

The Southern Nurses Survey

What's driving nurses to leave their employers and what they want from their next boss.



Introduction

The nursing profession may be one of the most difficult and varied in the medical field. National surveys have shown that nursing can be both a physically grueling and mentally stressful job that literally has life and death consequences no matter the level of licensure or area of care. Nursing workplaces vary from hospitals to one-doctor practices, from assisted living facilities to in-home care. And,

in every area of nursing, there seems to be one consistent refrain from employers – there is a shortage of candidates at every level of licensure.

Nurses undergo a long list of challenges in their work, and this survey doesn't uncover all the challenges they face. But it does help us understand what nurses most value in an employer, what's making them want

to leave you, and what got them into the profession to begin with. By better understanding our how nurses perceive their current situation and what is attracting them to look for new opportunities, healthcare companies across the spectrum can better design and promote their workplace culture to attract the right candidates and reduce expensive employee churn.

And now to the survey results.



The Respondents

Our survey attracted nurses from **all** the largest cities in the target area with **good** representation from some more rural areas as well. RN's (with both 2- and 4-year degrees) were 84% of the sample population. This ratio comes close to the national nursing population where 80% are licensed as RN's. Nurses with more than 20 years' experience represented slightly over 60% of the respondents. This sample is indicative of the American nurse population in general which has an average age of 50 .

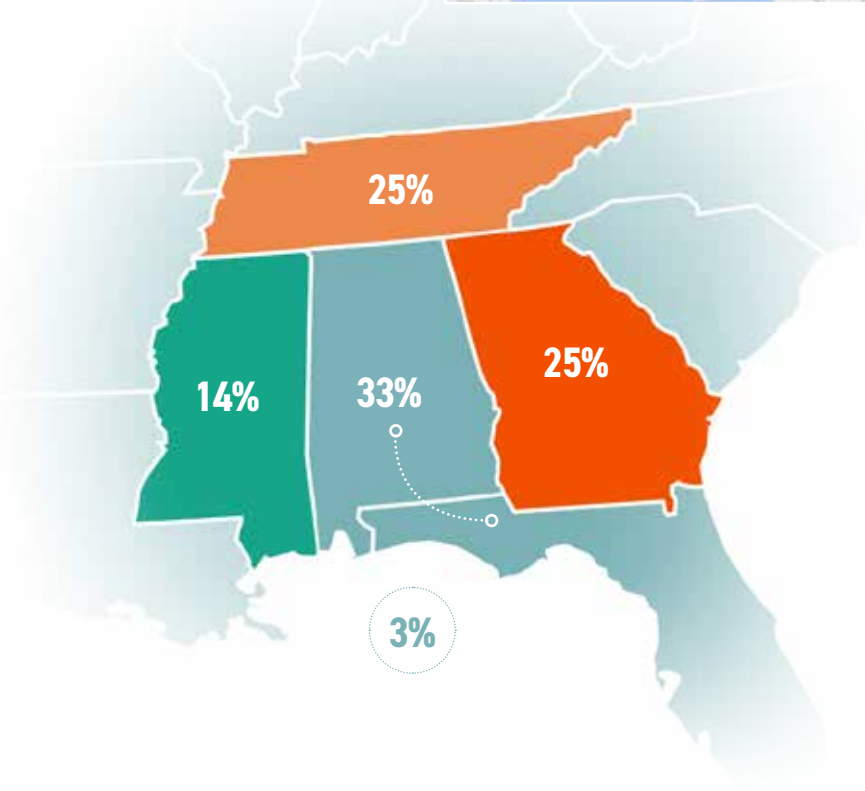
Our survey also attracted a sizable cohort with less than 5 years' experience – about 17% of the respondents. Since nurses entering the workforce have an average age of 30, years of experience don't necessarily correspond to age.

Geography - Response Target Area

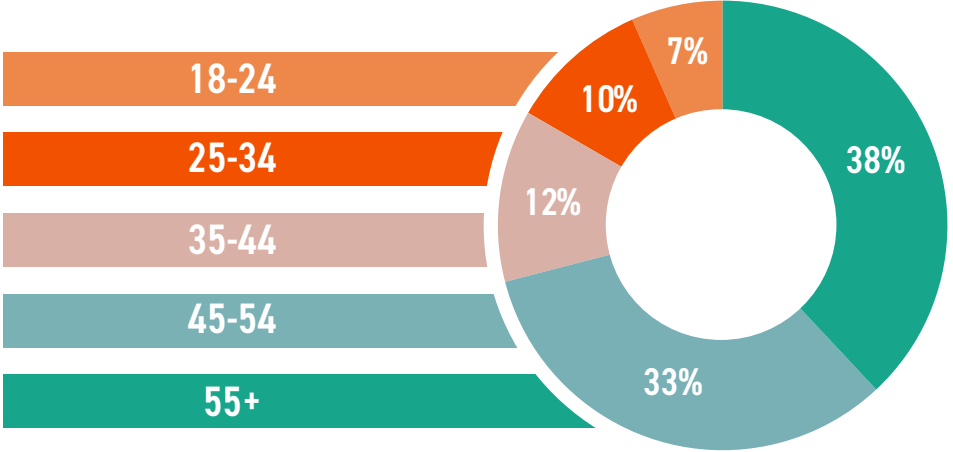
From July 11th through July 19th, 2019 we conducted a poll of nurses in the Southeast states of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia and northern Florida. We received a total of 1413 responses. There are 329,000 licensed nurses in the target area yielding a margin of error of +/-3.44%.

Response Target Area

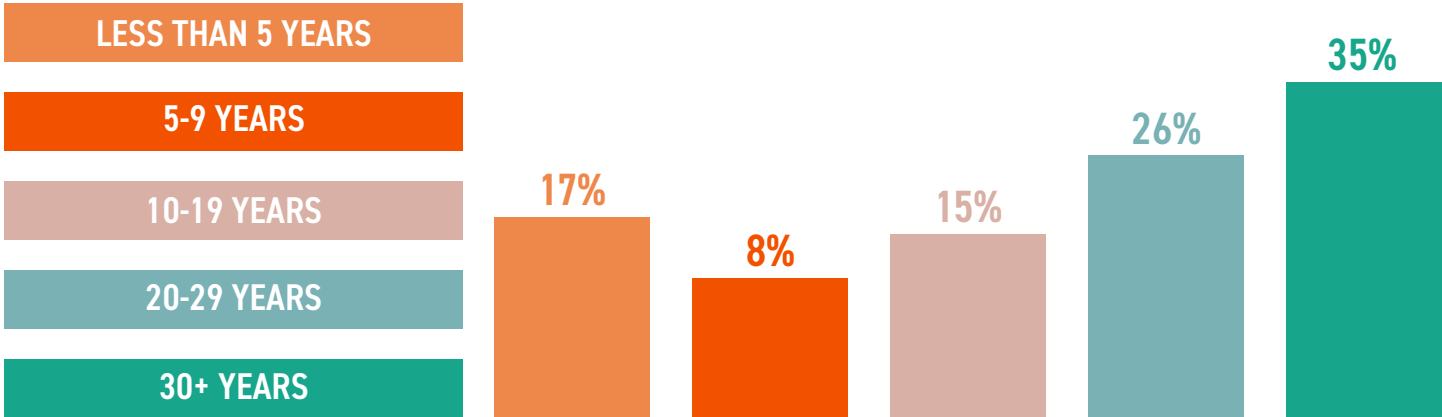
ALABAMA/NORTH FLORIDA	33%
GEORGIA	25%
TENNESSEE	25%
MISSISSIPPI	14%
OUT OF AREA	3%



Ages of Respondents

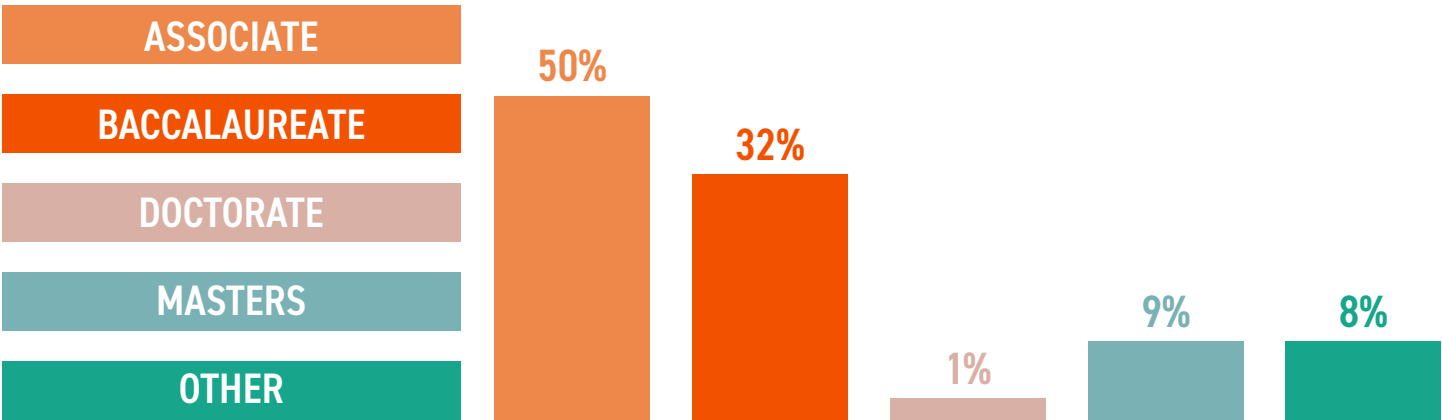


Nursing Years of Experience



Education and Licensure

Highest Degree Earned



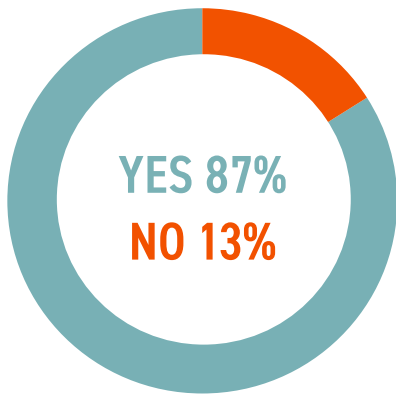
Highest Level of License Held





Current Employment

Are You Currently Working as a Nurse?



Most of the 13% of respondents not working are retired.



What Best Describes Your Workplace?



HOSPITAL
52%

While most respondents work in a hospital setting, many of the "other" responses work in education (22% of Other), correctional institutions (6.9%), insurance (5.64%) and many varied workplaces.



OTHER
28%



HOME HEALTH PROVIDER
7%



ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY
7%



TRAVEL NURSE
1%



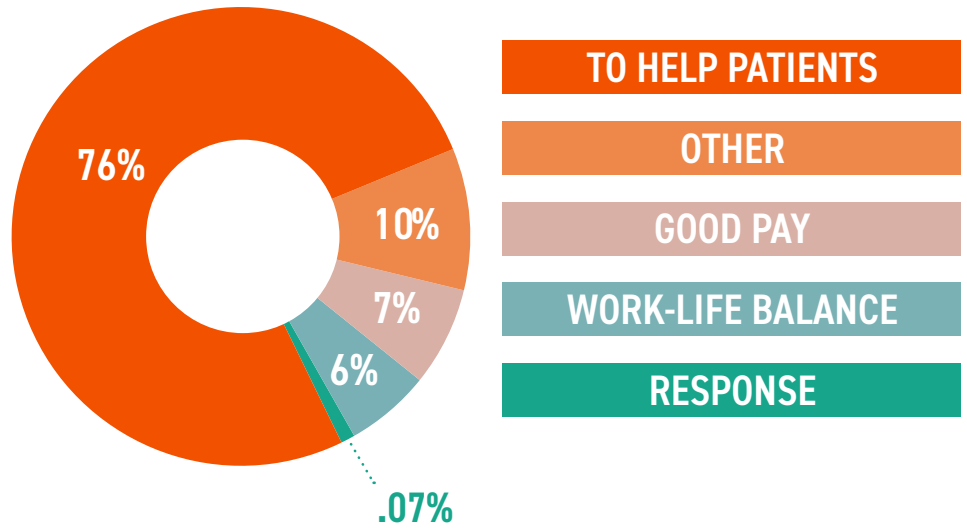
PRIVATE PRACTICE
5%



URGENT CARE OR FREESTANDING CLINIC
3%

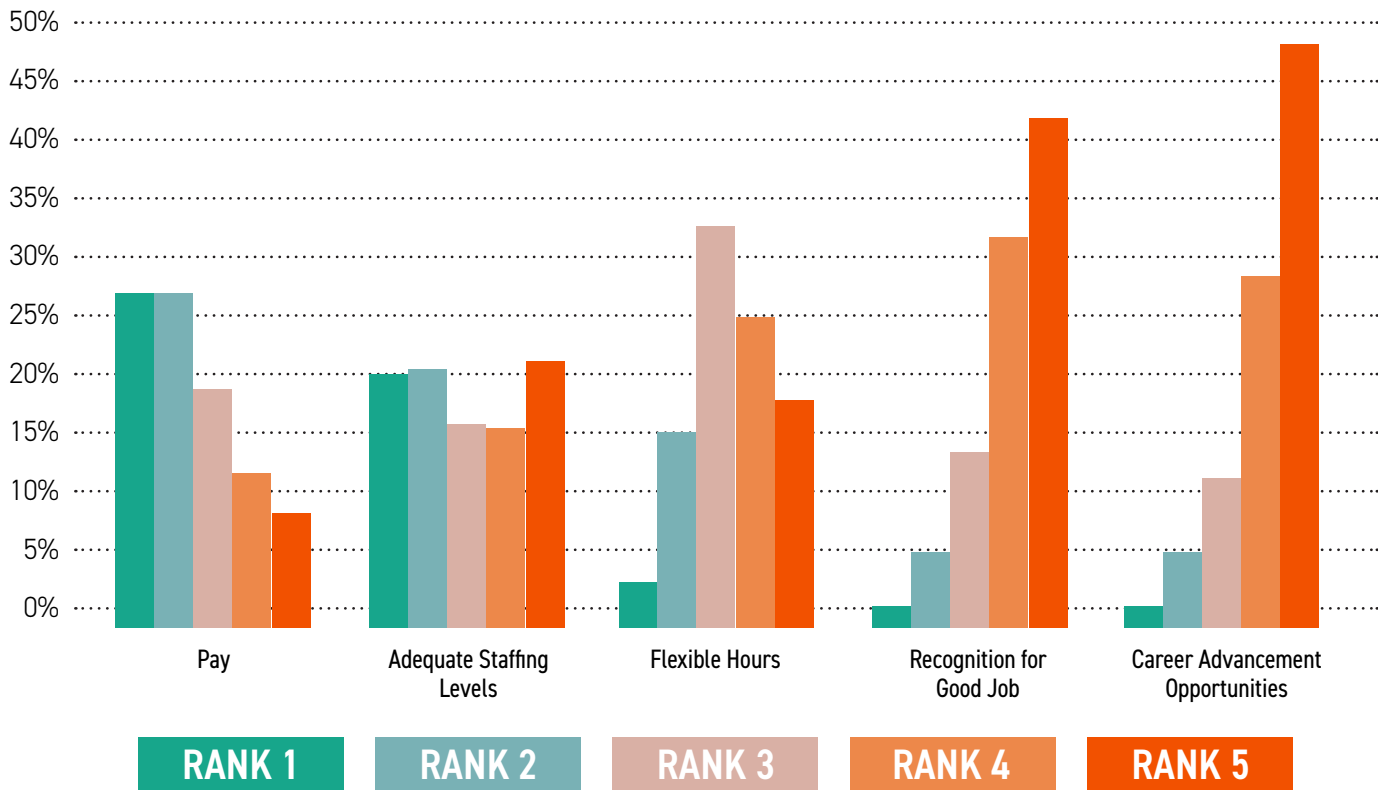
Why Did You Become a Nurse?

Most of the survey takers say they got into the profession to help patients. More than helping people, many of the "other" category listed personal reasons like "nursing is a higher calling for me." Several recalled situations in caring for family members that were ill or being inspired by relatives working as nurses. Employers would do well to recognize and celebrate these altruistic sentiments that drive their nurses.



The Workplace – What Nurses Say is Most Important

What are most important features you want from an employer?




We asked nurses to rank from 1-5 the most important job factors that they consider. Not surprisingly, pay was ranked number one by a plurality of nurses – 28%. An equal number of nurses ranked pay as number two consideration – 28%. **Three out of four nurses have pay in their top 3.** Even when factoring in age, pay was on top. Looking at this question from the filter of license held, slightly more RN's say they valued having adequate staffing levels first with pay running a close second.

But the next most popular concern amongst survey participants was having staffing levels high enough to allow nurses to spend more time with patients. 21.63% ranked this feature number one and 21.9% ranked it number 2. **2 out of 3 nurses ranked having enough staff to spend time with patients in their top 3.** Having seen that nurses got into the profession to help people (over 75%), it makes sense that spending adequate time with patients is a primary component of job satisfaction.

A 'flexible schedule' was ranked number 3 by 34% of survey takers. And 'praise and recognition for a job well done' was consistently in the bottom two slots by 77% of the population, along with career advancement opportunities.

It's important to note that praise and career advancement opportunities aren't unimportant to nurses, but that they rank them behind pay, adequate staffing levels and flexible hours – factors that impact both the professional and personal lives of nurses the most.



2 out of 3 nurses ranked having enough staff to spend time with patients in their top 3 most important job characteristics.

Why Nurses are Leaving Their Employers and (sometimes) the Nursing Profession



Most Nurses are Open or Actively Looking for Other Jobs

Over half of your workforce could be looking for a job – or at least open to new opportunities right now. 54% of survey respondents say they are either looking or open to other job offers. Let's dive in a little deeper to find out what's driving them to leave or at least causing their eyes to wander.

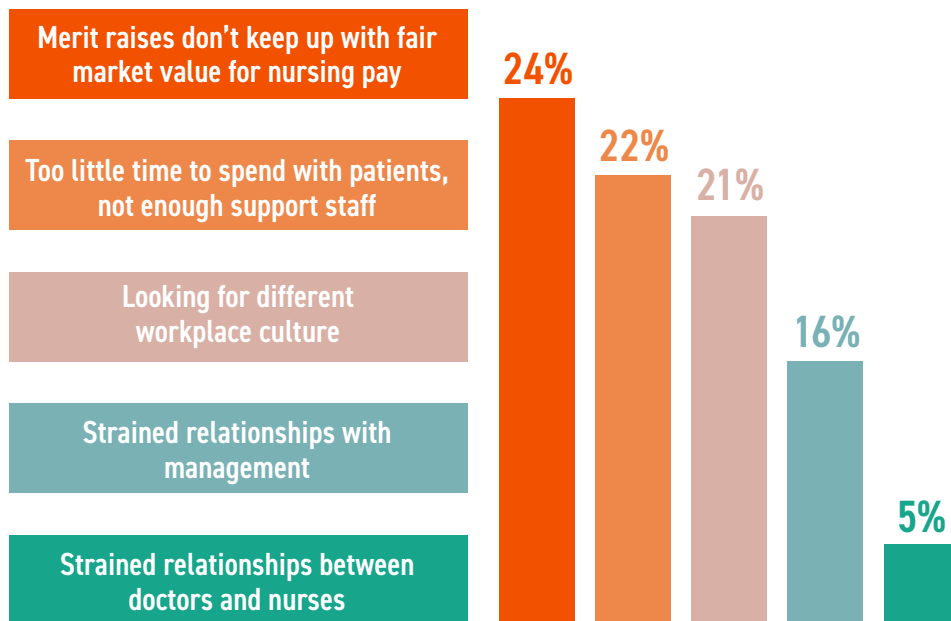
The top 5 reasons account for 88% of the responses. We also allowed respondents to enter their own text.

The remaining 12% of respondents chose to write out their answers. The write in responses varied but mainly centered around staffing shortages that made them feel overworked, nurses looking for a change of environment, specific problems with management and some feeling like they had to leave their company to advance in pay or responsibility.

Looking For or Open to Other Opportunities



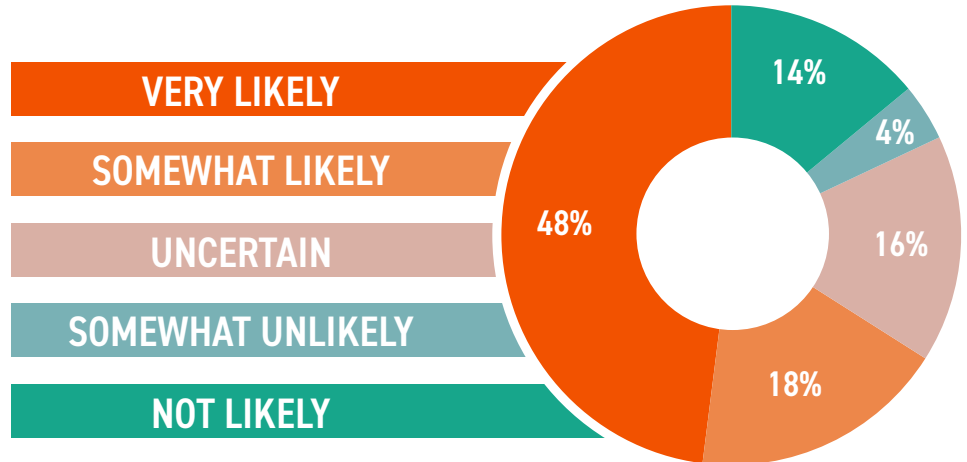
Reasons for Looking or Leaving



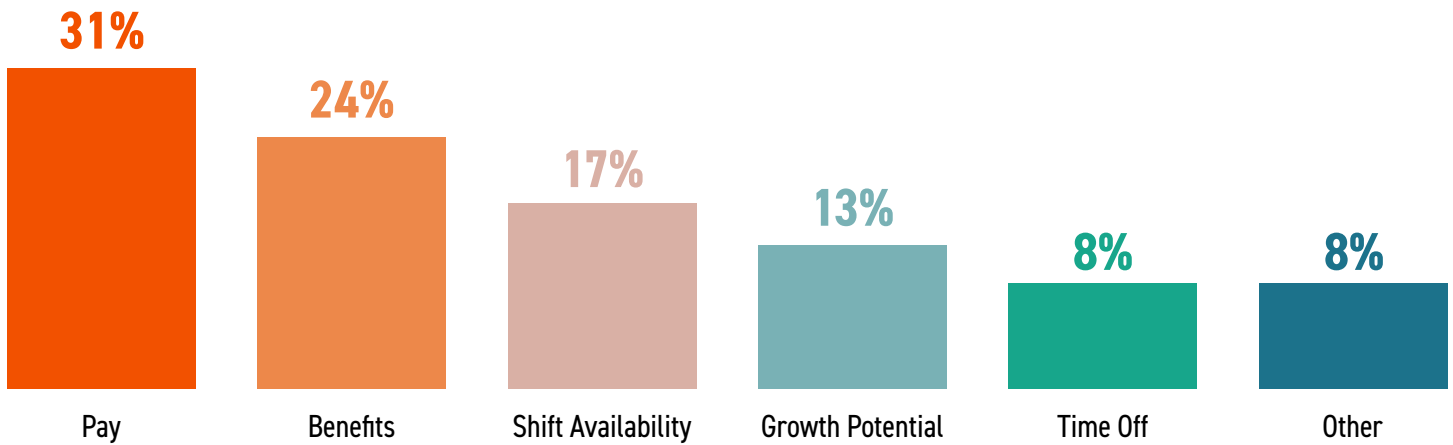
But How Likely Are Nurses to Change Jobs in the Next Year?

To get an idea of how quickly they were looking to move on from their present job, we asked them how likely they are to be at their present job one year from now. Two out of three nurses say they are somewhat likely or very likely to be in the same job in one year. But a third are uncertain or unlikely to remain for another year.

Likelihood of Being in the Same Job in One Year



When Looking for a Job, What is Most Important to You?



One third of nurses are uncertain or unlikely to remain in their current job for another year.

The Nursing Shortage is Real

87% of our survey takers believe there is a nursing shortage. Judging from their concerns about staffing shortages and lack of support at their present jobs, it's obvious that the shortage is something that affects most of them in their present jobs. These findings resemble a 2018 RN Network study that found 80% of nurses across the US believe there is a nursing shortage in their facility. And 88% of those nurses believe the shortage is impacting their workload.

Why Nurses Think their Colleagues are Leaving the Profession

The nursing shortage is only getting worse. The labor department estimates there will be 1.2 million vacancies by 2022ⁱⁱⁱ. Nurses are leaving the profession before retirement too – nationwide 49% of nurses have considered leaving according to the RN Network surveyⁱⁱⁱ.

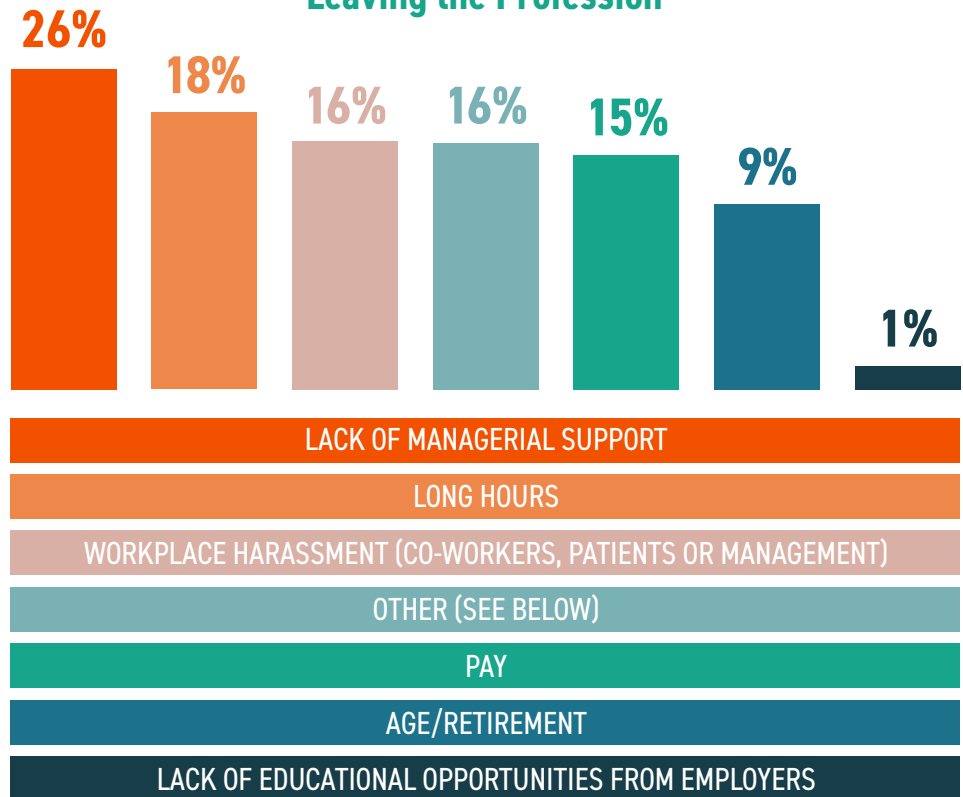
So why do our Southern nurses think their colleagues are getting out?

A strong 16% of respondents wrote in their reasons. The most numerous mentioned staffing shortages, while others keyed in on problems brought about by the shortages: increased workload, nurse to patient ratios out of balance and burnout.

Do You Believe There is a Shortage of Nurses?



What is the Primary Reason Nurses are Leaving the Profession



All Of The Above
Nurse To Patient Ratios
Staffing Shortage
Burnout
Workload
Unsafe Environment
 Poor Hours
 Culture
 High Stress
 Harassment

Now We Know – What to do About It



There is no shortage of articles and studies about the challenges facing the nursing profession and our health-care workplaces. But few are addressing what employers can do now to differentiate themselves and attract the right workforce. Many of our workplaces are addressing challenges with some unique approaches to work-life balance, building a positive and affirming culture, and offering some unique pay and benefits packages designed to meet the needs of their nurses.

With the pool of qualified applicants shrinking in comparison to the number of positions, employers will need to brand themselves to the nursing communities in their own back yard and look to nearby “feeder” markets to fill the need. Despite the importance of pay, healthy staff to patient ratios and work-schedule, workplace culture can be the difference-maker that make candidates chose you

over another employer. What is your brand in the nursing community? Whether or not you are telling your story, there is a story being told.

AMG Nursing Recruitment specializes in helping healthcare providers build their brand, craft their story and make an impact on nurse candidates across the Southeast. Nurses have so many choices, employers need to promote their unique culture and benefits to set themselves apart and attract the right candidates. We use a combination of technology and channels from social to search and other hyper-targeted digital advertising and sponsored content to get quality candidates to contact you. Your company is unique and so are our solutions. Email or call us today to see how we can deliver the nursing candidates you need to keep your patients well cared for. ●

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About AMG Nursing Recruitment

We are:

Expert marketers – we know how to tell your story, so nurses get to know you to choose the best long-term fit. We're not looking for short-term solutions that churn in 60 days. We're looking for the best fit for you – matching the right candidates to the right jobs and companies.

Accountable and Transparent – we let you know what's working with transparent reporting and attribution down to the campaign. We optimize our campaigns to dial in the best results for the money to drive the lowest application and per-hire cost for long-term hires.

Relationship Experts – our customers are more than just contacts. Our relationships with our customers come first. We commit to providing the best service and the best advice we can give to maximize your effectiveness. Our goal is to exceed your expectations in every aspect of our relationship with you and your business.



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Endnotes

- i. Minority Nurse; "Nursing Statistics"; <https://minoritynurse.com/nursing-statistics/>
- ii. Allied Staffing Network; "America's Nurses are Aging"; <https://alliedstaffingnetwork.com/americas-nurses-are-aging/>
- iii. RNnetwork: 2018 Portrait of a Modern Nurse Survey; https://rnnetwork.com/blog/rnnetwork-2018-portrait-of-a-modern-nurse-survey/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=11d2e719c6-MR_COPY_12&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-11d2e719c6-150885145