

Kentucky's Nursing Workforce CRISIS



Kentucky hospitals and healthcare systems are facing unprecedented critical workforce shortages, exponential growth in labor costs, and an ongoing need to use travel nurses to help staff their facilities. The pandemic has taken a toll on health care staff and nurses, in particular, are retiring and leaving bedside care just when our population is aging and hospitals are seeing sicker patients.

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▶ CURRENT CHALLENGES FACING HOSPITALS

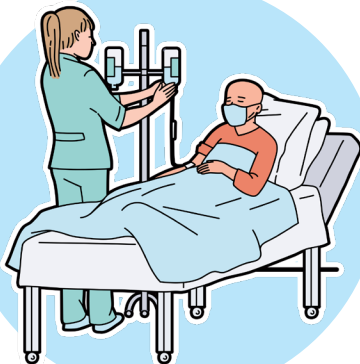
- A current shortfall of **5,391** registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs)
- **One in three RN positions** in medical/surgical units vacant
- By 2030 more than **1/3 of all psychiatric nurses** and more than **1/4 of all OR nurses will have retired.**
- **22% Turnover Rate** for RNs

▶ FUTURE CHALLENGES

There is also a significant gap between the number of vacancies and the number of new nurses coming into the profession.

- **More than 5,000 students enrolled** in nursing programs during the academic year 2019-20.
- **More than 3,000 nursing students “tested” in 2021.** That is they sat for the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX). **Leaving a gap of nearly 2,000 individuals** between enrollment and sitting for the NCLEX.
- **Too few new nurses are entering the workforce to replace those retiring.**

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▶ NURSES CARING FOR A SICKER POPULATION

Not only is there a severe shortage of nurses, but the nurses working in hospitals are caring for far more complex patients. Because so many delayed care during the pandemic, hospital patients are sicker and require longer times in the hospital. **There has been a 10% rise in the average length of stay.** This puts a greater burden on caregivers in hospitals and takes a toll on the entire healthcare workforce.

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