

Number of registered nurses rebounds following pandemic decline

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There was a rebound in the total size of the U.S. registered nurse (RN) workforce during 2022 and 2023, according to a study published online Feb. 16 in *JAMA Health Forum*.

David I. Auerbach, Ph.D., from Brandeis University in Waltham,

Massachusetts, and colleagues assessed whether the current and projected number of RNs in the United States changed after the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis included employment data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey for employed RNs aged 23 to 69 years from 1982 through 2023.

The researchers found that after a sharp decline in 2021, RN employment recovered and the total number of full-time equivalent RNs in 2022 and 2023 was 6 percent higher than in 2019 (3.35 million versus 3.16 million). By 2035, the size of the RN workforce was projected to increase by roughly 1.2 million full-time equivalents to 4.56 million, close to prepandemic forecasts. RNs aged 35 to 49 years, who are projected to compose nearly half (47 percent) of the RN workforce in 2035, will drive this growth.

"Overall, this [forecast](#) suggests that the pandemic's impact on employed RNs, at least thus far, is unlikely to have a significant impact on the future growth of the overall RN workforce," the authors write.

More information: David I. Auerbach et al, Projecting the Future Registered Nurse Workforce After the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Health Forum* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.5389](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.5389)

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