

# Overview and Summary: Today's Nursing Shortage: Workforce Considerations

[Karen Gabel Speroni, PhD, RN, BSN, MHSA](#)

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## Overview

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As a nurse from a generation '*a while back*' you can only hope that in the future there will be enough Registered Nurses (RNs) to fulfil a complex and diverse nursing workforce, both in the United States and abroad. All nurses will need to continue to innovate our profession of nursing, to provide quality evidence-based care while simultaneously working in a 'healthy' environment.

The nursing shortage has waxed and waned since the dawn of nursing. Accordingly, nursing leaders have implemented a variety of best practices to attract and retain RNs. One of the most effective practices has been for hospitals to achieve nursing excellence requirements per the American Nurses Credentialing Center Magnet® Recognition Program. ([[ANCC](#)], 2021). Hospitals with Magnet designation have transformational leaders who structurally empower their RNs and interprofessional teams to have exemplary professional practice. They generate new knowledge, innovations, and improvements. Their enculturated structures and processes are grounded in empirical outcomes that demonstrate nursing excellence.

This OJIN topic focuses on contemporary issues in the nursing workforce, for which one of the biggest swirling in the center is a lack of enough RNs to deliver nursing excellence! Attracting and retaining nurses is problematic. The nursing shortage can be attributed to many factors, including pandemic challenges, burn-out/compassion fatigue, unhealthy work environments, pay rates variances (e.g., staff versus travelers), staffing constraints, management issues, nurses retiring, nurses leaving the profession early, and not enough academic nurse educators adequately compensated to enable university nursing programs to accept all of the qualified baccalaureate nursing program candidates. This topic addresses many of these factors, with new research findings as well. The topic also focuses on mitigating issues surrounding nursing shortage, ranging from policy and administrative implications to how to have more supportive work environments for retaining nurses.

Longyear and colleagues, in their article, "[The Contingent Nursing Workforce during Covid-19: Implications for Policy and Administration](#)," provide a review of the significant supply issues and operating challenges in hospital labor markets, noting travel contingent worker dynamics. Highlighted is the need for health system leaders, public health professionals and policymakers, working together to manage the interplay of competing labor market dynamics (e.g., hospital workers and travel workers). The authors summarize recommendations and opportunities for policy and administration and discuss both short- and long-term policy implications. They also underscore the need to implement evidence-based policy and administrative solutions.

The second article, "[Addressing the Shortage of Academic Nurse Educators: Enlisting Public and Business Sectors as Advocates](#)," by Lee and colleagues addresses the shortage of academic nurse educators. In this qualitative study, researchers focused on public and business sector advocates. Themes identified support the need for continued partnerships within the profession of nursing so we may continue to serve the public sustainably in the future.

The article by Leep-Lazar and Stimpfel, "[Factors Associated with Intent to Stay at Current Nursing Job During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)," describes a cross-sectional survey design of over 600 working nurses. The authors aimed to identify individual and work-related factors which predict intent to stay in current nursing job in one year, including the psychosocial health and contextual pandemic factors. They highlight key factors needed for a healthy work environment, including psychosocial support.

Chicca and Hubbard addressed the need for more literature on healthy nurse-to-nurse relationships as nurses transition into new clinical specialties. In the article, "[Supporting Healthy Nurse-to-Nurse Relationships as Experienced Nurses Transition to New Clinical Specialties](#)," the authors review experienced nurse challenges and healthy relationship strategies during transition into new settings.

"[Distressed But Not Deterred: Nurses Reveal Solutions to the Nursing Shortage in the Aftermath of a Pandemic](#)," by White and Godsey, employed survey research of over 800 Kentucky nurses during the pandemic nursing shortage. The authors aimed to identify perceived contributors to the nursing shortage and the supportive actions that could be taken to alleviate them. They provide nurse recommendations to effectively retain and recruit nurses in the pandemic aftermath.

Author Tate conducted qualitative research to address why RNs leave the profession in the first two years. The author aimed to identify the reasons that novice nurses leave from the perspective of those who have actually departed. In the article, "[Nurses Leaving the Profession in the First Two Years: A Qualitative Study](#)," she describes emerging themes and potential interventions to retain nurses.

The journal editors invite you to share your response to this OJIN topic addressing workforce considerations for today's nursing shortage either by writing a Letter to the Editor or by submitting a manuscript which will further the discussion of this topic which has been initiated by these introductory articles.

## Author

**Karen Gabel Speroni, PhD, RN, BSN, MHSA**

Email: [karen.speroni@outlook.com](mailto:karen.speroni@outlook.com)

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6259-8501

Dr. Speroni is a research infrastructure and process expert who uniquely integrates organizational missions with research goals to facilitate evidence-informed practice of nursing, ultimately to advance the practice of nursing, including patient outcomes and work environment.

She has nearly 40 years of experience in biomedical research and hospital consultation, including hospital-based research, nursing excellence, serving on Institutional Review Boards, university teaching, presenting research processes and research findings nationally and internationally, and authoring research/healthcare related publications.

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