

The Long Term Care Nurse Staffing Study (LTCNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in the long term care setting. During the spring and summer of 2022, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the LTCNSS to directors of nursing (DONs) or facility administrators of 1,201 Texas nursing facilities. A total of 330 facilities participated for a final response rate of 27.5%. It is important to note that between the 2019 and 2022 LTCNSS, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred.

The demand for nurses in long term care facilities is expected to increase by 2032.¹ It will be imperative that long term care facilities recruit and retain nurses to ensure adequate staffing levels. Long term care facilities have high nursing turnover rates, and many face severe staffing shortages.^{2,3}

This report provides information on staffing, recruitment, and retention in Texas long term care nursing facilities, including staff mix, future staffing needs, interim staffing, wages, and recruitment and retention strategies.

¹ Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies. (2020). Updated Nurse Supply and Demand Projections, 2018-2032. Retrieved from dshs.texas.gov/chs/cnws/Supply-and-Demand-Projections.aspx

² Gandhi, A., Yu, Huizi, & Grabowski, D.C. (2021). High nursing staff turnover in nursing homes offers important quality information. *Health Affairs*, 40:3, 384-391.

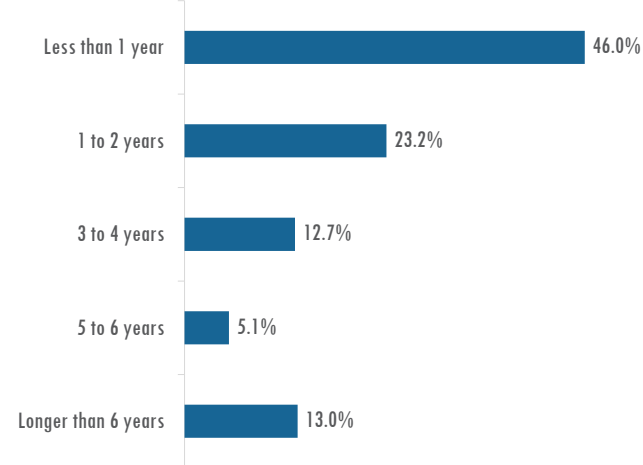
³ Muoio, D. (2021). Staffing shortages force long-term care facilities to limit admissions, hire agency workers. Retrieved from <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/hospitals/staffing-shortages-force-long-term-care-facilities-to-limit-admissions-hire-agency>

Longevity and Tenure

Figure 1 shows the proportions of DONs that have held their current position over various time periods and Figure 2 shows the proportions of DONs with various levels of long term care experience.

- 145 of 315 (46.0%) DONs held their current position for less than 1 year. Research has shown that facilities who employed a DON with shorter current job tenure had considerably lower quality of care scores compared to those facilities who had a DON with longer tenure.¹

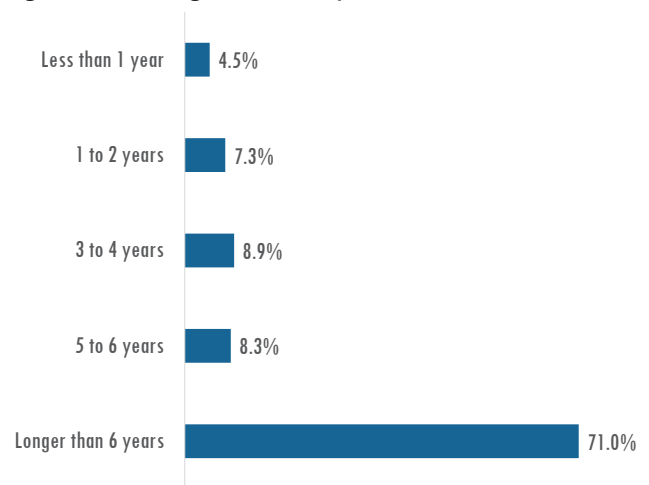
Figure 1. DON long term care position tenure (n=315)



Note: n=number of respondents

- In 2022, 223 out of 314 (71.0%) DONs had 6 or more years experience in long term care, comparable to 70.5% in 2019.

Figure 2. DON long term care experience (n=314)



Note: n=number of respondents

Table 1. Frequency of reasons reported for DON turnover

Reason for DON turnover	# of respondents	% of respondents
DON turnover is not an issue in my facility	100	30.3%
Exhaustion and burnout	186	56.4%
Staffing issues	167	50.6%
Burden of regulatory requirements	119	36.1%
Excessive paperwork	76	23.0%
Expectations of residents and/or resident's family	75	22.7%
Pay and/or benefits not commensurate with job duties and responsibilities	50	15.2%
Lack of administrative and/or corporate support	46	13.9%
Fear of litigation	42	12.7%
Lack of management and/or leadership skills	41	12.4%
Lack of experience in long term care setting	32	9.7%
Lack of nursing knowledge	5	1.5%
Other	12	3.6%

Respondents were asked to select the issues that contributed to the turnover of directors of nursing in their long term care facility. Note that respondents could select all that apply in this question, unless they selected “DON turnover is not an issue.”

- 100 of 330 (30.3%) respondents indicated that DON turnover was not an issue at their facility (Table 1), which was a decrease from the 2019 LTCNSS (43.9% of 301 respondents).
- The most frequently cited reason for DON turnover was exhaustion and burnout (56.4%).

Of those respondents who selected the “other” category in their response to which issues contribute to DON turnover, 10 provided a written response.

- Other responses included COVID-19-related challenges (4 facilities), inadequate salary (2 facilities), and stress & burnout (2 facilities). Location (1 facility) and family medical issues (1 facility) were also cited as reasons DONs left the position.

Education

In 2021, the National Academy of Medicine published *The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity*¹. This report focused on the achievement of health equity through a more diversified nursing workforce, prioritizing nurse well-being, and addressing systemic inequalities contributing to health disparities. Two of the recommendations pertain to the education and training of nursing staff:

- Nursing education programs should ensure nurses are prepared to address social determinants of health and achieve health equity.
- State, federal, and public health organizations should initiate substantive actions to enable the nursing workforce to address social determinants of health and health equity.

With respect to these recommendations and the increase of nursing training and education, respondents were asked about the educational attainment of DONs in Texas long term care facilities. Table 2 presents a breakdown of the

¹National Academy of Medicine (NAM). (2021). *The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/25982/chapter/1>

most commonly held degrees by DONs.

- Though 295 out of 313 (94.2%) DONs had a nursing degree, just 44.1% had a bachelor's degree or higher in nursing.
- The most common degree type among DONs was an associates in nursing (45.7%).

Table 2. Educational attainment of DONs (n=310)

Degree Type	# of DONs	% of DONs
Diploma in nursing	18	5.8%
Associates in nursing	143	45.7%
Bachelor's in nursing	119	38.0%
Bachelor's in field other than nursing	3	1.0%
Master's in nursing	19	6.1%
Master's in field other than nursing	4	1.3%
Other	7	2.2%
Total	313	100.0%

Note: n=number of respondents.

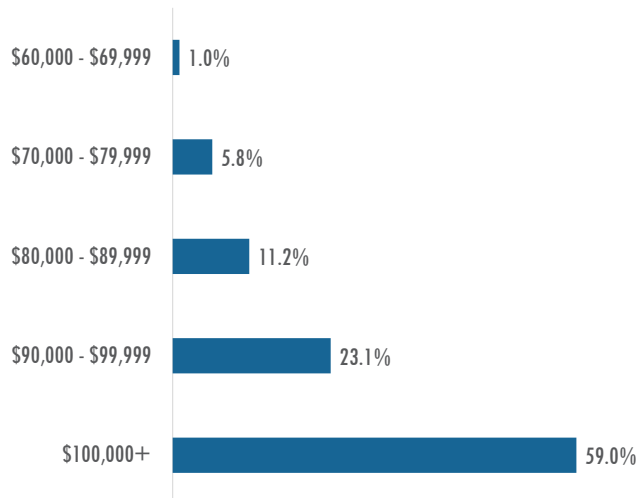


Salary

Survey respondents chose a salary range for the DON, from a minimum of less than \$40,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 and over (Figure 3). None of the survey respondents reported a salary below \$60,000.

- The majority (59.0%) of DONs had salaries greater than \$100,000.

Figure 3. DON salary range distribution (n=312)



Note: n=number of respondents

Conclusion

Nearly 46% of responding facilities currently had a DON who was at the facility less than a year. This is an issue that must be addressed because research has shown that quality of care is negatively impacted when long term care facilities employ a DON that does not have long tenure.¹ Exhaustion and burnout was the most frequently reported reason for DON turnover. The proportion of DONs with a bachelor's or higher in nursing was less than the proportion with a diploma or associates in nursing.

TCNWS Advisory Committee Recommendations (2022)

Continuing Education for Long Term Care Directors of Nursing

Stakeholders should develop and implement solutions to ensure the transition into the role of the DON for the first time and support DONs as they learn to effectively fulfill their role in a new long term care setting, specifically:

- Create a high-quality transition to practice program for new DONs including extended, intermittent training; training on managing the regulatory process; and participation in a long-term mentoring program paired with an experienced DON.
- Facilities identify continuing education opportunities to support DONs.