

Please Support Wisconsin's Health Care Workforce

- COVID's Impact on the health care workforce continues even as COVID cases wane.
- Staffing costs are accelerating the financial burden on hospitals.
- Staffing shortages also impact the availability of services.
- The average-size U.S. hospital devotes 59 FTE to regulatory compliance per year.

WHA Ask:

Please support opportunities to increase health care loan repayment programs, slots for special immigrant visas for health care professionals, and overall regulatory flexibility for hospitals and practitioners.

WHA Staff Contact

Jon Hoelter
VP Federal & State Relations
jhoelter@wha.org

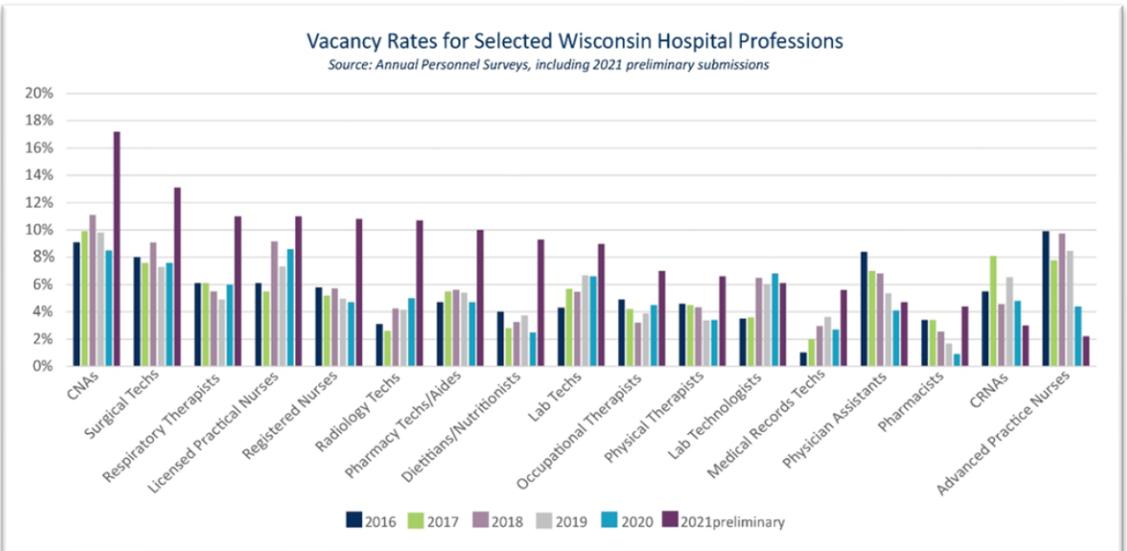
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Wisconsin's Health Care Workforce Challenge

Nurses, Techs, and Entry Level Positions Crucial for Timely, Accessible Care

COVID Workforce Challenges Reverberate in a Post-COVID Climate

From the inadequate public health infrastructure to support COVID testing and vaccination, to the collapse of the long-term care system, the COVID pandemic exposed the fragile nature of our health care system. Hospitals and health systems stepped up big to fill many voids, often creating their own public testing and vaccination sites, and expanding post-acute care capacity. Yet, every health care worker pulled into one of these roles was one less position supporting patients in need of hospital care. As we hopefully enter a post-COVID world, Wisconsin hospitals and health systems report a surge in openings for everything from nurses, to technicians, to cleaning staff.



The Impact of Workforce Shortages on Cost & Access to Care

This workforce crunch is creating mounting challenges both for hospitals and patients. The demand for traveling nurse from 3rd-party staffing agencies saw costs spike from \$80/hr in mid 2021 to more than \$200/hr later that year. While demand has leveled off recently, historic levels of inflation are having a growing impact on wages and salaries.

In addition to this fiscal impact, hospitals and health systems are continuing to play catch-up to demand for services. Wisconsin's hospitals and health systems did their best to minimize service disruptions during delta and omicron COVID surges, but the overloading demand for COVID care once again led to postponement of essential surgeries, planned procedures, and preventative care. Having ample surgeons and specialists has always been a challenge, but care is increasingly constrained by the lack of surgical techs to assist with surgeries, for instance, or even cleaning staff to turn over patient rooms.

Multipronged Solutions Needed to Health Care Workforce Challenges

There's no magic bullet to solving our national workforce woes, but many factors come into play at the federal level. **WHA asks for support of:**

- **Federal health care loan repayment programs that incentivize health care careers such as the National Health Service Corp and Nurse Corp programs.**
- **Increasing special immigrant visas for programs like the Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program.**
- **Increasing federal regulatory flexibility for hospitals and health care providers so we can do more with the workforce we have.**