

Health care workforce turnover increased after pandemic

January 27 2024, by Elana Gotkine



There was an increase in health care workforce turnover after the pandemic, according to a [study](#) published online Jan. 26 in *JAMA Health Forum*.

Karen Shen, Ph.D., from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues quantified the number of workers exiting from and entering into the health care workforce before and after the COVID-19 pandemic using U.S. Census Bureau state unemployment insurance data.

The researchers found that approximately 18.8 million people were working in the [health care sector](#) in this sample in quarter 1 of 2020. At the onset of the pandemic, there was an increase in the exit rate for [health care workers](#), from a baseline quarterly mean of 5.9 percentage points to 8.0 percentage points in 2018 and quarter 1 of 2020, respectively. Through quarter 4 of 2021, exit rates remained higher than baseline levels, with the health care exit rate 7.7 percentage points higher than the baseline in 2018.

The increase in health care worker exit rates was dominated by an increase in workers exiting to nonemployment in quarter 1 of 2020 (78% increase versus baseline); in [contrast](#), the exit rate was dominated by workers exiting to [employment](#) in non-health care sectors by quarter 4 of 2021 (38% increase). There was an increase seen in entry rates in health care in the postpandemic period, suggesting increased turnover of health care staff.

"Given these findings, policy efforts to address health care worker burnout and improve health care worker hiring pipelines are well warranted," the authors write.

More information: Karen Shen et al, Job Flows Into and Out of Health Care Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Health Forum* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.4964](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.4964)

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