

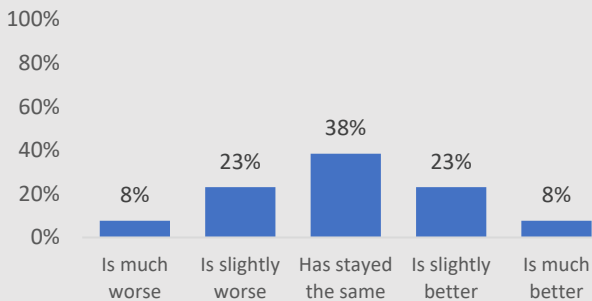
Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network

Findings Brief: Nursing Homes and Skilled Nursing Facilities

This Findings Brief highlights current workforce needs reported by nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities in Washington State during March and April 2023. More findings from 2023 and earlier may be viewed at wa.sentinelnetwork.org/findings. Responses to questions about current overarching workforce issues are summarized below. Earlier overarching and pandemic-related findings may be viewed at www.wa.sentinelnetwork.org/findings/covid-19.

Overarching Workforce Issues: Themes and Examples

In the past six months, how has your organization's ability to staff your facility/facilities changed?



- *[Slightly better]* Facility has gotten more assertive and aggressive in recruitment and interviewing candidates. Calling quicker/sooner.
- *[Stayed the same]* We are on a treadmill now....about even with how many leave and how many are hired. Before we were not even on the treadmill. We had more leaving than we were hiring.
- *[Stayed the same]* We keep on raising wages, sponsoring ads, offering sign-on bonuses, and it hasn't increased the number of applicants [...]

What are your top workforce needs that could be alleviated by new or modified laws, policies, regulations, and/or payment rules?

Suggestions included increasing insurance reimbursement rates, promotion of workforce training, easing licensing requirements, and increased resources to provide higher wages.

- *Make schooling accessible to people who want to become a nurse. Reduce the numbers of pre-req requirements for enter the nursing program. Pen up the compact... to allow nurses from other states to easily take jobs in Washington.*
- *Improve reimbursement in order increase wages to attract quality RN [and NAC].*

Has your organization made any of the following changes in the past year?

	Yes % (#)	Comments
Hired or assigned workers with higher-level qualifications to fill lower-skilled roles or positions.	23% (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have had nurse managers and licensed therapists work the floor as nursing assistants.</i> • <i>RNs and LPNs have been working as NACs to make sure our residents are receiving the care they need because we cannot keep enough NAC staff.</i>
Hired workers with fewer qualifications than would normally be considered.	38% (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The limited availability within the labor market has forced employers to consider absolute minimum qualifications and developing employee's hard skills.</i> • <i>Utilized NAC students with a NAR while in a class and before certified to help alleviate the short staffing on the floor.</i>
Implemented new outsourcing/contracting of specific services (or 'service lines').	23% (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have had to utilize agency staffing and be contracted with over a half dozen agencies to try and fill the vacancies.</i> • <i>Have spent way too much money on agency staff.</i>

In the past year, how has your ability to support clinical training experience/preceptorship/rotation opportunities for students/learners (not newly hired or incumbent employees) at your facility changed? What strategies/policies (e.g., financial incentives, student housing, etc.) have been - or would be - the most helpful for supporting clinical training experiences at your facility?

Most respondents reported that their ability to support clinical training opportunities stayed the same over the past year.

- *[Stayed the same]* We allow community college to conduct clinicals at the facility.
- *[Stayed the same]* We offer tuition assistance and student load repayment.

Nursing Homes/Skilled Nursing Facilities (Spring 2023)

Between 2016 and 2023, over the course of 14 reporting periods, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, and other health care facilities in Washington shared information about their workforce needs to the Washington State Health Workforce Sentinel Network. Below are highlights of trends over time and recent findings. More nursing home and skilled nursing facility findings, along with those from other health care facilities, are at wa.sentinelnetwork.org.

Top occupations cited as having exceptionally long vacancies by date of reporting							
Rank	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
1	Nursing assistant	Nursing assistant	Registered nurse	Registered nurse	Registered nurse	Nursing assistant	Registered nurse
2	Registered nurse	Registered nurse	Nursing assistant	Licensed practical nurse	Licensed practical nurse	Licensed practical nurse	Licensed practical nurse
				Nursing assistant		Registered nurse	Nursing assistant
3	Licensed practical nurse	Licensed practical nurse	Licensed practical nurse	Occupational therapist	Nursing assistant	Cook / Food services	Cook / Food services
	Dentist			Physical therapist			
4	Multiple occupations cited at same frequency	Occupational therapy assistant	Occupational therapist	Speech-language therapist	Cook / Food services	Dietitian / Nutritionist	Environmental Services
		Physical therapist	Physical therapist				Occupational therapy assistant
		Physical Therapy Assistant	Social worker				
			Speech-language therapist				

← Most cited

Findings prior to Spring 2020 not shown due to space constraints.

Reasons for vacancies reported by nursing homes/skilled nursing facilities

Themes: Many employers in skilled nursing facilities reported not enough applicants for open positions as the main reason for exceptionally long vacancies and fewer reported issues around salary, wages, and benefits.

- [Registered nurse] Multiple companies and agencies looking for RN - labor pool is limited in [our region]. We have advertised through Indeed and Facebook and offered large sign on bonus with no response.
- [Licensed practical nurse] Community College LN graduates want to work at the Hospital which is in the city. Our facility is rural. LPNs do not want to commute 25 minutes to work.
- [Cook/Food services] Low wages and immense job availability saturating the market has impacted staff recruitment and retention. Evaluation pay levels in these job categories and increasing incentives and improving work environments.

Reasons for worker retention/turnover problems reported by nursing home/skilled nursing facilities

Themes: Facilities frequently reported that staff left looking for higher pay, flexible schedules, and lower workload.

- [Cook/Food services] Entry level wages do not hold employees who need additional resources to survive in this inflationary economy.
- [Licensed practical nurse] Increased competition for licensed professional, to include wages and bonus incentives which are not equitable across all employer[s]. The reduction in availability of certified health care professionals.
- [Registered nurse] Every employer of RNs are hiring and SNFs can't compete with Hospital wages and agency wages.

Nursing Homes/Skilled Nursing Facilities (Spring 2023)

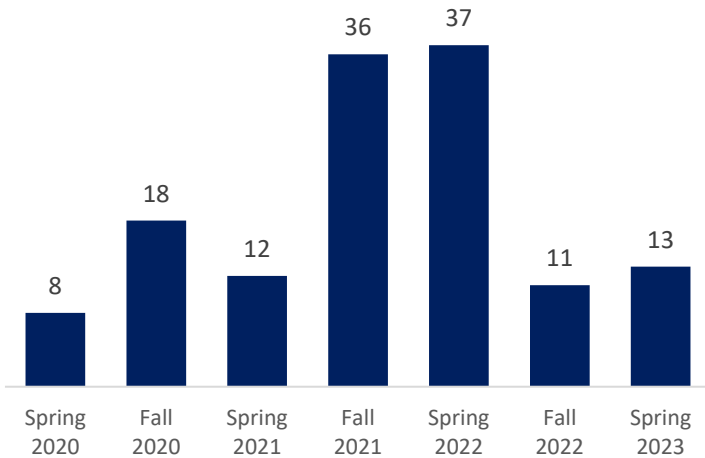
Changes in nursing homes'/skilled nursing facilities' priorities regarding orientation/onboarding for new employees and training for existing/incumbent workers

- [All clinical staff] Shortening the recruitment process training managers on equitable and fair hiring practices innovating onboarding to include remote and digital onboarding Creation of mentorship program for new hires.
- [Licensed practical nurse] Existing staff are stretched thin and proper orientation/onboarding new employees has been compromised do to the fact that there have been higher priorities in dealing with the on-going crisis in the industry

New roles for existing employees and new occupations hired by nursing homes/skilled nursing facilities

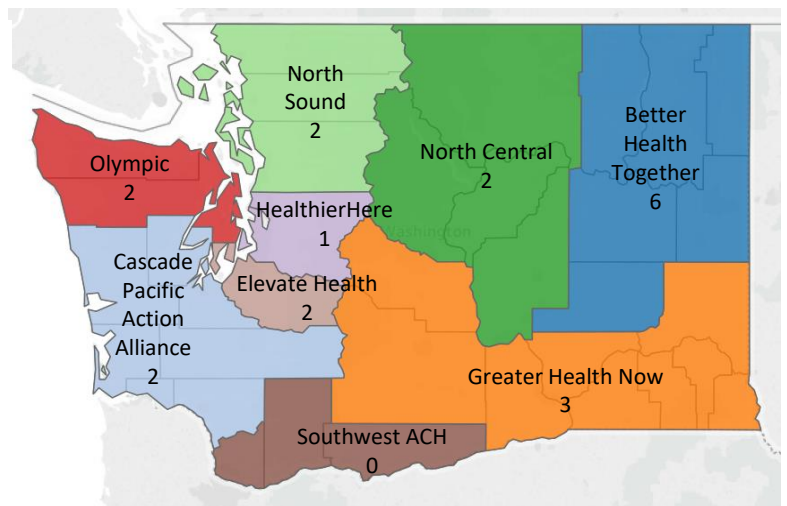
- [Registered nurse] Nurses in administrative roles have had to take floor/medication cart positions to cover the shortages related to the pandemic.
- [Nursing assistant] Restorative and Shower aide positions are the first to be pulled to cover the needs of Resident care.
- [Registered nurse and Licensed practical nurse] working as NACs as well.

Number of Sentinel Network Responses from Nursing Homes/Skilled Nursing Facilities in WA by Data Collection Date*



* findings prior to Spring 2020 not shown due to space constraints.

Number of Nursing Home/Skilled Nursing Facility Responses by Accountable Community of Health (ACH) (Spring 2023)



About the Washington Health Workforce Sentinel Network

The Health Workforce Sentinel Network links the healthcare sector with policymakers, workforce planners and educators to identify and respond to changing demand for healthcare workers, with a focus on identifying newly emerging skills and roles required by employers. The Sentinel Network is an initiative of Washington’s Health Workforce Council, conducted collaboratively by Washington’s Workforce Board and the University of Washington’s Center for Health Workforce Studies. Funding to initiate the Sentinel Network came from the Healthier Washington initiative, with ongoing support from Governor Inslee’s office and the Washington State Legislature.

Why become a Sentinel? As a Sentinel, you can:

- Communicate your workforce needs and ensure that the state is prepared to respond to the transforming healthcare environment.
- Have access to current and actionable information about emerging healthcare workforce needs.
- Compare your organization’s experience and emerging workforce demand trends with similar employer groups.

To view an interactive summary of findings and to provide information from your organization:

www.wa.sentinelnetwork.org.

Contact: healthworkforce@wasentinelnetwork.org

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