



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, September 22, 2022

For more information about survey data and methodology, please contact:

Nancy Zdunkewicz:

nancy@changeresearch.com

Michael Allen: (646)

436-7556; mallen@hpae.org

CRISIS BREWING: Overworked and poorly compensated nurses are leaving the profession, saying hospital safety is on the decline

HPAE releases survey results, urging lawmakers to address drastic staffing crisis in hospitals

EMERSON, NJ—Health Professionals and Allied Employees, New Jersey’s largest union of nurses and healthcare workers, today released the results of a survey that the union says is a wake-up call for New Jersey.

Some of the staggering findings in this statewide survey on the staffing crisis include:

- Nearly a third of nurses have left the bedside (hospitals) in the past three years.
- Of those nurses currently at the bedside, 72% have considered leaving recently.
- Newer nurses are the most likely to be considering leaving the bedside (95% of those with 5 years of experience or less).
- The number one reason nurses are leaving hospitals is poor staffing.
- The second is related to the first: burnout and stress.

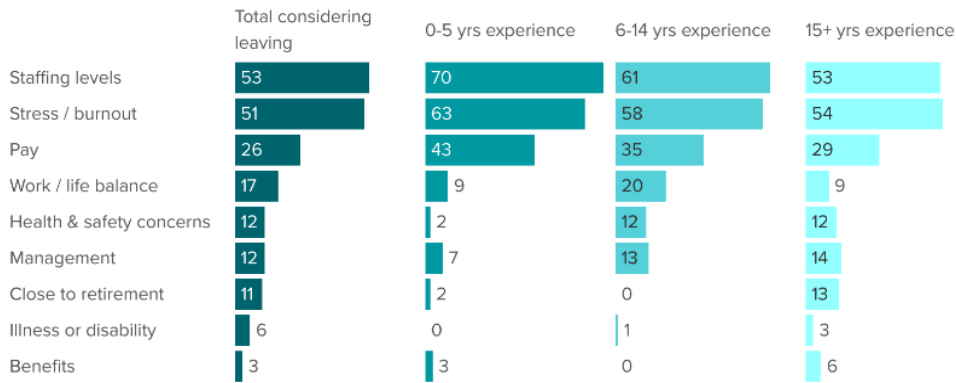
Deep into the third year of a global pandemic, HPAE commissioned an independent research consultant, Change Research, to conduct a multi-phase research program to better understand the experiences, challenges, and needs of hospital nurses in these unprecedented times. Along with the results of the survey, HPAE nurses are calling on lawmakers to move forward legislation to improve staffing and working conditions at hospitals across New Jersey.

“Our initial interest was to reassess the state of nursing in light of the fact that nurses had just worked through horrific conditions during the pandemic,” HPAE President Debbie White, RN, said. “Once we saw the initial results, we were alarmed. The staffing crisis in hospitals is chilling and must be addressed immediately.”

Change Research surveyed 512 current and recent nurses in primarily bedside facing roles in New Jersey hospitals from August 10-16th, 2022. Of the nurses surveyed, 70% are currently

- continue next page -

Which TWO of the following are most important factors in your decision to leave the bedside?



Asked of those who have considered leaving the bedside recently.

working at the bedside in hospital settings, 3% are currently at the bedside but recently left (within the past three years) hospital settings, 4% still work in a hospital setting but are no longer primarily at the bedside, and 23% were at the bedside in a hospital setting within the past three years but are no longer at the bedside or in a hospital. Fully 30% are

no longer in bedside facing roles in hospitals.

Of those nurses currently at the bedside, **72% have considered leaving the bedside recently.** Newer nurses are the most likely to be considering leaving the bedside (95% of those with 5 years of experience or less). This finding validates a concern of experienced nurses in HPAE’s focus groups that there may be too few younger nurses to fill the ranks as they retire and their observation that younger nurses are less tolerant of a lack of work-life balance.

“As a nurse for more 35 years, most of it in critical care, I constantly struggle to manage the stress of providing care for my patients as so many of my fellow nurses have left the bedside,” HPAE Local 5105 President Sheryl Mount, RN, said. “Mentoring the next generation means having to help prepare them on how to provide care, but also how to protect their profession. This is a burden on nurses who are exhausted and feel abused.”

When asked to indicate the top two reasons why they might leave the bedside from a list of nine possible reasons, **the top two reasons cited by over half of those considering leaving the bedside were staffing levels (53%) and stress/burnout (51%).**

“Make no mistake, unsafe staffing has been an issue for many years. In the past, we’ve seen staffing has been a line item cut down to its lowest amount, in order for hospitals to maximize profits. This has been a problem for a very long time. But the pandemic has greatly exacerbated a chronic problem created by the hospitals themselves,” White said.

Those who were currently considering leaving the bedside were particularly stressed, with 60% rating their stress level as very high. A number of factors may be contributing to those stress levels such as:

- Over 60% of all of the nurses surveyed reported they did not receive any sort of bonus in the past three years and less than one-third (31%) received hazard pay in the past three years to compensate them for the extraordinary risks and demands of the COVID-19 pandemic.

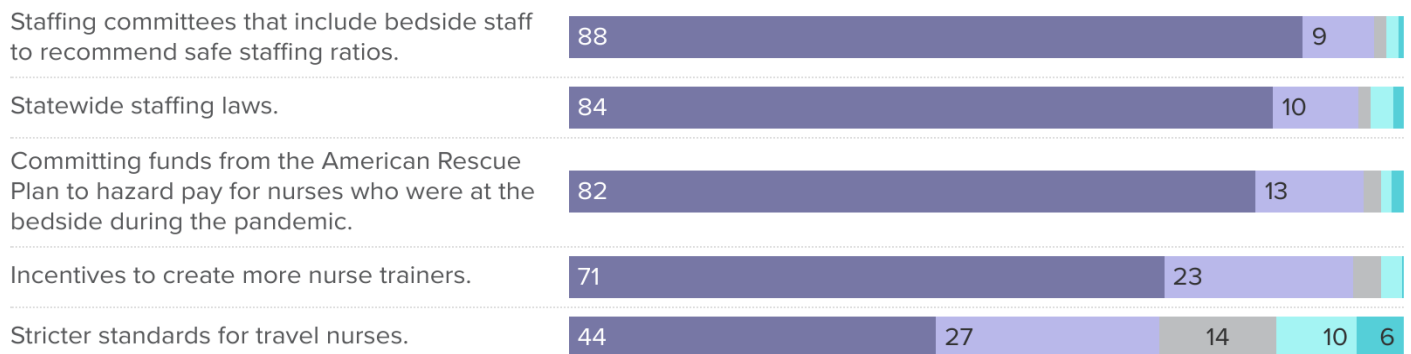
- continue next page -

- Not only do a 53% majority of hospital nurses currently at the bedside report inadequate protections from violence and abuse, but also 48% of hospital nurses currently at the bedside reported actually experiencing physical abuse in the past few years.
- **A whopping 83% of nurses said that over the past few years they were at least occasionally put in situations that put their license at risk with one-third reporting this happened frequently.**
- **Three-in-four bedside nurses in hospitals in New Jersey rate the staffing levels in their units as poor or not good.**

Fully 91% of nurses believe that the issues with nurse retention won't go away unless hospitals take action, and 83% say that "the issues with nurse retention have existed for a while and the pandemic made them even worse; they won't go away unless hospitals take action." **There are two things that these nurses consider critical to attracting and retaining more nurses at New Jersey hospitals: better staffing levels and higher pay.**

Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Not sure ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



“No longer can nurses sit by and wait for hospital administration to fix the problem,” White said. “We have tried to work with managers and administration to find solutions that will improve working conditions so nurses stay at the bedside and patient outcomes improve. Nurses have spoken, now it is time for lawmakers to listen to their nurses, not just hospital administrators. We need safe staffing levels; we need to properly train newer nurses and reward us for we are the ones who save lives.”

###

HPAE is the largest union of registered nurses and healthcare professionals in New Jersey representing 14,000 nurses, social workers, therapists, technicians, medical researchers, and other healthcare professionals in hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies, blood banks, and university research facilities. HPAE is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.