2022

NURSING SHORTAGE STATISTICS

An overview of staffing trends

Pe People element

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW OF NURSE SENTIMENT

12% feel happy in their current position

87% felt burnout in the past year

84% are frustrated with administrators

84% feel they are underpaid

83% feel their mental health has suffered

77% feel unsupported at work

61% feel unappreciated

58% felt unsafe at work in the past year

80% feel their unit is inadequately staffed

LIKELIHOOD TO STAY

40% of nurses practicing clinically require changes to be made to their current job in order to stay

31% want to get away from the bedside

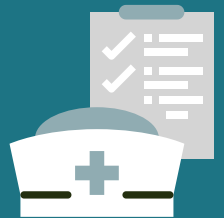**27%** are considering leaving the profession entirely

WHAT THEY WANT

Safe nurse-to-patient ratios

Real mental health resources

Adequate staff support

New nurse training & support programs

> I left nursing because of the lack of respect from managers, administration, doctors, and politicians. No one listened to our ideas to improve the environment.

THEY STILL HAVE HOPE

70% of nurses still think that nursing is a great career

64% still think that new nurses should join the profession

To say that nurses are in high demand would be an understatement. The demand for nurses has been steadily growing over the years and is expected to continue. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 276,000 additional Registered Nurses will be needed from 2020 to 2030 bringing the total RN employment from 3,080,100 in 2020 to 3,356, 800. Employment opportunities for RNs are predicted to grow about 9% from 2020 to 2030, which is about 1% faster than the occupational average.

The Nurse Practitioner field is experiencing high occupational growth rates as well. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that the overall employment for NPs will increase 45% from 2020 to 2030, adding 121,400 positions. This growth rate is 37% higher than the occupational average of 8%.

The increase in demand for nurses means it's even more critical that medical institutions across the nation make a concerted effort to engage their existing nurse population and retain recent RN graduates.

2020 - 2030

276,000
ADDITIONAL JOBS
Number of additional RN jobs that will be available

3.36M
TOTAL POSITIONS
Number of RN positions will increase from 3.08M to 3.36M

45%
NP GROWTH RATE
Growth of job opportunities for Nurse Practitioners

20% OF US POPULATION WILL BE 65+ BY 2030
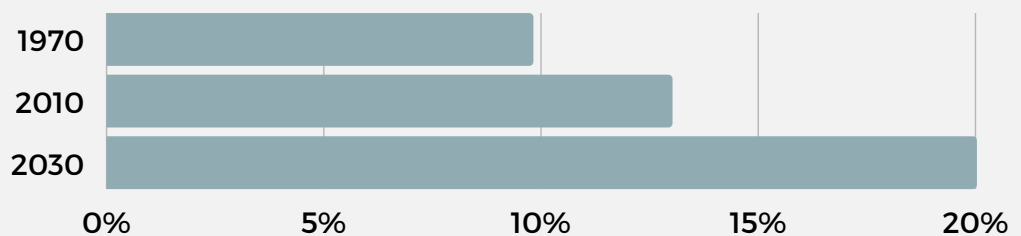
47.5% OF CURRENT RNs ARE OVER THE AGE OF 50

1 MIL TOTAL RNs EXPECTED TO RETIRE BY 2030

INCREASING HEALTHCARE NEEDS OF AGING BABY BOOMERS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF NURSING JOBS

HIGH NUMBERS OF NURSES ARE RETIRING, CONTRIBUTING TO THE ONGOING RN SHORTAGE

US POPULATION OVER THE AGE OF 65

Year	
1970	~10%
2010	~13%
2030	~20%

By 2030, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 20 percent of U.S. residents are projected to be age 65 and over, compared to just 9.8 percent of the population in 1970. There will be about 78 million Americans over the age of 65, surpassing the number of people under the age of 18 (76M). The increasing healthcare needs of the aging Baby Boomer population are contributing to the growth rate for nursing jobs. Skilled nurses are needed to provide preventative healthcare services and to treat chronic conditions, such as diabetes and obesity, that are on the rise in the aging Baby Boomer population.

Nurses are no exception to the increasing number of retirement-age individuals. A large portion of the nursing workforce is heading toward retirement. Between 2000 and 2018, the average age of employed registered nurses increased from 42.7 to 47.9 years old. Today almost half (47.5%) of all RNs are over the age of 50.

A recent study predicted that over one million RNs will retire from the workforce between now and 2030. This spike in retirements will only contribute to the ongoing shortage of nurses.

NURSING SHORTAGE OVER TIME

While management in every industry wants to avoid turnover, job vacancy issues in the healthcare industry are more than an inconvenience—they can be a life and death matter. The nursing shortage has been increasing over the last decade and skyrocketed in the past few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a 2022 report, in 2020, the RN turnover rate was 18.7%, with an average job vacancy rate of 9%. In just one year the turnover rate jumped 8.4 points, hitting 27.1% in 2021. Similarly, the vacancy rate spiked 7 points since 2020, now sitting at 17%. Currently, 81% of hospitals reported a vacancy rate higher than 10%, a huge jump from 2021 with only 35.8%. Registered Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, and Patient Care Techs had the three highest percentages of turnover.

RN TURNOVER RATE

15.9%	18.7%	27.1%
2019	2020	2021
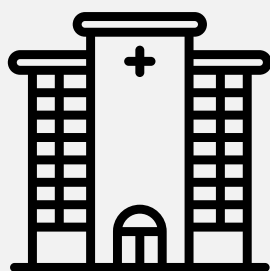
35.8% → 81.3%
2021   2022

Hospitals with an RN vacancy greater than 10%

DAYS SPENT RECRUITING

53-110 DAYS	→	62-112 DAYS
2015		2021

Average time to recruit an RN, depending on specialty

Depending on the specialty it took recruiters between 62 to 112 days to fill empty RN positions—an average increase of more than 5 days when compared to 2015. These high nurse turnover and vacancy rates affect the entire hospital and have an impact on the stress level and mental health of the nurses who are managing understaffed units.

Based on projected numbers for 2030, the following states are predicted to have the largest shortages of registered nurses.

RANK	STATE	SUPPLY (2030)	DEMAND (2030)	DIFFERENCE
1	California	343,400	387,900	-44,500
2	Texas	253,400	269,300	-15,900
3	New Jersey	90,800	102,200	-11,400
4	South Carolina	52,100	62,500	-10,400
5	Alaska	18,400	23,800	-5,400
6	Georgia	98,800	101,000	-2,200
7	South Dakota	11,700	13,600	-1,900
8	Montana	12,300	12,100	200
9	North Dakota	9,900	9,200	700
10	New Hampshire	21,300	20,200	1,100

Source: U.S. Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, "Supply and Demand Projections of the Nursing Workforce: 2014-2030," 2017: https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/data-research/nchwa-hrsa-nursing-report.pdf

COST OF NURSING TURNOVER

The longer a nursing position is vacant, the more costly it becomes in terms of overtime, and staff burnout. The average cost of turnover for a bedside RN is about $46,100, ranging from $33,900 to $58,300. The average financial loss from RN turnover per hospital is $5.2-9.0M, whereas the average hospital lost $7.1M in 2021. Each percentage increase in turnover will cost the average hospital $262,300 per year.

Healthcare organizations can reduce turnover costs by investing in programs to entice nurses to stay. Collecting feedback from current staff is a good way to determine factors that would make them stay in the long run. Also, utilizing exit interviews provides the opportunity to hear from nurses who are leaving to gain insights into their exit factors so that improvements can be made. It's ultimately more cost-effective to understand what would enhance engagement and job satisfaction within the organization to attempt to lower turnover than it is to pay the price of losing skilled, trained nurses.

EVERY

1% **INCREASE IN TURNOVER**

WILL COST THE AVERAGE HOSPITAL

$262,300
PER YEAR

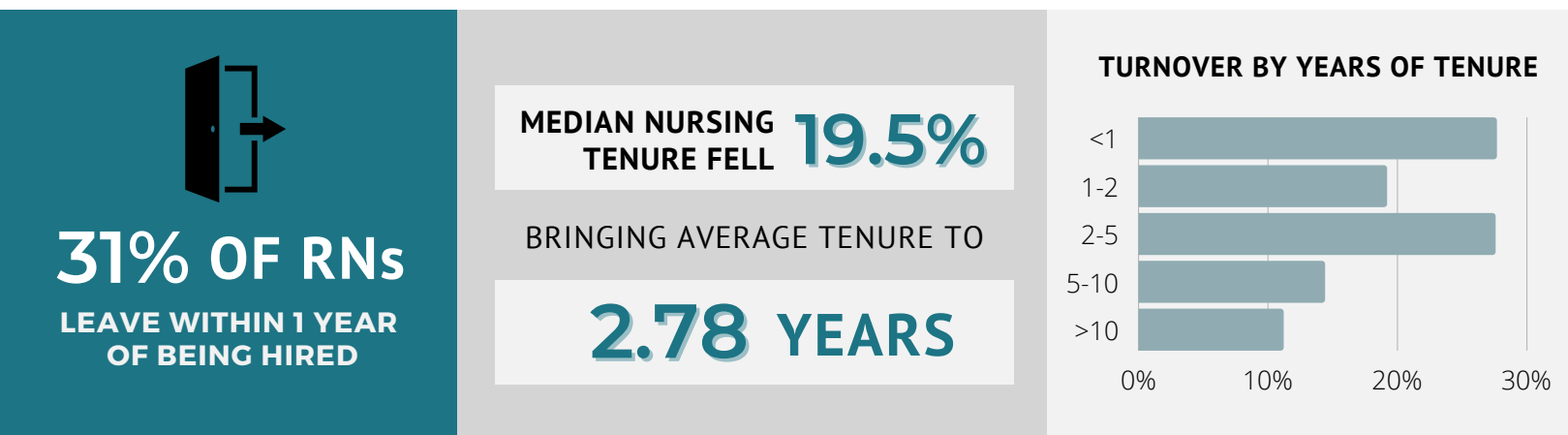**$46,100**

AVERAGE COST
of turnover for
a bedside RN

$7.1 Million

AVERAGE LOST
per hospital from RN
turnover in 2021

Research indicates that the majority of nurse turnover happens within the first year of service with an organization. About a third (31%) of newly hired RNs leave within one year. Recently, there has been a large number of new nurses entering the workforce as more experienced ones leave. According to this article, between March 2021 and March 2022, the median nursing tenure fell by 19.5% to an average of 2.78 years, and the number of shifts filled by newly hired nurses increased by 55%.

New hires report feeling pressure not to ask questions, and describe situations in which nurses with more experience often aren't willing to mentor or offer help. Training and orientation are the second biggest issues cited by nurses as to why they left a position within the first three months. These factors, along with undesirable shift hours, high levels of job-related stress and insufficient staffing, all lead to lower job satisfaction causing many new nurses to change jobs.

31% OF RNs
LEAVE WITHIN 1 YEAR OF BEING HIRED

MEDIAN NURSING TENURE FELL **19.5%**

BRINGING AVERAGE TENURE TO

2.78 YEARS

TURNOVER BY YEARS OF TENURE

Turnover begins to decrease once a nurse has been at the organization over five years (14%) and continues to fall with the lowest rates among those with over ten years of tenure (11%). Although this is the case now, it is predicted that turnover rates will begin to increase among those with the highest tenure as they begin to hit retirement age in the coming years.

High nurse turnover and vacancy rates affect access to healthcare and impact the level of care patients receive. Several studies suggest a correlation between appropriate levels of RN staffing, safe patient care, and mortality rate. According to underline research published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, a review of nearly 200,000 nursing shifts showed that staffing of RN's below target levels is directly related to increased patient mortality. The study found the risk of death increased 2% for patients exposed to shifts below target RN staffing levels. The average patient was exposed to 3 nursing shifts below target levels thereby creating a 6% higher risk of death per stay.

Patients exposed to shifts below staffing levels had

6% HIGHER

RISK OF DEATH PER STAY

4-6 FEWER DEATHS

For each additional mean year of nurse experience

EVERY PATIENT ABOVE THE

1:4 NURSE-TO-PATIENT RATIO

INCREASED LIKELIHOOD OF PATIENT DEATH BY 7%

Further, it has been found that increased nurse-to-patient ratios can create unsafe outcomes and lead to higher mortality rates. Another study notes that for every additional patient above the recommended 1:4 nurse-to-patient ratio, it increased the likelihood patient death within 30 days by 7%.

The high number of RNs expected to retire in the upcoming years creates an influx of experienced nurses leaving the field and thus leads to imbalanced staffing mixes. Research found that years of nurse experience is inversely related to patient mortality. For each additional mean year of nurse experience on the clinical unit, there were 4–6 fewer deaths for every 1000 patients.

NURSING SCHOOL CAPACITY ISSUES

Nursing schools are also being impacted by the nursing shortage, limiting the number of students they are able to take on due to a lack of faculty. According to a report from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, in 2020 over 80,000 qualified applicants were turned away from nursing baccalaureate and graduate programs. Despite some capacity issues, enrollment has continually increased in entry-level baccalaureate, master's, and Doctor of Nursing programs over the past 15 years. Conversely, there has been declined enrollment in the BSN and research-focused PhD programs.

56%
PERCENTAGE OF RNs
who hold a bachelors
degree or higher

80,521
Qualified applicants turned
away from nursing
programs in 2020

200,000+
NUMBER OF GRADUATES
from a nursing program
in 2020

On a positive note, over 210,000 students graduated from a nursing program in 2020 adding to the much needed supply of nurses in the workforce. Among these graduates, we are seeing a higher number of students from underrepresented ethnic groups, with an average population of about 36.5% in each of the offered program levels. Additionally, the percentage of RNs who hold a bachelor's degree or higher is at an all time high with a national average of 56%. This number is up almost 10 points from 49% in 2010, with some states like Delaware with over 20 points of growth.

ABOUT PEOPLE ELEMENT

When you lose your star RN or have to say goodbye to a promising employee early in their career at your health care facility, it's a tough blow to endure. The costs associated with high RN turnover are enough to make any organization cringe, not to mention the impact losing your best and brightest has on your team and your patients' lives outside of the dollar amount.

The unique People Element approach to workforce intelligence will help significantly lower turnover rates while simultaneously helping you identify where employees are disengaged and where leadership may be unaware of certain challenges and obstacles the RNs and other employees face. From this valuable insight, we will help you create a roadmap that leads to a more engaged workforce and a more engaging work environment to help attract top talent and keep them a happy part of your team for years to come.

Learn more at peopleelement.com

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