



**2022**

# **This Is The State of Nursing**

**Nurse.org**

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# About the State of Nursing Report

With millions of nurses worldwide, we wanted to truly understand the state of nursing and give nurses a voice. We surveyed nearly 1,500 nurses to find out how they felt about the past year and get to the real reasons behind the nursing shortage. We asked them about the real issues they are facing every day during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## About Nurse.org

Nurse.org impacts the lives of nurses and nursing students by publishing thought-provoking content, supporting their career growth through high-caliber educational opportunities, and launching culture-changing initiatives. Nurse.org is an authoritative and trusted blog within the nursing community - it is read over 1.4 million times per month, our social media channels reach over 30 million users per month and our email subscriber list is composed of over 800,000 nurses. Our "Ask Nurse Alice" podcast is hosted by TV health expert, Alice Benjamin, and has ranked in the Top 10 on Apple's podcast charts in the medical category.

# Background and Summary of Findings

The U.S. was already predicting a dire nursing shortage. Then, COVID hit.

In short, what was already going to be a critical nursing shortage has worsened due to nurses leaving the workforce from extreme burnout, understaffing, concerns over COVID, and other pandemic-related factors, such as a lack of childcare.

An April 2021 survey by Vivian found that nearly 1 in 4 nurses were considering leaving the profession, a number that was even higher among ICU nurses who have borne the brunt of caring for critically ill COVID patients. They cited reasons for their wish to leave as:

- A decline in morale
- Increase in stress
- General dissatisfaction about pay

# Survey Insights

From Sep-Nov of 2021, Nurse.org surveyed nearly 1,500 nurses to understand the state of nursing and give nurses a voice. What did we find?

- Nurses are struggling
- Only 12% of nurses are happy where they are
- Over 80% feel burnt out, underpaid, frustrated with their administrators, and that this past year has affected their mental health
- Nurses are leaving the bedside because of issues like:
  - Inadequate staffing ratios
  - Not getting equal pay for equal experience
  - Not receiving hazard pay during a pandemic
  - Not having adequate back up
  - An inability to take breaks, sick days, or even turn down extra shifts
- Black/African American and Asian nurses feel less appreciated, less safe, and less likely to stay in their current situation than white nurses
- Travel nurses reported higher levels of struggle than staff and per diem nurses

Despite everything, nurses still have hope.

- 70% still think nursing is a great career
- 64% still think that new nurses should join the profession

# What Can We Do?

A world without enough nurses is a dangerous one indeed, but we have time to turn this around. Retaining our nursing workforce, our nation's largest healthcare profession, should focus on three main issues:

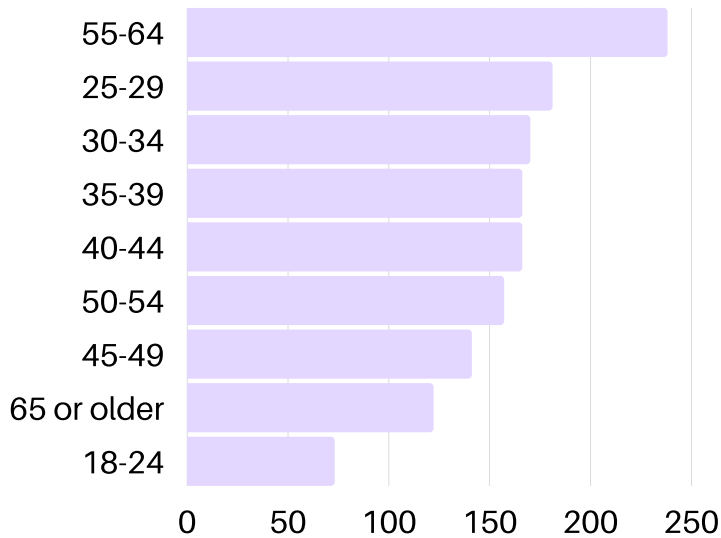
- Supporting nurses as they return to the workforce
- Improving workplace conditions
- Investing in nursing education & mental health resources for nurses

The nursing shortage is an issue that affects us all, from the youngest of patients to the oldest, and from our families at home to the communities we live and work in. Nurses fill so many roles, from the bedside to administration to shaping the healthcare policies of the future.

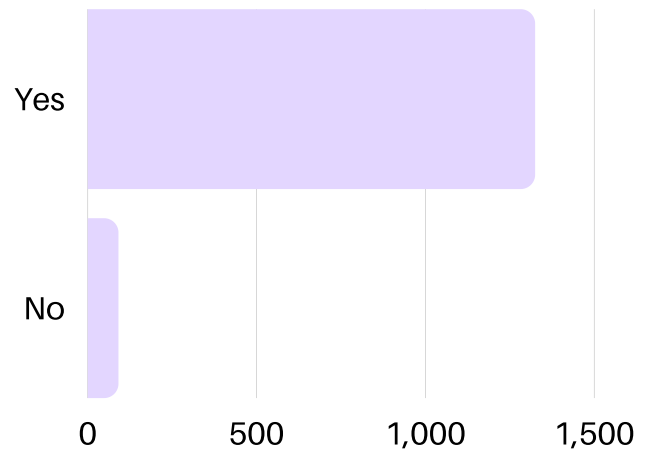
To learn more about the nursing shortage and learn ways you can get involved, **[click here.](#)**

# Survey Demographics

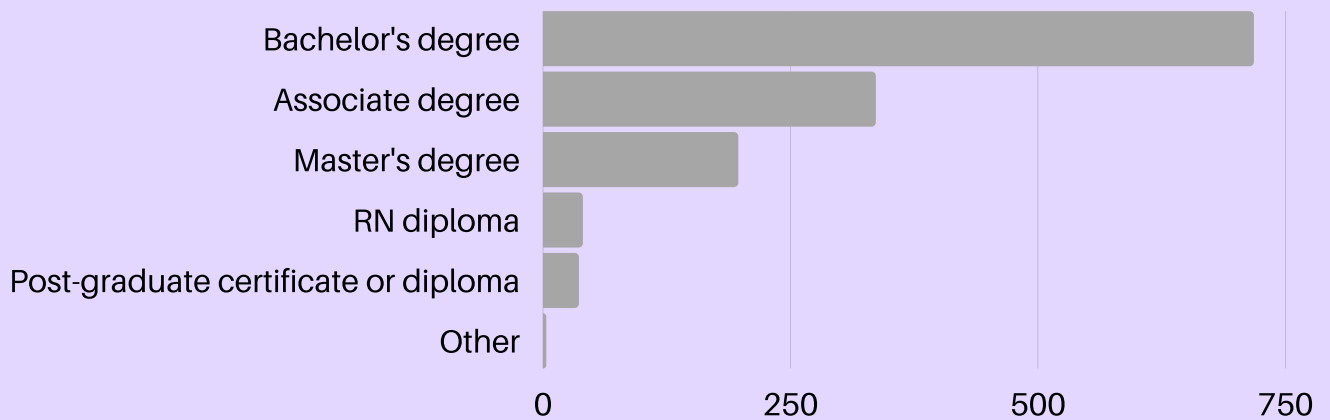
Age Ranges



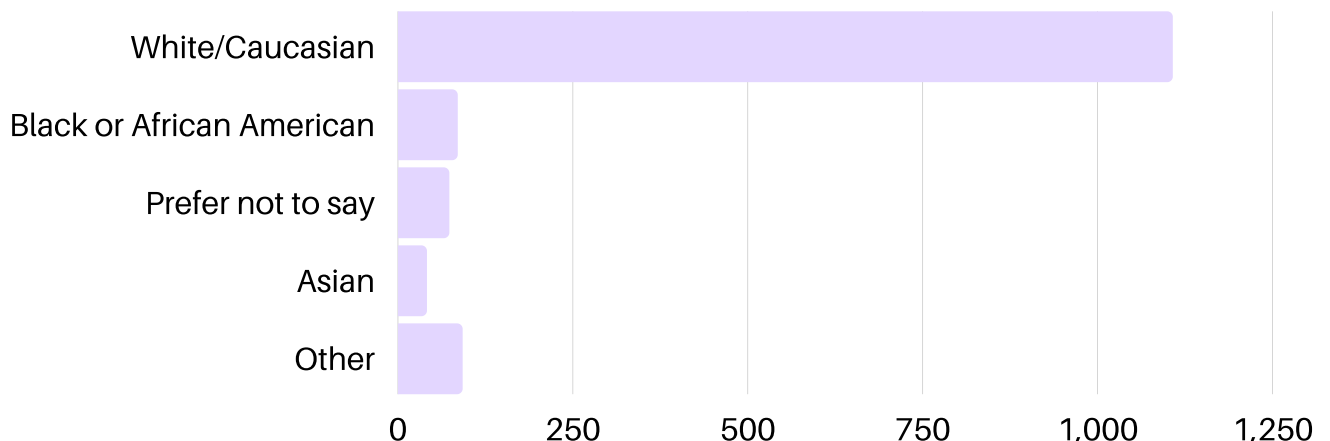
RN Status



Education Levels

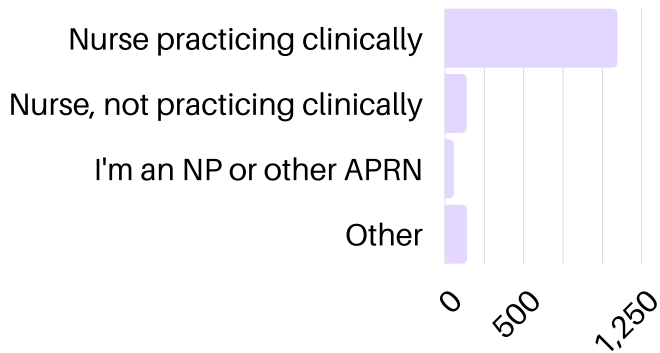


Race / Ethnicity

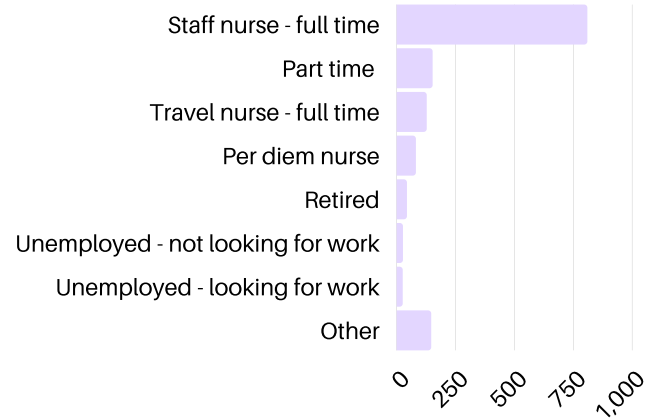


# Survey Demographics

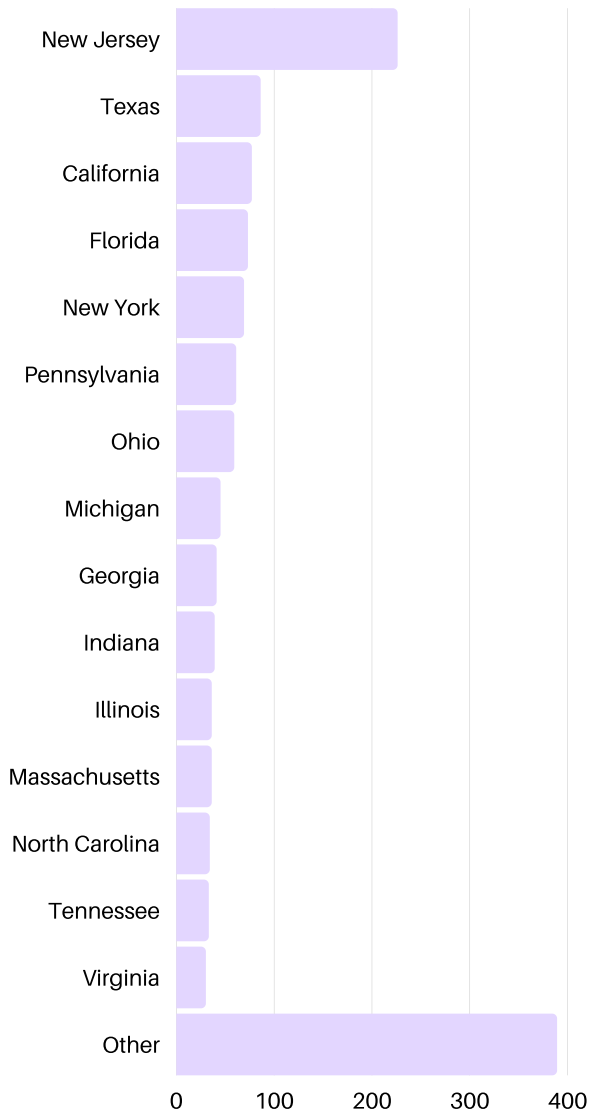
## Career Level



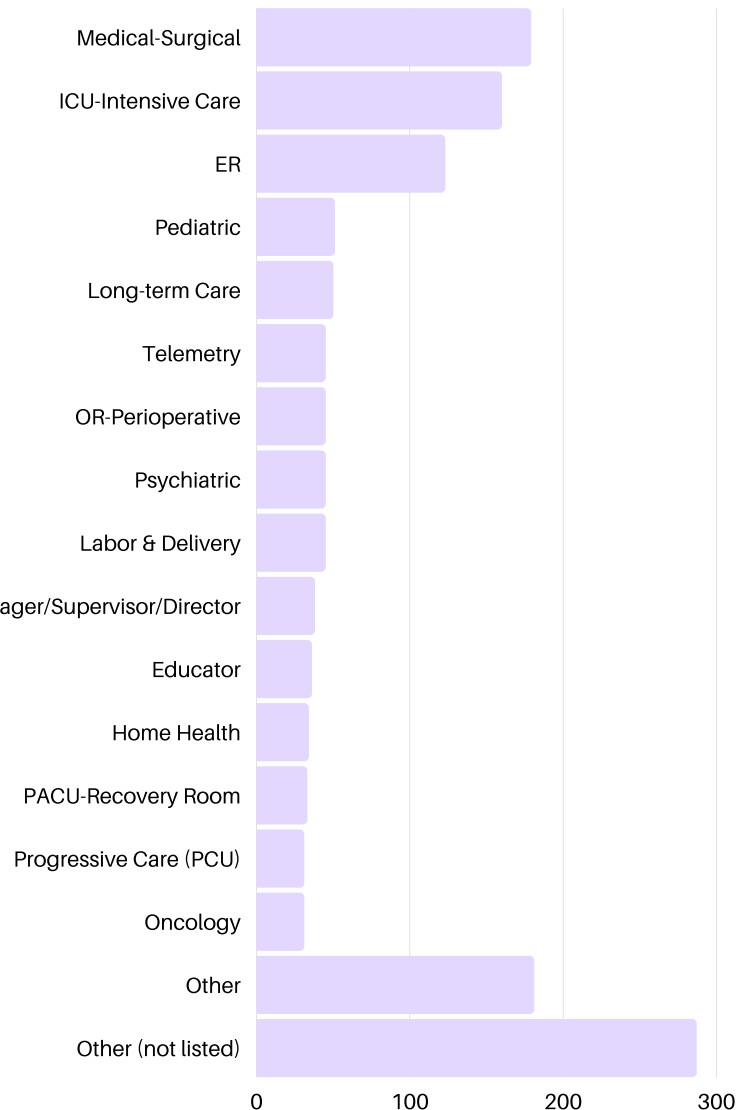
## Employment Status



## Location



## Primary Specialty





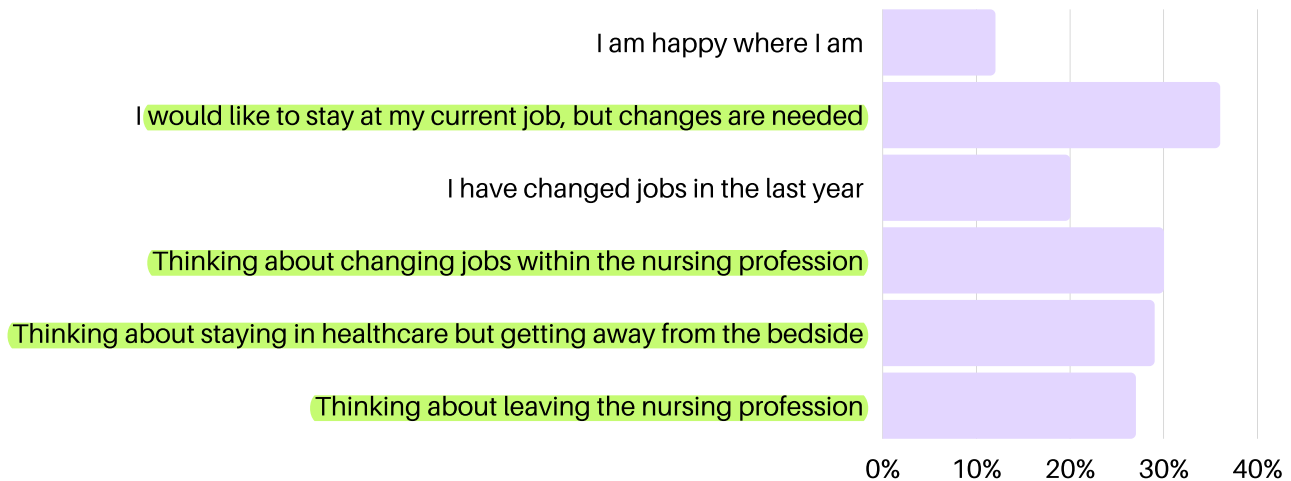
## SECTION 1

# Nurses Are Struggling

*Nurses are struggling. Regardless of practice specialty, age, or state of practice – nurses need help.*

# Only 12% of Nurses Surveyed Are Happy in Their Current Job

Which of these statements best reflect your thoughts about your current job?



## Nurses Practicing Clinically Are Least Satisfied with Their Current Jobs

40% of nurses practicing clinically require changes to be made to their current job in order to stay. 31% want to get away from the bedside and 27% are considering leaving the profession entirely.

	I'm a nurse practicing clinically	I'm a nurse, not practicing clinically	I'm an NP or other aprn	Other
I am happy where I am	9%	22%	25%	20%
I would like to stay at my current job, but changes are needed	40%	17%	25%	28%
I have changed jobs in the last year	20%	19%	27%	13%
I am thinking about changing nursing jobs	32%	15%	29%	30%
I am thinking about staying in healthcare but getting away from the bedside	31%	20%	9%	23%
I am thinking about leaving the nursing profession	27%	38%	20%	17%

# Some Nursing Specialties Are Having a Harder Time Than Others

Across all nurses, only 12% replied that they were happy in their current job. But when we looked at these satisfaction ratings by specialty, it became clear that some nurses were faring far better than others.

Nurse Educators and Home Health Nurses reported the highest satisfaction ratings, while telemetry nurses and ER nurses reported the lowest. In fact, 0% of telemetry nurses surveyed were willing to stay at their current job without any changes.

## Specialties With the Highest Satisfaction Ratings

% That Replied  
"I am Happy Where I am"

- Nurse Educators - 33%
- Home Health - 24%
- Nurse Manager - 18%
- OR-Perioperative - 18%
- Pediatric - 18%

## Specialties With the Lowest Satisfaction Ratings

% That Replied  
"I am Happy Where I am"

- Telemetry - 0%
- ER- 2%
- Progressive Care (PCU) - 3%
- Medical-Surgical - 6%
- ICU - 6%

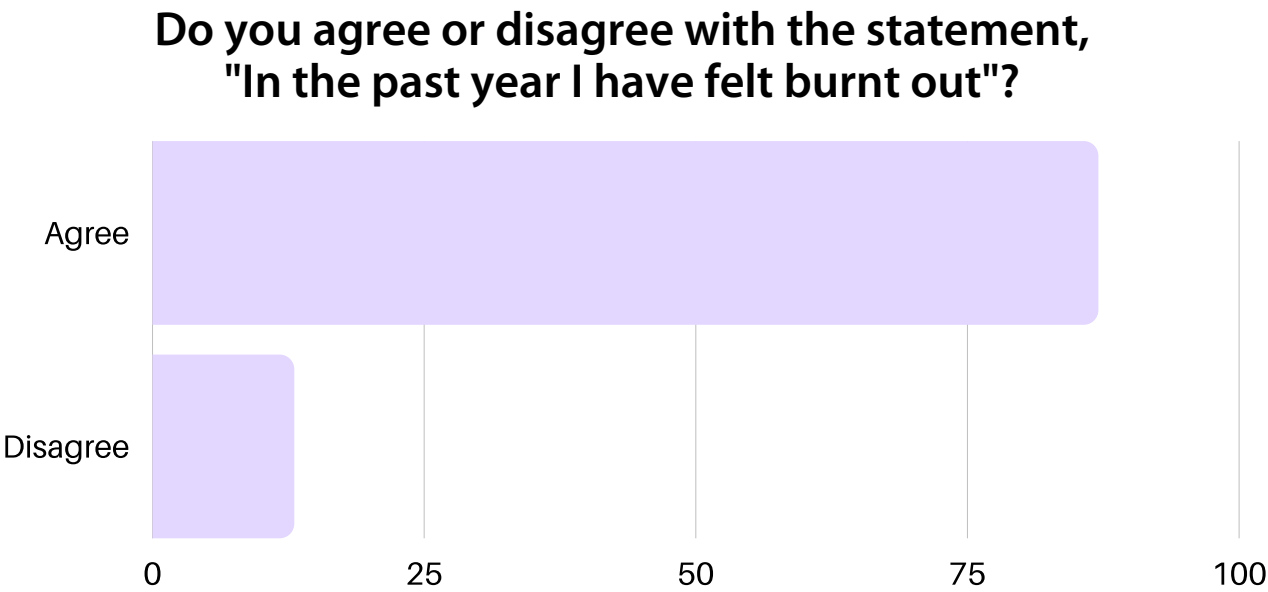
## SECTION 2

# How Are Nurses Feeling?

## Nurses Are *NOT* OK

- 87% of nurses feel burnt out
- 84% are frustrated with administrators
- 84% feel they are underpaid
- 83% feel their mental health has suffered
- 77% feel unsupported at work
- 61% feel unappreciated
- 60% have had to work outside their comfort zone
- 58% have felt frustrated with their patients
- 58% have had to work outside their specialty/scope of work
- 56% have felt unsafe at work

# 87% of Nurses Said They've Felt Burnt Out In The Past Year



*"I have been an RN for 34 years and in my specialty of nursing for 31 years and I am burned out. If I could afford to quit I would. I can't wait to retire."*

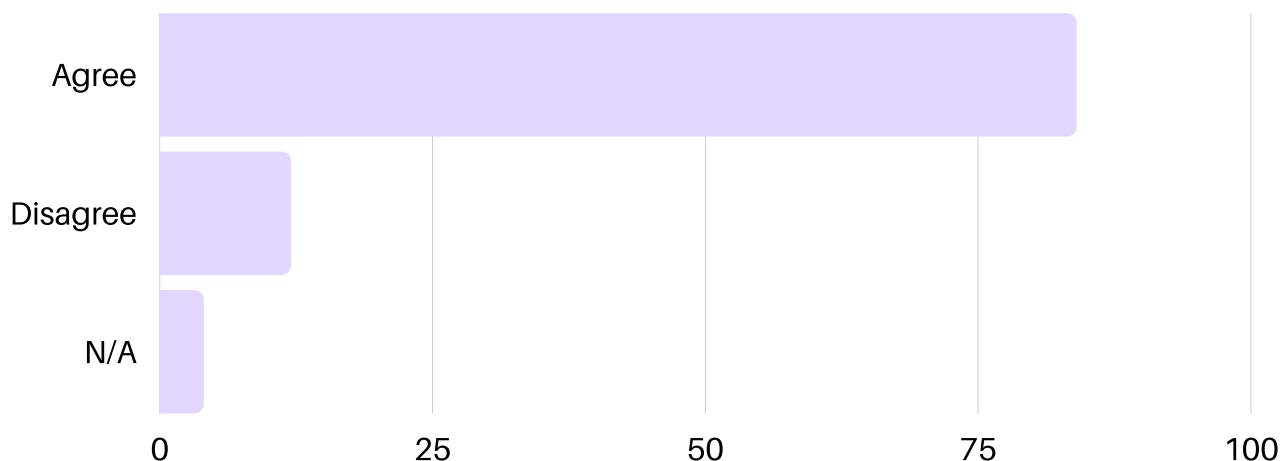
## Burn Out Rates Were Highest for Nurses Practicing Clinically

% That Replied  
They Felt Burnt Out by Place of Work

- 90% of nurses practicing clinically
- 78% of nurses not practicing clinically
- 69% of NPs and APRNs
- 75% of other nurses

# 84% of Nurses Said That They Feel Underpaid

Do you agree or disagree with the statement,  
"In the past year I have felt underpaid"?



*"I just saw a local pizza place paying \$20/hr and a new nurse around here starts about \$25/hr. It's less of a headache to go sling pizzas..... nurses need hazard pay, higher wages, safe staffing ratios (1:4), paid COVID sick time. We are drowning out here!!!"*

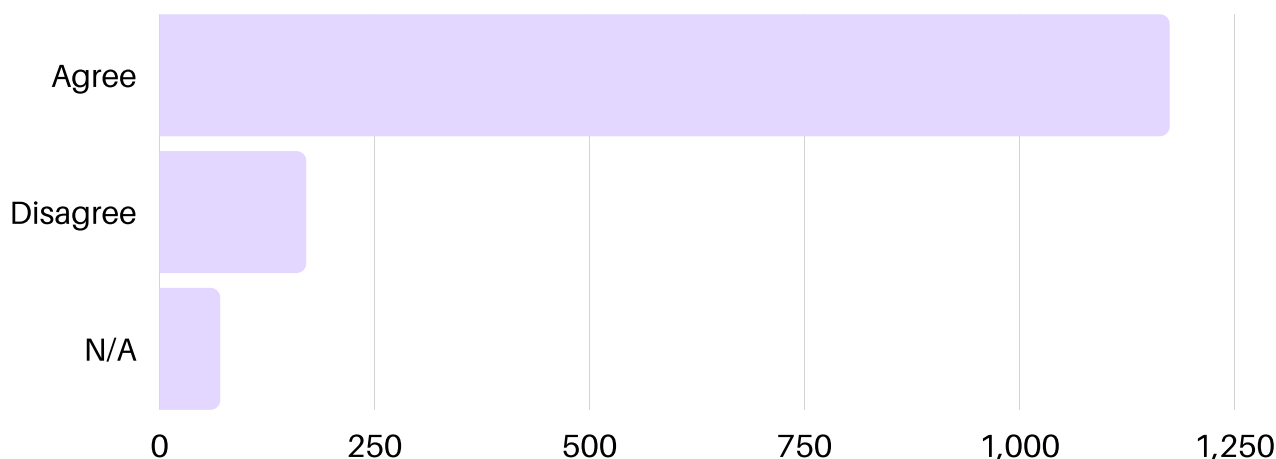
## Bachelor's- and Associate-Prepared Nurses Reported Feeling Underpaid at Higher Rates

% That Replied "Strongly" or "Somewhat Agree" to Feeling Underpaid

- 85% of Bachelor's degree-prepared nurses
- 86% of Associate degree-prepared nurses
- 77% of Master's degree-prepared nurses
- 75% of RN diploma-prepared nurses
- 78% of nurses with a post-graduate certificate or diploma

# 83% of Nurses Say Their Mental Health Has Suffered

Do you agree or disagree with the statement,  
"My mental health has suffered because of my job"?



*"I am mentally, physically, and emotionally overwhelmed. We have shouldered enough of this unrealistic burden, it is time for a MAJOR change to be made in nursing and the American healthcare system."*

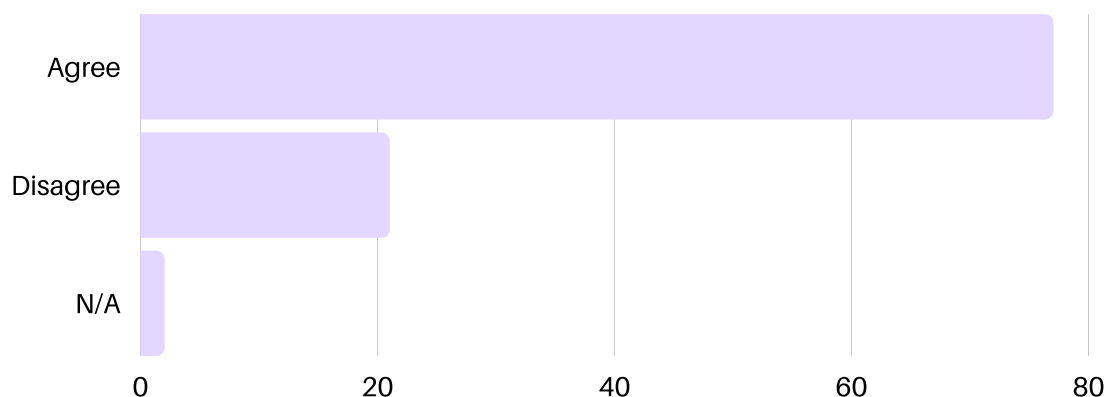
## Nursing Specialties That Had the Highest Reports of Mental Health Suffering

% That Replied "Strongly" or "Somewhat Agree" to  
Feeling Their Mental Health has Suffered

- 97% of Progressive Care (PCU) Nurses
- 96% of Telemetry Nurses
- 90% of Oncology Nurses
- 88% of ICU Nurses
- 87% of ER Nurses

## 77% of Nurses Feel Unsupported at Work

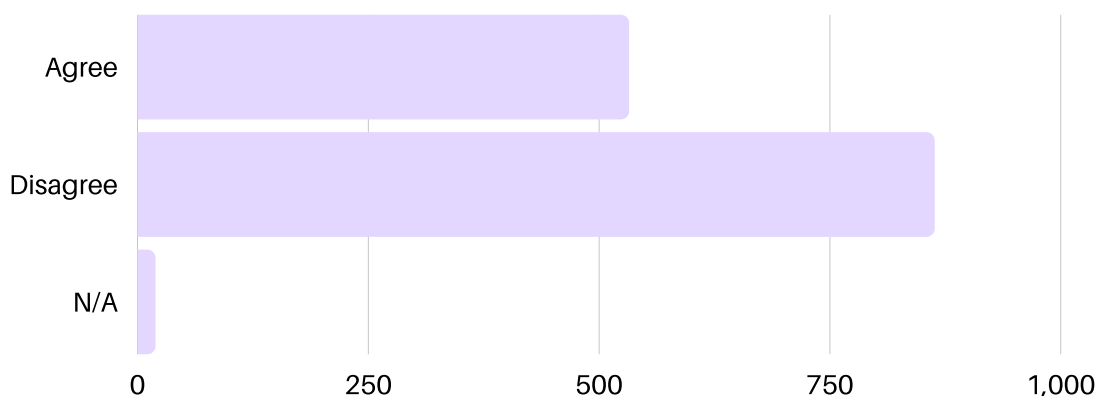
Do you agree or disagree with the statement,  
"In the past year, I have felt unsupported"?



*"Nurses cannot continue to provide optimal patient care when organizations do not assist with staffing, support, and staff wellness"*

## 61% of Nurses Have Felt Unappreciated During The Past Year

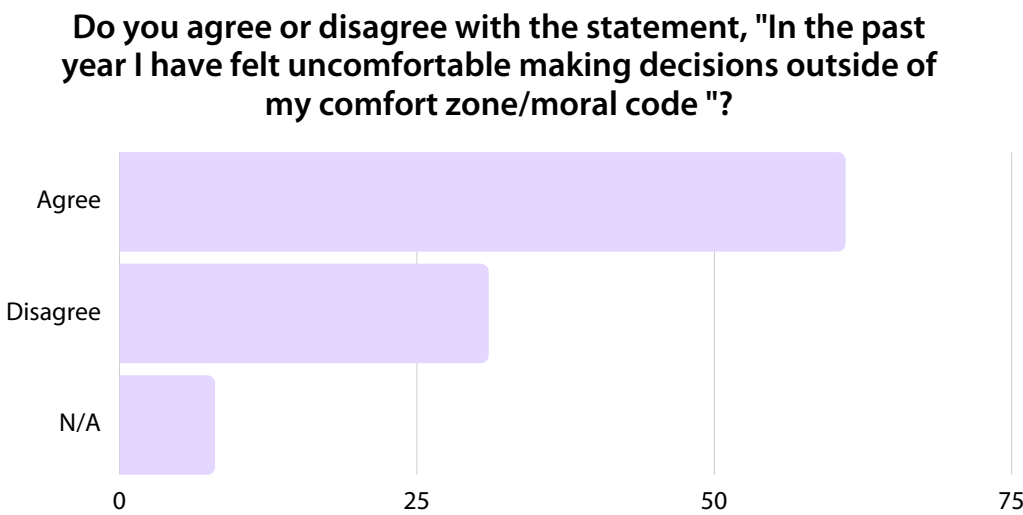
Do you agree or disagree with the statement,  
"In the past year, I have felt appreciated"?



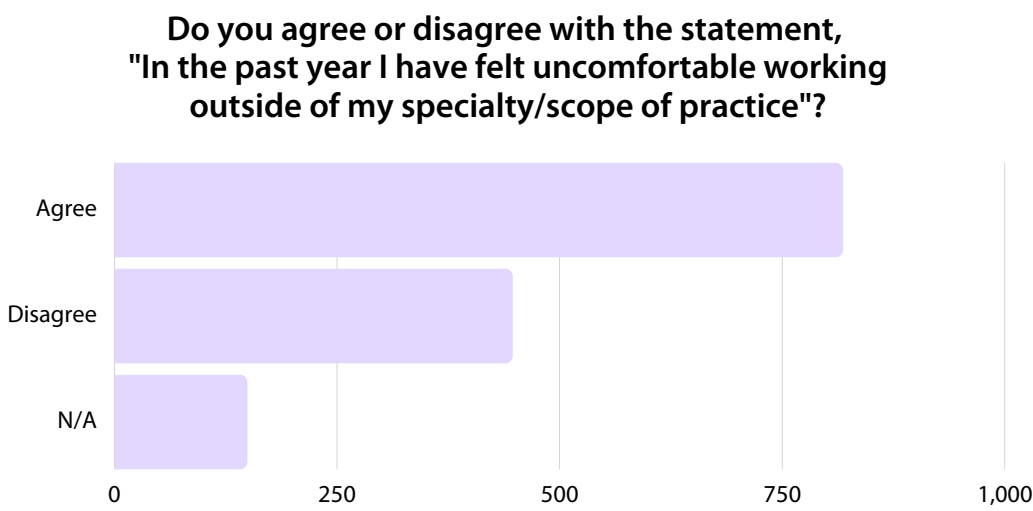
*"I left nursing because of the lack of respect from managers, administration, doctors, and politicians. No one listened to our ideas to improve the environment."*



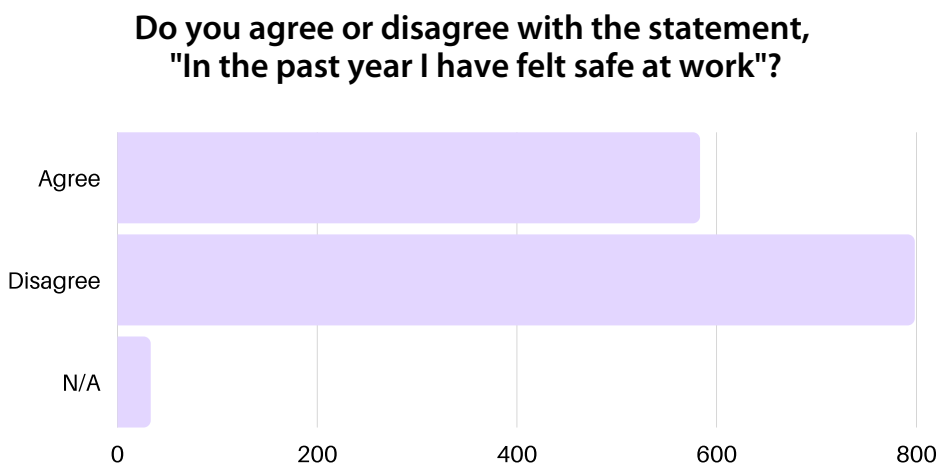
# 60% of Nurses Felt Uncomfortable Working Outside of Their Comfort Zone/ Moral Code



# 58% of Nurses Felt Uncomfortable Working Outside of Their Specialty/ Scope of Practice



# 56% of Nurses Have Felt Unsafe at Work in the Past Year



## SECTION 3

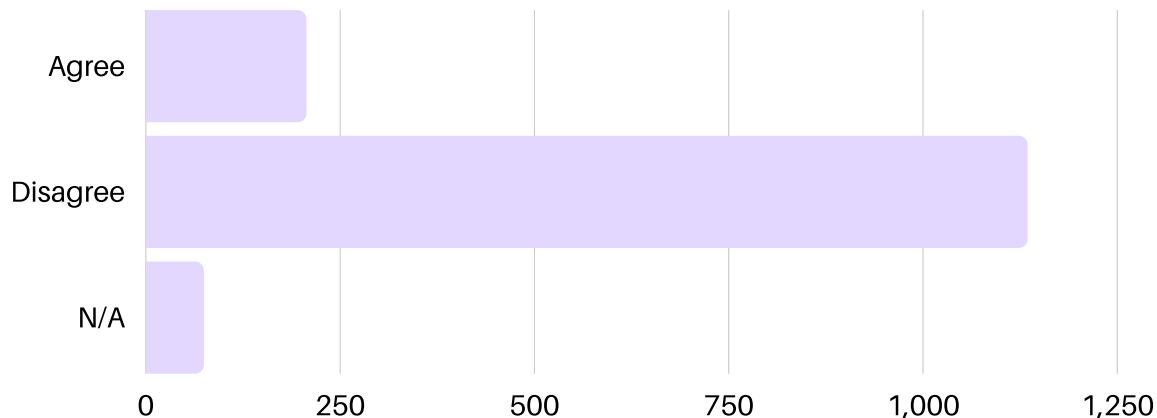
# The Real Reasons for the Nursing Shortage

### **Nurses are Leaving the Bedside Because of:**

- Inadequate staffing
- Not getting equal pay for equal experience
- Not receiving hazard pay
- Not having adequate back up
- Not getting full breaks
- Not being able to take sick days
- Not being able to turn down extra shifts

# 80% of Nurses Say Their Units Are Inadequately Staffed

Do you agree or disagree with the statement,  
"My nursing unit is adequately staffed"?



*"With increased patient census, staffing ratios are very unsafe especially with high acuity patients. Having 4+ critically ill patients not only puts licenses at risk but the patients do not benefit at all. We're just running around doing tasks, not providing adequate care."*

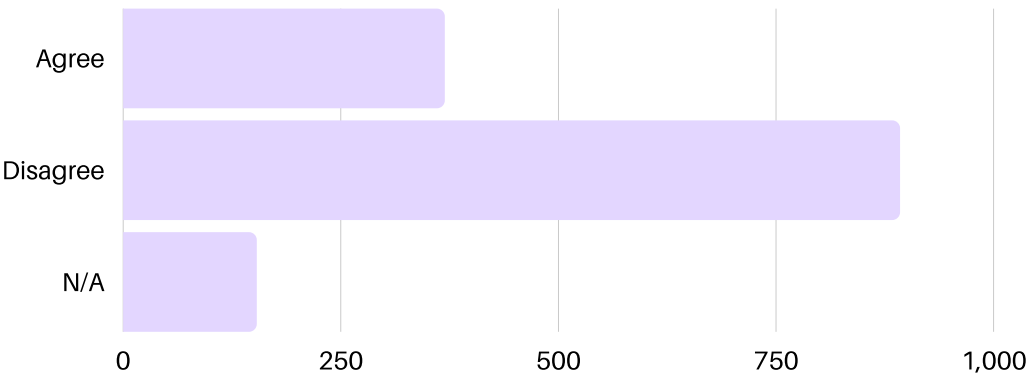
## Nursing Specialties That Have The Biggest Staffing Shortages

% That Replied "Strongly" or "Somewhat Disagree"  
to Feeling Adequately Staffed

- 96% of Long-Term Care Nurses
- 94% of Progressive Care (PCU) Nurses
- 92% of Medical Surgical Nurses
- 91% of Telemetry Nurses
- 91% of Labor and Delivery Nurses

# 63% of Nurses Don't Feel They Are Getting Equal Pay for Equal Experience

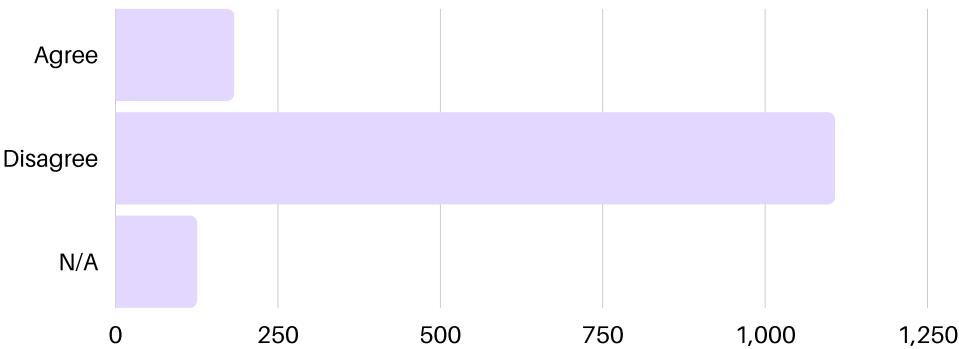
Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "My nursing unit pays nurses with similar experience equally"?



*"Nurses are leaving to earn travel money which they should be getting paid at their regular jobs. We are underpaid. Paying travel nurses isn't a sustainable option."*

# 78% of Nurses Are Not Getting Hazard Pay

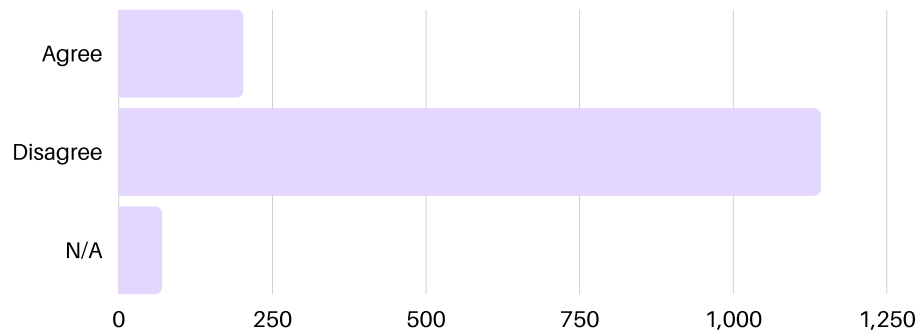
Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "My nursing unit offers hazard pay during COVID"?



*"The only "hazard" pay is specific to minutes spent with a known COVID patient. Zero retention incentives, only recruitment bonuses for referring new nurses and being encouraged to pick up extra shifts after already working massive overtime."*

# 81% Of Nurses Don't Have Adequate Back-Up

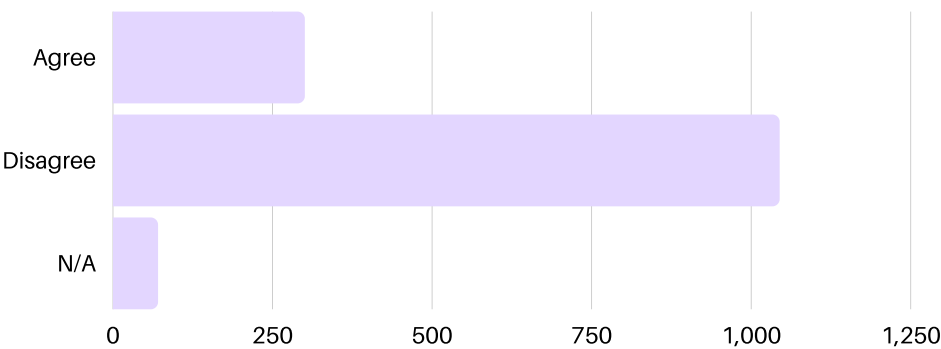
Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "My nursing unit provides adequate back-up when needed"?



*"Understaffed and expected to do more than can be possibly done in one shift."*

# 53% of Nurses Feel They're Not Able to Turn Down Extra Shifts

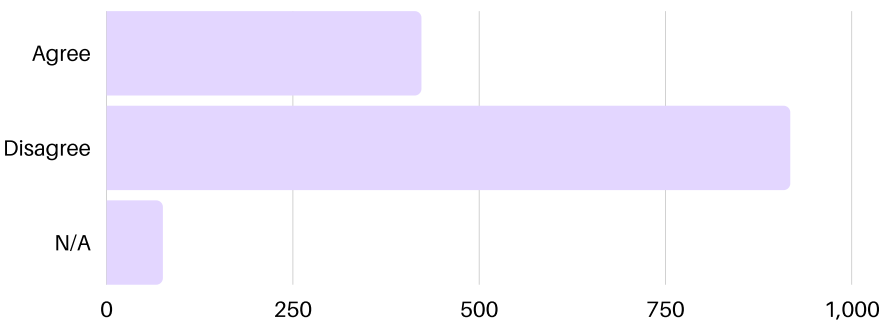
Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "My nursing unit supports me turning down extra shifts"?



*"The incentive to work extra shifts is financially high yet no one seems to understand you're asking nurses who are already exhausted to extend themselves even more because the extra shift pay is so good."*

# 65% of Nurses Are Unable to Take Sick Days

Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "My nursing unit supports nurses taking sick days when needed"?



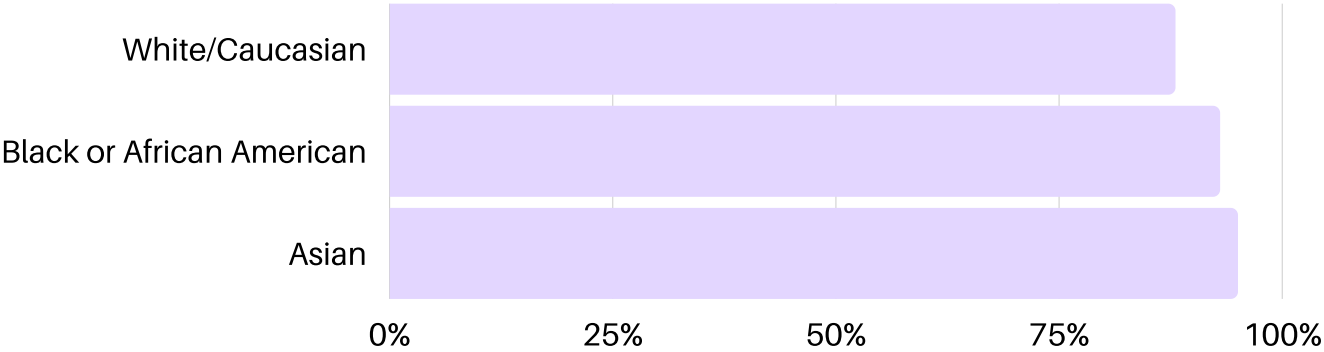
*"We are not supported even when we have to call off for covid. While the majority of the country was told to stay home and still get paid, nurses had no choice."*

## **SECTION 4**

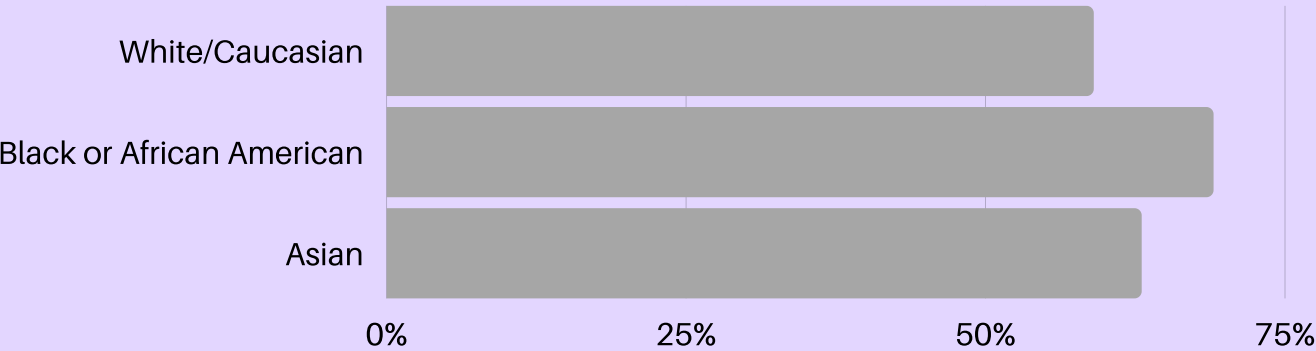
# **Are Some Nurses Struggling More Than Others?**

# Black/African American and Asian Nurses Had Higher Rates of Job Dissatisfaction Than Their White Counterparts

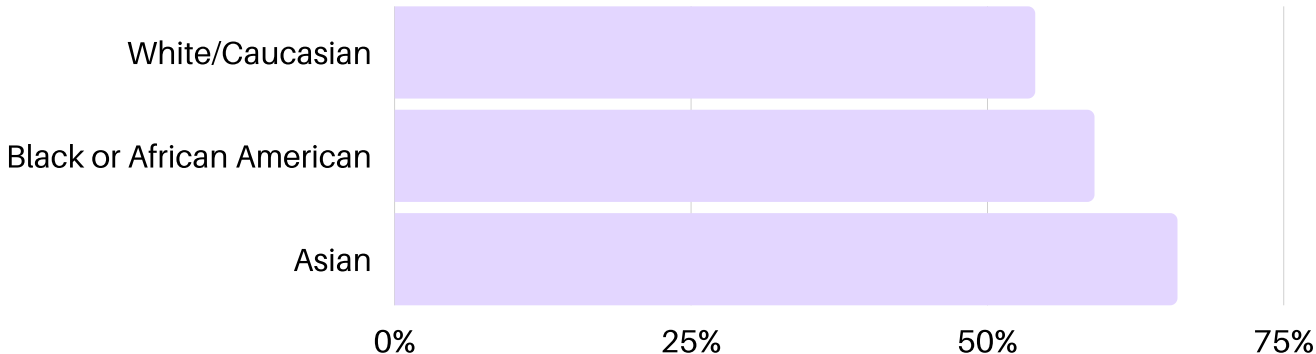
% of Nurses Who Answered "I am Happy Where I Am" by Race/ Ethnicity



% of Nurses Who Answered "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to "I feel appreciated as a nurse" by Race/ Ethnicity



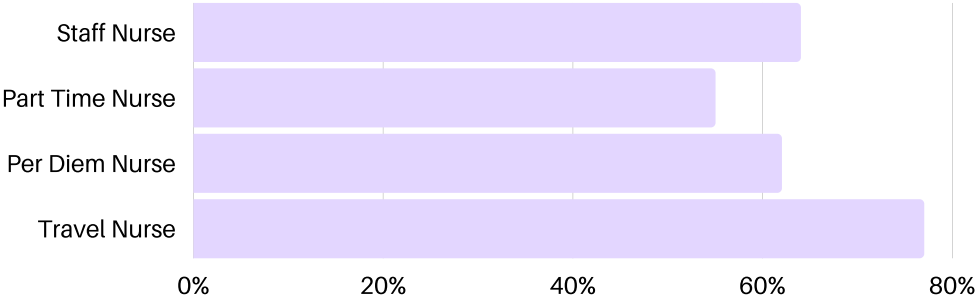
% of Nurses Who Answered "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to "I feel safe at work" by Race/ Ethnicity



# While Many Nurses Have Turned to Travel Nursing, Travel Nurses Reported Higher Levels of Struggle Than Any Other Type of Nurse

## 77% of Travel Nurses Feel Nurses Are Not Being Paid Fairly

% of Nurses Who Answered "Somewhat" or "Strongly Disagree" to "My unit pays nurses with similar experience equally"



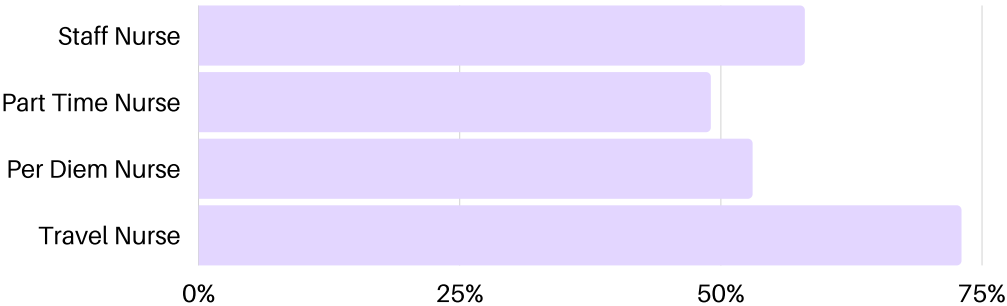
## 70% of Travel Nurses Feel Unappreciated

% of Nurses Who Answered "Somewhat" or "Strongly Disagree" to "I feel appreciated as a nurse"



## 73% of Travel Nurses Feel Unsafe at Work

% of Nurses Who Answered "Somewhat" or "Strongly disagree" to "I have felt safe at work"





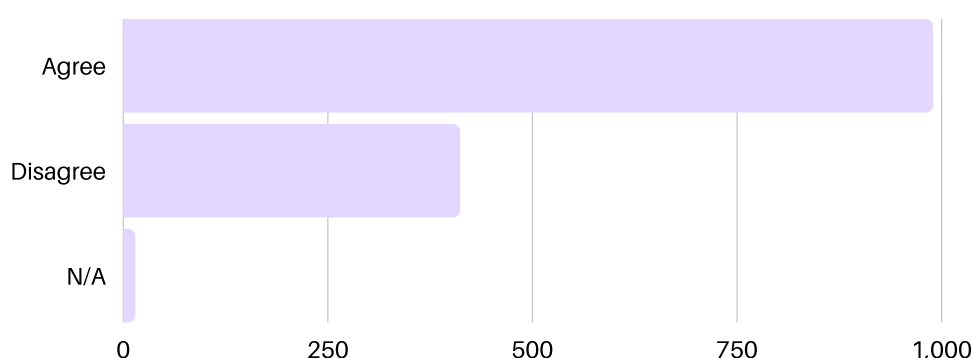
## SECTION 5

# **Do Nurses Still Think Nursing is a Good Profession?**

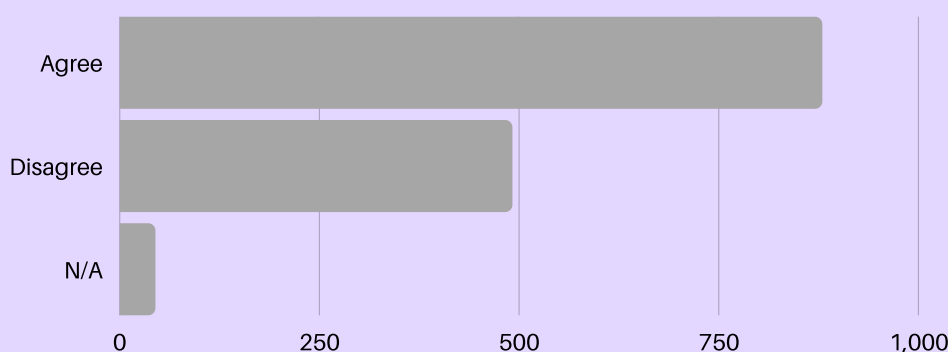
# YES! Nurses Still Have Hope

Despite everything, 70% of nurses still think that nursing is a great career and 64% still think that new nurses should join the profession.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement,  
"Nursing is a great career?"



Do you agree or disagree with the statement,  
"New nurses should join the profession"?



*"If you're a student considering becoming a nurse, please know that you are not walking into a doomed profession. You will never meet anyone who is more determined, more resourceful, or more ready to jump in and lend a helping hand than a nurse."*

--- Nurse Alice Benjamin, MSN, APRN, ACNS-BC, FNP-C, CCRN, CEN, CV-BC  
Chief Nursing Officer and Correspondent at Nurse.org

# So, What Now?

If the past two years have taught the world anything, it's that nurses are NOT okay.

The truth is that despite the 7 pm cheers, the commercials thanking nurses for their dedication and selflessness, and the free coffee from major retailers – the overwhelming majority of nurses are burnt out, underpaid, overworked, and under-appreciated.

Nurses need the support of patients, families, administrators, and healthcare systems in order to continue to perform this vital work. And that starts with spreading the word about what nurses need now:

- **Higher pay**
- **Safe nurse-to-patient ratios**
- **Hazard pay**
- **REAL mental health resources**
- **Adequate staff support**
- **New nurse training and support programs**

# How You Can Take Action

## Sign the Pledge

True change starts with YOU, the nurses! Sign the pledge and encourage your friends & colleagues to do the same. Share this pledge on social media using the hashtag #TheRealNursingShortage. **[Click here](#)** to sign the pledge.

*The term “nursing shortage” fails to address the systemic issues causing nurses to leave the profession. I pledge to amplify these issues and to no longer keep quiet about our struggles. I will support fellow and future nurses by advocating for true change within the nursing profession because all nurses deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and to be paid our worth.*

## Contact Your Elected Officials

It's time for elected officials to stand up for nurses. Write them a letter. Call their office. Demand change for nurses. **[Click here to get the contact information for your local and state Officials.](#)**

# How You Can Take Action

## Put Yourself First

If we want to solve the nursing shortage (and we do!), it can't happen without nurses recognizing that they are NOT the problem.

*"The problem is not with nurses or nursing; the problem is that nurses have been so busy taking care of others that no one has taken care of them. And we're here to change that--and by entering the nursing profession, you will be part of the solution too."*

– Nurse Alice Benjamin, MSN, APRN, ACNS-BC, FNP-C, CCRN, CEN, CV-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Correspondent at Nurse.org

# Final Thoughts

*"If you are a current nurse considering leaving the profession, be assured that you are not alone in your struggles. If all you've had the energy for is keeping your head down and getting through your shifts, sleeping, and getting up to do it all over again, know that you are doing enough. It's not your responsibility to solve the nursing shortage."*

– Nurse Alice Benjamin, MSN, APRN, ACNS-BC, FNP-C, CCRN, CEN, CV-BC, Chief Nursing Officer and Correspondent at Nurse.org

## Sources

- Nurse.org's 2021 State of Nursing Survey
- [Vivian's April 2021 Healthcare Survey](#)

## Contact

Contact [info@nurse.org](mailto:info@nurse.org) for more information and complete survey results

