

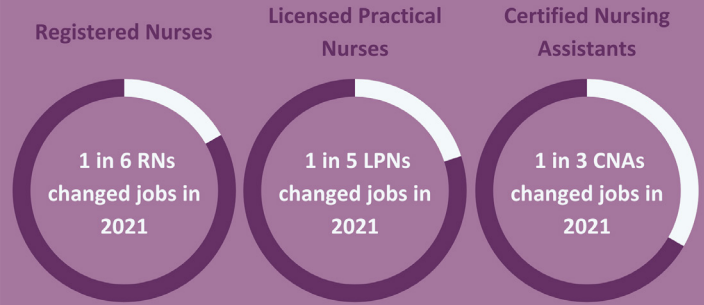
Wisconsin's Health Care Workforce Challenge: Growing Demands on a Shrinking Pool of Workers

Wisconsin Workers at Retirement Age



Wisconsin's aging workforce means health care workers are retiring faster than they can be replaced.

Successive surges in COVID-19 and pent-up demand required more staff, and as shortages worsened and volumes kept climbing, staff worked extra hours, extra shifts and overtime.

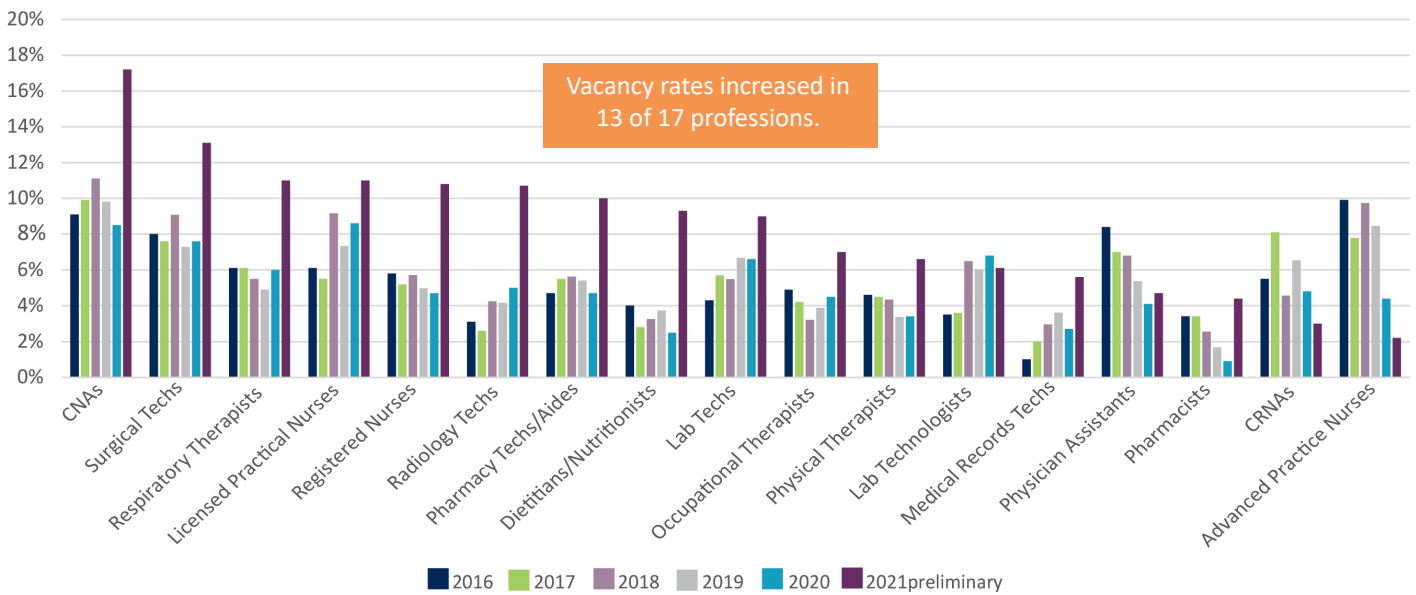


Fatigued health care workers retired, took contract jobs or left the field altogether, creating higher vacancy rates.

The combination of the Silver Tsunami, the Great Resignation and a persistent pandemic pushed hospital occupancy to its limit and vacancy rates to the double digits in 13 of 17 health care professions in 2021. Registered nurse vacancy rates were the highest they've been since 2005.

Vacancy Rates for Selected Wisconsin Hospital Professions

Source: Annual Personnel Surveys, including 2021 preliminary submissions



WHA-Recommended Strategies to Support Wisconsin's Health Care Workforce



#1 Build public-private partnerships to “grow our own” health care workforce.

Leveraging the strong relationship between where you work and where you live is critical to building a community's talent pool.




#2 Promote rapid innovations to retain and recruit health care workers.

As the health care industry seeks to attract new workers and build new capacity from within, it must also adapt to the expectations of a new, younger workforce.



#3 Break down barriers to top-of-skill practice.

Responding to the demands of COVID-19 demonstrated how versatile health care workers can be when allowed to put their skills to full use.



#4 Bolster acceptance and utilization of integrated health care technology.

Technology can increase access to health care services while at the same time increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of health care services throughout the continuum of care.



#5 Reduce regulatory burden and increase regulatory flexibility.

Burdensome regulatory compliance that offers no care or safety benefit means less time spent with patients.



#6 Support care in the best setting — inpatient, outpatient, or post-acute.

Lack of access to post-acute care resulted in more than 600 patients needlessly occupy hospital beds at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more about the Wisconsin Hospital Association's recommendations for health care organizations, educators and policy makers to maintain and grow the state's health care workforce and sustain the excellent health care Wisconsin is known for at www.wha.org/workforce-report.