

## North Carolina Health Workforce Sentinel Network

### Findings Brief: Higher Education

In May through June 2023, healthcare employers in North Carolina reported on their current workforce needs related to staff vacancies, turnover, training/onboarding priorities, and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past 6 months (roughly Jan.-June 2023 ). This brief summarizes the responses from **higher education organizations**.

More findings and responses from other health care settings may be viewed at [nc.sentinelnetwork.org/findings/](https://nc.sentinelnetwork.org/findings/).

14 Higher Education/ Research Organization Survey Responses

### Highlights

In the last 6 months,

- Exceptionally long **vacancies** and **high turnover** occurred **for instructors of all professions** in higher education/research organizations
- Respondents noted the **challenge of hiring** instructors or full-time staff in any healthcare profession due to **lower pay** in the educational/research setting than in 'industry' or 'acute care'
- **Burnout worsened** for **46%** of respondents, **improved slightly** for **31%**, and **remained the same** for **23%**
- **Staff shortages**, due to the pandemic, and their impact on the ability to provide care **worsened** for **41%** of respondents, **remained the same** for **25%**, and **improved** for **32%** of respondents
- All respondents that provide **telehealth/virtual visits** reported doing so at the same or increased level as compared to one year ago

### Exceptionally long vacancies

Higher Education/Research Organizations noted long vacancies for:

- RNs (36% of respondents)
- CNA, LPN, Occupational Therapist, Respiratory Therapist, Surgical Tech (all 21%)

#### Reasons for Long Vacancies

*"Workforce shortages have hospitals and clinical facilities competing for the same resources. State educational institutions are not able to compete on salaries creating a cycle of the workplace needing more trained nurses but nurse training programs not able to expand due to lack of nurse educators! Increasing the salary funding for healthcare educators is desperately needed to help fill the RN nursing pipeline."*

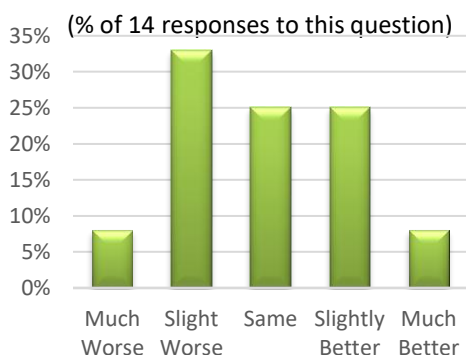
*"We do not pay enough to recruit these technologists as instructors because they are paid so much in the workforce."*

## NC Sentinel Findings Brief: Behavioral Health

### Top workforce needs that changes to policy, regulations, or payment could alleviate

Need	Suggested Changes
Increase base pay for all instructors or educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase part-time and full-time wages for instructors at all training institutions (4-year, community college, etc.)</li> <li>Award compensation for all hours worked for a dental hygienist [instructor]. They are only paid for a 6-hour shift per day of instruction even when we are there 7-9 hours per shift. Although hourly rates have increased, it would be good to receive compensation for all hours worked.</li> <li>Ask accrediting bodies to consider the use of simulation hours to meet some of the required clinical hours to reduce the burden on personnel.</li> </ul>
Increase workforce pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust the educational requirements to add a new program (length of time it takes and number of full-time faculty, for example).</li> <li>Increase marketing to improve community awareness of Medical Assistants and Surgical Techs</li> <li>Remove requirement for program coordinator at long-term care facility to have 2 years experience in long-term care</li> </ul>

In the past 6 months, has the impact of staff shortages on your facility's capacity to provide care gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?

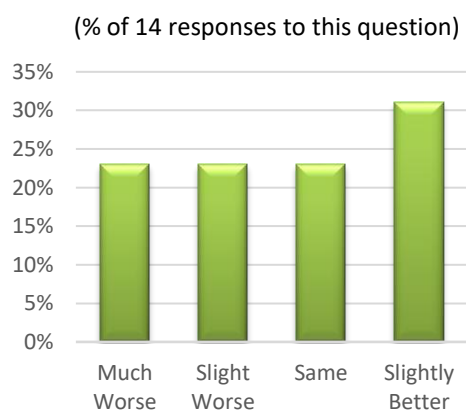


**[Slightly Worse]** *"Our existing faculty is experiencing burnout and are tired and frustrated. They do not have the energy to improve teaching strategies. Therefore, instruction has suffered."*

*"Unable to grow programs and/or focus on improving programs that can lead to increased retention and graduation."*

**[Slightly Better]** *"Our program has continued to grow, and we have been able to hire more faculty to meet student needs."*

In the past 6 months, has burnout as a workforce issue at your facility gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?



**[Much worse]** *"Pay is an enormous issue. We are instructors, and with our years of service, we all could be making a lot more (up to \$20,000/year more). We see our associates earning substantial raises (20%), our cost of living is up 8.7%, and we have not had any raises to compete. It's disheartening and frustrating."*

**[Slightly Better]** *"We have worked to provide additional flextime for faculty as a recruitment tool."*

#### Data Limitations

Findings presented in the brief represent the responses from a convenience sample of health system administrators who voluntarily participated in the Summer 2023 Sentinel Network questionnaire (Jan.-June 2023). Generalizability of these findings to the broader North Carolina health care system may be limited.

#### About the North Carolina 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 needs for healthcare workers; visit:

<https://nc.sentinelnetwork.org/> Questions? Contact: [nc@sentinelnetwork.org](mailto:nc@sentinelnetwork.org)