

The Hospital Nurse Staffing Survey (HNSS) assesses the size and effects of the nursing shortage in hospitals, Texas' largest employer of nurses. During the spring and summer of 2022, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the HNSS to the Chief Nursing Officers/Directors of Nursing of 657 Texas hospitals. These included for-profit, nonprofit, public, and Texas Health and Human Services Commission-operated hospitals, as well as hospitals linked to academic institutions; military hospitals were not surveyed. The facilities surveyed were general acute care, psychiatric, special, and rehabilitation hospitals; outpatient or community-based clinics were not included. Respondents provided data for 333 hospitals for a response rate of 50.7%. It is important to note that between the 2019 and 2022 HNSS, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred.

This report presents the results of the 2022 HNSS related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Texas hospitals. The findings summarize consequences experienced due to COVID-19, changes in staffing models, and COVID-19 vaccination.

Consequences and Changes Due to COVID-19

Hospitals were asked to select consequences their facility had experienced as a result of COVID-19 (Table 1).

- The top 3 consequences were nurses leaving for travel jobs (91.5%), insufficient staffing (74.7%), and nurses retiring early (67.7%).
- Facilities in metropolitan counties were more likely to have experienced all consequences except financial instability.
- 4 hospitals responded that they had not experienced any consequences due to COVID-19.
- Other consequences included staff burnout (7 hospitals), high turnover (5 hospitals), higher nurse/patient ratios (4 hospitals), increased acuity due to inability to transfer critical care patients (4 hospitals), and unit closures (3 hospitals).

Nearly half of responding hospitals (45.3%) used APRN or ancillary staff (physical therapists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, respiratory technicians, etc.) in nontraditional roles to support RN staff.

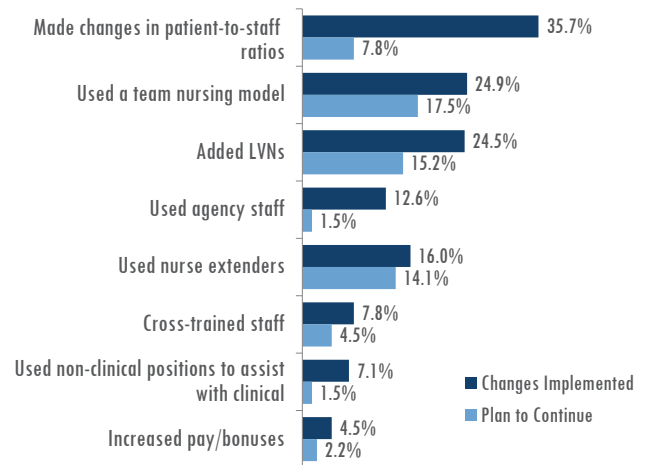
Table 1. Number and percent of responding hospitals experiencing consequences due to COVID-19 (n=328)

Consequence of COVID-19	# of Hospitals	% of Hospitals
Nurses leaving for travel nurse jobs	300	91.5%
Insufficient staffing	245	74.7%
Nurses retiring early	222	67.7%
Nurses leaving due to COVID illness	221	67.4%
Nurses leaving the profession	199	60.7%
Reduced inpatient bed capacity	119	36.3%
Financial instability	93	28.4%
Other	26	7.9%
My facility did not experience any consequences due to COVID-19	4	1.2%

Responding hospitals listed changes they had made to staffing models as a result of COVID-19, as well as the changes they planned to continue long-term. Some of the most common, open-ended, responses are shown in Figure 1.

- Over one-third of hospitals (35.7%) made changes to nurse/patient ratios. Less than one-quarter of these hospitals planned to keep these changes.
- Nearly one-quarter of hospitals started using a team nursing model (24.9%) and added additional LVN positions (24.5%). The majority of these hospitals planned to continue these changes.
- From 2019 to 2022, the proportion of LVNs in the hospital nursing staff mix increased for the first time, from 2.8% to 3.7%.¹

Figure 1. Percent of responding hospitals reporting changes to staffing models due to COVID-19 (n=269)



COVID-19 Vaccination

280 hospitals (85.4%) mandated COVID-19 vaccination of staff. Of these, 155 (55.4%) reported losing staff because of the mandate.

- The median vaccination rate of 303 responding facilities was 90%, and the mean was 85.6%.
- The majority of hospitals held COVID-19 vaccine clinics: 249 for the public and staff, 58 only for staff, and 3 only for the public (Table 2).

Table 2. Number and percent of responding hospitals that hosted COVID-19 vaccine clinics (n=329)

Did Hospital Host COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics?	# of Hospitals	% of Hospitals
Yes, for the public	3	0.9%
Yes, for staff	58	17.6%
Yes, for the public and staff	249	75.7%
No	19	5.8%

¹ Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies. (2022). 2022 Hospital Nurse Staffing Survey: Staffing. <https://dshs.texas.gov/chs/cnws/Nurse-Staffing-Studies.aspx>

