



2018 Nurse.com

# Nursing Salary Research Report

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## Introduction

This salary survey was conducted to assess salary, overall compensation and multiple demographic points for RNs across the country. Salary surveys are a benefit to employees to determine whether a job offer is as good as it seems and for employers to remain competitive while recruiting and retaining top talent. Additionally, the data in this salary survey will assist recruiters in understanding the differences in salary, employment and education of various RN segments.

## Methodology

Nurse.com by OnCourse Learning conducted a salary and benefit survey from April to June of 2017. The survey questions were created by two doctorally-prepared RNs and several industry experts. Analysis was completed by a doctorally-prepared RN.

RNs and APRNs nationwide were invited to participate in a 10- to 15-minute online survey. Participants were recruited from emails and through Nurse.com social media. The only screening requirement was respondents had to be an RN or APRN (LPNs were excluded). Approximately 4,520 nurses (female = 4,126 and men = 394) met the criteria and completed the survey. The overall sample is representative of each state's percentage of RNs when compared to the U.S. workforce. For instance, California's 330,000 nurses represent 10% of the U.S. nursing workforce. Similarly, 10% of the survey's nurse respondents live and work in California. Therefore, they were equally represented in the survey as they are within the U.S. nursing workforce.

The sampling error is 1.5% with a 95% confidence interval. There was no honorarium or incentive to participate. Variations in sample sizes is the result of missing data; participants did not answer every question because it was not required.

The data is reported in three main groupings where it is appropriate. Overall, data is reported for all participants for each question. Further analysis is provided on some questions that look at differences between genders as well as generational differences. Strauss-Howe Generational Theory (1991) informed the year breakdown of Generation Y or millennials (Gen Y) ages 19 to 35, Generation X (Gen X) ages 36 to 56, baby boomers (BB) ages 57 to 74, and the Silent Generation (Silent) ages 75 to 80. Sample size for each generation is as follows: Gen Y: 608 (10% men; 90% women), Gen X: 2,601 (9% men; 91% women), BB: 1,222 (8% men; 92% women) and Silent: 14 (13% men; 87% women).

## General Data

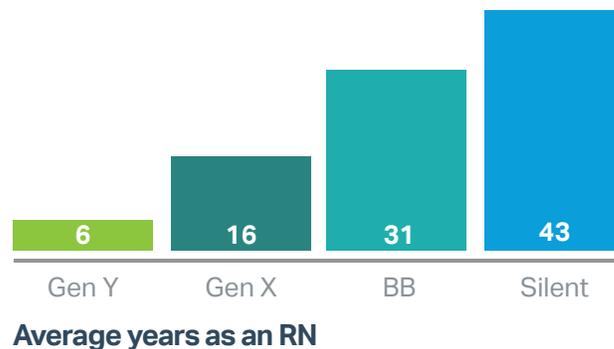
Overall, the average length of time as an RN is 19 years<sup>1</sup> with a mode of 5 years<sup>2</sup>. Women have been RNs for an average of 19 years compared to men's average length as RNs of 15 years<sup>3</sup>. The overall average age of RNs in this sample is 48, which is also the average age for men and women. Figure 1 shows average length of time by generation as an RN.



# Figure 1

## Average Length of Time as an RN

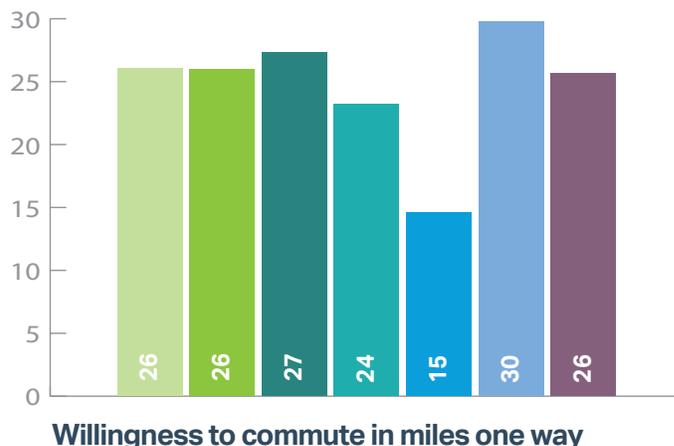
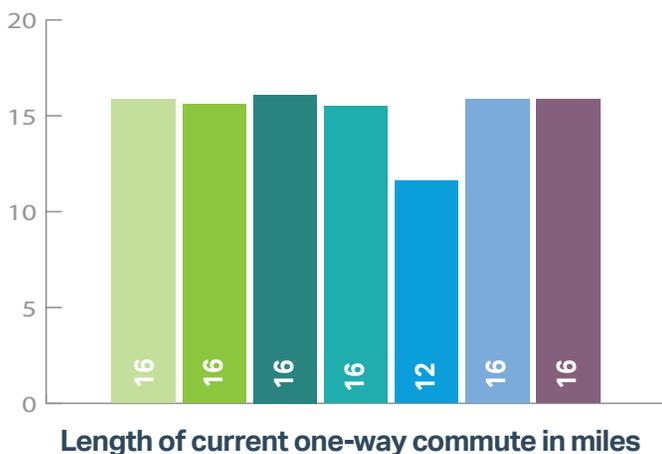
The average length of employment in their current positions is a little more than seven years with a mode of two years. Men had a shorter length of employment with almost six years while women were in their current positions longer, at more than seven years. Length of time at current positions varied for each generation and is statistically correlated<sup>4</sup> for all generations except Silent, meaning the longer the respondent is an RN, the longer the respondent has been in his or her current position. Gen Y respondents had been at their current positions a little more than three years, Gen X for almost seven years, BB for just more than 10 years, and Silent for almost seven years.



# Table 1

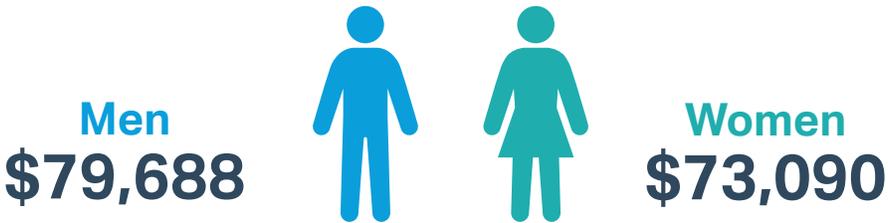
## One-Way Travel to Employer

The length of current commute (M = 16 miles, SD = 0.21) and how far one is willing to commute one way (M = 26 miles, SD = 0.21) is consistent between different groups. Distances driven by RNs in home health were removed from this average. Nurses, not including home health nurses, have a median of 22 miles for willingness to commute one way.



## Salaries and Benefits

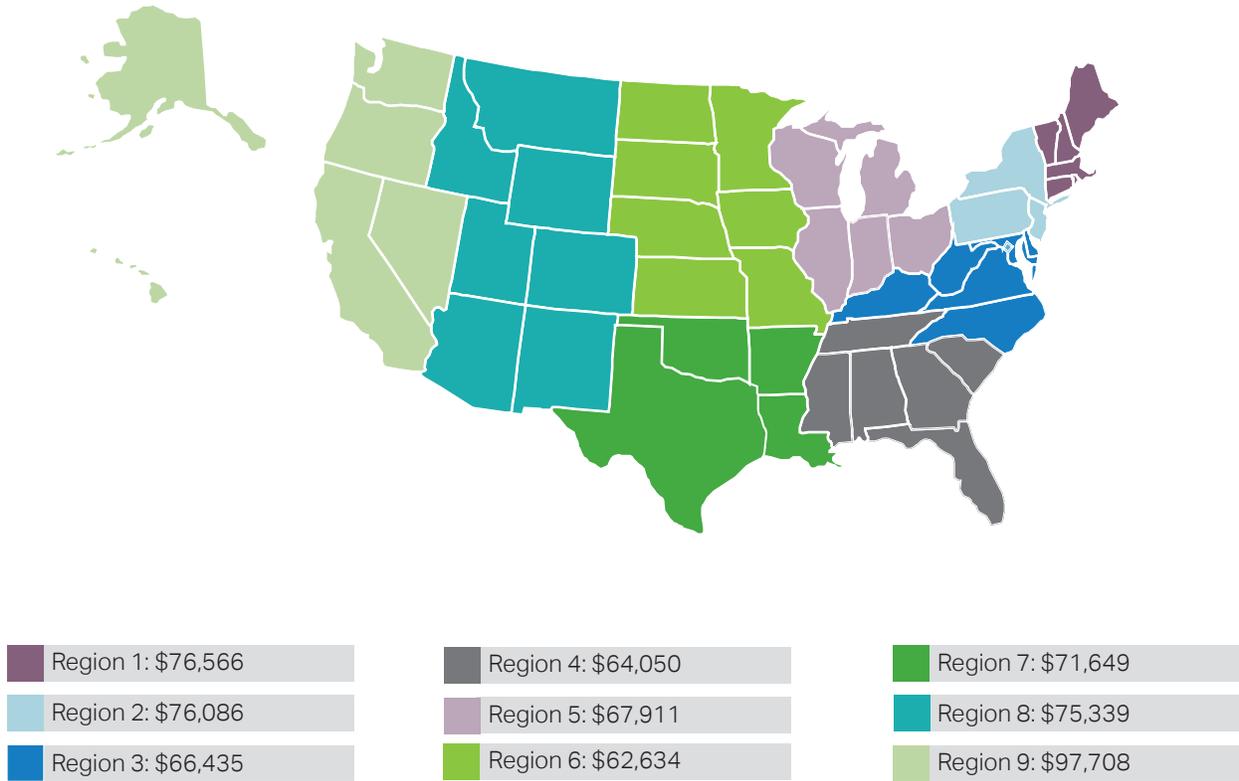
Salary is one of the biggest questions most RNs have, particularly when it comes to comparing to peers, as well as determining if additional education or a position move is the right decision financially. The average primary salary overall for this sample is \$73,663. The mode is \$60,000. Men in this survey do make more than women, \$79,688 compared to \$73,090. There is a standard deviation (SD) between salaries<sup>5</sup> for men (M = 79,688; SD = 37,421) and women (M= 73,090, SD = 48,003).



## Figure 2

### Salary Per U.S. Region

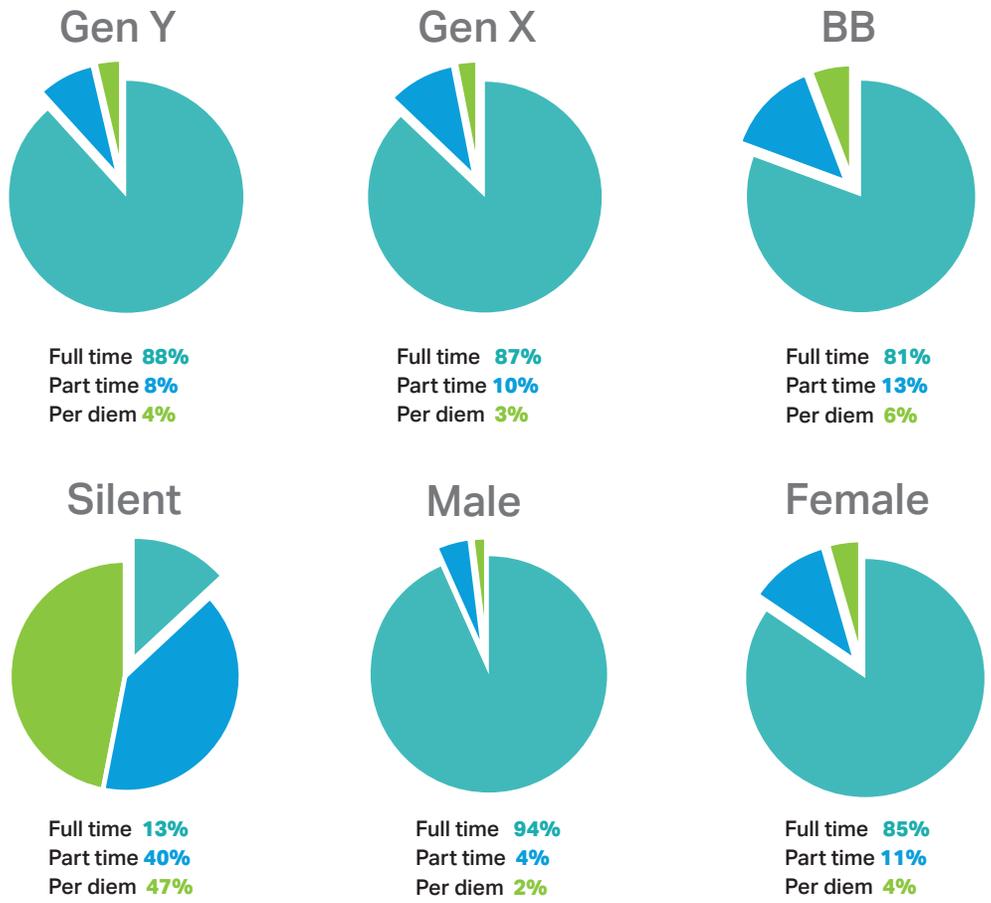
There are some differences in average salary per U.S. region. The regional map below uses the American Hospital Association's U.S. regional breakdown.



# Table 2

## Employment Status at Primary Job

Approximately **85%** of RNs work full time, **11%** work part time and **4%** work per diem. Men tend to work more hours per week than women on average (40 compared to 39). However, this increased number of hours worked did not statistically account for salary differences between gender alone. A total of 377 nurses worked a second position with an additional second salary of about \$23,600. A total of 43 men and 334 women worked at a secondary nursing position. Women made more (\$24,064) than men (\$20,371) on average in those positions.



When it comes to negotiating salary, 43% of the time men “most of the time or always” negotiate, compared to only 34% of women. There was no statistical relationship noted in this survey between negotiating and salary for either gender.

Participants were asked about their overall satisfaction with their current salary (1 = very unsatisfied to 5 = very satisfied). Overall satisfaction average was toward satisfied (M = 3.42, SD = .2). Men were more satisfied with their salary (M = 3.61; SD = .92) than women (M = 3.4, SD = 1.07). Satisfaction is relatively the same between generations, with Gen Y reporting a satisfaction level of 3.4, Gen X reporting 3.41, BB noting their level as 3.45 and Silent Generation being least satisfied with an average satisfaction level of 2.6. Average salary varied between generations with the Gen Y average at \$64,998, Gen X averaging \$74,160, the BB average at \$77,595 and Silent averaging \$24,339 related to the high level of per diem and part-time job status among that group.

# Table 3

## Salary and Certification by Role

Salary was further divided by role as reported by participants. The total sample size (all participants) are noted in the "Total Sample Size" column. Both male and female samples are subsets of the total number. The mean salary number is reported in the "Total Average Salary" column. Respondents who said they have certification included 137 men with a mean salary of \$81,672 and 1,632 women with a mean salary of \$80,420. Respondents who said they did not have certification included 255 men with a mean salary of \$78,342 and 2,475 women with a mean salary of \$68,227. These results demonstrate that certification helps female nurses close the salary gap between genders.

Role	Total Sample Size	Total Average Salary	Average Male Salary	Average Female Salary	Professional Certification
CEO/COO	12	\$157,437	\$113,084	\$172,222	42%
CNO/CNE	16	\$127,754	\$132,700	\$127,047	38%
Director	132	\$96,786	\$115,220	\$95,437	39%
Nurse Manager	202	\$92,025	\$93,937	\$91,862	44%
Assistant Nurse Manager	66	\$94,821	\$106,600	\$93,856	52%
Supervisor	166	\$79,717	\$93,200	\$78,475	34%
Charge Nurse	399	\$75,746	\$84,465	\$74,775	41%
Clinical Nurse Specialist	66	\$76,333	\$73,650	\$76,703	61%
Nurse Educator	182	\$75,602	\$80,571	\$75,187	53%
Case Manager	310	\$73,552	\$82,745	\$73,085	39%
Staff RN	2,368	\$69,224	\$75,833	\$68,521	36%
Clinician	41	\$81,377	\$116,000	\$80,512	56%
Other	520	\$147,096	\$86,383	\$151,469	46%
Consulting/Business Owner	15	\$106,155	\$69,000	\$108,809	47%

In a further attempt to explain differences in salary between women and men, additional analysis was performed. Salaries for women are positively correlated with length of time as a clinician in only staff RN ( $p = .001$ ), case manager ( $p = .005$ ), charge RN ( $p = .02$ ), assistant nurse manager ( $p = .02$ ), and nurse manager ( $p = .03$ ). For men, only nurse educator ( $p = .03$ ) and staff RN ( $p = .003$ ) salaries were positively correlated to length of time as a clinician.

# Table 4

## Salary and Certification by Academic Preparation

Salary was further divided by education level as reported by participants. The average salary for all participants combined is noted in the "Total Average Salary" column. Both male and female samples are subsets of the total number.

	Diploma	ADN	BSN	MSN	DNP	EdD or other	PhD Nursing	Masters (non-nursing)	Doctoral (non-nursing)
<b>Total Average Salary</b>	\$66,092	\$67,162	\$73,995	\$90,288	\$84,410	\$61,700	\$106,820	\$80,653	\$98,616
<b>Average Male Salary</b>	\$72,291	\$72,742	\$81,125	\$92,028	\$50,000 <sup>6</sup>	\$78,000 <sup>6</sup>	\$102,500 <sup>6</sup>	\$89,194	\$71,952 <sup>6</sup>
<b>Average Female Salary</b>	\$65,756	\$66,575	\$73,380	\$90,118	\$86,221	\$57,625	\$107,685	\$79,267	\$103,615
<b>Professional Certification</b>	37%	28%	42%	62%	60%	30%	63%	45%	16%

# Table 5

## Roles by Demographic

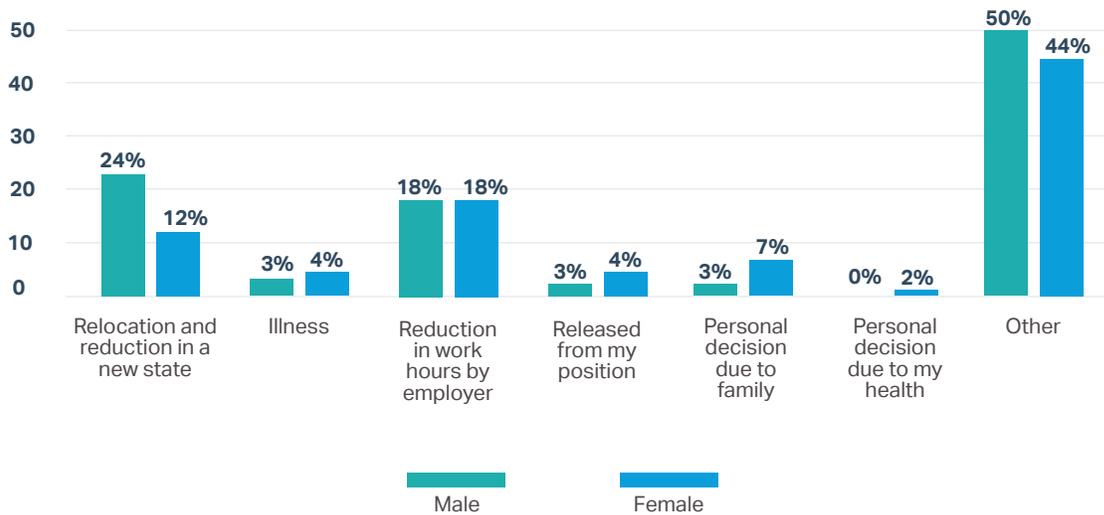
Nursing education is positively correlated with salary ( $p < .001$ ) for women, however, not significant for men ( $p = .133$ ). Role data was further broken down by generation and gender.

	CEO/COO	CNO/CNE	Director	Nurse Manager	Assistant Nurse Manager	Supervisor	Charge Nurse	Clinical Nurse Specialist	Educator	Case Manager	Staff RN	Clinician	Other	Consulting/ Business Owner
<b>Gen Y</b>	.2%	.2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	10%	1%	2%	4%	68%	1%	6%	.3%
<b>Gen X</b>	.2%	.3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	10%	2%	4%	7%	52%	1%	12%	.2%
<b>BB</b>	.4%	1%	3%	5%	2%	4%	7%	2%	6%	8%	46%	1%	14%	1%
<b>Silent</b>	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	7%	0%	67%	0%	13%	0%
<b>Men</b>	1%	1%	2%	4%	1%	4%	10%	2%	4%	4%	58%	.3%	9%	.3%
<b>Women</b>	.2%	.3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	9%	1%	4%	7%	52%	1%	12%	.3%

# Figure 3

## Reasons for Reduction in Salary

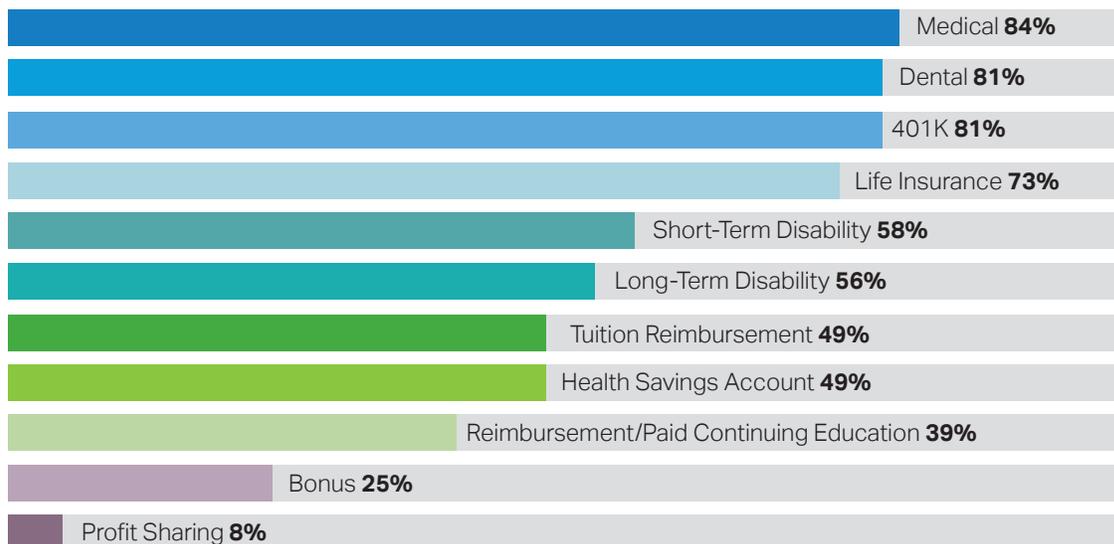
In the last six months, approximately 9% of men and 9% of women stated they received a reduction in their salary. Reasons varied, with "other" being the most often chosen reason. "Other" was a free text box within the survey. The most common reason shared in this box included change in position, change in job or change in company/employer. The next highest number of responses written in "other" indicated the hospital reduced base pay, an increase in low census, or an increase in healthcare insurance costs to employees.



# Table 6

## Benefits Received Through Employer

Overall, health insurance was the most frequent benefit received by the largest number of nurse respondents. Approximately 1,276 respondents noted they received an average of \$2,619 in continuing education reimbursement.



# Table 7

## How Nurses Rank Their Benefits

Participants also were asked about overall importance of certain aspects to job satisfaction, ranking each benefit on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being most important and 6 being least important. Overall, salary is the most important aspect in this list on overall job satisfaction, with tuition reimbursement being least important. Participants could only choose a rank once based on all potential answers. Rankings were compiled based on total number of responses because not all choices received a unique ranking. Some participants did not answer all the questions, which made some responses tie in the rankings.

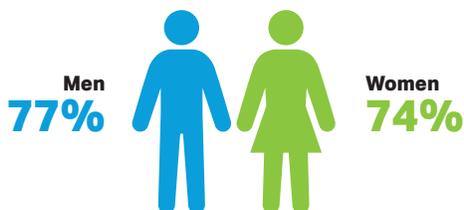
Generation	Benefits	Salary	Tuition Reimbursement	Regular Merit Increase	Overtime Opportunities	Advancement Opportunities
<b>Overall</b>	2	1	6	3	6*	4
<b>Gen Y</b>	2	1	6*	3	6*	4
<b>Gen X</b>	2	1	6*	3	6*	4
<b>BB</b>	2	1	6*	3	6*	4
<b>Silent</b>	6	1	5	2	4	3
<b>Female</b>	2	1	6*	3	6*	4
<b>Male</b>	2	1	6*	3	6*	4

\*Used ranking with highest tally per group; with missing responses per answer, highest frequency may result in same ranking of some benefits or have the same number of responses for that rank.

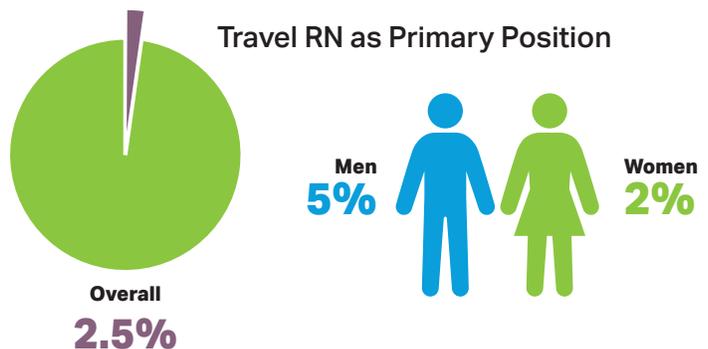
## Travel and Registry Employment

Overall, 2.5% of nurses work as travel RNs for their primary employment positions. This breaks down to 5% of all men and 2% of women. Men are statistically more likely to be travel RNs<sup>7</sup>. Beyond travel positions, approximately 6% of nurses work as registry or float RNs, with men choosing this role more frequently (8%) than women (5%). For 77% of men and 74% of women who stated they work registry or float, these are their primary nursing employment positions.

### Registry or Float RN as Primary Position



### Travel RN as Primary Position

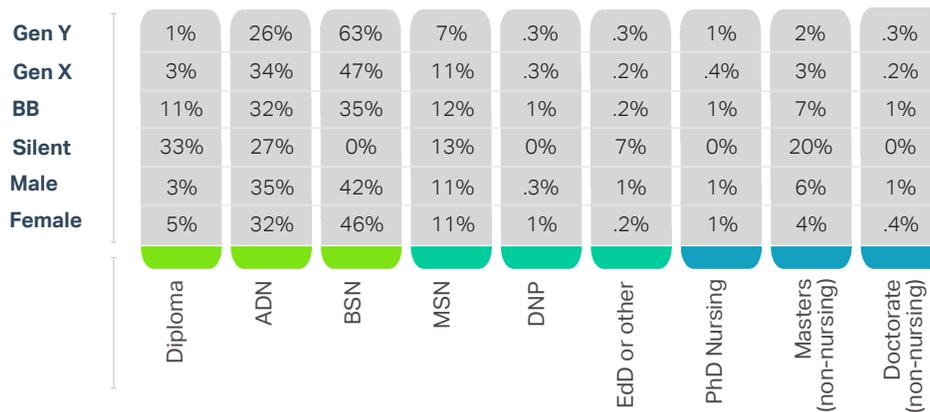


# Table 8

## Education Level

It is important to note the current landscape of education and certification levels of RNs (Tables 8 and 9) considering the national focus on higher RN education. Participants were asked if they were considering pursuing higher education, certification or training to boost salary potential with an overall response of 50%. When comparing genders, 56% of men said yes compared to only 49% of women. When controlling for education and number of hours worked, a significant relationship was noted between men's and women's salaries and certifications.

### What is the highest level of education you have completed?

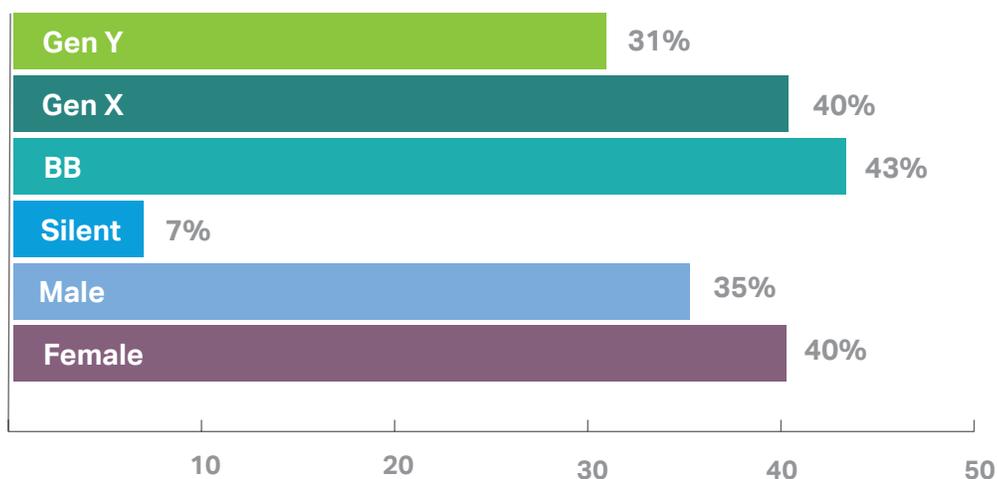


# Table 9

## Certification

All participants were asked if they held a professional certification. Examples given to participants included Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN) and Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN). Examples of what not to include as a professional certification included Basic Life Support (BLS) or Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS). Overall, 40% of RNs stated they are professionally certified.

### Nurses who have professional certification

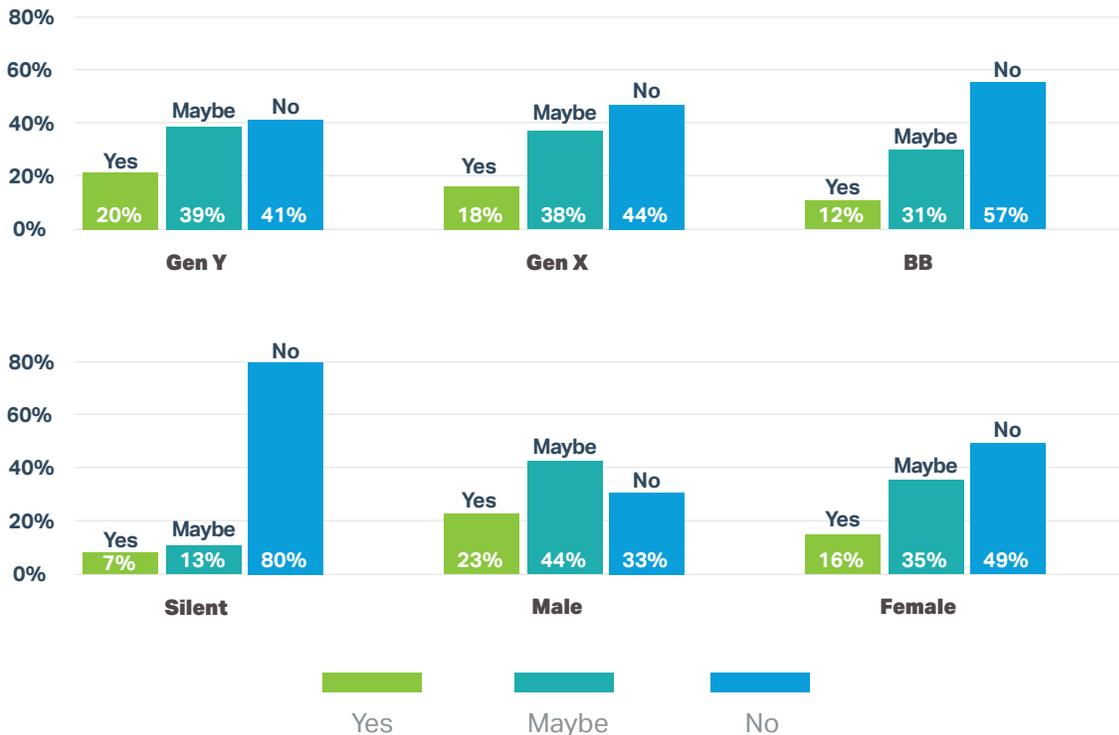
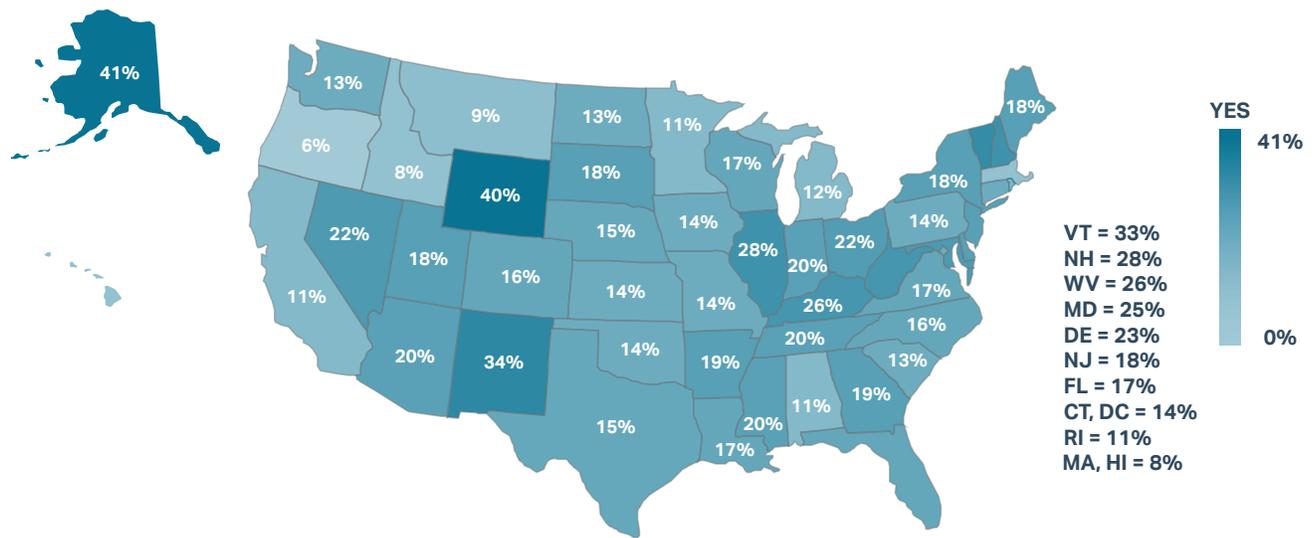


# Table 10

## Relocation

With the economy doing well, RNs are well positioned to move for a job. Understanding willingness to relocate by group may be useful in specific recruitment efforts. For instance, men are statistically more likely to consider relocating than women<sup>8</sup>. We asked nurses how likely they would be to relocate. States with the largest number of nurse respondents who said they would definitely move for a job include: Alaska (41%); Wyoming (40%); New Mexico (34%); Vermont (33%); Illinois and New Hampshire (28%); West Virginia and Kentucky (26%); Maryland (25%); Delaware (23%); Ohio and Nevada (22%); and Arizona, Indiana, Mississippi and Tennessee (20%).

### Would you consider relocating to another state for a job?

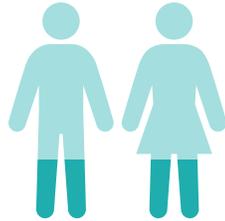


# Table 11

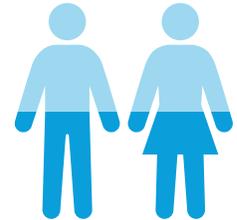
## Plans to Change Employers

Although the number of nurses searching for positions does not reflect the majority, a large percentage of nurses overall are open to new career opportunities (49%). Gen X and Gen Y nurses were most open to new opportunities at 51%, while baby boomers were close behind at 43%.

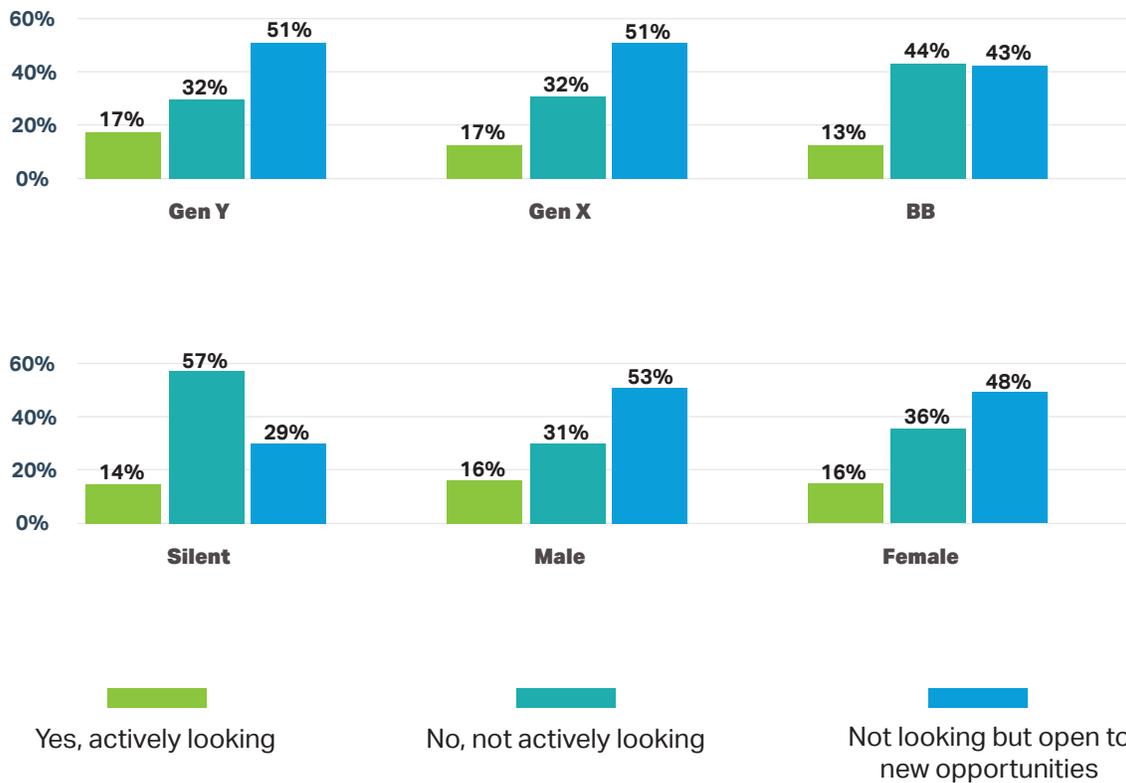
Currently, **16%** of RNs are actively looking to change employers.



An additional **49%** stated they are not actively looking but are open to new opportunities.



### Are you considering changing employers?



# Table 12

## Expected Timeframe to Change Employers

Of those looking to change employers, overall 46% believe they will change within the next 0-3 months, 32% state within 4-6 months and 22% believe 7 or more months from now. Men are looking to change employers the fastest.

### When are you considering changing employers?

	 <b>0-3 months</b>	 <b>4-6 months</b>	 <b>7 or more months</b>
<b>Male</b>	54%	35%	11%
<b>Female</b>	45%	32%	23%
<b>Gen Y</b>	46%	33%	21%
<b>Gen X</b>	46%	32%	22%
<b>BB</b>	48%	32%	20%
<b>Silent</b>	50% <sup>6</sup>	50% <sup>6</sup>	0%

### Summary of Key Points

Overall, this salary survey reviewed salary, education and roles of RNs from April to June of 2017. As found in other salary surveys, men continue to make more money as RNs than women. Salary is the No. 1 compensation factor for all RNs in relation to job satisfaction, however, all RNs were moderately satisfied with their salaries. Education and certification do positively correlate with higher salaries in both genders and a high number of RNs were planning on pursuing higher education, training or certification to increase income. Although there were many differences noted between genders on numerous questions, fewer differences were noted between generations. This suggests less attention may be warranted on particular generational differences between RNs.

## Reference Key

<sup>1</sup> Standard deviation (SD) = 0.19.

<sup>2</sup> Mode is a value that appears most often in a set of data.

<sup>3</sup> Men SD = 10.84 and women SD = 12.6.

<sup>4</sup> Gen Y, Gen X and BB all have ( $p < .001$ ) Silent  $p = .83$ .

<sup>5</sup> ( $t(4510) = 2.649, p = .008$ ).

<sup>6</sup> Sample sizes less than 5.

<sup>7</sup> ( $X^2(2) = 9.09, p = .011$ )

<sup>8</sup> ( $X^2(4) = 43, p < .001$ )

**Howe, Neil (1991).** Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069. ISBN 978-0688119126.

# Contributors

## Key Research Project Personnel

**Jennifer Mensik**, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, is former vice president of CE programming for Nurse.com by OnCourse Learning. A second-edition book she authored, "The Nurse Manager's Guide to Innovative Staffing," won third place in the leadership category for the American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Awards 2017. Mensik helped develop the survey questions, analyzed the data and authored the research report.

**Robert G. Hess Jr.**, PhD, RN, FAAN, is OnCourse Learning's executive vice president and chief clinical executive. He also is founder and CEO of the Forum for Shared Governance. Hess blogs on Nurse.com about career topics. As a presenter at professional conferences, Hess often addresses participants on how to find the right job and steps for building a successful career. Hess helped develop the survey questions and is sharing highlights from the research report in his regular career blog.

**Eileen Williamson**, MSN, RN, is a consultant for Nurse.com and former senior vice president and CNE at OnCourse Learning, where she led nursing programs and initiatives. Before joining the company in 1998, Williamson was employed by North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System in New York, where she held leadership positions in nursing and hospital administration, including chief nurse at two of the system's member hospitals. She holds a BSN and an MSN in administration, and is a graduate fellow of the Johnson & Johnson University of Pennsylvania Wharton School Nurse Executives program. She also is a board member and past president of the New Jersey League for Nursing, a constituent league of the National League for Nursing. Williamson helped develop the survey questions.

**Heather Cygan** is senior director of content and creative strategy for the recruitment and advertising solutions division of Nurse.com by OnCourse Learning. She has been developing healthcare content for more than 12 years and has a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Eastern Illinois University. She develops content for the Nurse.com Mediakit Blog that speaks to healthcare recruiters, HR professionals and schools of nursing. Cygan helped develop the survey questions and served as project manager of the research paper.

**Sallie Jimenez** is content manager for healthcare in the recruitment and advertising solutions division of Nurse.com by OnCourse Learning. She develops and edits content for the Nurse.com Blog and the Nurse.com Digital Editions. She has more than 22 years of healthcare journalism, content marketing and editing experience and has a bachelor of arts degree in communications. Jimenez helped develop the survey questions.

**Mike Milinac** is creative manager for the recruitment and advertising solutions division of Nurse.com by OnCourse Learning. He has been designing healthcare content for more than 27 years and has a bachelor of science degree in design from Illinois State University. Milinac designs our Nurse.com Digital Editions and professionally photographs nurses and other advertising and marketing collateral. He designed the Nursing Salary Research Report.