

# Survey: Most nurses attribute well-being struggles to staffing shortages

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Cross Country Healthcare, Inc., a workforce solutions platform and advisory firm, in collaboration with Florida Atlantic University, today announced the results of its annual survey of nursing professionals and

students.

The study found that although [nurses](#) are passionate about doing meaningful work and earning a good income, only one-third of nurses plan to remain in the profession for the foreseeable future, and about one-fourth plan to leave in just one to two years from now. The survey, conducted in collaboration with FAU's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, found that more than half of nurses claim there is insufficient staff to meet demand, which they regard as the worst part of the profession, resulting in burnout and feeling overworked.

May is Nurse Appreciation Month and Mental Health Awareness Month, and to help address some of the mental health struggles facing our nurses today, Cross Country Healthcare is launching the Check Your Vitals initiative, asking nurses to check their vitals, or overall health and well-being, while offering tips and strategies for nurses on maintaining both mental and physical wellness. As part of the campaign, nurses are encouraged to wear green to show support for mental health awareness and post their green on social media using the hashtag #checkyourvitals.

"We had hoped that at this point past the pandemic, we would see improvement in the sentiment of our nurses, but that's simply not the case," said John A. Martins, president and CEO of Cross Country Healthcare. "The decision to choose nursing is more of a calling than a job. Nurses are tireless in their passion for quality patient care, no matter how challenging their working conditions may be. But the profession has reached a [breaking point](#), and it is well past time that industry leaders come together to create reform to revitalize this essential profession."

According to the survey, nurses reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety (46%), insomnia (35%), and depression (32%). Most employed nurses (83%) do not utilize mental health or well-being counseling, despite employers offering such services. The leading cause for poor

mental health was staffing shortages (71%), followed by a lack of support resources (55%). The nurses' experience with the COVID-19 pandemic has added to feelings of discontent, and nearly 2 in 5 employed nurses said it dramatically increased their desire to leave the profession.

The findings come as the United States Health Resources & Services Administration predicts a national projected shortage of 63,720 full-time registered nurses in 2030 and a projected shortage of 141,580 fulltime licensed practical nurses in 2035.

With regard to mental health in nursing students, 61% said their school offers mental health and well-being resources, including student assistance programs, gyms and fitness resources, counseling, food and nutrition services, and a mental health and well-being hotline. Forty-seven% of students use the mental health offerings from their school, and 53% find them useful. When asked if they were satisfied with their decision to become a [nurse](#), 93% of student nurses said they are.

"Despite the many challenges and stressors that have contributed to burnout and nurses being on the brink of a breaking point in their professional careers, nurses and nursing students remain overwhelming satisfied with their career choice," said Safiya George, Ph.D., Holli Rockwell Trubinsky Eminent Dean and Professor, FAU's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing. "Nurses have endured and thrived over the years. The profession as a whole will need a lot more investment of human capital as well as fiscal and other supportive resources moving forward. This [national survey](#) has helped to identify innovative ways to improve quality of work and life for current and the next generation of nurses."

The Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing offers accredited programs at all levels to prepare and train students, including Bachelor of Science in

Nursing (B.S.N.), Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) and Ph.D. programs. A BSN-DNP program with a psychiatric [mental health](#) nurse practitioner concentration and post-graduate dermatology and telehealth certificate courses, and other concentrations that combine innovation and technology also are offered to address health care provider shortages.

"Nurses are struggling and have been for years now. They are overworked and understaffed, and addressing their well-being challenges must be a critical priority for health care leaders," said Hank Drummond, Ph.D., M.Div, B.A., RN, senior vice president, and chief clinical officer. "The patient experience is only as good as the caregiver experience, so we need to ensure our caregivers are well and cared for, both physically and emotionally."

Other survey findings include:

- Nearly 1 in 5 employed nurses don't know if they would follow the same career path if they could talk to their former selves.
- Most nurses overwhelmingly believe that increased pay rates/incentives are necessary to attract and retain staff and increase flexible scheduling.
- While many health care organizations offer opportunities for growth and development, 1 in 3 nurses are unaware if their employer has such opportunities, and 1 in 5 said their employer does not.
- The most common well-being programs offered include employee assistance programs, hotlines, employer-paid health care, flexibility and time off.
- Employed and unemployed nurses greatly believe in the value of national licensure.

To help address some of the challenges facing the nursing profession

today, Cross Country Healthcare recommends five ways to revitalize the profession, including:

- Create new opportunities for education:
  - Identify new pathways at the high school, undergraduate and postgraduate levels to expedite the supply of nurses.
  - Recruit more nursing faculty to educate and train the next generation of nurses.
- Offer flexibility and awareness of growth opportunities:
  - Open every door to expedite the transition from the university to the hospital floor and offer more fluid career paths that match individual skills and ambitions to evolve and grow with the person.
- Invest in retention strategies and well-being initiatives that matter:
  - Focus on enriching current and future nurses' working conditions and well-being to ensure long-term satisfaction and subsequent retention.
- Technological innovation will drive the future:
  - Use technology to understand better equitable workforce distribution, workflow management, employee satisfaction and well-being, and patient safety.
- Explore innovative staffing models:
  - Explore innovative and flexible staffing models, including travel and per-diem nurses, to provide agility and continuity of [quality patient care](#).

This national survey, titled, "The Future of Nursing: At the Breaking Point," was conducted with nearly 1,500 nursing professionals and students at health care and hospital facilities. The online survey was conducted between Feb. 22 and April 14, in partnership with FAU's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing.

**More information:** Survey: [The Future of Nursing: At the Breaking Point](#)

Provided by Florida Atlantic University

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