



Urgent Action Needed to Retain and Strengthen the Nursing Workforce **May 11, 2022**

During Nurses Week 2022, ANAC calls attention to [nursing workforce issues](#) that impact the quality of patient care and the capacity and sustainability of the nursing profession. As our patients living with HIV are aging, the likelihood of them needing in-patient care due to co-occurring conditions increases. In-patient nursing issues, previously distant, are now in the forefront. Therefore, we join nurses across the globe in calling for:

- Safe staff/patient ratios
- Fair wages
- An end to violence against healthcare workers

Multiple sources indicate that more than one-third of nurses say it's very likely that they will leave their current roles by the end of 2022, with nearly half stating that burnout and a high stress work environment are the root causes of their desire to leave. The impact of accelerated retirement from this demanding profession is also a factor in staff shortages. Adding to this, the pipeline of new staff nurses is hindered by limitations in nursing school enrollments due to shortages of nursing faculty.

Nurses also cite benefits and pay as other leading reasons for leaving. The vacancies are impacting staffing ratios and causing hospitals to have a greater reliance on costly travel nurses to fill these openings. Complicating this situation is that the travel nurses are compensated much higher than their staff peers, impacting moral of the workforce. Current hospital nursing budgets based in nursing services as part of room fee charges also contribute to financial challenges that impact nursing.

Nurses are fighting discrimination and assault on the front lines on a regular basis. In 2021, two-thirds of nurses interviewed reported they were verbally or physically assaulted by a patient or their family member/caregiver within the last year. Some believe this number could be higher due to a lack of reporting. No other profession has historically accepted abuse as part of the job.

Actions

In collaboration with other nursing organizations, we support and encourage nurses and allies to take the following actions:

- **[Staffing and fair wages action alert](#)**: Work with key stakeholders and legislators to change current payment structures to change the paradigm and recognize nurses as a value instead of 'overhead.' Advocate for greater support for nursing faculty to increase the pipeline of new nurses.
- **[Workplace safety action alert](#)**: Support the passage of H.R.1195-Workplace Violence Prevention for Healthcare and Social Service Workers Act. This act would mandate OSHA to promulgate a standard that would require all covered employers to develop and implement prevention plans that reduce workplace violence incidents. The House passed this bill last year, now the Senate needs to follow. #EndNurseAbuse

ANAC is committed to ongoing efforts to raise awareness and address workforce issues that intersect with HIV care, as well as the health and well-being of nurses, as we collectively work toward lasting and sustainable solutions.