

The cost of nurse turnover in 24 numbers

Nurse recruitment and retention is top of mind for every hospital and health system executive given that the shortage of registered nurses is only expected to intensify.

The 2023 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report features input from 273 hospitals in 35 states on registered nurse turnover, retention, vacancy rates, recruitment metrics and staffing strategies.

It found the average cost of turnover for one staff RN increased 13.5 percent from 2021 to 2022, to \$52,350, among other dollar figures and statistics that are helpful to understand the financial implications of one of healthcare's most challenging labor disruptions.

Here are 24 numbers that illustrate the cost of nurse turnover, according to the most recent edition of the report, which can be found in full [here](#).

1. In 2022, the turnover rate for staff RNs decreased by **4.6 percent**, resulting in a national average of **22.5 percent**.
2. The average cost of turnover for a staff RN is **\$52,350**, with the range averaging **\$40,200 to \$64,500**. This is up from the average cost of turnover for an RN in 2021, which was **\$46,100**.
3. Each percent change in RN turnover will cost or save the average hospital **\$380,600** per year.
4. **Fifty-one percent** of respondents said the RN vacancy rate in their hospital tops **15 percent**; **5 percent** said they have an RN vacancy rate of less than **5 percent**.
5. The RN Recruitment Difficulty Index ranges from **61 to 120 days**, meaning it essentially takes at least two months or up to four months to recruit an experienced RN. Throughout 2022, all specialties experienced an increase in time-to-fill with the exception of labor and delivery RNs.
6. For every **20 travel RNs** eliminated, a hospital can save **\$3,140,000** on average. Every RN hired saves **\$157,000**.
7. From 2021 to 2022, the percent change in regional RN turnover ranged from **0.7 percent to -7.9 percent**. The West saw the high end of this range while the North Central region saw the low end.
8. Over the past five years, RNs in step down, emergency services, behavioral health and telemetry were most mobile with a cumulative turnover rate between **108.7 percent and 115.2 percent**. "Essentially, these departments will turn over their entire RN staff in less than five years," the report states.
9. RNs in surgical services, pediatrics and women's health were less mobile, with 2022 turnover rates of **16 percent, 17.1 percent and 17.2 percent**, respectively, compared to the national average of **22.5 percent**.

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