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← BACKGROUND

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had substantial impacts on New York’s health care delivery system as well as on its health workforce
- Health professions education programs faced pandemic-related disruptions that jeopardized students’ ability to meet educational program requirements
- Health care providers reported growing difficulty recruiting and retaining patient-care staff in all health care settings
- The purpose of the study was to:
 - Understand health workforce recruitment and retention difficulties in and around New York City (NYC)
 - Identify ways in which the pandemic contributed to these issues
 - Determine strategies used by health care providers to attract and retain workers

⚙️ METHODS

- A mixed-methods approach was used
 - Key informant interviews
 - Secondary data analysis
 - Employer demand survey (sent to all NYC hospitals, nursing homes, and home health care agencies)
- Study research questions included:
 - What health occupations are the most difficult to recruit for and why?
 - What health occupations are the most difficult to retain and why?
 - Do recruitment and retention difficulties vary by provider type?
 - What strategies are health care providers using to recruit and retain needed workers?
 - What are recent trends in the deployment of and demand for health workers in NYC?
 - What impacts has the COVID-19 pandemic had on the health professions educational pipeline, particularly registered nursing?



A variety of strategies need to be used to recruit and retain health care workers—otherwise current workforce shortages will persist and increase.



📊 RESULTS

Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) Were 2 of the Most Difficult Occupations to Recruit and Retain

Other recruitment and retention difficulties included:

- Clinical laboratory technicians and technologists (hospitals)
- Social workers, medical assistants, and clerical staff (hospitals, home health care agencies, ambulatory care providers)
- Home health aides (long-term care providers, home health care agencies)

Critical Factors Contributed to Recruitment Difficulties

- Demand for workers outstripped supply
- Noncompetitive salaries
- Younger applicants were much more concerned with work-life balance
- New hires often stayed long enough to obtain the necessary experience to get a higher paying job, often in a different setting

Retention of Health Care Workers Worsened During and After the Pandemic

Factors included:

- Stressful working conditions
- Retirements
- Concern about COVID-19 exposure
- Better paying jobs in and out of health care
- Family commitments (childcare or eldercare)

Key Informants Described a Variety of Strategies to Recruit and Retain Workers

- Using service-obligated programs
- Standardizing career ladder programs (nurse aide-to LPN-to RN)
- Increasing support staff
- Developing student internship or externship programs
- Offering nurse residencies to new graduates
- Sponsoring worker resilience programs
- Adopting hybrid models of work and flexible hours

📊 RESULTS

Considerable Job Growth Is Projected for Many Health Care Occupations in NYC, Including Some That Are Currently in Short Supply

Between 2018 and 2028:

- Home health aide positions are projected to have more than 37,000 annual openings
- Personal care aide positions are projected to have nearly 32,000 annual openings

FIGURE 1. Employment Projections for NYC for Selected Occupations, 2018–2028

Title	Number of Jobs		Projected Change Between 2018-2028		Average Annual Openings
	2018	2028	Number	Percent	
Home Health Aides	165,810	285,030	119,220	71.90%	37,185
Personal Care Aides	126,720	210,360	83,640	66.00%	31,855
Registered Nurses	78,470	97,570	19,100	24.30%	6,610
Nursing Assistants	39,790	45,570	5,780	14.50%	5,361
Medical Assistants	13,670	19,220	5,550	40.60%	2,367
Licensed Practical Nurses	15,380	19,360	3,980	25.90%	1,722
Medical and Health Service Administrators	14,440	17,920	3,480	24.10%	1,630
Healthcare Social Workers	7,040	9,600	2,560	36.40%	1,069
Clinical Lab Technologists and Technicians	7,900	9,370	1,470	18.60%	691
Nursing Practitioners	6,480	8,990	2,510	38.70%	664
Physician Assistants	5,770	8,140	2,370	41.10%	632
Radiologic Technologists	5,200	6,440	1,240	23.80%	443
Surgical Technologists	2,530	2,910	380	15.00%	258
Respiratory Therapists	2,260	2,940	680	30.10%	205



DISCUSSION

- Health worker shortages were not a new phenomenon
 - COVID-19 pandemic dramatically increased the number and magnitude of occupations in short supply
 - Other employment sectors were competing with health care for the same workers
 - Strong competition for workers in general and in health care settings specifically
- Turnover increased
 - Many workers experienced stressful working conditions and left their jobs, including many older workers who retired
 - Some workers left their jobs due to concerns about the potential impact of COVID-19 on themselves and their families
 - Other workers found better paying jobs both in and out of health care
 - Other factors that contributed to increased attrition included family commitments (childcare or eldercare) and transportation issues
- Employers observed a generational shift in how younger employees view their jobs
 - These workers prioritize work-life balance in order to avoid burnout and maintain better balance between their work and personal lives

IMPLICATIONS

- A variety of strategies are needed to recruit and retain health care workers
- Without them, the current workforce shortages will persist and increase



LINK TO REPORT

