

How To Overcome the Growing Nurse Shortage

SWIPE
SENSE



Hospitals have been facing this critical issue for years now, and it's only getting worse. Get actionable strategies to address the problem, and learn why you need to act now.

The current nursing shortage isn't like previous shortages. It's already affecting hospitals' ability to provide care – and the data suggests that the labor shortage is going to get significantly worse.

In a 2022 report, McKinsey warned that "**the nursing shortage will become dire by 2025**" when nursing supply will fall short of demand by 10-20%. Unfortunately, it looks like the projections were right on the mark.

While demand for nurses is increasing, RNs are retiring in droves – and not enough nurses are entering the workforce to meet the rising demand.

By 2030, 42 out of 50 states are expected to experience nursing shortages.¹

There's no light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, either. The current nursing education system simply can't produce enough new nurses to keep up with demand. It will likely take years to increase the capacity of nursing schools and universities.

In order to continue to provide quality patient care, hospitals must take action now to alleviate the challenge. Follow the steps detailed within to overcome the critical nurse shortage.

What's Inside

- 4** The Nursing Shortage by the Numbers
- 6** How the Nurse Labor Shortage Affects Hospitals' Bottom Line
- 7** What Nurses Want
- 8** 7 Strategies to Find and Keep Great Nurses
- 12** Use Technology to Ease Workloads & Support Nurses
- 13** About SwipeSense



The Nursing Shortage by the Numbers

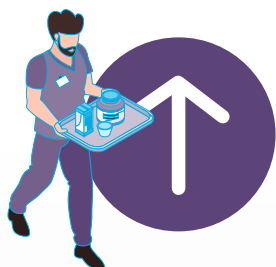
*"If no actions are taken, there will likely be more patients in the United States who will need care than nurses available to deliver it."*²

McKinsey & Company

Americans – including nurses – are getting older. There are currently more Americans over the age of 65 than at any other time in history. And the number of people aged 65 and older in the United States is projected to increase from 58 million (in 2022) to 82 million by 2050, a 47% increase.³

Meanwhile, a whopping one million nurses are 50 years or older in the U.S., while almost 60% are over 40 years old. And more than 20 percent of nurses plan to retire within the next five years.⁴ The number of new nurses isn't keeping pace — and demand for healthcare will only increase in the coming years.

*"The gap between available nurses and required positions is expected to widen considerably by 2036."*⁵



Demand for nurses is increasing —

- There are projected to be an average **194,500** job openings for RNs every year until 2033...⁶
- Demand for nurses will increase 6% from 2022 to 2032, which is 3% faster than the occupational average.⁷



— while supply is dwindling.

- But only an additional **177,400** nurses will enter the workforce annually.⁸
- 610,388 RNs reported an "intent to leave" the workforce by 2027.⁹



Most concerning, **more nurses are leaving the profession than entering it –**

- 7% of U.S. RNs have left direct patient care every year since 2020.¹¹
- 1 million RNs are expected to retire by 2030.¹²

States with the Largest Projected Shortages of RNs in 2036

Most Severe Shortages

Rank	State	Projected Shortage (%)	Projected Shortage (FTEs)
1	Georgia	29%	-34,800
2	California	26%	-106,310
3	Washington	26%	-22,700
4	New Jersey	25%	-24,450
5	North Carolina	23%	-31,350
6	New Hampshire	23%	-4,120
7	South Carolina	21%	-13,570
8	Maryland	20%	-14,700
9	Michigan	19%	-21,870
10	Oregon	16%	-7,410

... and the **existing educational system is not equipped to educate an adequate number of new nurses.**

- 91,938 qualified applicants were turned away from BSN and graduate nursing programs in 2021 due to lack of faculty and space.¹⁴
- Enrollment at entry level nursing school programs decreased in 2022 for the first time in 20 years.¹⁵

Source: Health Resources & Services Administration, Health Workforce Projections, March 2024¹³

TIME TO ACT!

2021

Clinical workforce is the #1 concern for hospital CEOs¹⁶

2022

More than 1 in 6 U.S. hospitals report critical nursing shortages¹⁷

2025

Predicted U.S. nurse shortage: 200,000 – 450,000 nurses¹⁸

2036

9% shortage of RNs, equivalent to 337,970 full-time equivalent nurses¹⁹

2030

U.S. healthcare facilities unable to meet demand for patient care unless 1.2 million new RNs added to workforce by 2030²⁰

How the Nurse Labor Shortage Affects Hospitals' Bottom Line

The nurse shortage is increasing costs, decreasing income, and shrinking margins. Travel and contract nurses are expensive, and outsourcing staffing is simply not sustainable. Without sufficient staffing, infection rates and average length of stay increase, driving up costs. Numerous studies have linked high patient-to-nurse ratios with nurse burnout and higher rates of infection.²¹ And without sufficient staffing, hospitals can't increase their patient volume or elective surgeries.

In some places, hospitals are even closing as a result of staffing shortages. Since early 2022, Becker's Hospital Review reports that 42 medical centers have closed departments or ended services at facilities for a variety of reasons.²²

Increased costs

Hospital labor costs increased by more than \$42.5 billion from 2021 to 2023, totalling \$839 billion — nearly 60% of an average hospital's expense. Part of that expense can be attributed to expensive contract labor used to fill employment gaps; hospitals spent \$51.1 billion on contracted staff in 2023.²³

Higher wage rates, which are crucial for attracting employees, have also contributed to this dramatic increase. In 2023, wage rates across all hospital jobs jumped 10.1%, and growth in total hospital employee compensation significantly outpaced inflation.²⁴

The cost of providing care also increases due to the nursing shortage. Understaffing increases nurses' workload, and heavier patient caseloads have been proven to increase infections, length of stay, and hospital readmission rates.²⁵

Decreased Income

Patient satisfaction scores, which are tied to reimbursement rates, decrease when sufficient staff are not available to meet patient needs.²⁶ A low HCAPS score limits the amount of funding a hospital can receive from Medicare — and low HCAPS and Leapfrog scores may cause some patients to seek care elsewhere.

Clinical shortages also inhibit revenue generation opportunities. According to a McKinsey report, 90% of hospital leaders said that "workforce shortages were a barrier to increasing elective surgery volume."²⁹

“

The lack of available nurses is one major contributing factor to the rise of hospital closures in recent years across the United States."

U.S. Chamber of Commerce²⁷



The Cost of Nursing Turnover²⁸

Average cost of turnover for a RN:

\$56,300

Average lost per hospital from RN turnover 2023:

\$4.8 Million

What Nurses Want

Compensation is important – nurses want to be paid fairly for their expertise – but it's not the most important factor in nurses' employment decisions.

Nurses want to work in a safe, supportive environment. They don't want to sacrifice their personal well-being for a healthcare system that doesn't seem to care about their needs. These educated healthcare professionals are looking for three key things:

Manageable Workload

- High nurse-patient ratios that nurses perceive as “unsafe” are a major reason that nurses leave clinical practice.³⁰
- 75% of new graduate nurses are worried about staffing shortages.³¹

Work-Life Balance

- Long hours increase nurse burnout, which often leads to nurse resignations.³²
- Nurses who have left direct patient care say flexible scheduling and the “ability to take time off” would influence their decision to return to clinical practice.³³

Respect & Regard

- Nurses who do not feel valued by their employer are more likely to leave.³⁴
- “Not feeling listened to or supported at work” is among the strongest drivers of intent to leave a nursing position.³⁵

Top Reasons Nurses Quit	
Burnout	54.2%
Inadequate Staffing	49.5%
Stressful Work Environment	47.3%
Lack of Good Management Leadership	36.5%
Better Pay or Benefits	36.1%

Source: HRSA National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses³⁶





7 Strategies to Find and Keep Great Nurses

“

*Staffing shortages are now the nation's top patient safety concern.*³⁷

U.S. News & World Report

Every nurse is looking for a job that fits into their life and allows them to utilize and grow their professional expertise. Nurses who find a workplace that meets their needs and doesn't devalue their time or experience are incredibly loyal – and often recruit other nurses to join them.

Hospital and healthcare systems that don't act now may be forced to cancel procedures and close facilities due to lack of sufficient staffing. It's going to take time to reverse the national nursing shortage, but there are several steps you can take today to begin filling nurse vacancies.



Where to Find Nurses

Online

- Hire a digital marketing pro to help you with programmatic display advertising, pop-up banners, and re-targeting displays.
- Feature nurse stories in social media posts. Share videos and photos, and post contests and surveys to create engagement.

On their phones

- SMS/text campaigns are a great way to reach Millennial and Gen Z nurses.
- Targeted email can help you reach new nurse grads.

Via your current nurses

- Update or create an employee referral program. Offer cash bonuses or gift cards.
- Consider a contest with a big reward for the employee who recruits the most new nurses.

1

Prioritize Nurses' Needs

If your workplace isn't nurse-friendly, nurses won't stay on staff, regardless of pay.

Action Item: Hire additional support staff, including housekeeping, technicians, CNAs, and people who can assist with patient transport and supply runs, so nurses can practice at the top of their scope of licensure. Ask nurses what they need, and do your best to implement some of their suggestions.

2

Involve Nurses in Decision-Making & Problem-Solving

Nurses know how to improve patient care and clinical efficiency. Involve them and act on their input.

Action Item: Ask nurses how to improve clinical workflows.

3

Minimize Workloads by Maximizing Efficiency

Use technology to streamline and automate repetitive non-clinical tasks, such as looking for equipment. Digital tools like an automated nurse rounding application can help you identify and correct workflow challenges to enable top-of-license practice.

Action Item: Utilize asset tracking technology so staff don't waste time locating necessary equipment. Determine where extra help is needed with an automated nurse rounding program.

“

Highlighting the employee experience and hospital culture are very important in nurse recruitment.”³⁸

Julie Perkins

Director of Digital Strategy
AMNY Health Marketing

How Ambassador Nurses Help with Nurse Recruitment

Prospective nurses want to know what it's really like to work at a hospital before they commit to employment. That's where ambassador nurses are helpful.

Ambassador nurses can:

- Post and share stories on social media
- Visit nursing schools
- Represent your hospital at career fairs and nursing conferences
- Meet nurse applicants and answer questions

4

Provide Continuing Education & Support

Nurses want to grow their skills. Consider offering new-graduate residency programs, transition-to-practice programs, ample professional development, and tuition reimbursement for relevant education.

Action Item: Survey staff nurses and ask what educational offerings would best meet their needs. Take steps to connect them with appropriate programs.

5

Offer Flexible Scheduling

Shorter shifts are attractive to some nurses, and many nurses would love the opportunity to choose their shifts. Don't be afraid to get creative.

Action Item: Involve nurses in scheduling.

6

Appoint Ambassador Nurses

Enthusiastic nurses make excellent brand ambassadors who can recruit their peers organically.

Action Item: Appoint ambassador nurses and provide them with additional compensation for their recruiting efforts.

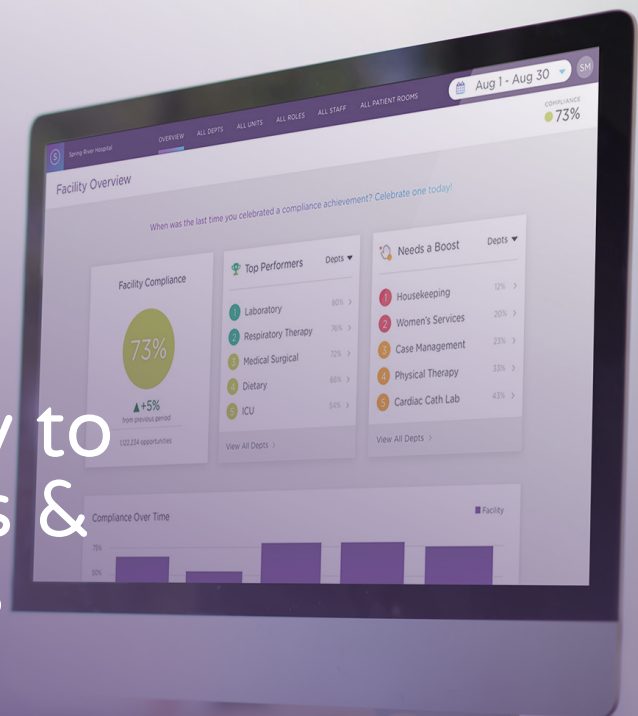
7

Increase Compensation for Staff Nurses

To stay competitive, it may be necessary to increase compensation. Bumping up pay for existing nurses decreases the likelihood they'll leave for contract positions.

Action Item: Notify recently retired nurses and those who've left clinical practice of increased salary.

Use Technology to Ease Workloads & Support Nurses



“The core goal for hospital and health IT leaders right now should be to elevate and optimize nurses’ abilities and day-to-day experience through the use of technology.”

Bill Siwicki, [Healthcare IT News](#)

Nursing is a highly personal, high-touch job. You can’t automate nursing care – but you can use technology to ease nurse workloads and support professional nursing practice.

A lack of technology solutions, systems, and automation contribute to inefficient clinical workflows and nurse frustration and burnout, according to a recent report by Healthcare IT News.³⁹ The same report notes, “outdated, inefficient and manual workflows ... consume too much of nurses’ time and attention.”

Nurses – especially Millennial and Gen Z nurses – want digital support.

53%

of nurses want streamlined processes that ensure visibility into patient needs and communication.

45%

want better communication and coordination across departments.

Technology that provides real-time information about patient needs and clinical workflows can help hospital leaders make smart staffing decisions – and provide just-in-time support as needed. And technology that supports best practices helps nurses provide top-notch care.



About SwipeSense

SwipeSense empowers hospitals to make data-driven changes that lead to predictable outcomes in an effort to save lives, improve patient and clinician experiences, and create operational efficiencies.

The SwipeSense platform provides real-time, actionable data that health systems can use to ease nurse workloads and support nursing practice. The applications utilize a cloud-based sensor network to cost-effectively boost efficiency.

Asset Tracking

More than 1/3 of nurses spend at least an hour searching for necessary medical equipment during an average hospital shift – and another hour helping staff on other wards locate items. In a month, a nurse may spend up to 40 hours – the equivalent of one whole work week – locating equipment.

Asset Tracking allows staff to instantly pinpoint the location of tagged equipment, freeing up nurse time for more important matters. Deploying asset tracking in your hospital can reduce the number of staff you need to effectively meet patient needs.

Nursing Insights

Understanding clinical workflow is crucial to proper staffing. Nursing Insights provides reliable data regarding staff movement so hospital leaders can address inefficient workflows and provide just-in-time staff support. The application fits seamlessly into nurses' existing workflow, requiring no extra effort or documentation from nurses. Nursing Insights also facilitates purposeful rounding and bedside shift reporting, two evidence-based best practices that allow nurses to streamline care.

Contact Tracing

Understanding who may have been exposed to an infectious agent is key to making smart staffing decisions while preventing the spread of disease. Because the SwipeSense system automatically captures all employee-to-employee and employee-to-patient contacts, infection control and occupational health staff can generate an initial list of at-risk staff, patients, and equipment with the click of a button.

Electronic Hand Hygiene Monitoring

Decrease healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) – and their associated costs – with an electronic hand hygiene system that non-intrusively promotes positive behavior change. Hand hygiene performance contributes to Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, and the Leapfrog Group has communicated “a strong preference for the use of electronic monitoring” in its guidance.



Get in Touch



SWIPE
SENSE

SwipeSense, Inc.

4424 N Ravenswood Ave
Chicago, IL 60640

Learn more about
hospital safety
technology

Contact our team

or

Request a Custom Demo

Virtual patent markings



Endnotes

- 1, 4, 7, 8, 14, 27 <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/nursing-workforce-data-center-a-national-nursing-crisis>
- 2, 11, 16, 18, 29, 33 <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/assessing-the-lingering-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-nursing-workforce>
- 3 <https://www.prb.org/resources/fact-sheet-aging-in-the-united-states/>
- 5, 7, 12, 15, 28 <https://peopleelement.com/blog/nursing-shortage-2024-statistics/>
- 6 <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>
- 9 <https://www.ncsbn.org/news/ncsbn-research-projects-significant-nursing-workforce-shortages-and-crisis>
- 13, 19 <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/data-research/projecting-health-workforce-supply-demand>
- 17 <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/how-to-ease-the-nursing-shortage-in-america/>
- 20 <https://www.usa.edu/blog/nursing-shortage/>
- 21 <https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/Nursing-Shortage>
- 22 <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/finance/10-hospitals-closing-departments-or-ending-services.html>
- 23, 24 <https://www.aha.org/costsofcaring>
- 25 <https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/Nursing-Shortage>
- 26 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8066393/>
- 30 <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/expert-insights/retaining-new-grad-nurses-what-are-millennials-looking-for>
- 31 <https://www.incrediblehealth.com/blog/new-nurse-study/>
- 32 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23484222/>
- 34 <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/expert-insights/retaining-new-grad-nurses-what-are-millennials-looking-for>
- 35 <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/surveyed-nurses-consider-leaving-direct-patient-care-at-elevated-rates>
- 36 <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/data-research/access-data-tools/national-sample-survey-registered-nurses>
- 37 <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2022-07-28/staff-shortages-choking-u-s-health-care-system>
- 38 <https://www.advancemediany.com/healthcare-recruiting-101-highlight-nurse-ambassadors-with-testimonials/>
- 39 <https://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/report-90-nurses-considering-leaving-profession-next-year>