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The Office of Public Health Support presents the final IHS CEO Brief in this email series designed to help you address the challenge of retaining our professional and clinical staff.

Thank you for your support and interest in Insights, IHS CEO Brief, Focus on Retention. This 2008 series of Best Practice Retention Case Study emails will be printed as an insert for inclusion in the Indian Health CEO Retention Toolkit, the gold notebook mailed to you last year. The Indian Health CEO Retention Toolkit presents valuable information that will help you address the challenges of retaining professional and clinical staff. To facilitate the delivery of your 2008 Best Practice Retention Case Studies Insert, please email any change to your mailing address to us at [IHS CEO Brief](#). The 2008 Best Practice Retention Case Study Insert will be mailed in early November.

In this final issue, a CEO helps a promising nurse director take the steps toward a CEO position, thus retaining her in the IHS and within her service area. This case highlights the best practices of career development and communication.

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CASE STUDY

Chief Executive Officer

Location: Mid-Sized Rural Service Unit

Background: A nursing director had been with her service unit for 13 years. During that time, she had earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree and had become a Commissioned Corps officer. With her children grown, she was now ready to further her personal and professional aspirations through the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP). The CEO of the service unit worked with the nursing director's supervisor to ensure that she was nominated for and accepted into the ELDP program. While in the program, the nursing director became aware of another director of nursing position at a larger hospital outside of the service area - and she indicated a desire to pursue it.

Challenge: The CEO did not have an appropriate opening for the nursing director within

the service unit, but wanted to continue to support her and keep her within IHS - and the local area - if possible.

Solution: Another service unit in the area needed a CEO. The nursing director's CEO suggested she apply for the position, but the nursing director wasn't sure about taking on that much responsibility. Fortunately, there was a deputy CEO position available as well, for which she applied and was subsequently hired. Eventually, when the CEO position at that unit was vacated, the CEO encouraged the now-deputy CEO to pursue it, which she successfully did.

Lessons Learned: Succession planning does not play favorites, but it does support committed staff members who have contributed enormously to the success of your facility, your patients and the quality care you provide. Helping individuals reach their potential is important, even if they outgrow the system or reach a higher position than the leader. It is the responsibility of a leader to make opportunities work in their employees' best interests under any circumstances.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION

A supportive leader identifies an individual's drive and commitment to improve, then finds ways to provide that person with career development opportunities, such as additional training, a new position or an assignment in which the individual is interested.

When you gain the trust of your employees, you must honor it by being realistic about their potential opportunities and introducing them to people who can help. You can achieve this by maintaining good communications with other facilities in the area about your top employees, spreading the word about a staffer who has great potential and wants a new challenge.

We recognize that you may have successful retention strategies and your own best practices and we value your input. Send your stories or comments. Add a colleague to next year's mailing list or update us with changes in your email address. And to facilitate delivery of your 2008 Best Practice Retention Case Studies Insert, please remember to email any change in your mailing address. Email us at: [IHS CEO Brief](#).



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