

18 MONTH PULSE REPORT: Nursing Spotlight

OCTOBER 2023

digital ethnography
research | strategy



For over 14 years, Feedback has conducted digital ethnographic research studies across various industries, uncovering actionable insights from extensive online discussions. Our expertise extends to healthcare domains, where we recently analyzed the nuances of nurses' discussions, along with insights from related fields to provide context and validation within the broader industry and consumer landscape. **This report illuminates insights about nurses in today's workforce.**

“There is going to be a deeply terrifying shortage coming.”

—Nurses Forecasting Organizing & Exodus,
March 2022 – September 2023

Social Data Pool

Millions of active social media users are nurses.

Data Analyzed

Hundreds of thousands of discussions and engagements from the past 18 months.

Top Channels



KEY TOPIC #1 | UNIONIZATION

Conversations transition from venting to active idea sharing and solidarity:

“If there aren't any nurses willing to cross the picket line the entire hospital grinds to a halt...”

KEY TOPIC #2 | LABOR

Executive decisions can exacerbate nurses' discontent:

“I fully expect to be paid for the effort I give, not a damn pizza party.”

KEY TOPIC #3 | BURNOUT

Discussions among nurses consistently revolve around burnout:

“There won't ever be an over saturation because burn out is so high, and I don't foresee admin anywhere choosing to do better by their nursing staff.”

KEY TOPIC #4 | SHORTAGES

Active discussions about leaving the hospital setting or nursing profession altogether:

“I want to leave nursing, and leave it far behind.”

Unlock the Power of Digital Ethnography to Empower Your Workforce.

Feedback's proficiency in digital ethnography provides vital insights for decision-makers, enabling them to shape operational, marketing, and communication strategies. Customized digital ethnography for your organization has the potential to transform key performance indicators (KPIs). **Key Workforce Statistics from Becker's Hospital Review:**

Average Cost of Turnover for 1 Staff RN: **\$52,300**

Each % change in RN turnover costs or saves a hospital: **~\$380,600 per year**

Every 20 Travel RNs eliminated saves a hospital: **~\$3,140,000**

Contact us.

INSIGHTS | UNIONIZATION & LABOR

Overview:

- Nursing union discussions span the nation, but the shift towards active unions is regionally diverse.
- Recent shifts in unionization are reshaping regions, with strikes gaining momentum.

NURSE QUOTE | *"Somewhere around 18 to 20% of nurses in the US are unionized, mostly concentrated on the west coast (CA, OR, WA), upper Midwest (MN, MI, Chicago area) and northeast (MA, NY, VT, PA, NJ mostly). Some southern states don't have unions."*

NURSE QUOTE | *"We just did strike. It didn't do sh*t. The pay raises we asked for would've cost \$100m over three years. They spent \$40m on scabs for three days. Meanwhile our CEO makes \$3.3m a year, a number that's up 96% over the last 2 years. Hospitals unfortunately are just businesses to the people who run them, so if they can milk money out of grandma they're gonna keep tugging til there's nothing left and they're gonna spend as little money as possible doing it."*

Issues:

- Undesirable working conditions drive loyal nurses toward unionization.
- Frustration with hospital budget priorities and executive compensation is mounting.
- Nurses are evolving from venting to organized idea sharing and solidarity.

NURSE QUOTE | *"If there aren't any nurses willing to cross the picket line the entire hospital grinds to a halt and the greedy execs will cave all that more quickly."*



NURSE QUOTE | *"I resent the shell games hospitals play with their 'budgets'. If my car needs tires, my tank is empty and my kids aren't getting fed, I don't give myself a 'bonus' steak dinner, but if my hospital has old, broken equipment, short staffing and unhappy patients and caregivers, my CEO magically 'earned' a bonus last year? Please help me understand. I just want healthcare to make sense. Isn't bad enough that our society values professional athletes to the tune of millions, yet our teachers helping to raise our children can't even write off the school supplies they buy to do their job? I'm just tired of the upside down priorities."*

Transformation:

- Recent unionization victories inspire nurses to seek better working conditions.
- Leadership decisions prompting even non-unionized nurses to reconsider unionization.
- The choice for many nurses becoming clear: solidarity or industry departure.

NURSE QUOTE | *"During our recent strike many of our current travel RNs walked out with us in support. Refused to cross at the risk of their current contracts. Hospital basically shut down to a skeleton crew. Divert etc."*

NURSE QUOTE | *"Alone you beg. Together you bargain."*

 "Alone you beg.
Together you bargain." 

—Nurse on social media

INSIGHTS | BURNOUT & SHORTAGES

Overview:

- Rising concerns and discussions about the state of nursing, especially in the hospital setting.
- Growing consensus on the challenges in the nursing profession.
- Anticipation of "terrifying shortages" if conditions don't change.

NURSE QUOTE | *"There is going to be a deeply terrifying shortage coming. Of the working nurses in the US 40% are within 7 years of retirement. Of the new nurses coming into the field 30% have an attrition rate due to dissatisfaction or overwork."*

Issues:

- Nurses discuss leaving hospital settings due to job dissatisfaction and burnout.
- Leadership and management decisions scrutinized for their role in exacerbating challenges faced by nurses.
- Nurses discuss profession oversaturation as a myth.
- Dissatisfaction with rewarding travel nurses over loyal staff.
- Skepticism about mid-level responsibility expansion and its impact on patient care quality.

NURSE QUOTE | *"I want to leave nursing, and leave it far behind. It also terrifies me to be associated with NP's that have virtually no patient care experience..."*

NURSE QUOTE | *"It shouldn't surprise you to know that there are many other nursing specialties outside of the hospital. Home Health. Long Term Care, Physician clinics, Workman's Comp. Tele-triage. Public Health, Research clinicians..."*

Transformation:

- A demand for improved working conditions and fair compensation.
- A call for more thoughtful, informed communication with nurses.
- Prioritize job satisfaction, retention, and quality recruitment.
- Address systemic challenges for long-term professional sustainability.

NURSE QUOTE | *"Almost every RN I know is planning an escape to either a different field or to become an NP, PA, Crna, etc."*



At Feedback, we believe persistently illuminating, understanding, and advocating for populations will empower decision-makers and improve outcomes. Together, we can work to identify the specific workforce challenges and opportunities that your organization faces and align them with your goals for a more successful future. **Contact us today.**

Feedback

digital ethnography | research | strategy

a CareStarter company