



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES NURSE RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT SURVEY 2021

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

RAPPORT SUR CE QUE NOUS AVONS ENTENDU

SONDAGE 2021 LIÉ À LA RÉTENTION ET AU RECRUTEMENT DES INFIRMIERS AUX TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST

Le présent document contient la traduction française du sommaire.

JULY • JUILLET | 2022

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English

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French

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Tł̥icho yati k'èè. Dı wegodi newo dè, gots'o gonede.

Tłóżco

?eriht'ís Dëne Sułiné yatı t'a huts'elkér xa beyáyatı theɂą ɂat'e, nuwe ts'ën yólti.

Chipewyan

Edi gondı dehgáh got'je zhatié k'ée edat'eh enahddhe nide naxets'é edahfí.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'ıne xədə k'é hederı ɂedıħtl'é yerinıwę nídé dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinohthan jì', diits'at ginohkhìi.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnagtu

ogenous Langu

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Executive Summary

Introduction

As part of its 2019-2023 Mandate, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to increasing the number of resident health care professionals by at least 20 percent. This will help ensure that residents are understood, receive the best care, and are able to develop ongoing relationships with their health and social services professionals. To help achieve this goal and intended outcomes, the GNWT is focused on reducing the number of vacancies and the reliance on locums. One of the actions that will support this objective is the review and implementation of renewed retention and recruitment strategies, policies and practices, including staff surveys. The Nurse Retention and Recruitment Survey, which was conducted in 2021, and resulted in a survey report and this What We Heard Report, will assist the GNWT in reaching its goal.

Survey Design and Participants

The GNWT Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and the Government of Nunavut, Department of Health collaborated with, and provided funding to, the Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (RNANT/NU) to develop updated survey tools and implement a retention and recruitment survey in 2021. Previous surveys were conducted in 1996, 2000 and 2005 in both the Northwest Territories (NT) and Nunavut (NU). For the first time, in 2021 feedback was solicited not only from Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs), but also Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPNs).

The survey was available online, using the Survey Monkey platform, from November 10 to 28, 2021. In total, 519 nurses working in the NT took part.

Demographic Information	Nurse Responses
Registration Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RNs (n=431, 83.2%) ▪ LPNs (n=53, 10.2%) ▪ NPs (n=29, 5.6%) ▪ RPNs (n=5, 1.0%)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range in age from under 30 to over 60 years, with the majority (n=384, 73.9%) in the 31-60 year age range
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most identify as women (n=458, 88.6%)
Permanent Place of Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Majority reside in the NT (n=380, 73.4%)
Current Work Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yellowknife (n=163, 32.7%) ▪ Stanton Hospital (n=129, 26.0%) ▪ Beaufort Delta (n=92, 18.5%) ▪ Sahtu (n=33, 6.7%) ▪ Hay River (n=30, 6.0%) ▪ Deh Cho (n=20, 4.0%) ▪ Fort Smith (n=17, 3.4%) ▪ Tłı̨chǫ (n=13, 2.6%)
Nursing Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 35.1% (n=179) have 20 years or more of nursing experience ▪ 6.3% (n=32) have two years or less of experience
Years Nursing in the NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 39.4% (n=201) have been nursing in the territory for 10 years or more ▪ 46.2% (n=236) have been practicing in the NT for five years or less
Current Employment Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 58.3% (n=296) are indeterminate full-time employees ▪ 13.6% (n=69) are on contract or agency nurses
Primary Place of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 46.7% (n=232) reported working primarily in a hospital
Current Area(s) of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Majority of nurses work in three practice areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acute care (n=232, 46.8%) ○ Primary care/community health (n=154, 31.0%) ○ Public health (n=54, 10.9%)
Number of Years in Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 73.7% (n=364) have been in their current position for five years or less

What We Heard

Recruitment

- 84.6% of nurses **found out about employment opportunities in the NT** through word of mouth and/or by visiting the GNWT website
- Factors that **attracted nurses to work in the NT** include such things as experience Northern lifestyle, salary, opportunity for professional development, and nursing in small, remote communities
- 50.9% (n=237) of nurses were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the **recruitment process**

Orientation

- 70.0% (n=325) of nurses **received orientation** for their current position
- 55.1% (n=178) of nurses felt that the **orientation was adequate**
- 69.1% (n=221) felt the **orientation was tailored** to meet their position's roles and responsibilities

Working Conditions

- 45.0% (n=204) percentage of nurses feel they have the **resources** they need to perform their job compared to 42.6% (n=193) who feel they do not have the resources they need
- 88.4% (n=314) of nurses reported being satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the opportunities they have to **use their skills and abilities** to their fullest potential
- 54.8% (n=229) of nurses are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their present **working conditions**
- 71.2% (n=292) of nurses have **experienced workplace violence**

Workload

- 82.6% (n=337) of nurses reported spending a **portion of their day on non-nursing duties**
- 51.9% (n=207) of nurses feel that **nursing staffing levels** are not adequate to meet the needs of the clients / patients
- 89.9% (n=356) of nurses are asked to **work overtime** in their current positions
 - 54.6% (n=109) of nurses reported that **overtime is stressful** for them
 - In past 12 months, 93.5% (n=285) of nurses experienced symptoms of **burnout**

Professional Development

- 92.1% (n=339) of nurses reported that **educational in-services and webinars** are important or somewhat important to them
 - In the past two years, 73.7% (n=272) of nurses have taken part in an in-service or webinar
- 99.2% (n=366) of nurses reported that **continuing education** is important or somewhat important to them
 - In the past two years, 75.5% (n=280) of nurses have taken part in continuing education
- 47.5% (n=172) of nurses have not received a **performance review** in their current position
- 71.5% (n=263) of nurses reported having a **current learning plan** within the last 12 months

Salary and Benefits

- 69.4% (n=252) of nurses feel their **compensation** is adequate compared to similar positions in other provinces and/ or territories

Career Planning

- Top five **factors most likely to influence nurses continued employment** in the NT are income, flexibility of work, workload, relationships with colleagues, and family or friends
- 78.9% (n=281) of nurses **considered leaving their job** in last two years
- 55.2% (n=198) of nurses **considered leaving the nursing profession** over the last two years
- 6.7% (n=26) of nurses plan to **retire** immediately or once the pandemic is over and 19.3% (n=69) plan to retire in the next 5 years

Next Steps

The experiences and perceptions shared by nurses working in the NT provides an opportunity for the HSS system to build on current strengths and address the gaps and challenges to improve future nursing retention and recruitment initiatives.

Sommaire

Introduction

Dans le cadre de son mandat 2019-2023, le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) s'engage à augmenter le nombre de professionnels de la santé résidents d'au moins 20 %. Cette augmentation permettrait aux résidents de se sentir mieux compris, de recevoir les soins optimaux et de nouer des liens permanents avec les professionnels de la santé et des services sociaux. Pour atteindre cet objectif et obtenir les résultats visés, le GTNO est déterminé à réduire le nombre de postes vacants et la dépendance des TNO à l'égard des remplaçants. L'une des mesures à prendre pour y arriver vise entre autres à examiner et à renouveler les stratégies, les politiques et les pratiques de rétention et de recrutement, en effectuant notamment des sondages auprès du personnel, et à les mettre en œuvre. Le sondage sur la rétention et le recrutement des infirmiers aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest, mené en 2021, a donné lieu à un rapport d'enquête et au présent rapport sur ce que nous avons entendu; ces outils aideront le GTNO à atteindre ses objectifs.

Plan de sondage et participants

Le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) du GTNO, le gouvernement du Nunavut et Santé Canada ont collaboré avec l'Association des infirmières et infirmiers autorisés des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO) et du Nunavut en lui fournissant du financement pour élaborer des outils d'enquête actualisés et effectuer le sondage 2021 sur la rétention et le recrutement des infirmiers. Des sondages ont été menés en 1996, en 2000 et en 2005 aux TNO et au Nunavut. En 2021, pour la première fois, on a recueilli les commentaires non seulement des infirmiers autorisés et des infirmiers praticiens, mais également des infirmiers auxiliaires autorisés (IAA) et des infirmiers psychiatriques autorisés.

Le sondage était disponible en ligne sur la plateforme Survey Monkey, du 10 au 28 novembre 2021. Au total, 519 infirmiers travaillant aux TNO ont participé au sondage.

Renseignements démographiques	Réponses des infirmiers
Statut professionnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infirmiers autorisés (n^{bre} = 431; 83,2 %) Infirmiers auxiliaires autorisés (n^{bre} = 53; 10,2 %) Infirmiers praticiens (n^{bre} = 29; 5,6 %) Infirmiers psychiatriques autorisés (n^{bre} = 5; 1 %)
Âge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La fourchette des âges varie de moins de 30 ans à plus de 60 ans, mais la majorité des répondants (n^{bre} = 384, 73,9 %) se situe entre 31 et 60 ans.
Genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La majorité s'identifie comme des femmes (n^{bre} = 458, 88,6 %).
Lieu de résidence permanente	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La majorité réside aux TNO (n^{bre} = 380; 73,4 %).
Lieu de travail actuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yellowknife (n^{bre} = 163; 32,7 %) Hôpital Stanton (n^{bre} = 129; 26,0 %) Beaufort-Delta (n^{bre} = 92; 18,5 %) Sahtu (n^{bre} = 33; 6,7 %) Hay River (n^{bre} = 30; 6,0 %) Dehcho (n^{bre} = 20; 4,0 %) Fort Smith (n^{bre} = 17; 3,4 %) Tłı̨chǫ (n^{bre} = 13; 2,6 %)
Expérience en soins infirmiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35,1 % (n^{bre} = 179) ont 20 ans et plus d'expérience en soins infirmiers. 6,3 % (n^{bre} = 32) ont deux ans et moins d'expérience.
Années d'expérience en soins infirmiers aux TNO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39,4 % (n^{bre} = 201) exercent les soins infirmiers aux TNO depuis 10 ans et plus. 46,2 % (n^{bre} = 236) exercent les soins infirmiers aux TNO depuis cinq ans moins.
Situation professionnelle actuelle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 58,3 % (n^{bre} = 296) sont des employés permanents à temps plein. 13,6 % (n^{bre} = 69) travaillent sous contrat ou pour une agence.
Lieu de travail principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46,7 % (n^{bre} = 232) ont déclaré avoir travaillé principalement en milieu hospitalier.
Domaine de pratique actuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La majorité des infirmiers travaillent dans l'un des trois domaines suivants : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soins de courte durée (n^{bre} = 232; 46,8 %); Soins primaires et santé communautaire (n^{bre} = 154; 31,0 %);

Renseignements démographiques	Réponses des infirmiers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Santé publique (n^{bre} = 54; 10,9 %).
Nombre d'années à leur poste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 73,7 % (n^{bre} = 364) occupent leur poste actuel depuis cinq ans ou moins.

Ce que nous avons entendu

Recrutement

- 84,6 % des infirmiers **ont pris connaissance des possibilités d'emploi aux TNO** par bouche-à-oreille ou en visitant le site Web du GTNO.
- Voici certains éléments qui ont **attiré les infirmiers aux TNO** pour y travailler : le mode de vie du Nord, le salaire, les possibilités de perfectionnement professionnel et la prestation de soins infirmiers dans de petites collectivités éloignées.
- 50,9 % (n^{bre} = 237) des infirmiers sont satisfaits ou assez satisfaits **du processus de recrutement**.

Orientation

- 70,0 % (n^{bre} = 325) des infirmiers **ont reçu une orientation** pour le poste qu'ils occupent actuellement.
- 55,1 % (n^{bre} = 178) des infirmiers ont estimé que **l'orientation était adéquate**.
- 69,1 % (n^{bre} = 221) ont estimé que **l'orientation** était adaptée aux rôles et aux responsabilités de leur poste.

Conditions de travail

- 45,0 % (n^{bre} = 204) des infirmiers estiment qu'ils disposent des **ressources** nécessaires pour effectuer leur travail tandis que 42,6 % (n^{bre} = 193) estiment qu'ils ne disposent pas des ressources nécessaires.
- 88,4 % (n^{bre} = 314) des infirmiers ont déclaré être satisfaits ou assez satisfaits des possibilités offertes pour faire valoir **leurs pleines compétences et habiletés**.
- 54,8 % (n^{bre} = 229) des infirmiers sont satisfaits ou assez satisfaits de leurs conditions de **travail actuelles**.
- 71,2 % (n^{bre} = 292) des infirmiers ont été victimes de **violence en milieu de travail**.

Charge de travail

- 82,6 % (n^{bre} = 337) des infirmiers ont déclaré passer **une partie de leur journée à effectuer des tâches qui ne sont pas liées aux soins infirmiers**.
- 51,9 % (n^{bre} = 207) des infirmiers estiment que le **niveau de dotation en personnel infirmier** n'est pas suffisant pour répondre aux besoins des clients et des patients.

- 89,9 % (n^{bre} = 356) des infirmiers ont été priés d'effectuer des **heures supplémentaires** dans le poste qu'ils occupent actuellement.
 - 54,6 % (n^{bre} = 109) des infirmiers ont déclaré que les heures supplémentaires sont une **source de stress**.
 - Dans les 12 derniers mois, 93,5 % (n^{bre}=285) des infirmiers ont éprouvé des symptômes **d'épuisement professionnel**.

Perfectionnement professionnel

- 92,1 % (n^{bre} = 339) des infirmiers ont déclaré que **le perfectionnement professionnel en cours d'emploi et les webinaires** sont importants ou assez importants pour eux.
 - Au cours des deux années précédentes, 73,7 % (n^{bre} = 272) des infirmiers ont pris part à des séances de perfectionnement professionnel en cours d'emploi et à des webinaires.
- 99,2 % (n^{bre} = 366) des infirmiers ont déclaré que la **formation continue** est importante ou assez importante pour eux.
 - Au cours des deux dernières années, 75,5 % (n^{bre} = 280) des infirmiers ont pris part à de la formation continue.
- 47,5 % (n^{bre} = 172) des infirmiers n'ont pas reçu **d'évaluation de rendement** dans le poste qu'ils occupent actuellement.
- 71,5 % (n^{bre} = 263) des infirmiers ont déclaré que leur **plan d'apprentissage** a été mis à jour au cours des 12 derniers mois.

Salaire et avantages sociaux

- 69,4 % (n^{bre} = 252) des infirmiers estiment que la **rémunération** est adéquate comparativement à des postes similaires dans les provinces ou les autres territoires.

Planification de carrière

- Voici les cinq **facteurs les plus susceptibles d'influencer les infirmiers à poursuivre leur carrière aux TNO** : le revenu, la flexibilité des horaires, la charge de travail, les relations avec les collègues ainsi que la vie familiale et les amis.
- 78,9 % (n^{bre}=281) des infirmiers ont envisagé **de quitter leur emploi** au cours des deux dernières années.
- 55,2 % (n^{bre}=198) des infirmiers ont envisagé **d'abandonner leur carrière en soins infirmiers** au cours des deux dernières années.
- 6,7 % (n^{bre}=26) des infirmiers ont planifié prendre leur **retraite** sous peu ou dès que la pandémie est terminée, et 19,3 % (n^{bre}=69) d'entre eux prévoient prendre leur retraite au cours des cinq prochaines années.

Prochaines étapes

Pour améliorer la rétention et le recrutement du personnel infirmier, il est important de tirer parti de l'expérience et de la perspective des infirmiers travaillant aux TNO pour permettre au système de la santé et des services sociaux de consolider ses points forts, de remédier à ses lacunes et d'éliminer les obstacles.

Introduction

The retention and recruitment of nurses has been an on-going challenge for the Northwest Territories (NT) for many years, with the recent COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbating an already critical situation. An unstable nursing workforce can affect the quantity and quality of health services delivered in the communities which in turn, can negatively affect the health status of NT residents. Understanding nurses' experiences and perceptions of their workplaces is essential for the successful retention and recruitment of nurses in the NT.

“... nursing shortages are primarily caused by the increasing and more complex demands for population health services coupled with a shrinking workforce, with more nurses retiring from the profession and others leaving the workforce altogether due to unhealthy work environments, characterized as being overly burdensome and stressful”.

[Ingram School of Nursing McGill University. (2019). Global Shortage of Nurses. https://www.mcgill.ca/nursing/files/nursing/nurse_shortages.pdf]

This What We Heard Report highlights the key findings of the Northwest Territories Nurse Retention and Recruitment 2021 Survey Report. The survey was completed by registered nurses (RNs), nurse practitioners (NPs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) working in the NT. The survey report presented information on the factors that have affected, and continue to affect, the Health and Social Services (HSS) systems' ability to maintain a stable workforce. It also identifies strategies that may help promote attraction and sustainability of qualified nurses. The results of the survey can be used by the HSS system to inform, plan and implement effective retention and recruitment initiatives moving forward.

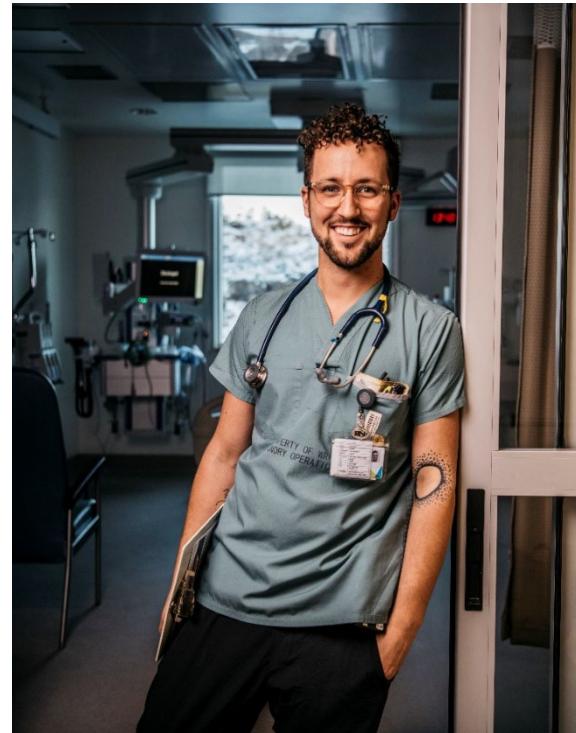


Background

The Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (RNANT/NU) is the legislated regulatory body and professional association for RNs and NPs in the Northwest Territories (NT) and Nunavut (NU). The Association was established in 1975 by the *Nursing Profession Act*.

Recognizing the importance of a stable nursing workforce, the need to help identify strengths and challenges facing retention and recruitment is recognized by the health system. One way method is conducting surveys, with the first survey conducted in 1996, and follow-up surveys undertaken in 2000 and 2005 in both the NT and NU.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), Department of Health and Social Services and the Government of NU, Department of Health worked collaboratively with RNANT/NU to update and implement the survey in 2021. For the first time, feedback was solicited from LPNs and RPNs, in addition to RNs and NPs.¹



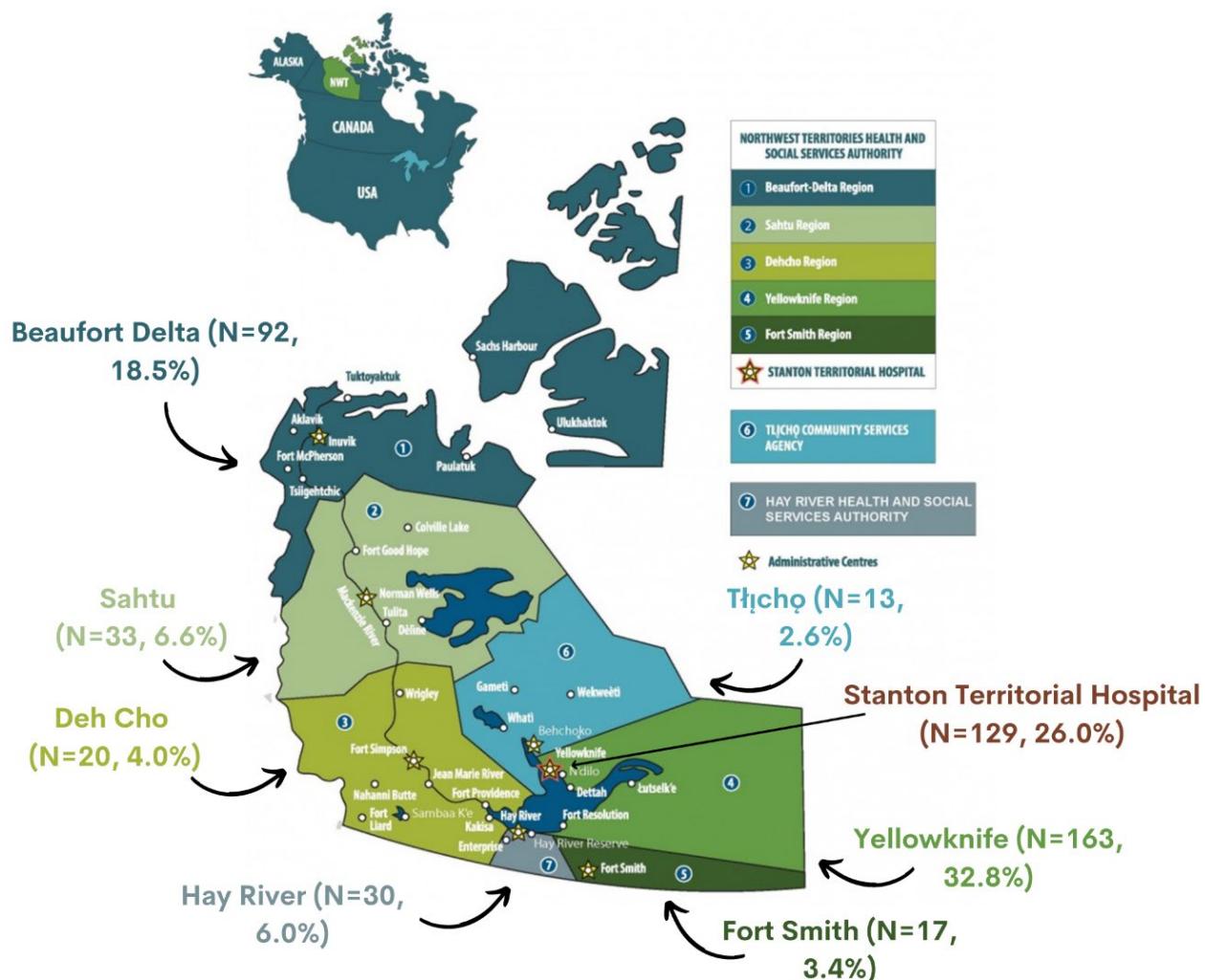
Much has happened since those first surveys were published that has impacted nursing in the NT. There is a global nursing shortage resulting in a highly competitive job market for healthcare professionals across Canada, with vacancies caused by retirements and departures (e.g., due to burnout) as well as ineffective long-term hiring practices (e.g., reliance on short-term hiring, agency nurses). In 2016, there was also a transformation of the health and social services system from eight authorities acting as governing bodies, to a more integrated operating system comprised of three bodies: NT Health and Social Services (NTHSSA), Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA), and Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA).

¹ Registration status varies across the four groups: (1) RNs and NPs must be registered through the professional nursing association in the NT and NU (RNANT/NU); (2) LPNs must be 'registered' (approved to practice) within the GNWT or GN depending on where they are working; and (3) RPNs must be registered through a professional nursing association in Manitoba, Alberta or British Columbia.

The Survey

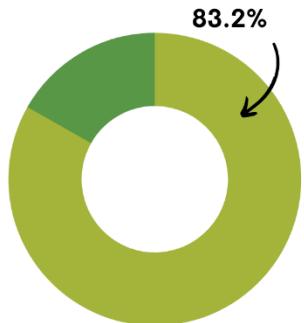
The survey consisted of 124 questions, divided into 12 sections – demographic information, nursing experience, present employment, recruitment, orientation, working conditions, workload, professional development, salary and benefits, housing an accommodation, career planning and additional information - that allowed for the collection of both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (narrative) data. The survey was available online, using the Survey Monkey platform, from November 10 to 28, 2021. In total, 519 nurses working in the NT took part.

Geographic Distribution

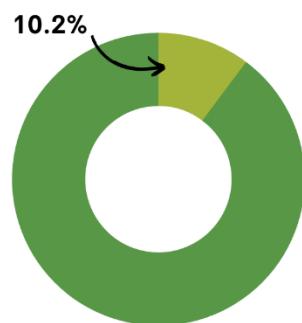


Registration Status Distribution

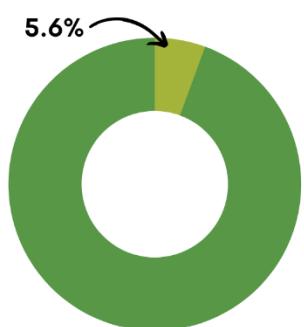
Registered Nurse
n=431



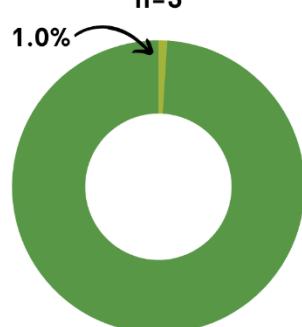
Licensed Practical Nurse
n=53



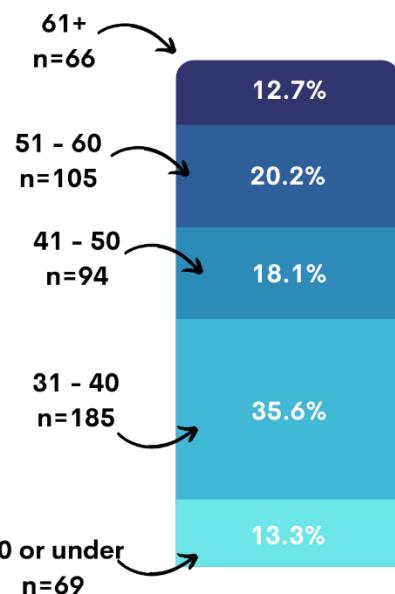
Nurse Practitioner
n=29



Registered Psychiatric
Nurse
n=5



Age Distribution



Gender Distribution

Woman
n=458
88.6%



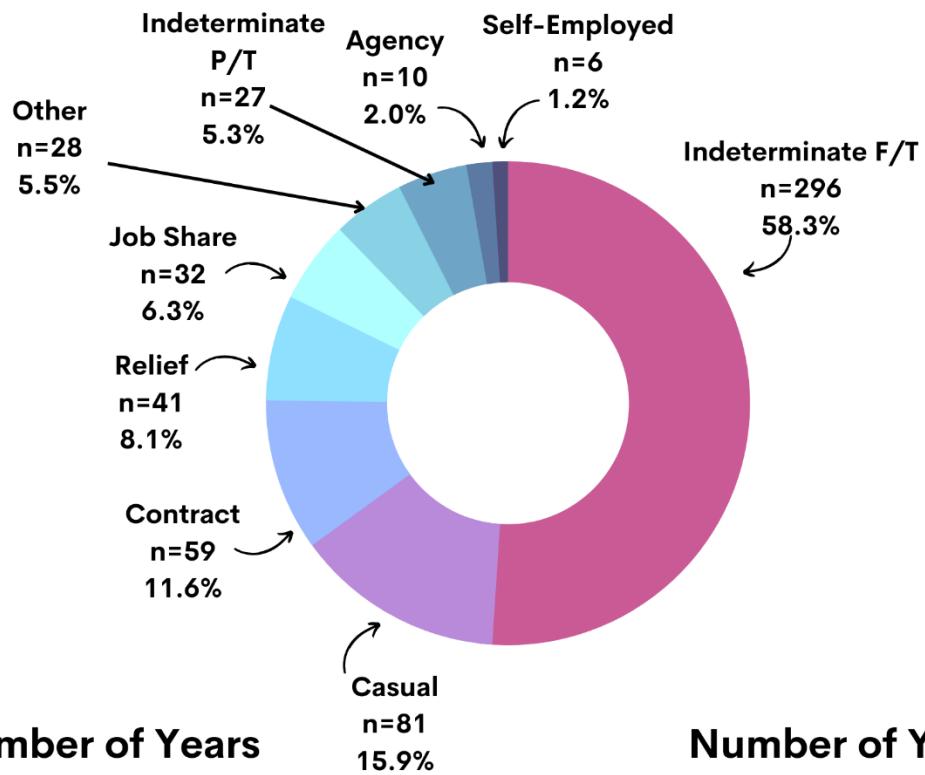
Prefer to self-describe
n=2
0.4%

Man
n=56
10.8%

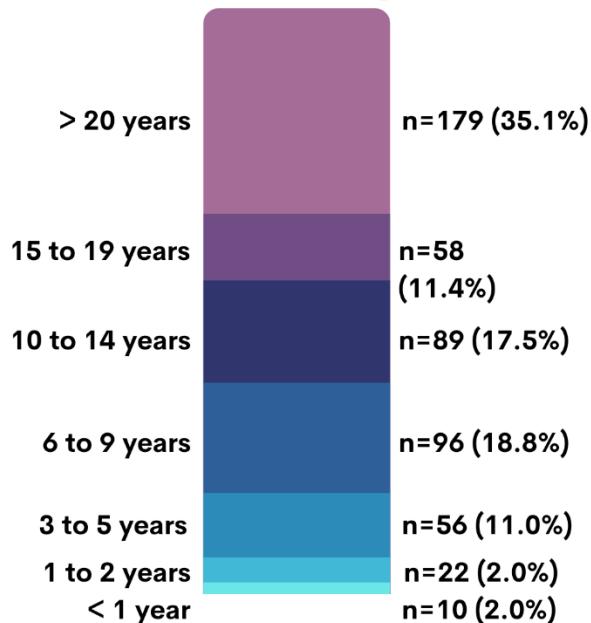


Non-binary
n=1
0.2%

Current Nursing Employment Status



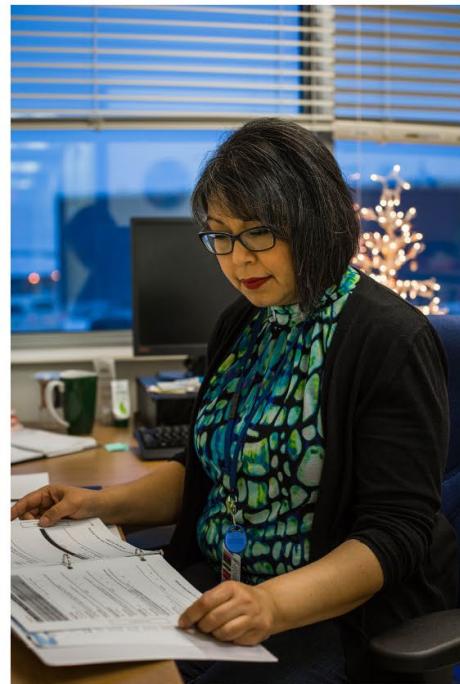
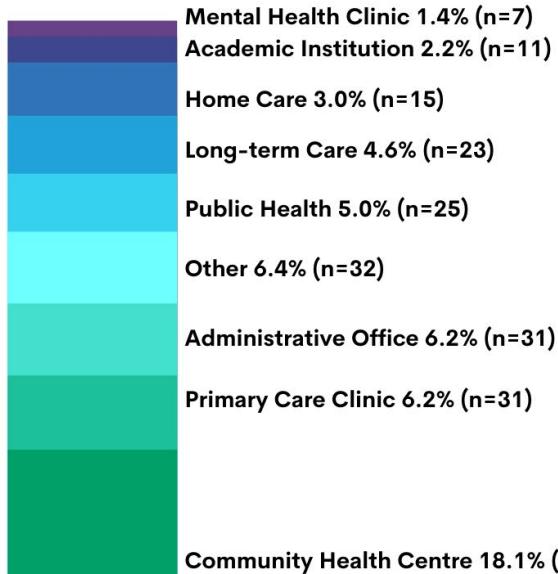
Number of Years in Nursing



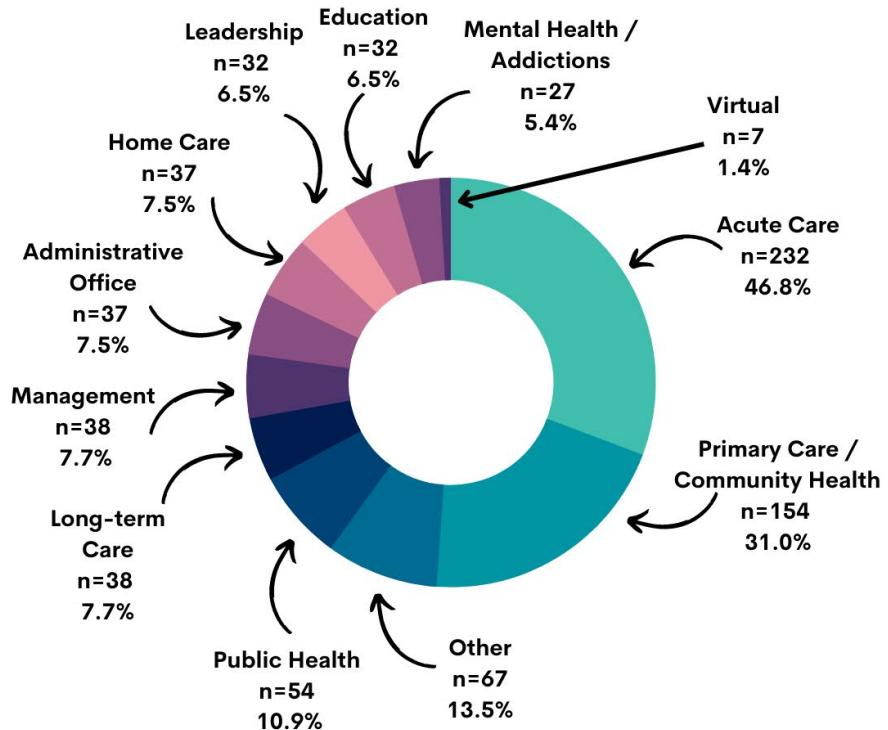
Number of Years in Nursing in the NT



Primary Place of Work



Current Area of Practice



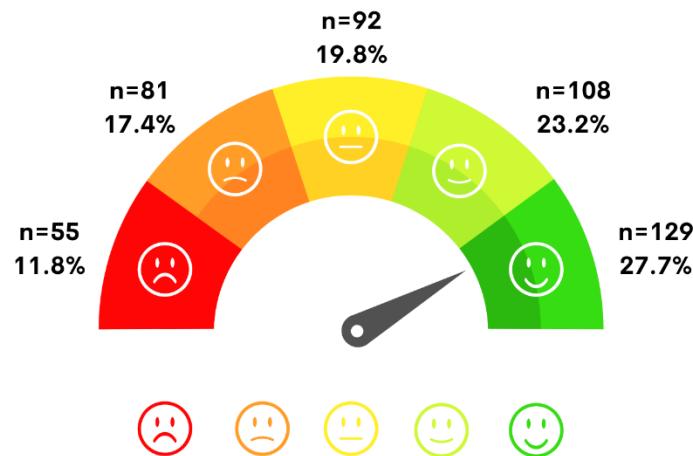
What We Heard

Recruitment

- Most nurses (84.6%) **found out about employment opportunities in the NT** through word of mouth (referral by another nurse or from family and friends) and by visiting the GNWT website
 - Other ways that nurses were made aware was through academic institutions, through the hiring process of their partner/spouse, social media, advertisements in a professional journal, and online job board.
- The key factors that **attracted nurses to work in the NT** include:
 - Experience Northern lifestyle
 - Salary
 - Opportunity for professional development
 - Nursing in small, remote communities
 - Opportunity to make an impact in the community
 - Advanced practice opportunities
 - Employee Benefits
- 50.9% of nurses were **satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the recruitment process**
 - NPs were more satisfied or somewhat satisfied (69.2%) than RNs, LPNs and RPNs



Satisfaction with Recruitment Process



- The main reasons nurses were **dissatisfied with the recruitment process** include:

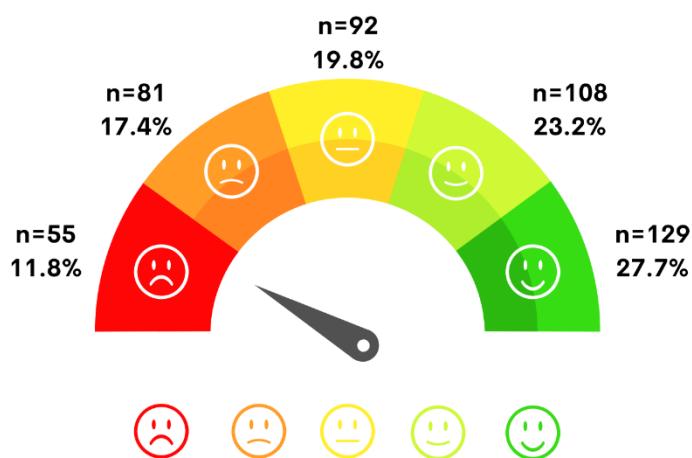
- Length of the hiring process
- Relocation and logistical navigation
- Confusion regarding the process
- Other

reasons include such things as lack of housing/accommodation and lack of communication with the Department of Human Resources

- Nurses think the **recruitment process could be improved** by:

- Offering recruitment bonuses for signing on (and for staying)
- Streamlining hiring processes
 - More effective human resources (HR) practice
- Increasing advertisements of available opportunities and advertising more widely
- Providing more assistance with housing and offering free accommodation

Dissatisfaction with Recruitment Process



“ Make the process faster for job share and permanent hires. When you make prospective employees play the waiting game, or don't keep them in the loop with where their application is, it makes them think that you have passed them over and they look for somewhere else to hire them. If that other place responds and gets the ball rolling faster, then they win. ”

“ Have nurses involved in recruiting instead of it being HR staff, so that relevant info is provided, and work conditions accurately supplied. ”

Orientation

- The majority of nurses (70.0%) **received orientation** for their current position
 - More LPNs received orientation (89.6%) than RNs, NPs or RPNs
 - Nurses working in the Hay River Region received orientation (92.6%) more often than elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Deh Cho (31.6%))
- 55.1% of nurses felt that the **orientation was adequate**
 - More NPs felt their orientation was sufficient (68.4%) than RNs, LPNs and RPNs
 - More nurses working in homecare (76.0%), administration (70.0%) and Education (68.2%) felt their orientation was adequate compared to other practices areas (e.g., primary care/community care (57.1%))
- 69.1% felt the **orientation was tailored to meet their position's roles and responsibilities**
 - More nurses working in home care (84.0%) and leadership (82.4%) felt their orientation was appropriately tailored to their position than nurse in other practices areas (e.g., long term care (50.0%))



- **Suggested enhancements to the orientation process** include:
 - Offering more and longer mentorship opportunities
 - Ensuring mentors are properly trained and oriented in all aspects of the position
 - Having a designated buddy be the point of contact for ongoing questions
 - Providing more targeted onboarding over a longer period of time (to reduce information overload)
 - Developing onboarding plans for all new hires
 - Ensuring protected time for participation in orientation activities
 - Offering more orientation on online tools (e.g., PeopleSoft, ScheduleSoft, NISS charting)

“
A clear path for mentorship would be helpful. I was lucky to be given overlap with the outgoing NP for 10 days but that was just lucky and not a built in support.

“
NTHSSA should have a recorded centralized orientation that is online and can be sent out to every employee as they are hired. Orientation processes need to be further defined and categorized. Orientation and onboarding are not the same thing. They have different objectives and learning outcomes for the new employee. NTHSSA needs to dedicate more resources to orientation and onboarding to ensure standardization and consensus in messaging. When possible, move these processes online.

Working Conditions

- A similar percentage of nurses feel they have the **resources** they need to perform their job (45.0%) as opposed to those who feel they do not have the resources they need (42.6%).
- Nurses who feel they do not have adequate resources to perform their job, commented that **additional resources** are needed in the following areas:
 - Staffing
 - Sufficient nurse to patient ratio
 - Full compliment of staff at all times
 - Float staff to allow for sick call, vacation coverage
 - Management/leadership support
 - Nurse educators
 - Education and training opportunities as well as time to take part
 - Updated resource materials (e.g., policies, CHN guidelines)
 - Dedicated office and clinical workspace
 - Information technology (e.g., better EMR system) and clinical equipment (e.g., PPE that fits, proper transfer equipment for bariatric residents)
 - Access to supportive services such as physiotherapy, OT, psychotherapy

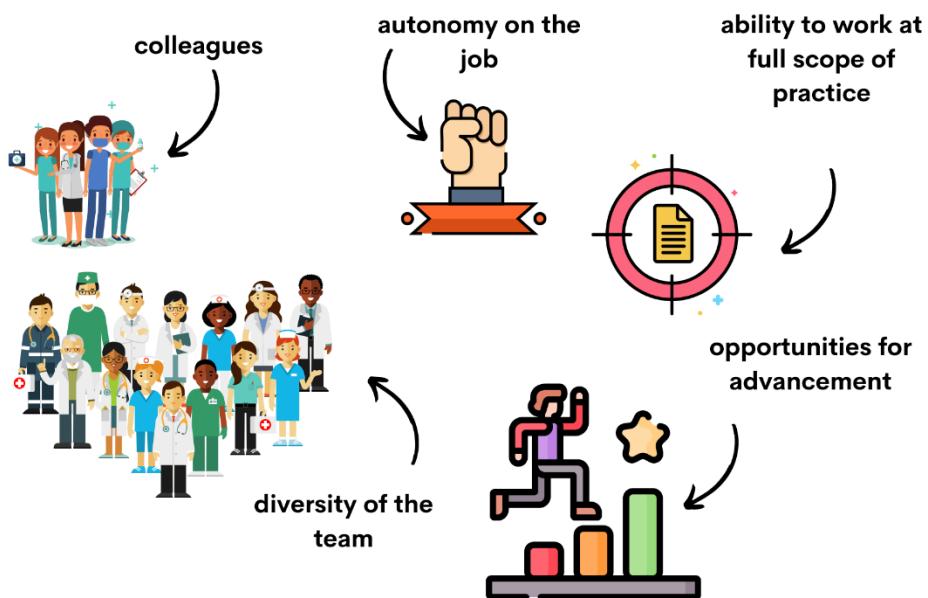
Sufficient staff! We are always short staffed which leads to worker burnout and deterioration of patient care.



- 88.4% of nurses reported being satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the opportunities they have to **use their skills and abilities** to their fullest potential
 - RNs (77.9%) and RPNs (100%) are the most satisfied with opportunities to use their skills and abilities
- 54.8% of nurses are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their present **working conditions**
 - NPs are more satisfied with their working conditions (63.6%) than RNs, LPNs and RPNs
 - The key **aspects of work** nurses are most satisfied with include:
 - Support received from other nurses and healthcare staff (73.6%)
 - Amount of responsibility they are given (68.0%)
 - Salary and benefits (63.4%)
 - The main **aspects of work** nurses are least satisfied with include:
 - In-service and webinar opportunities (31.7%)
 - Ability to take vacation when requested (32.0%)
 - Continuing education opportunities (36.7%)

“
There is no opportunity to learn. We have no nurse educator. Our flex days are always traded for shifts on the floor, so we never have time to complete certificates.
”

The top five factors nurses identified that make their workplace great



- 71.2% of nurses have **experienced workplace violence**
 - The primary form of violence experienced by nurses is psychological/verbal violence (bullying, teasing, threats, yelling swearing)
 - Rates of physical workplace violence are highest in the practice areas of mental health and/or addiction (80.0%) and acute care (70.1%)

For the purposes of this survey, workplace violence was defined as including any event or situation which could have or did result in physical or emotional harm to a staff member. This includes any time that a person is physically or verbally abused or threatened at work. Incidents can involve employees, patients/clients, visitors and community members.

- 83.0% of nurses have **witnessed incidents of workplace violence**
- 68.4% of nurses are not satisfied with the handling of workplace violence
 - Nurses felt that their concerns were not taken seriously and/or did not result in any action
 - Some nurses have left their position to remove themselves from the situation

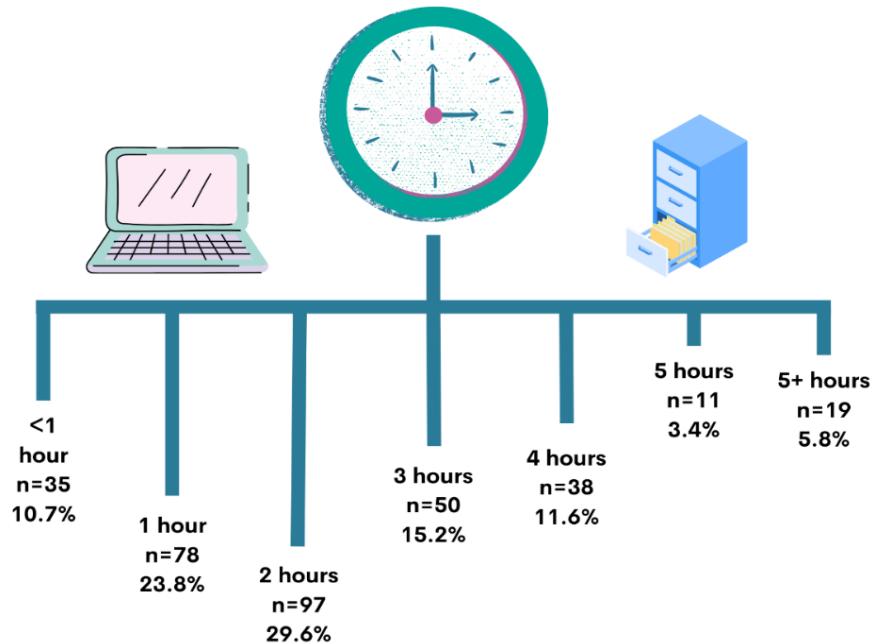
“
It is an unsafe work environment. Locums do not want to come back due to poor working conditions. We have unsafe patient to nurse ratios and high acuity
”



Workload

- 82.6% of nurses reported **spending a portion of their day on non-nursing duties**
 - Nurses working in an academic institution (90.9%) and at a community health centre (89.4%) spend more time on non-nursing duties than nurses in other primary places of work

Average Daily Time on Non-nursing Duties



- 51.9% of nurses feel that **nursing staffing levels** are not adequate to meet the needs of the clients / patients
 - Nurses working in the areas of leadership (64.3%), primary care/community health (64.0%) and public health (62.8%) were more likely to report inadequate staffing than nurses in other practice areas (e.g., home care (36.7%), mental health and/or addictions (39.1%))

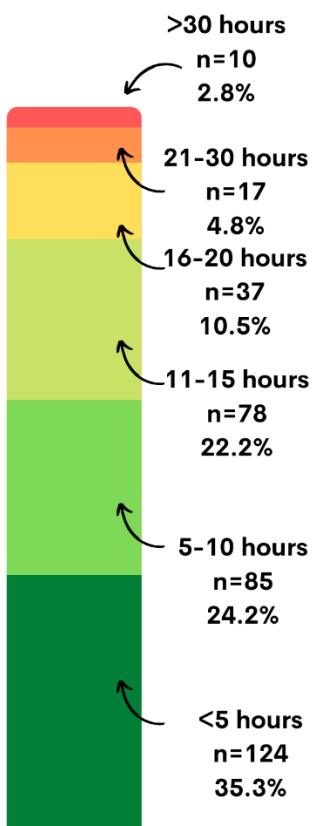
“
Money is spent on locums and on flying patients south rather than having enough staff on each unit to meet the demands of high acuity/high need when it arises
”

- 89.9% of nurses are asked to **work overtime** in their current positions
 - While 76.9% of nurses like the opportunity to work overtime, nurses commented on the expectation / lack of choice and pressure associated with accepting overtime work

“
Sometimes it's mandatory overtime, we can't leave, there is no one to replace us.”



Average Amount of Weekly Overtime

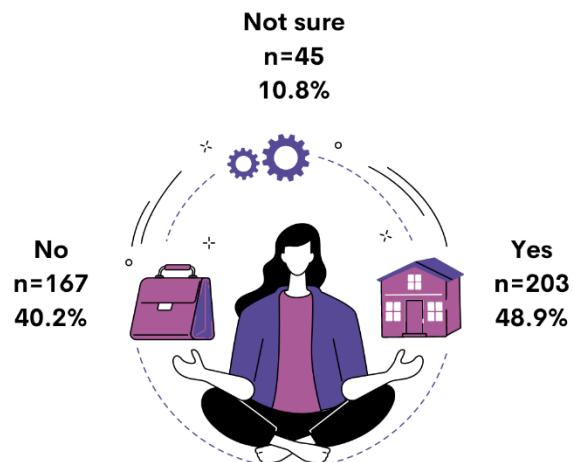


“...sometimes, we are asked to work 4 hours overtime on the top of our 12-hour scheduled shift, we are even offered to work 16 hours after a full night shift, which is very unsafe.”

“I'm happy to help when needed, but I've been mandated to work more than once, and felt extremely violated, especially when it interfered with family plans.”

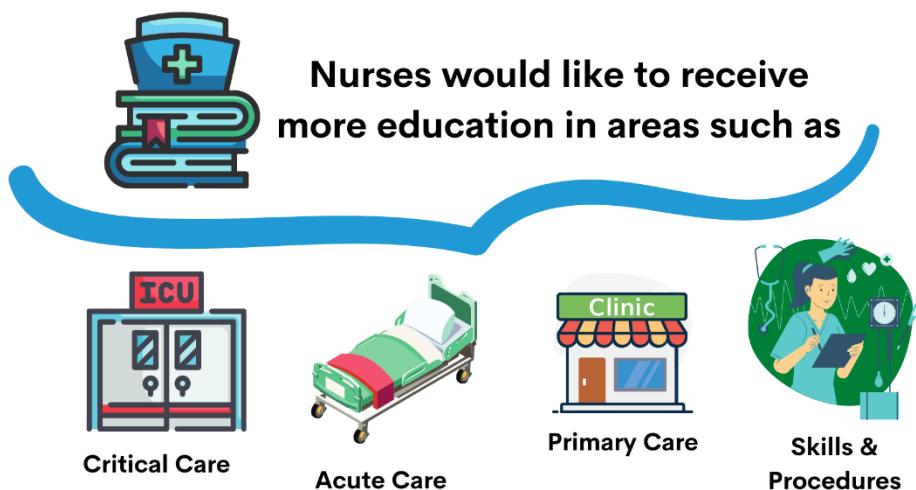
- In past 12 months, 93.5% of nurses experienced symptoms of **burnout**
 - 100% of nurses working in the area of leadership reported burnout in the last 12 months
 - The main factors leading to burnout for nurses include:
 - Lack of breaks on the job
 - Lack of vacation
 - Culture of expectation / excessive demands
 - Toxic work environment
 - Inability to balance work and life / lack of time to deal with personal issues
 - 54.6% of nurses reported that overtime is stressful for them
 - Nurses spoke about being exhausted and fearful of making mistakes or compromising patient care as well as the lack of work-life balance that results from a lot of overtime

Ability to Achieve Work-Life Balance



Professional Development

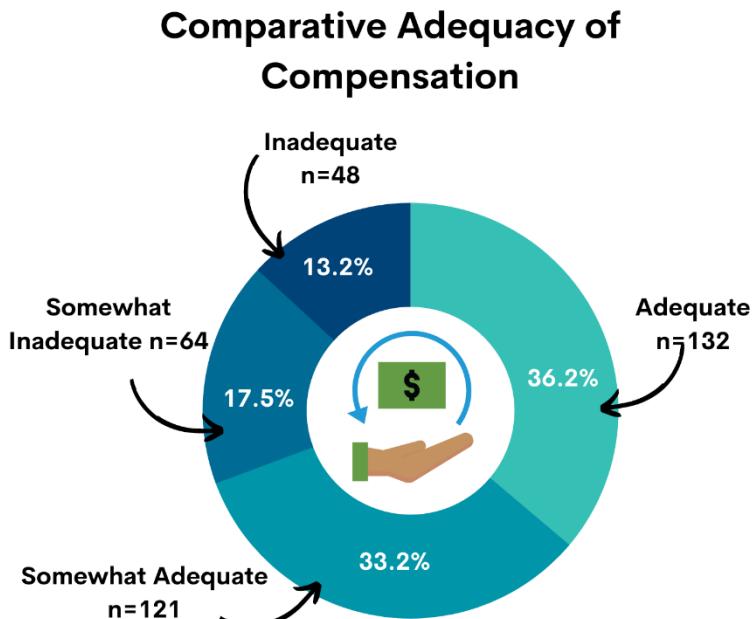
- 92.1% of nurses reported that **educational in-services and webinars** are important or somewhat important to them
 - In the past two years, 73.7% of nurses have taken part in an in-service or webinar



- 99.2% of nurses reported that **continuing education** is important or somewhat important to them
 - In the past two years, 75.5% of nurses have taken part in continuing education
- The **most important educational opportunities** identified by nurses are clinical development courses and occupation-required courses
 - Other important educational opportunities include leadership / management courses and courses / programs leading to university degrees
- To support participation in educational opportunities, nurses reported needing more **organizational supports** such as:
 - Educational leave
 - Financial incentives
 - Reimbursement
 - Replacement staff to cover shifts
- 47.5% of nurses have not received a **performance review** in their current position
- 71.5% of nurses reported having a **current learning plan** within the last 12 months

Salary and Benefits

- 69.4% of nurses feel their **compensation** is adequate compared to similar positions in other provinces and/ or territories
- Nurses suggested a number of **compensation improvements** including:
 - Similar compensation for the same positions in different communities / health authorities
 - Better communication regarding available benefits and easier access to benefits
 - Increased physical and mental health benefits to meet the demands of the job
 - Increased salary to better reflect the higher cost of living in the north
 - Offer retention and recruitment bonuses



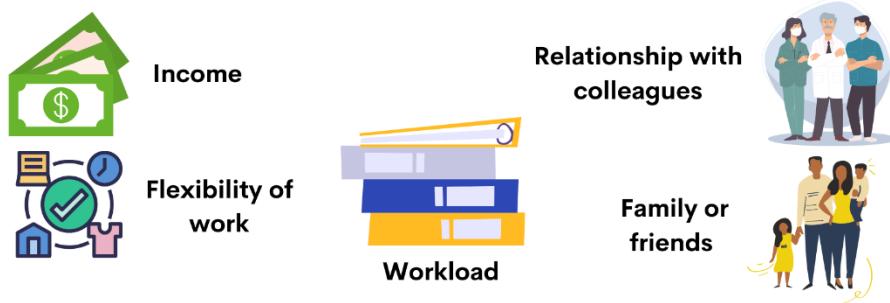
“
Clear salary grid for all RNs with applicable shift differentials and bonus for acuity vs. Job Evaluation process which does not adequately reflect roles/responsibilities in nursing practice.

“
I am satisfied with my benefits, but my employer will not let me use them (ex. annual leave or education time)

Career Planning

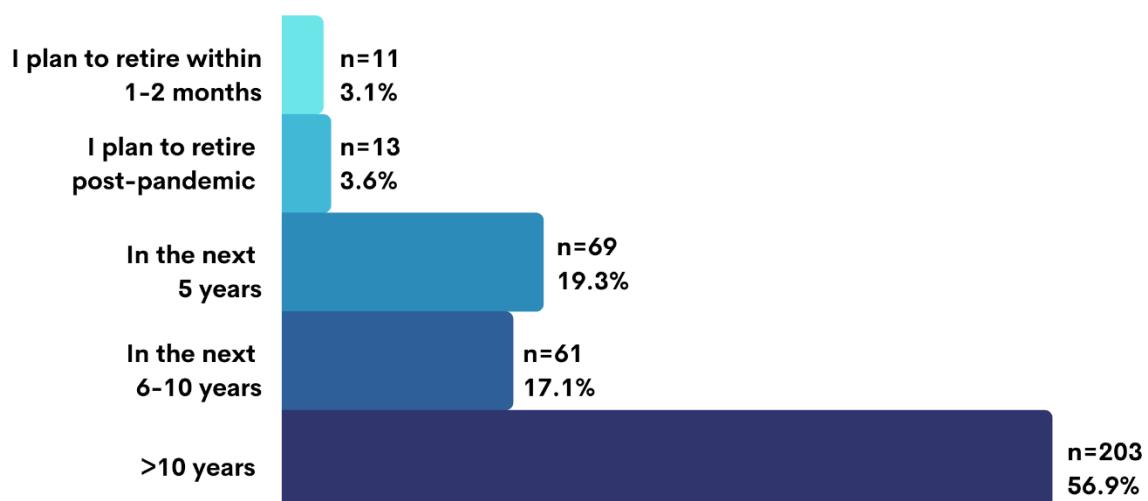
- 58.2% of nurses have **not changed jobs in the last two years**
 - Nurses identified better work-life balance as the main **reason for changing jobs or planning to change jobs**
- 35% (n=126) of nurses are **planning to change jobs within the next two years** while continuing to work in the NT
- 78.9% of nurses **considered leaving their job in last two years**
 - The main reason for thinking about leaving was because they felt overworked
 - Other reasons included:
 - Not enjoying their job anymore
 - Spending too much time of paperwork and entering data
 - Not getting to spend enough time with patients / clients
 - Poor relationship with management
 - Toxic work environment
 - Key changes that would encourage nurses to continue in their current job include:
 - Receiving an annual cash incentive
 - Having access to more professional development opportunities
 - Increased flexibility in scheduling

Top five factors mostly likely to influence nurses continued employment in the NT



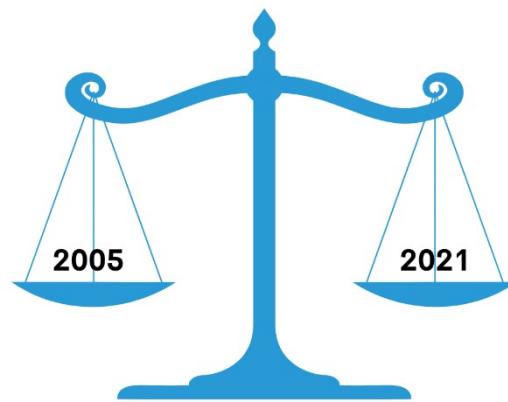
- 55.2% of nurses **considered leaving the nursing profession over the last two years**
 - The main reasons they have considered leaving the profession are:
 - Burnout
 - Staffing issues
 - Lack of good management / leadership
 - Low morale
 - Stressful work environment

Planned Timing of Retirement



Comparison of 2005 & 2021 Survey Results

The last Nursing Retention and Recruitment Survey was carried out in 2005. A lot has happened in the NT and across Canada in those 16 years. Although it was not possible to do a direct comparison between the 2005 and 2021 findings because of differences in process (e.g., the 2005 survey only included RNs and NPs), operational environment (e.g., amalgamation of eight Health and Social Services Authorities down to three), and context (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic), it was possible to compare some high level thematic findings. These include:



- In 2021, 51.0% of nurses were over the age of 40 years compared to 63% in 2005, demonstrating an increasing trend in younger nurses
- In 2021, fewer nurses were satisfied with the recruitment process than in 2005
- Similar to 2005, nurses in 2021 expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of orientation including insufficient time, lack of a structured and consistent approach, and lack of a buddy system with qualified staff
- In both 2021 and 2005, nurses expressed high levels of satisfaction with the opportunities they had to use their skills and abilities to their fullest potential
- In both 2021 and 2005, nurses expressed concerns with the levels of staffing indicating they were not adequate to meet patient / client needs
- In 2021, the amount of overtime nurses worked had increased compared to 2005
- In both 2021 and 2005, the majority of nurses indicated that the amount of overtime they work causes them stress
- Similar to 2005, the vast majority of nurses in 2021 indicated educational opportunities are important
- In 2021, the factors that would most influence nurses' continued employment were income, flexibility of the work, workload and relationships with colleagues compared to opportunities for continued growth, salary and relationship with colleagues reported in 2005.

Next Steps

The findings presented in this What We Heard Report, which are based on the Northwest Territories Retention and Recruitment 2021 Survey Report, reveal that there are aspects of the NT's nurse retention and recruitment processes that require attention. While nurses – RNs, NPs, LPNs and RPNs – identified a number of concerns and challenges that affect GNWT's ability to maintain a stable nursing workforce, they also identified strategies that may help to promote attraction and sustainability of qualified nurses.

The experiences and perceptions shared by nurses working in the NT provides an opportunity for the HSS system to build on current strengths and address the gaps and challenges to improve future nursing retention and recruitment initiatives.

