

# 2017 nursing trends and salary survey results: PART 1

Almost 6,000 clinical nurses and nurse managers told us who they are, what they do, and what they think.

By Meaghan O’Keeffe, BSN, RN

**W**hat would you get if you took a snapshot of nursing? To answer that question, *American Nurse Today* surveyed thousands of nurses to examine a variety of nursing trends. The goal of the survey was not just to collect salary data, but also to unearth valuable information about what keeps nurses satisfied, what nurses value, and how they perceive their work environments. In short, what do nurses need and why do they stay?

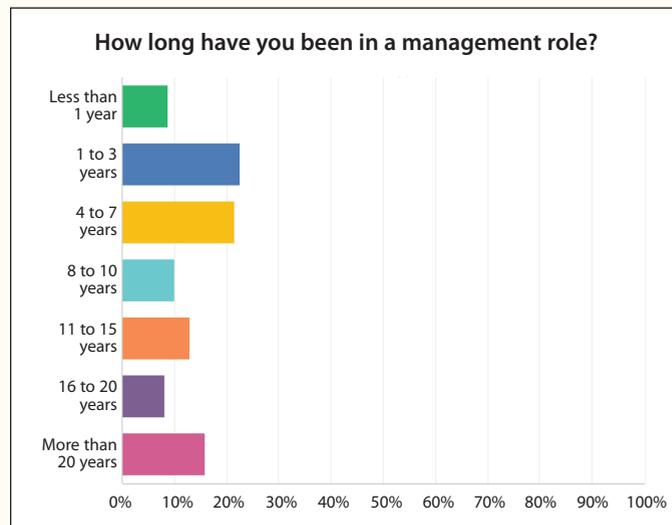
This comprehensive survey considered managers and clinicians separately and as a group, broadening its usefulness in understanding what’s important to nurses at all levels of the profession. Nearly 6,000 nurses took the survey between June and August 2017—an outstanding response that shows a deep level of engagement.

This, the first of a two-part report, focuses on who nurses are, what keeps them in the profession, and where employers might want to focus their efforts in retaining engaged and satisfied nurses.

## Manager metrics

Managers who responded to the survey report a wide range in years worked. Most say they’ve been in a management role either between 1 and 10 years (44%) or more than 10 years (37%).

Most respondents manage a budget from \$100,000 to \$250,000, followed



## Key takeaways

**87.2%** of respondents would still become a nurse.

**62%** of respondents say their workload has increased over the last year.

**60%** of managers say recruiting RNs in the past 12 months has been difficult.

**48%** of clinicians who responded are certified in their specialty.

**18%** of managers who responded are certified in nursing leadership.

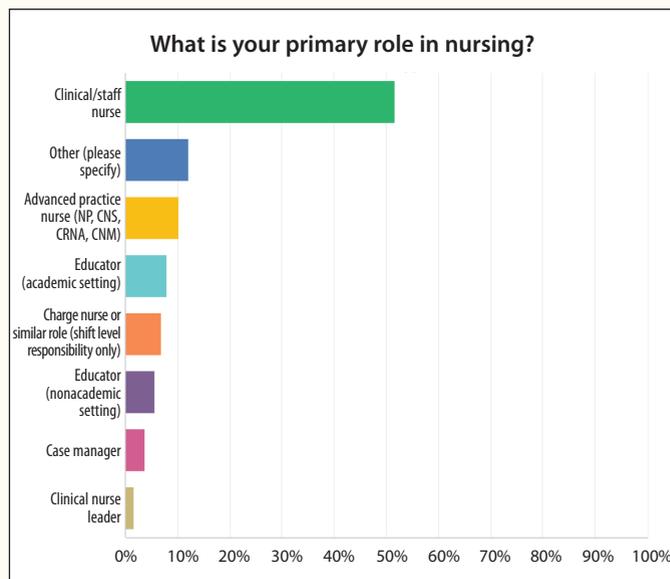
by \$250,001 to \$500,000. (However, nearly half preferred not to answer.)

Over half (57%) say they aren’t eligible for a bonus. Of those who received a bonus, 21% say it was nondiscretionary, 16% say it was discretionary, and 6% say it was both.

## Clinician workforce demographics

### Primary nursing role

Just slightly more than 50% of clinicians say they work as a clinical or staff nurse, and 10% work as advanced practice RNs. Other roles identified include educators in both academic and nonacademic settings, charge nurses, case managers, and clinical nurse leaders.



### Nursing shift stats

Most of the responding nurses work the day shift only (82% of managers and 71% of clinicians); 13.5% of clinicians report working nights only; and 10% rotate between the day and night shift. (Only 9% of managers rotate between two shifts; 4% rotate among three shifts.)

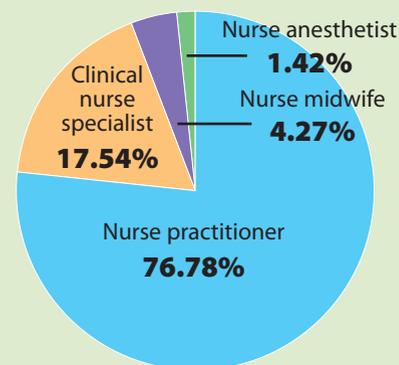
In all, 40% of clinicians who responded said they work 12-hour shifts on a regular basis.

### Hours worked (per week)

Fewer than 40	11.14%
40-45	35.44%
46-50	24.82%
51-55	10.84%
56-60	10.19%
More than 60	7.57%

### APRN breakdown

Here's a breakdown of advanced practice RN (APRN) specialties among respondents.



### Salary and benefits

Both clinicians and managers shared information about their current salary, the raises they've received, and the benefits offered by their employers.

#### Salary

When asked how their current salary compared to the prior year's, 59% reported a salary increase, 33% said their salary remained the same, and 8% said their salary decreased.

#### Raises

Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) report having received a raise within the last 18 months; 15% say it's been 2 or more years since they received a raise.

#### Benefits

When asked about health insurance and paid time off, 82% of nurses report receiving both; 75% receive retirement contributions and dental insurance.

### Employment status

- 40%** report working 12-hour shifts
- 84%** report working full-time
- 10%** report working part-time

About 50% report education funds (including tuition reimbursement) and disability insurance.

In all, 47% of clinicians report receiving additional compensation for shift work, 37% for education level, 36% for certification, 26% for serving as a preceptor.

### Open positions and recruitment trends

**53%** of managers say they've had an increase in open positions in the past 12 months.

**60%** of managers say recruiting RNs in the past 12 months has been difficult.

## TOP 10 primary specialties

More than half (55%) of clinicians report working in acute care, and 52% are staff nurses. Top primary specialties reported by survey respondents are:

- 1 Medical/surgical
- 2 Perioperative services (operating room, postanesthesia care unit)
- 3 Critical care
- 4 Psychiatric/mental health
- 5 Women's health/obstetrics/gynecology
- 6 Pediatrics
- 7 Cardiovascular
- 8 Emergency care
- 9 Academic education
- 10 School nursing

tor, and 25% for a clinical ladder. (Respondents could choose more than one.)

### Turnover trends

Almost 35% of nurses report having worked for their current employer for 1 to 5 years.

### Reported salary

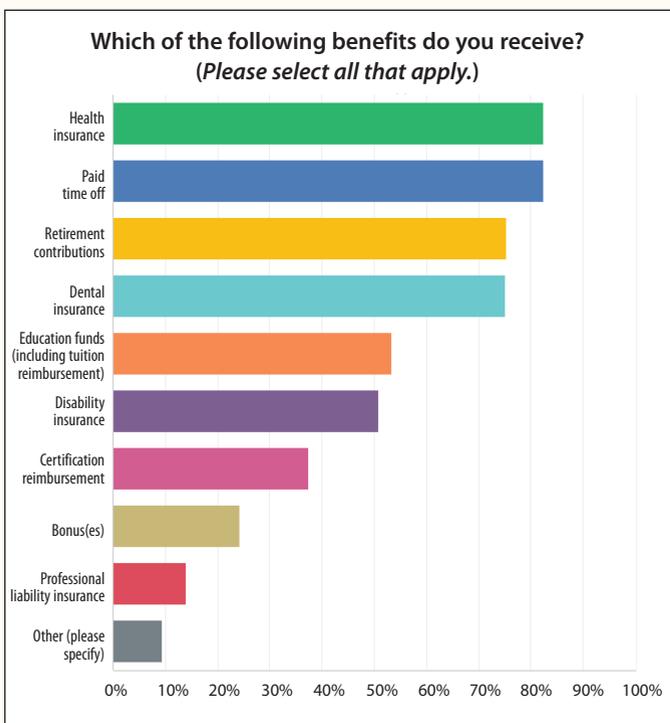
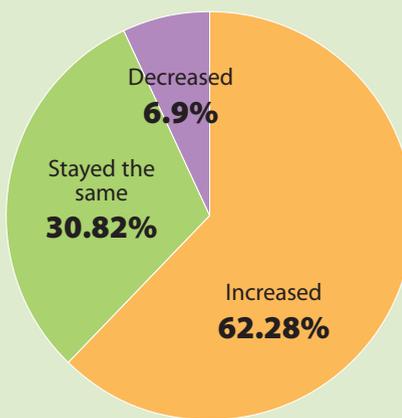
Less than \$40k	6.9%
\$40-\$59k	21.07%
\$60-\$79k	29.63%
\$80-\$99k	23.26%
\$100-\$120k	11.15%
\$120+k	7.99%

### Future employment plans

When asked about their employment plans, 10% of respondents say they plan to stay with their employer for less than a year; 46% say they plan to stay for 5 or more years. Of those who intend to leave within a year, 76% are currently seeking a job with another employer or plan to do so within the next 3 months.

For nurses who intend to stay with their employer, the two biggest factors that they report would motivate them to take a job with a new employer are a salary increase and a better work environment.

### Change in workload in the past year (clinicians and managers)



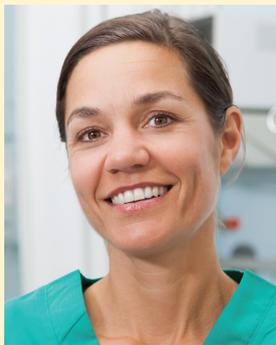
### Job satisfaction

Nurses were asked to complete a satisfaction question, rating a variety of factors related to job satisfaction (on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not satisfied and 5 being totally satisfied). Nurse

### Length of time with current employer

Less than 1 year	10.79%
1-5 years	34.36%
6-10 years	17.88%
11-20 years	21.38%
21-35 years	12.86%
More than 35 years	2.73%

## Your voice: What keeps nurses most satisfied?



In an open-response question, nurses were asked to identify the single most important factor related to job satisfaction. The most common themes included caring for patients, making a difference in patients' lives, and providing quality care. Other themes were schedule flexibility, helping nursing students and new nurses grow, opportunities for career advancement, and the variety of nursing roles available. Here's a small sample of those comments.

- "My nursing colleagues who are both in education settings and in various practice settings. They are a wonderful support, encouragement, and motivation to continue to learn and improve."
- "Knowing that [as a] quality-assurance nurse in public

health...the funding through contracts that I support [will] provide access to care and improved health by direct care and referral for community resources."

- "The opportunity to learn something new. It can occur serendipitously on the job, at a seminar, or through personal research."
- "I LOVE mentoring and teaching new nurses. I will continue teaching for a university once I retire from my hospital job."
- "Health, happiness, and well-being of my staff."
- "My research making a difference in public policy to provide nurses with adequate staff and resources to care for patients."
- "Helping a patient get well or die with dignity."
- "Nurses who are committed to advancing the practice, and who demonstrate professionalism."
- "Knowing that I can have a positive impact on the health of one person, one family, one community, one hospital, one healthcare system, one nation."
- "I love the art & science of nursing...best career decision I made."

managers were asked to do the same in a separate question geared toward a management role.

Among the answer choices, nurses report being most satisfied with their relationships with coworkers (with a weighted average of 3.9) and non-nurse colleagues, such as respiratory therapists and physical therapists (with a weighted average of 3.8). They are least satisfied with their salary/compensation,

opportunities for organizational advancement, and upper-management support (each with a weighted average score of 2.9). When it comes to salary, even with a low weighted average, 64% rate their satisfaction between 3 and 5 on the scale (satisfied to totally satisfied). In comparison, consider a Medscape physician compensation survey done in early 2017, in which an average of 54% of physicians reported they felt that they were fairly compensated.

### Retirement trends

**35%** of the nurses who responded said they plan to retire between 2018 and 2025.

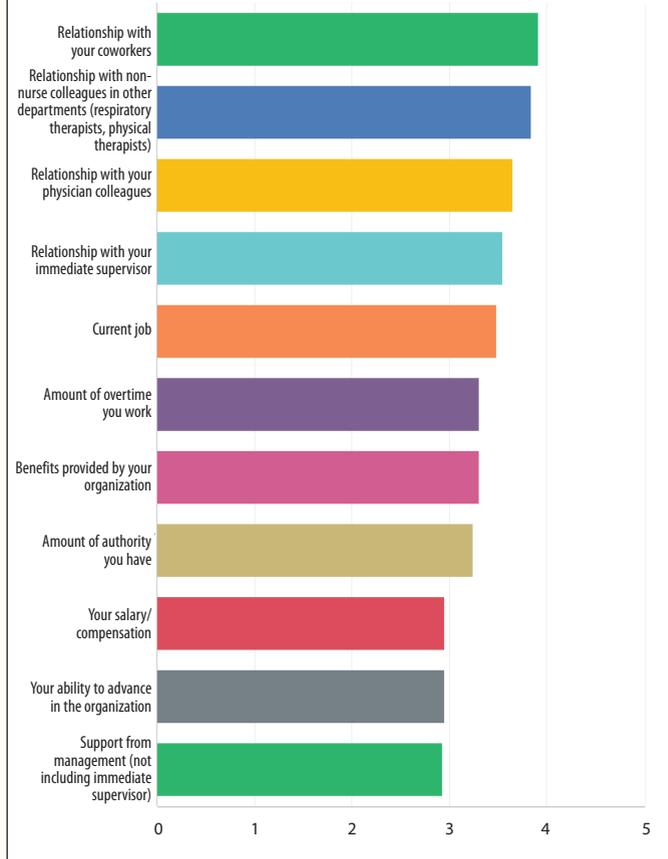
Nearly **40%** of respondents plan to retire between the ages of 61 and 65, and **35%** between the ages of 66 and 70.

### We asked:

If you had to do it all over again, would you still become a nurse?

**87.2%** said yes!

We asked clinicians, "How satisfied are you with the following, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being totally satisfied?"



## Your voice: What are nurses' challenges?



In an open-response question, we asked nurses to name the top three challenges in their practice. Time, staffing, and people issues, such as lack of manager support, topped the list. Here are a few of their comments.

- "Incivility, new evidence taking forever to be implemented at the bedside, nurses keep getting additional responsibilities."
- "Endless, needless, repetitive, soul-sucking documentation, balancing productivity with quality of care, a screwed-up healthcare system that is built to impede communication"

by not employing at least a minimal universal health record starting with, say, a medication record."

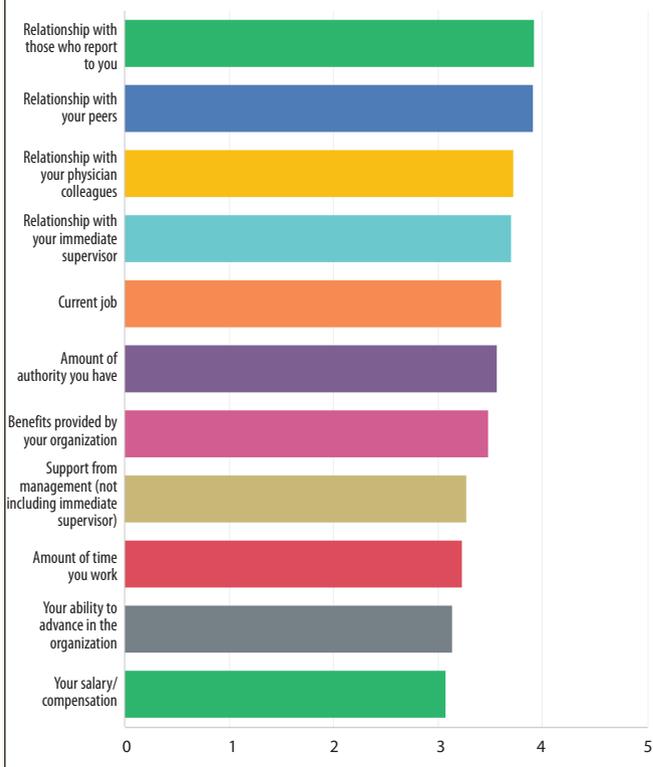
- "High census, high acuity, stress."
- "Lack of managerial support, staffing issues, short stays."
- "On night shift, not as many resources readily available (example: physicians on the unit), sleep deprivation, too much time spent charting: Required to chart more and more. Less patient care time and then being reprimanded for overtime."
- "Poor staffing, hostile work environment, lack of support from management."
- "Not enough staff, not enough time, no support from management."
- "Bullying, bullying, bullying."
- "Communication, communication, communication."
- "Staffing, staffing, and staffing."

Nurse managers report a high level of satisfaction with their relationships with those who report to them (a weighted average of 3.9) and with their peers (a weighted average of 3.9). Among the other answer choices, they say they're least satisfied with the amount of time worked, opportunities for advancement within the organization, and salary/compensation (weighted average of 3.2, 3.1, and 3, respectively).

### Top three most valued job factors for clinicians:

- 1 Salary
- 2 Patient care
- 3 Flexible hours

We asked managers, "How satisfied are you with the following, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being totally satisfied?"



### Nurse respondent demographics

The sample of nurses who responded to the survey comprise a fairly even split across the country. Approximately 25% live in the Midwest, 27% in the Northeast, 29% in the South, and 20% in the West. The sample was predominantly female (91%). When asked about ethnicity, 76% identify as white/non-Hispanic, 7% as black/African American, 5% as Asian, and 4% as Hispanic; 6% chose not to select an ethnicity. A small margin (less than 2%) identify as Native American or Native Pacific Islander.

### Years of experience

42% of survey respondents have worked as a nurse for 25 years or more.

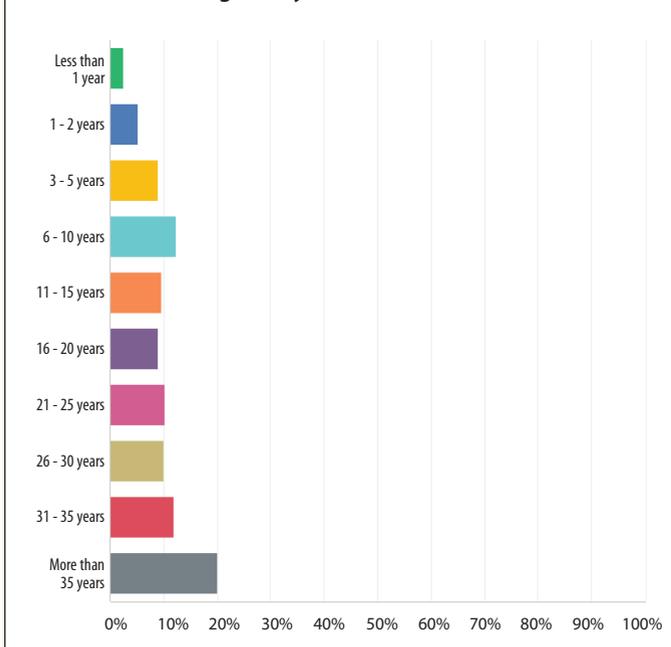
### Age of nurse respondents

The ages of survey participants range from 20 to 89! More than half are over age 50.

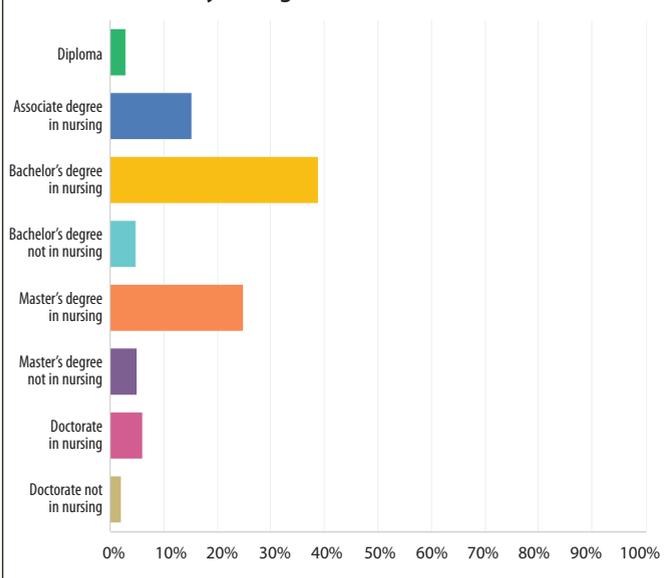
### Education/certification

Close to 40% of survey respondents

### How long have you worked as a nurse?



### What is your highest level of education?



### Age of respondents

20-25	2.1%
26-30	6.28%
31-35	7.86%
36-40	8.67%
41-45	10.18%
46-50	11.45%
51-55	15.83%
56-60	18.82%
61-65	13.89%
66-70	3.52%
71-75	1.06%
76-80	0.28%
81-85	0.06%
86-89	0.02%

have a bachelor's degree in nursing; 25% hold a master's degree in nursing, and 6% have a doctorate in nursing. Approximately 18% report being currently in school, while 13% plan to return to school within the next 6 months. Two-thirds of those who are either currently in school or have plans to return report they will be working toward a graduate degree in nursing, while 18% are pursuing or plan to pursue an undergraduate degree.

Only 18% of managers report being certified in nursing leadership; many of those hold certification from the American Nurses Credentialing

Center (42%), followed by certification from the American Organization of Nurse Executives (17%). Nearly half of clinicians (48%) report being certified in their specialty.

### Thank you!

Thank you to all who completed the survey. Watch for more results in part 2, which will explore nurse lifestyle factors, healthy work environments, staffing trends, and the future of nursing. ★

Meaghan O'Keeffe is a freelance writer and clinical editor based in Framingham, Massachusetts.

