

About 100,000 US nurses left workforce during pandemic

April 14 2023, by Cara Murez



During the pandemic, nearly 100,000 U.S. registered nurses called it

quits, a new survey shows.

Why? A combination of stress, burnout and retirements created a perfect storm for the exodus.

Even worse, another 610,000 registered nurses (RNs) said they had an "intent to leave" the [workforce](#) by 2027, citing those same reasons. And an additional 189,000 RNs younger than 40 reported similar intentions, the study from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) found.

Put together, this means about one-fifth of the 4.5 million registered nurses nationally could leave the health care workforce in a short time period.

"The [data](#) is clear: the future of nursing and of the U.S. health care ecosystem is at an urgent crossroads," said [Maryann Alexander](#), chief officer of nursing regulation at the NCSBN.

"The [pandemic](#) has stressed nurses to leave the workforce and has expedited an intent to leave in the near future, which will become a greater crisis and threaten patient populations if solutions are not enacted immediately," Alexander said in an NCSBN news release.

The survey laid bare the pandemic's impact on nursing, and examined the personal and professional characteristics of nurses experiencing heightened workplace burnout and stress due to the pandemic.

Data was gathered as part of a biennial [nursing workforce study](#) conducted by NCSBN and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers.

Among the findings: 62% of nurses sampled said they had an increase in

workload during the pandemic; nearly 51% said they felt emotionally drained; and 56% said they felt used up. About 50% of nurses reported being fatigued; 45% said they were burned out; and 29% were at the end of their rope "a few times a week" or "every day."

These concerns were most pronounced in nurses with 10 or fewer years of experience, according to the report. This drove an overall 3.3% decline in the U.S. nursing workforce in the past two years. Meanwhile, the [number](#) of licensed practical/vocational nurses, who generally work in long-term care settings, declined by nearly 34,000 since the beginning of the pandemic.

Pandemic disruptions in nursing programs have also raised concerns about the supply and clinical preparedness of new [nurse](#) graduates. Early career data for these new [nurses](#) suggests decreased practice and assessment proficiency, according to the researchers.

More information: The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General has more on [health care worker burnout](#).

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Citation: About 100,000 US nurses left workforce during pandemic (2023, April 14) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-04-nurses-left-workforce-pandemic.html>

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