais, T. Hyrkas, K. (2019). Missing pieces of the retention puzzle. *Nursing Management*, *50*(5), 32–37. Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition.

~~Most studies on retention mention effective communication, respect, and competitive financial benefits as the top three factors influencing retention. The amount of research on this topic is somewhat limited and almost every study calls for more research.~~

~~Previous research in this area has identified nursing to be one of, if not the largest disciplines that need to be focused on related to retention strategies.~~

~~This contrasts with our study as we will conduct interviews with a variety of staff in various disciplines at a variety of healthcare organizations to gain a better overall understanding of factors influencing retention, both for nursing and other positions in the healthcare industry.~~

3. **Describe the population from which your research sample will be drawn.** Be sure to indicate if subjects are from a vulnerable population such as infants, children, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, prisoners, employees, students, economically or educationally challenged persons, etc. What additional safeguards will be included to protect the rights and welfare of `these participants?

The participants will include employees that have been working at their current organization in healthcare for 4 years or longer. No vulnerable population will be included in the research sample.

The participants will be employees of healthcare organizations (hospitals, stand alone emergency rooms, ambulatory surgery centers, etc.) and their entities, or physician practice offices in the state of Tennessee. Physician Practices may be of any size to participate but will have had to be in business for a minimum of 4 years.

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No organization will have more than 5 employees represented and will be admitted on a "first come" basis. This will assist in not having the results weighted too heavily by one or a few organizations.

~~The participants will include employees that have been working at their current organization in healthcare for 4 years or longer. No vulnerable population will be included in the research sample.~~

4. **Explain the inclusion and exclusion criteria that will be used (e.g., age, race, gender, language, academic abilities, academic major, pre-existing conditions, etc.).**

   Participants must be over the age of 18, working in healthcare currently for the same employer for 4 years of longer. There are no minimum academic requirements.

5. **Indicate how many potential participants will be approached.** The APSU IRB needs to know the maximum number that might be asked to participate, NOT the minimum number needed to adequately ask the research question. It is recommended that you choose a number higher than you expect to need because once the number is approved you will need to apply to the IRB for permission to recruit additional participants. Do not choose an unnecessarily large number however, because sample size may affect the risk/benefit ratio decision that the IRB must make. Please break down your maximum numbers by category (e.g., child, adult, male, female, depressed, healthy, etc.) so that the board can evaluate the risks for different types of participants.

   The maximum number of participants will include 140 adults, 35 of whom would be male and 105 females. The gender is weighted toward females due to the working population in healthcare organizations.

   ~~The maximum number of participants will include 70 adults, 20 of whom are male and 50 females.~~

6. **Describe how participants will be identified, approached, and recruited, and how informed consent will be obtained.** Who will make the first contact, and when and where will it occur? All materials used to recruit participants need to be submitted for review (e.g., media advertisements, brochures, email, poster/signs or sign-up sheets, etc.). If verbal announcements will be made for recruitment purposes, please provide a script of how the study will be described or a list of the points that will be made.

   We will reach out to multiple Human Resources Departments at hospitals, medical practices or other entities as described in question number 3 above. In the case of smaller healthcare organizations, senior management or leadership will be asked to help identify volunteers for this study and will make the first contact. They will be asked to help identify employees that meet the criteria of our study. When the HR departments have identified employees that meet our criteria, those employees will be given a letter of invitation to participate in our study. If they are interested they will call or email either Dr. Hendrickson or Ryan Beckett to answer a series of questions. Materials used to recruit and scripts are attached as separate documents.

   Verbal announcements will also be made during staff meetings, leadership meetings, etc. Also, flyers will be hung up so that participants can choose to reach out on their own should they wish

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to do so. ~~Human resources departments, or in the case of smaller healthcare organizations, senior management or leadership will be asked to help identify volunteers for this study and will make the first contact. Materials used to recruit and scripts are attached as separate documents.~~

7. **Specifically identify all individuals who will describe the study to and obtain informed consent from potential participants.** Do these individual(s) have any other relationship with potential participants (e.g., instructor, mentor, employer, caregiver, etc.) that might create the perception or actual existence of coercion or undue influence? What procedures will you put in place to reduce or eliminate potential/perceived coercive situations?

The principal investigator will be Andrew Blake Hendrickson, along with Ryan Beckett, will be obtaining informed consent from the potential participants. While no complete confidentiality can be guaranteed, by going through the process of invitation, everyone who answers the invitation will be given instructions on how to ensure as complete confidentiality, as possible. If for any reason, one of the interviewers does know one of the volunteers, that person will be interviewed by the other researcher.

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~~The principal investigator will be Andrew Blake Hendrickson, along with Ryan Beckett, will be obtaining informed consent from the potential participants. While no complete anonymity can be guaranteed, by going through the process of invitation, everyone who answers the invitation will be given a code that will be used going forward to capture their answers and any pertinent demographic information. If for any reason, one of the interviewers does know one of the volunteers, that person will be interviewed by the other researcher~~

8. **Describe your research procedures.** We need to know all of the procedures that will occur, but in particular we need a description of what the participants will experience. For example, a description of the instructions that will be given to them, activities in which they will engage, the length and timing of involvement, and the circumstances under which they will provide data (i.e., group assessments, one-on-one interview, videotaping, audio taping, phone calls, spending time in an uncomfortable position, etc.).

The research method will be a qualitative exploratory single case study. It will be used to investigate the factors the participants consider vital in their ongoing decision to remain with their current place of employment for over four years.

The participants' experience include: a notification by flyer, discussion with a supervisor, human resource representative, or another member of the senior leadership team mentioning the study to potential participants. It also could be announced in a staff meeting (script provided).

If interested, they will be given a copy of the letter of invitation, and if they choose to move forward will be given an informed consent form.

At this point, the participants will be allowed the opportunity to contact the researcher.

The participants will experience one on one interviews, along with the descriptions from the invitation to participate. Demographic and open-ended questions will be asked to determine

factors that have been important to everyone to remain with their current employer for over four years. The interviews are expected to last approximately 30 minutes. The participant does have the opportunity to contact the researcher, if other items they consider important are recollected.

~~The research method will be a qualitative exploratory single case study. It will be used to investigate the factors the participants consider vital in their ongoing decision to remain with their current place of employment for over four years.~~

~~The participants experience include: a notification by flyer, discussion with a supervisor, human resource representative, or another member of the senior leadership team mentioning the study to potential participants. It also could be announced in a staff meeting (script provided).~~

~~If interested, they will be given a copy of the letter of invitation, and if they choose to move forward will be given an informed consent form.~~

~~At this point, the participants will be allowed the opportunity to contact the researcher and receive their anonymous code for the study.~~

~~The participants will experience one on one interviews, along with the descriptions from the invitation to participate. Demographic and open-ended questions will be asked to determine factors that have been important to everyone to remain with their current employer for over four years. The interviews are expected to last one hour or less and will allow the participant the opportunity to contact the researcher, if other items they consider important are recollected.~~

9. **If this study involves deception, describe it and justify its use.** Deception will require that subjects be debriefed following data collection. The purposes of the debriefing are to explain the true purpose of the study, reduce any negative consequences participants may experience from participation, and to provide a clear, easy opportunity for withdrawal of consent. You must include a copy of the debriefing statement in your application.

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This study does not involve any form of deception thus there is no need to describe it or justify its use. Deception also does not need to be addressed in the debrief since this study will not be using any form of deception.

~~N/A~~

10. **Describe any form of compensation that participants will receive (e.g., money, extra credit, toys, food, etc.).** If compensation will be provided, please describe the amount, the type, and when the participants will receive it. If withdrawal from the study will change the amount or type of compensation, please describe how (i.e., prorated, eliminated, etc.). Note that academic extra credit can only be awarded at the discretion of the instructor, not the Principal Investigator.

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Participants will not receive any compensation for participating in the study. Thus, there will be no penalty or reduction in compensation if they withdraw consent since they will not be receiving any compensation regardless of whether they participate or not.

Debriefing statement:

Please understand that there is no compensation for participating in this study. You are free to withdraw consent at any time. Should you complete the interview or decide to withdraw consent early, it has no effect on any form of compensation. Please confirm you understand this information.

~~N/A~~

11. **If this research might entail psychological, legal, physical, or social harm or discomfort to the subjects, explain this risk and justify it.** What steps have been taken to minimize these risks? What provisions have been made to ensure that appropriate facilities and professional attention necessary for the health and safety of the subjects are available and will be utilized? How will the participants be informed of these procedures? If an information sheet describing these resources will be provided to participants, please submit it as an attachment to this application. If university or community professionals agree to provide their services, please submit a letter of cooperation from the individuals/agencies that describes the agreement.

Any risk that entails psychological, legal, physical, or social harm is minimal due to the nature of the confidential interview. The questions that they will be asked only pertain to the specific factors that have contributed to the participants remaining employed at their current organization for 4 years or longer.

There could be a question that brings up some type of negative emotion with the participant. If that occurs, the interviewer will ask the participant if they wish to end the study.

~~N/A~~

12. **Describe how the potential benefits of this activity to the participants and humankind outweigh any possible risks.** Describe the potential benefits of this study and why any benefits will be greater than any possible risks.

The country as a whole and specifically the healthcare field is experiencing an overwhelming shortage of staff. This is affecting how patients are treated and how many patients can be treated.

This study may help healthcare leaders gain some insight and understanding into employee retention techniques to help benefit their organizations which in turn may help them become better employers and will ultimately benefit the patients served. Most current studies express the need for further investigation.

Due to the confidentiality of this study, the participants of this study face minimal risk. To ensure that, ethical assurances will be given to each participant, educate them as to the voluntary nature of the study and provide them with Informed Consent. Participants could potentially know another participant if they were in the same organization as an example. Participants will be given information as to the possibility of violating confidentiality and any potential harm. Any such behavior could result in the removal of participants from the study.

~~The country as a whole and specifically the healthcare field is experiencing an overwhelming shortage of staff. This is affecting how patients are treated and how many patients can be treated. This study may help healthcare leaders gain some insight and understanding into employee retention techniques to help benefit their organizations which in turn may help them~~

~~become better employers and will ultimately benefit the patients served. Most current studies express the need for further investigation.~~
~~Due to the anonymity to the participants of this study, the risks are minimal. To ensure that, ethical assurances will be given to each participant, educate them as to the voluntary nature of the study and provide them with an Informed Consent. Participants could potentially know another participant, if they were in the same organization as an example. Participants will be given information as to the possibility of violating confidentiality and any potential harm. Any such behavior would result in the removal of participant from the study.~~

13. **Describe how the confidentiality of data about participants will be protected.** What steps and procedures will be used? How (e.g., hard copy, electronic, etc.) and where (e.g., locked file cabinet in PIs campus office, etc.) will data be stored? If data will be destroyed, please indicate when and how.

Data will be kept on an electronic spreadsheet using google sheets and only Dr. Hendrickson and Ryan will have access to the data. Once the study has been accepted for publication, the google sheet and all data will be destroyed.

~~Data will be kept on an electronic spreadsheet using google sheets and only Dr. Hendrickson and Ryan will have access to the data. Anonymous codes will be assigned to each participant to keep their identities secure. Once the study has been accepted for publication, the google sheet and all data will be deleted.~~

14. **If data will be anonymous, explain how this anonymity will be achieved.** Note that anonymity requires that the data cannot be connected to the participant by anyone involved in the research, even the PI, at any time. If data will be anonymous, explain how and where the consent document will be stored.

Since the primary method of research will be interviews, the PI and his associate will have knowledge of the data. It will not be shared with any other participant and the records will be electronically stored by the PI until the study and publication is complete. Data will not remain anonymous for the PIs but will remain confidential. The consent documentation will be stored on a shared drive that only Dr. Hendrickson and Ryan Beckett will have access to.

15. **Explain how any data collected relate to illegal activities.** This includes any contact with prisoners or law enforcement officers, even if no information about illegal activities will be collected.

No data collected will relate to any illegal activities. There will not be any contact with prisoners or law enforcement officers. This study will only apply to healthcare workers and will not be asking them about illegal activities only questions pertaining to retention.

16. **Please indicate by marking Yes or No whether the attached informed consent document includes each of the following elements <u>as required</u> by the Code of Federal Regulations: Title 45, Part 46.116.**

X Yes or No A statement that the study involves research.

X Yes or No An explanation of the duration of the subject's participation.

X Yes or No A description of the procedures to be used.

X Yes or No A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject.

X Yes or No A description of any benefits to the subject or others which can be reasonably expected from the research. *(Note: Compensation is not a benefit.)*

X Yes or No A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained.

X Yes or No An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research- related injury to the subject. *(Note: Should include APSU IRB, PI, and if applicable, the student's faculty sponsor)*

x Yes or No A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled. *(Note: This statement should be written in language at an appropriate level for the subjects in your study.)*

The following may or may not apply to your study. Please read carefully and indicate Yes or No.

Yes or No X A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject.

Yes or No X For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation or medical treatments are available if injury occurs and what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained.

Yes or No X A statement that the particular treatment or procedure may involve risks to the subject which are currently unforeseeable.

X Yes or No Anticipated circumstances under which the subject's participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to the subject's consent.

Yes or No X Any additional costs to the subject that may result from participation in the research. *(Note: This is not limited to monetary costs.)*

Yes or No X The consequences of a subject's decision to withdraw from the research and procedures for orderly termination of participation by the subject.

~~X~~ **Yes or No** X A statement that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to the subject's willingness to continue participation will be provided to the subject.

17. State the approximate number of subjects projected to participate in the study.

The number of subjects projected to participate in the study is approximately 70 adults.

~~18.~~ **If your study includes children, please provide the committee with information about how you will obtain the child's assent to participate.** Children older than 12 are expected to be

provided the opportunity to sign to indicate their assent to participate. Children 7-12 should be provided with a written document, which may or may not also be read. Depending on the research to be conducted, children 6 years and younger may be read an assent script (please submit as an attachment if applicable). In addition to your procedures to obtain assent, please indicate what dissent behaviors will lead you to decide a child is not providing or has withdrawn his/her assent to participate. Note: Child assent can be solicited only after parental consent has been obtained.

18.

~~19.~~

This study will not involve any children.

~~N/A~~

~~20.~~19. If you are requesting a waiver of the documentation of informed consent, please explain how you would meet the requirements of 45 CFR 46.117.

We are not requesting a waiver of the documentation of informed consent and have attached an informed consent document for your review that each participant will either sign or be read aloud so that we can maintain documentation of informed consent.

~~N/A~~

I have read the Austin Peay State University Policies and Procedure on Human Research (00:002) and Research Misconduct (99:013) and agree to abide by them. I also agree to report to the Austin Peay Institutional Review Board any unexpected events related to this study. I also agree to obtain approval before implementing any changes in this study.

PI Signature Date

Faculty Supervisor's Signature Date

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