

North Carolina Health Workforce Sentinel Network *Findings Brief: Long Term Care*

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 **long term care facilities**.

More findings and responses from other health care settings may be viewed at nc.sentinelnetwork.org/findings/.

12 Long Term Care Responses	7	Nursing home or skilled nursing facility
	5	Other nursing/personal care facility

Highlights

- In the last 6 months,
 - Exceptionally long **vacancies** and **turnover** for **certified nurse assistants (CNAs)** and **licensed practical nurses (LPNs)** in nursing home and skilled nursing facilities
 - Exceptionally long **vacancies** and **turnover registered nurses (RNs)** in other nursing/personal care facilities.
 - Respondents noted **challenges** with **finding enough qualified candidates** while **competing with hospitals or contract agencies that offer higher pay for the positions noted above**
 - **50%** of respondents noted **burnout improved** during the last 6 months, **17%** of respondents reported **burnout remains the same** during the last 6 months, and **33%** of respondents indicated **burnout worsened** during the last
 - **Impact of staff shortages** due to the pandemic is **slightly better** for **55%** of respondents **and the same** for **27%** with the remaining **9%** reporting **much better** and **7%** **slightly worse**

Exceptionally long vacancies

Reasons for Vacancies

by Long Term Care Facility Type

Nursing home or skilled nursing facility

- CNAs (57%)
- LPNs (57%)

Other nursing/personal care facility

- RNs (40%)

“There's a lack of available nursing assistants [CNAs] in our area to recruit. If we are able to recruit and onboard an employee, there are many options in the community and by travel that they can leave immediately and abruptly for; often, without notice.”

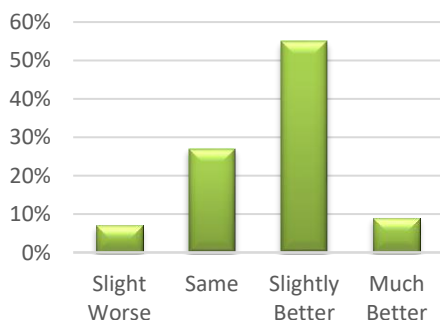
“I wish I knew why. Ever since the Covid pandemic, we have struggled with finding RNs. Some have gone to the hospital to work, others home health.”

“There is a shortage of qualified [LPN] candidates. Contract staffing offered more financial benefits. Being in a rural community, it's challenging to compete with larger urban areas and ensure competitive wages.”

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

Need	Suggested Changes
Increase staff wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase reimbursement rate so we can pay higher wages • Increase Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement for rural areas • Update wage analysis studies
Increased workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for individuals to go into health-related careers. • Increase pay for faculty so professionals will choose that path instead of direct practice for a higher wage • Decrease the amount of time it takes to obtain CNA certification for those that have their CNAs but let them lapse. • Subsidize childcare

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 Better] “We increased our CNA wage exponentially higher and that is starting to attract employees, but mostly summer staff that will be back in school in the fall.”

[Same] “Staff are wonderful with patients, but just difficult with coworkers. Lack of empathy for the people in the same situation that they are in.”

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



[Slightly Worse] “Employees are tired of having to cover for vacancies. They question things that are not related to their job, and are critical of new ideas or implementation that will help make their work easier.”

“Inability to recruit [makes burnout slightly worse].”

[Slightly better] “Not as much stress as it relates to the COVID work environment.”

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.

To view an interactive version of all responses from all types of health care organizations and to join the network to provide information on your organization’s workforce needs and challenges, visit: <https://nc.sentinelnetwork.org/>

Questions? Contact: nc@sentinelnetwork.org