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Florida nursing workforce grows, but aging trend challenges long-term sustainability

TAMPA, Fla. (March 26, 2026) — Florida’s nursing workforce continues to grow, driven primarily by an increase in entry-level registered nurses, according to new findings released today from the Florida Center for Nursing (FCN), headquartered at the University of South Florida College of Nursing. However, the report also reveals emerging challenges, including an aging workforce with a limited pipeline of younger entrants, that could raise long-term concerns about the sustainability of the state’s nursing workforce.

The report, *Florida’s Nursing Workforce Characteristics*, provides a comprehensive analysis of workforce trends and outlines key considerations for health care leaders, educators, and policymakers planning for the state’s future needs.

Key findings:

- **Continued growth:** Florida’s nursing workforce is expanding, driven primarily by growth in RN licensure.
- **Aging workforce:** Only 7.2% of nurses in the state are under age 30, raising concerns about long-term sustainability as retirements increase.
- **Faculty shortage:** Academic settings represent the smallest share of employment for Florida nurses. This presents challenges for maintaining and expanding nursing faculty to train the next generation of nurses.
- **Demographics:** Florida’s nursing workforce is more racially and ethnically diverse than national averages.

“We are encouraged by the continued growth of Florida’s nursing workforce. The Florida Center for Nursing remains committed to developing programs and initiatives that ensure nurses are prepared to meet the needs of our state’s residents and visitors,” said Florida Center for Nursing Executive Director Rayna Letourneau, PhD, RN, FAAN. “Our latest research highlights significant challenges facing the workforce and will help guide FCN’s efforts to strengthen recruitment and retention. We will continue conducting rigorous

nursing workforce research and providing evidence-based recommendations to support and sustain Florida’s nursing workforce.”

In addition to detailed analysis of current trends, the report recommends several strategies to support the future of Florida’s nursing workforce, including:

- **Reinforcing pipeline & retention:** Expand clinical placements, transition-to-practice supports, and targeted retention initiatives in high-need settings (elderly care, hospital medical-surgical settings, behavioral health).
- **Expanding educator capacity:** Invest in faculty recruitment/retention (doctoral pathways, compensation incentives) to sustain program growth.
- **Enhancing mobility:** Encourage multistate licensure uptake to improve surge capacity and regional responsiveness.
- **Strengthening data quality:** Improve survey participation through integrated renewal prompts, reminders, and stakeholder partnerships to restore response rates.

These findings will inform FCN’s efforts to ensure the health care needs of Florida’s residents and visitors are met by a competent and sufficient nursing workforce. The report will also support policymakers, health care leaders, and educators as they plan for the state’s future nursing needs.

Visit the [FCN website](#) to read the full report.

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USF Health is dedicated to making life better through research, education and patient care. It is the partnership of the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine, the College of Nursing, the College of Public Health, the Taneja College of Pharmacy, the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences, the Biomedical Sciences Graduate and Postdoctoral Programs and USF Health’s multispecialty physicians’ group, the largest on Florida’s west coast of Florida. In 2025, U.S. News & World Report ranked the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine as the No. 1 medical school in Florida and in the highest tier nationwide for research. U.S. News also ranked the USF College of Public Health and the USF College of Nursing’s Master of Science program No. 1 in the state. Together with Tampa General Hospital, USF Health forms one of the nation’s premier academic health systems, with more than 1,000 physicians and providers caring for more than one million patients each year. USF Health is part of the University of South Florida, a top-ranked research university and member of the Association of American Universities (AAU). USF serves approximately 50,000 students and generates nearly \$10 billion in annual economic impact for Florida. For more information, visit health.usf.edu.

About the Florida Center for Nursing-

The Florida Center for Nursing is established under section 464.0195, Florida Statutes, to research and address issues of supply and demand for nursing, including issues of recruitment, retention,

and utilization of nurse workforce resources. For more information, visit flcenterfornursing.org. The Florida Center for Nursing is headquartered at the University of South Florida.