Survey of 18,000 Nurses Shows Worsening Satisfaction and Wellbeing

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Report also Offers Solutions to Reverse Trends, Address Shortages and Transform Workforce

DALLAS, May 01, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Career satisfaction, intention to leave jobs, and mental health and wellbeing issues among registered nurses have gotten significantly worse since the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the AMN Healthcare (NYSE: AMN) 2023 Survey of Registered Nurses.

"The survey data reveal the depth of the problems faced in nursing today and concludes with solutions that could help alleviate the strain posed by systemic staffing shortages and exacerbated by the pandemic," said AMN Healthcare Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Cole Edmonson, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, FAONL, FNAP, FAAN. "The health of our nation is tied directly to the health of the nursing workforce."

Among the survey's findings:

- Only 15% of hospital nurses say they will continue in the same job in one year.
- 30% of nurses are likely to leave career due to the pandemic, up 7 points since 2021.
- Four of five nurses experience a great deal or a lot of stress, up 16 points since 2021.
- More nurses worry that their job is affecting their health, up 19 points from 2021.
- Nurses who said they often feel emotionally drained was up 15 points from 2021.
- Career satisfaction dropped to 71% in 2023 after holding steady at 80-85% for a decade.

Workforce challenges are the number one problem faced by healthcare executives, replacing financial issues, which for decades were cited as the top problem.

The full report is available on AMNHealthcare.com

Declining Career Satisfaction
The AMN Healthcare 2023 Survey of Registered Nurses, based on responses from more than 18,000 nurses in January 2023, found that career satisfaction dropped by 10 percentage points since the middle of the pandemic in 2021. In addition, the likelihood of encouraging others to become a nurse declined 14 points since 2021.

The survey shows how the Great Resignation has impacted the healthcare workforce, with only 15% of hospital nurses saying they will "continue working as I am" in one year. Among all nurses, only 40% said they will continue in the same job in one year -- a 5-percentage-point drop since 2021. The remainder will seek a new staff nursing job; work as a travel nurse, part-time or per diem; take a job outside patient care; return to school; or leave nursing altogether.

Rising Mental Health and Wellbeing Challenges
Nurse satisfaction and quitting issues may be driven by rising mental health and wellbeing problems for nurses, which have dramatically increased since the middle of the pandemic in 2021. Mental health problems increased by double digits. Meanwhile, more than one-third of nurses (35%) never address mental health and wellbeing issues. One in five nurses (20%) address their mental health and wellbeing at least four times a week, a decrease of 4 points from 2021 (24%). Particularly concerning is that younger nurses' responses were more negative than older nurses regarding satisfaction and mental health and wellbeing.

One cause of the post-pandemic rise in problems affecting nurses may be a shift in public attention. "During the pandemic, nurses were widely lauded as heroes in the media and public acclaim, which buoyed our spirits and pride during the worst national public health crisis in our lifetimes," Edmonson said. "But as pandemic conditions waned, the accolades subsided and the focus on nurse wellbeing wavered."

Collaborative Solutions Needed
Data from the 2023 survey points the way toward solutions to the current situation. Comparisons show that positives are interrelated – reduction in stress and utilization of mental health and wellbeing services result in better career satisfaction and job retention.

Also needed is a systemic transformation in how organizations view and deploy the healthcare workforce and widespread adoption of technology and systems that can help ease the stress on nurses. Healthcare organizations need the flexibility for the most effective and efficient way to cover the work that needs to be done at the unit and enterprise levels.

Achieving these goals requires a collaborative national campaign of healthcare organizations; professional organizations; organizations representing patient groups; civil society such as the major health nonprofits; government agencies; elected officials; and nurses themselves.

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