



*Predictors of  
Public Health Nurses' Intentions  
to Leave Their Jobs*

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# Greetings From Rutgers



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# An Adequate Public Health Workforce Essential to:

- Responding to terrorist events
- Emerging infectious diseases
- Public emergencies

## However.....

- Workforce shortages threatening HDs
- Attrition rates averaging 14%
- Shortages among nurses MOST severe

# Nurses: the Backbone of Public Health

- PHNs comprise
  - 11% of PH workforce
  - 25% of all PH professionals
- Shortage of nurses 2x greater than shortage of epidemiologists
- Nursing shortages threat to national security



## Shortage of PHNs attributed to:

- Noncompetitive salary
- Cuts in funding
- Hiring freezes and bureaucracy
- Retirements

– Gebbie (2006); Barrett & Greene (2004); ASTHO (2004)

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# These Assumptions Are Not Evidence-Based

# Little Known Regarding

- Predictors of PHNs' Job Satisfaction
- Burnout among PHNs
- Intent-to-Leave among PHNs

# Purposes of Study:

Propose and test model of:

PHN Job Satisfaction

## Purposes of Study:

- Develop and test model of PHN job satisfaction
- Determine prevalence of burnout among PHNs
- Determine impact of job dissatisfaction and burnout on intent-to-Leave

## Herzberg's Theory of Job Satisfaction (1959)

### Extrinsic Factors

- Work Environment
- Professional Status
- Salary & Benefits
- Work Schedule

### Intrinsic Factors

- Personal Accomplishment
- Opportunity for Advancement
- Independence

# Maslach's Theory of Burnout

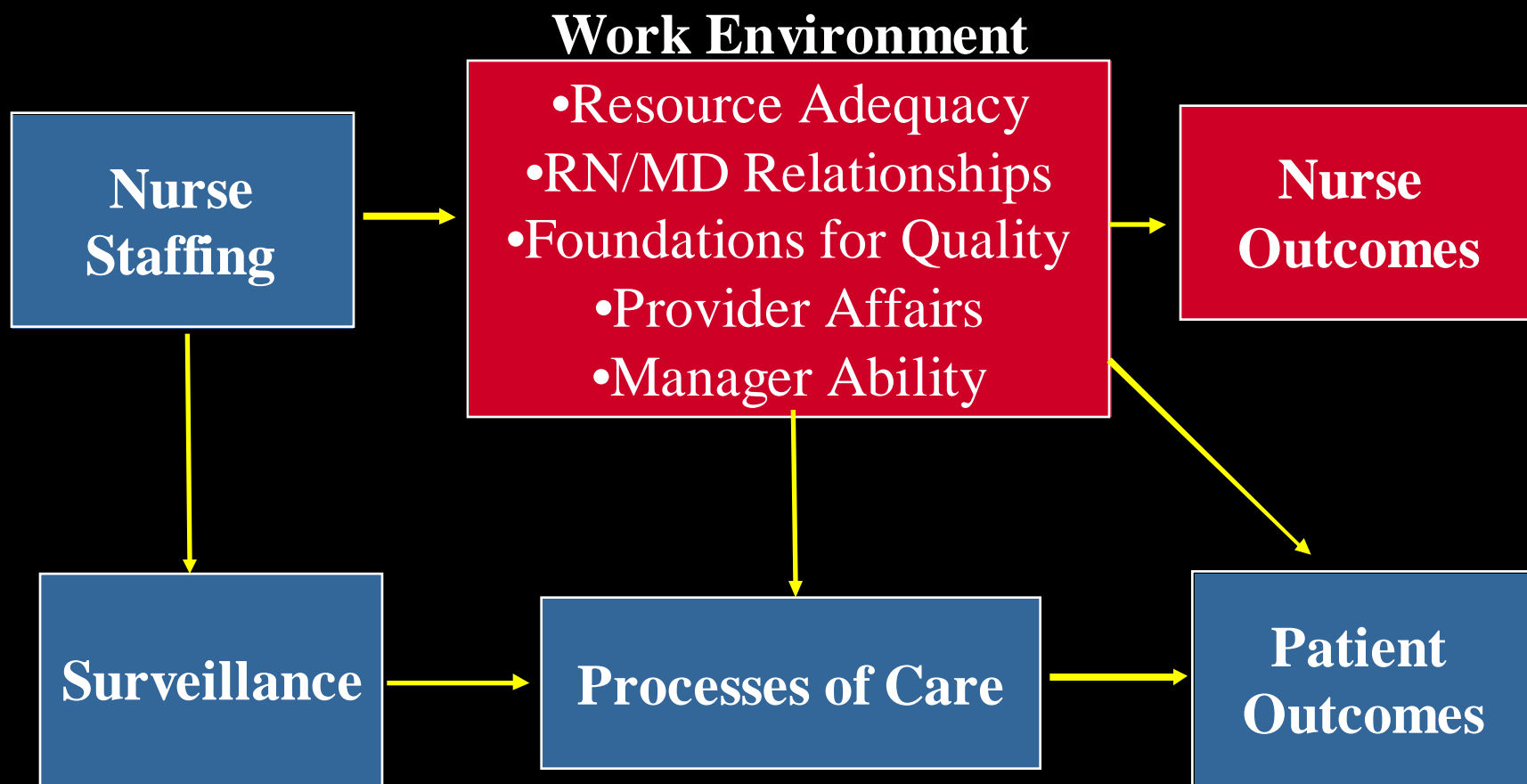
- Burnout contributes to job dissatisfaction and intent-to-leave
- Maslach, C. (1982). *Burnout: The cost of caring*. New York: Prentice Hall.

## Lake's Model of Nurse Turnover

- Job Dissatisfaction predicts intention to leave
- Intention to leave predicts resignation
- Nurses who indicated an intent-to-leave within 1 year were 2x more likely to do so
  - Lake (1998) Advances in understanding & predicting turnover. *Research in the Sociology of Health Care*, 15, 147-171.



# Aiken's Conceptual Model of the Nursing Work Environment



## Method

- Surveyed 50% of RNs licensed and living in the State (n = 44,343)
- 50.5% response rate
- Dataset of **22,406** NJ RNs or approximately 25% of all NJ RNs
- **396** RNs worked in Public Health

## Measures

- Maslach Burnout Inventory measured burnout
- Other variables measured by survey items developed by Aiken and team

## PHN Sample (n = 396)

- 96.1% Female
- 72.0% White, non-Hispanic
- 8.8% African American
- 4.4% Hispanic
  
- Mean age = 52 years old
- 26 years of nursing experience
- 9.5 years at current organization

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# Highest Nursing Education

- Diploma 21.5%
- ADN 24.1%
- BSN 36.4%
- MSN 13.4%
- Doctorate 0.5%

How did they rate their jobs??

## Public Health Nurses Rate Their Job!

- 29% rate work environment fair/poor
- 11% dissatisfied with job
- 42% very satisfied with their job
- 12% planning to leave within year
- 4% planning to retire within year

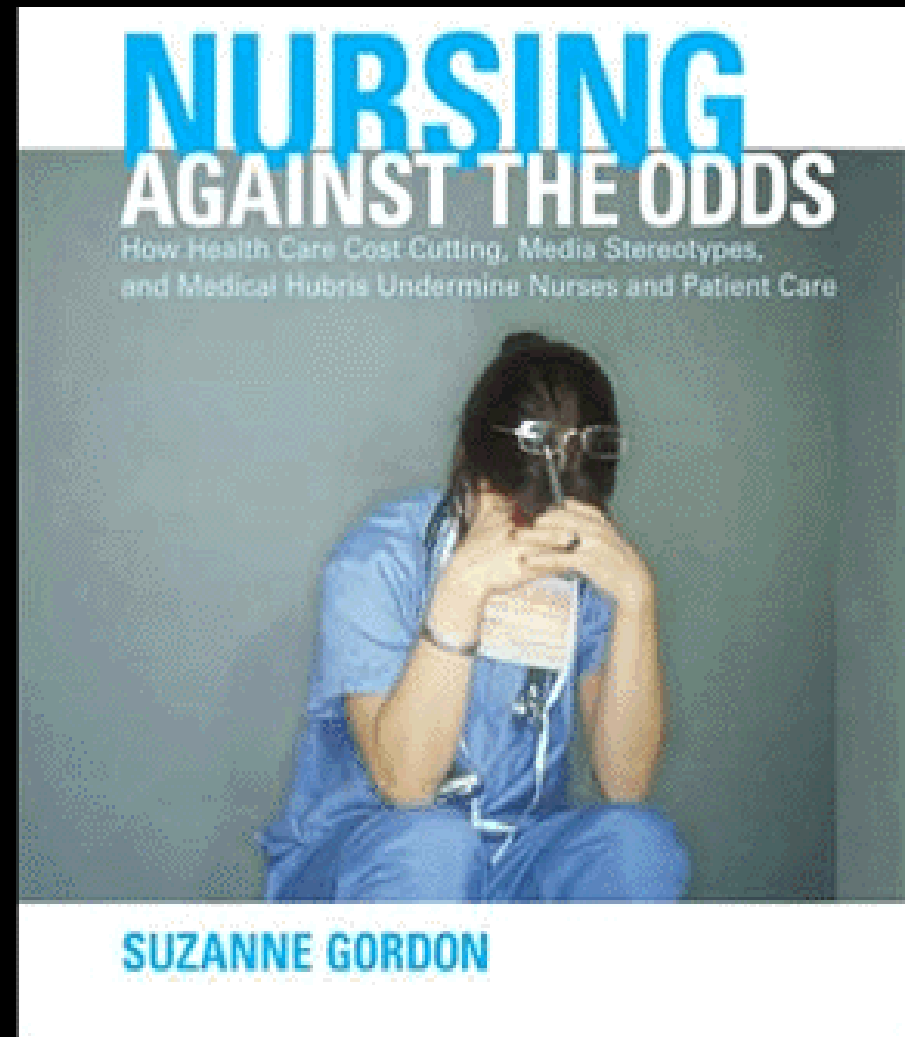
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19% suffer from job-related burn out



# What is Job-Induced Burnout?

- A serious psychological condition and occupational health problem



# Physical Impact of Burnout

- Severe Fatigue
- Severe Muscle Pain / Back Aches
- Changes in Appetite
- Changes in Weight
- Headache
- Depressed Immune System

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# Psychological Impact of Burnout

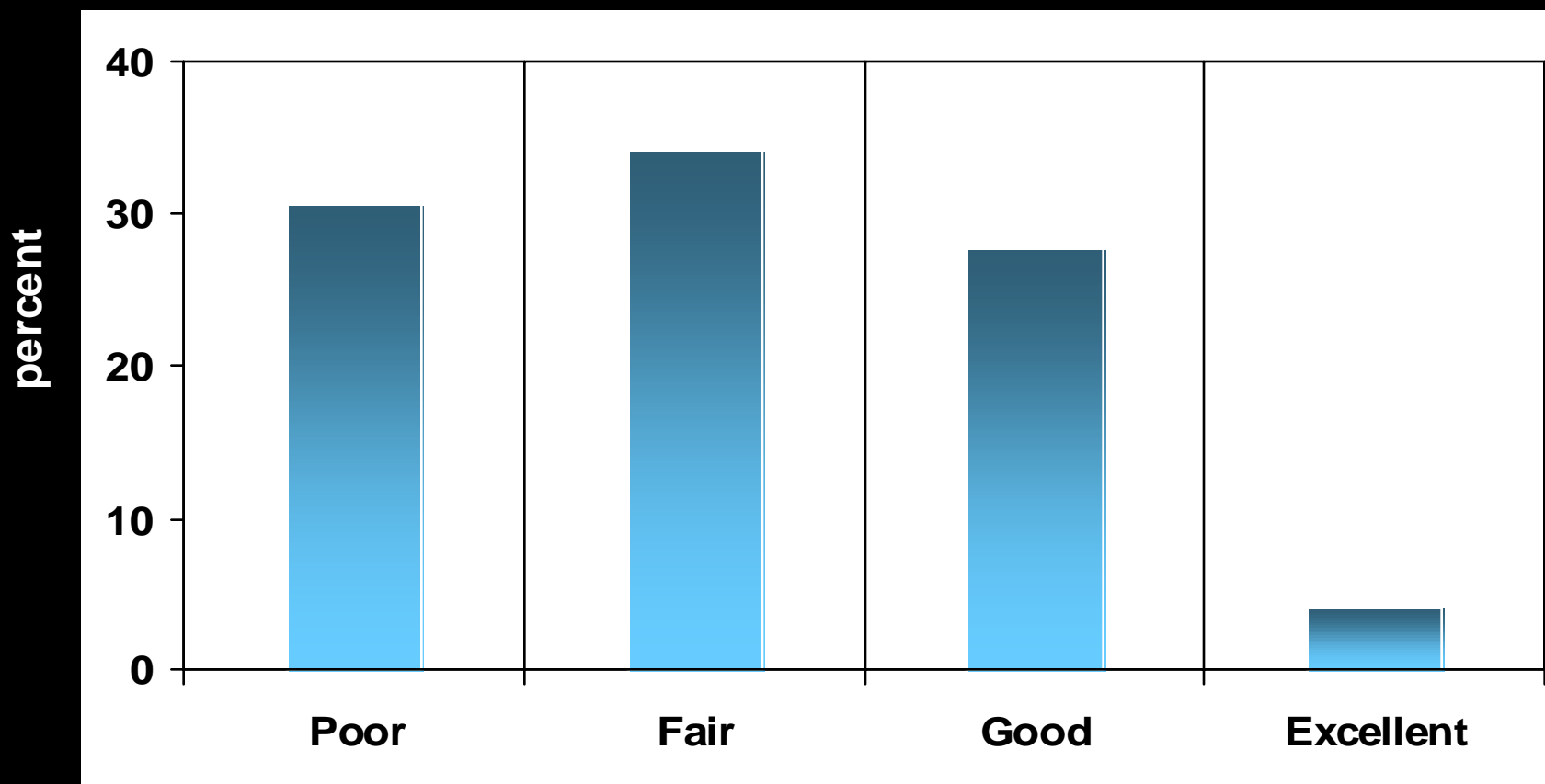
- Emotional Exhaustion – DRAINED
- Mood Swings
- Depression
- Marital Conflict / Family Conflict
- Hopelessness
- Suicidal Ideation

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# Known Contributors to Burnout

- Work demands without resources
- Lack of organizational support
- Role overload / Role conflict
- Role ambiguity

# Impact of Work Environment on PHN Burnout (n = 396)



# What About PHNs' Job Satisfaction?

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## Factors NOT Related to PHN Job Satisfaction (n = 396)

- Education
- Race
- Age
- Years of tenure in organization

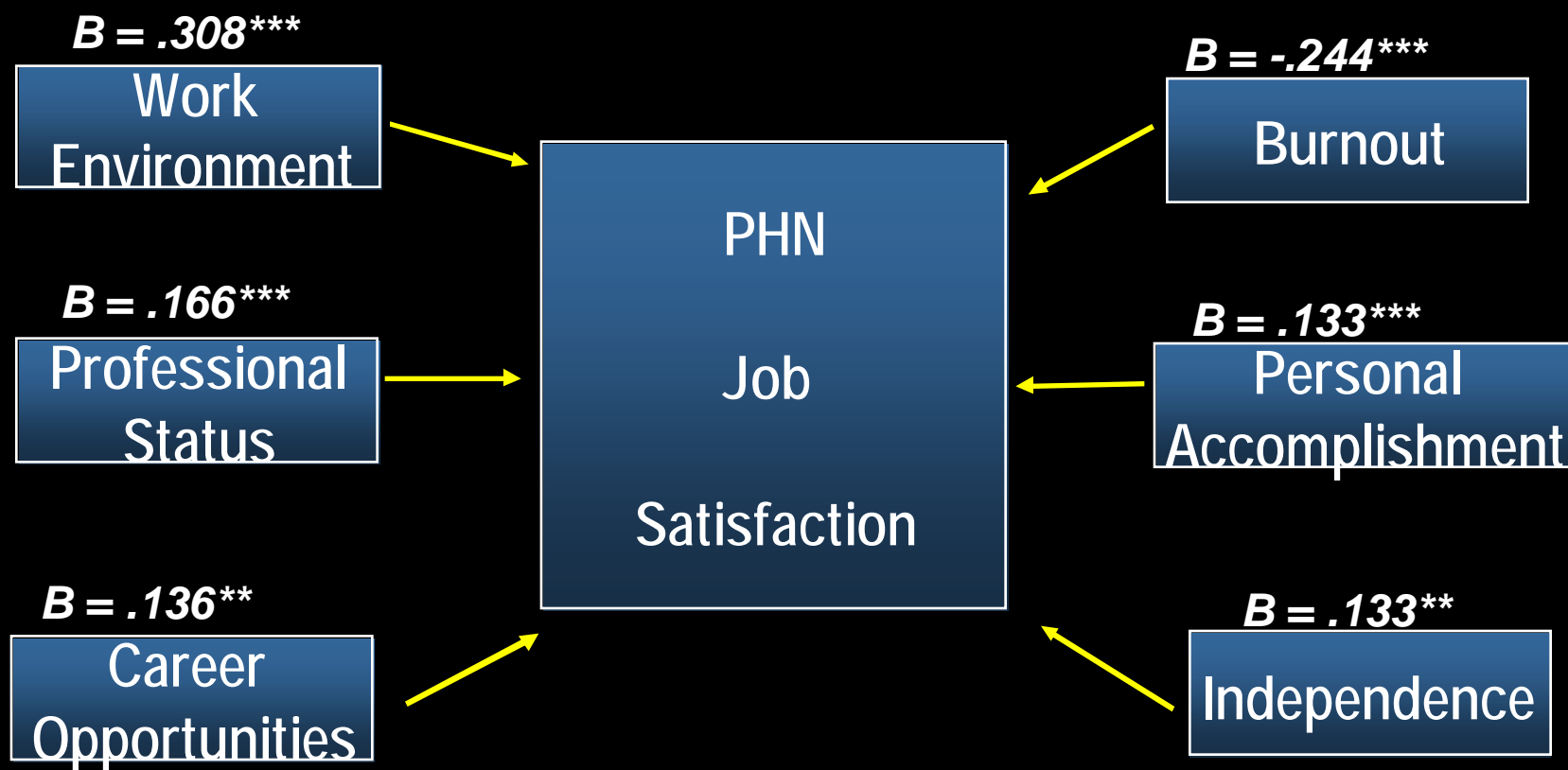
## Correlates of PHN Job Satisfaction (n = 396)

- # of Years as RN
- Work Schedule
- Advance Opportunities
- Independence
- Professional Status
- **Salary**
- Health Care Benefits
- Retirement Benefits
- Tuition Benefits
- Employment Status (Part time v. Full time)
- Personal Accomplishment
- Emotional Exhaustion (Burnout)

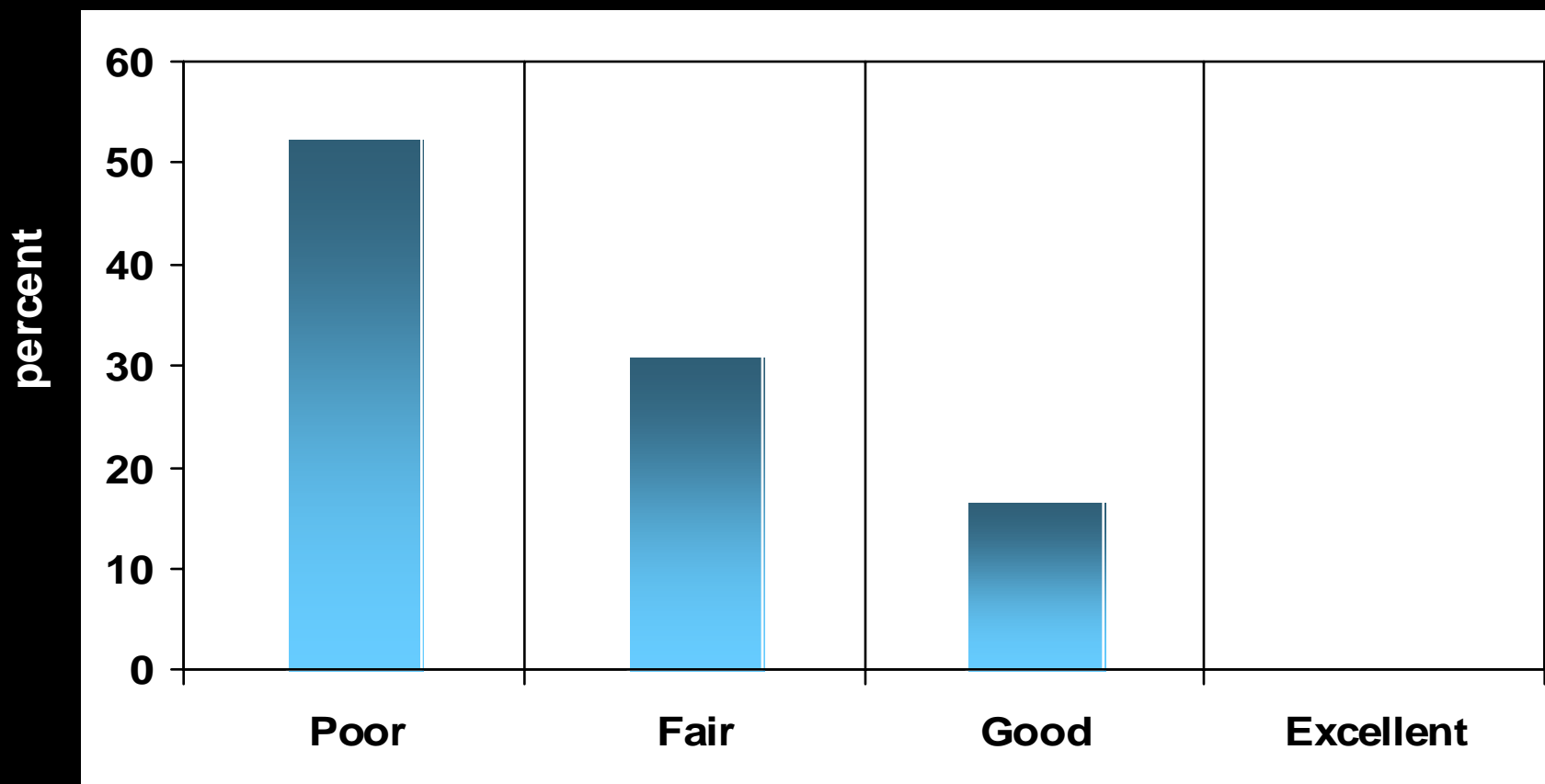


# What are the significant predictors of PHN job satisfaction?

# Model of PHN Job Satisfaction (n = 396)



# Impact of Work Environment on PHN Job Dissatisfaction (n = 396)



# So why care about PHNs job satisfaction?

PHNs dissatisfied with their jobs were almost 7 times as likely to report intentions to leave job within 1 year

O.R. (3.23, 14.5) = 6.8,  $p = .000$

## Odds on PHNs' Intent to Leave Job

	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Burnout	4.23***	2.58*
Job Dissatisfaction	6.87***	4.28**

p <.05; \*\*p <.01; \*\*\*p<.000

## Implications of Findings:

- PHN Retention: It's more than money!
- Enhance professional work environment!!
  - Supportive manager
  - Collegial interdisciplinary working relationships
  - Input into policies and decisions
  - Focus on quality of services

## Increase PHN Job Satisfaction Thru:

- Developing career opportunities
  - Professional ladders
  - Clinical ladders
  - Encourage requisite education for management / decision-making positions



## Increase PHN Job Satisfaction Thru:

- Organizational Recognition of PHNs Professional Status
- Link PHNs accomplishments and activities to communities' health & preparedness

## Conclusion

- These findings refute assumption that PHN shortages due mainly to salary and retirements
- PHN job satisfaction and retention influenced mainly by ***work environment***

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