



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Nurse experience 2025

New data reveals rising expectations, shifting engagement patterns, and an urgent need to restore trust, purpose, and a sense of belonging across care teams. This is a moment to fix, innovate, and elevate the role of nursing in a fast-changing industry.

Dear colleagues,

As we enter a new chapter in healthcare, one truth remains constant: Nurses are pivotal to the success and well-being of our healthcare delivery system. But today's nurse experience is both under extraordinary pressure and evolving fast. With expectations shifting, turnover rising, and trust in leadership at a critical inflection point, this is not a moment for incremental change. It's a moment to lead with purpose and to innovate.

Press Ganey's report, "Nurse experience 2025," illuminates what nurses are telling us—clearly and urgently—about their work, their needs, and what will keep them committed to our organizations. The findings are a call to action for every leadership team. They remind us that when we invest in our nurses, we invest in the strength of our entire industry.

While some organizations are still struggling, others are making measurable progress. We learn more every day about what helps care teams thrive—and, across every role and region, it starts with culture. The most resilient organizations recognize that clinical excellence begins with an engaged and inspired workforce—that workforce experience, safety, equity, and resilience are deeply connected. Strengthening one strengthens them all. That insight gives us both a mandate and a roadmap, because the organizations getting it right are showing us what's possible.

Strategic advantage won't come from new technology or capital investments alone. It will come from rebuilding trust with the people who deliver care, and restoring their sense of belonging, pride, trust, and purpose.

Let this report be your roadmap. Use it to pinpoint where engagement is at risk, where culture can be strengthened, and where the next generation needs your support. Together, we will shape a future where nurses don't just stay—they stay proud, empowered, and equipped to lead.

With gratitude,



Jeff Doucette
DNP, RN, FACHE, NEA-BC, FAAN
SVP, Chief Nursing Officer
Press Ganey



Executive summary

Nursing is the heartbeat of healthcare, playing a crucial role in driving positive patient outcomes. Today's nurses face significant challenges that underscore the vital importance of supporting and empowering these essential caregivers. Yet as the demands on nurses grow, so too does the opportunity to foster innovation and growth within the profession.

While declining engagement and high turnover rates remain a concern, they also underscore the need for strong, supportive leadership. Now more than ever, nursing leaders are uniquely positioned to take bold, strategic action—empowering and sustaining those who are at the heart of care delivery. Together, we have the opportunity to shape a resilient and thriving future for healthcare.

Key findings: Trust at a turning point

- **The cost of constant change.** Turnover has improved slightly—now at 18% for all healthcare workers and 17% among nurses—but new declines in engagement suggest that progress may be short-lived. High turnover erodes team stability, making it harder to build the trust and cohesion that drive performance and culture.
- **Worrisome signals from APPs.** While engagement scores declined slightly across most roles, the divide between senior leadership and advanced practice providers (APPs) widened in 2024. Further, only 52% believe leadership is responsive to their feedback, and just 55% feel like they have a voice in decision-making.
- **A sense of pride predicts retention.** For both clinical RNs and APPs, the strongest predictor of retention is pride in the organization's mission, care quality, and reputation.
- **Gen Z discontent and turnover risk.** An alarming 24% of Gen Z RNs left their organizations in 2024. This generation has distinct priorities—a sense of purpose, support, and alignment—and are willing to walk away if those needs aren't met.
- **Teamwork fuels both retention and safety.** RNs with negative perceptions of teamwork and resources are 1.53x more likely to leave, while units with strong teamwork report significantly better outcomes on nursing-sensitive quality indicators like falls, CAUTI, CLABSI, and pressure injuries.
- **Safety culture is slipping.** Responses to prevention and reporting questions are down, with only 74% of employees saying mistakes are treated as learning opportunities (a drop from 77%)—signaling a breakdown of psychological safety.

Far from dispiriting, these signals point to a ripe opportunity for provider organizations to meet the moment—to focus on key drivers such as restoring trust, culture, and connection—to redirect these declines in their early stages. These key drivers are also at the heart of social capital—the glue that binds teams, secures trust, and fosters a sense of shared purpose.

Strong social capital fortifies engagement, enables resilience, and fuels innovation—creating a virtuous cycle that powers the flywheel of organizational outcomes.

To explore these findings and tailor your strategy, connect with the Press Ganey team at:

pressganey.com/speak-to-an-expert

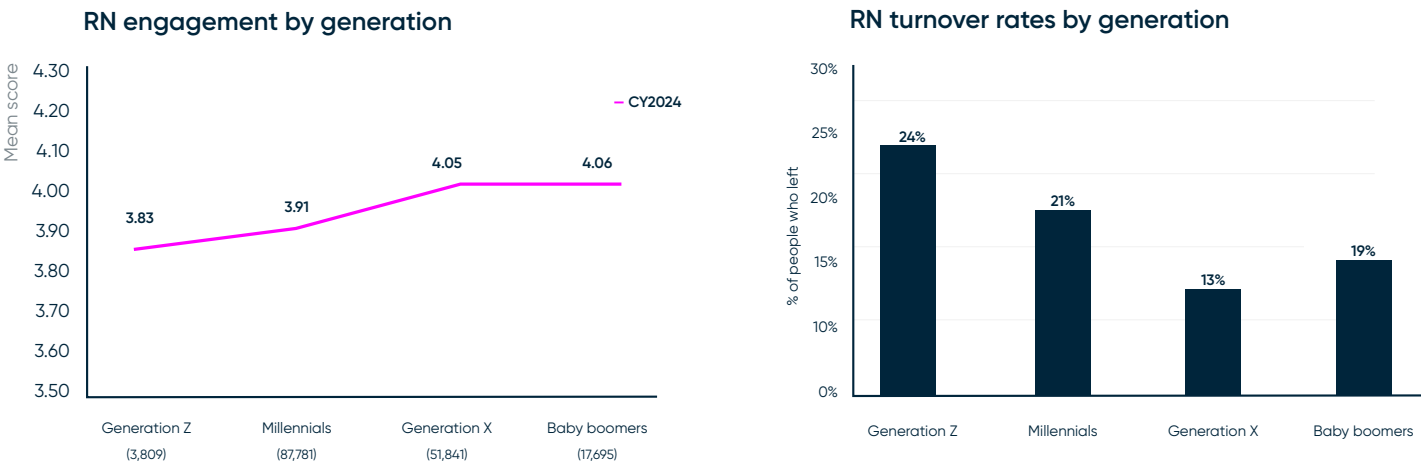
Mind the engagement gap

Engagement across the healthcare workforce is uneven. While senior leaders consistently report the highest levels of engagement, those on the front lines continue to lag behind. The issues are particularly acute among registered nurses (RNs), APPs, and licensed technical employees in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

This disconnect is more than a data point. It reflects the lived experiences—and frustrations—of those closest to patients. Their roles carry the heaviest clinical and emotional burdens, often without adequate support or a meaningful voice in decision-making. Persistent gaps in workload balance, resources, and recognition are taking a toll on engagement and retention, creating risk for safety and quality outcomes.

Generational differences compound the issue. Millennial and Gen Z RNs report the lowest engagement scores, 3.83 and 3.91, respectively—well below the national average of 3.97 for healthcare workers. Gen Z RNs are leaving organizations at the highest rate too: 24% in 2024, vs. 21% among millennials. And it’s not because this generation lacks resilience or isn’t committed to the work. They have different priorities, and are unwilling to stay in environments that don’t support their well-being or align with their values.

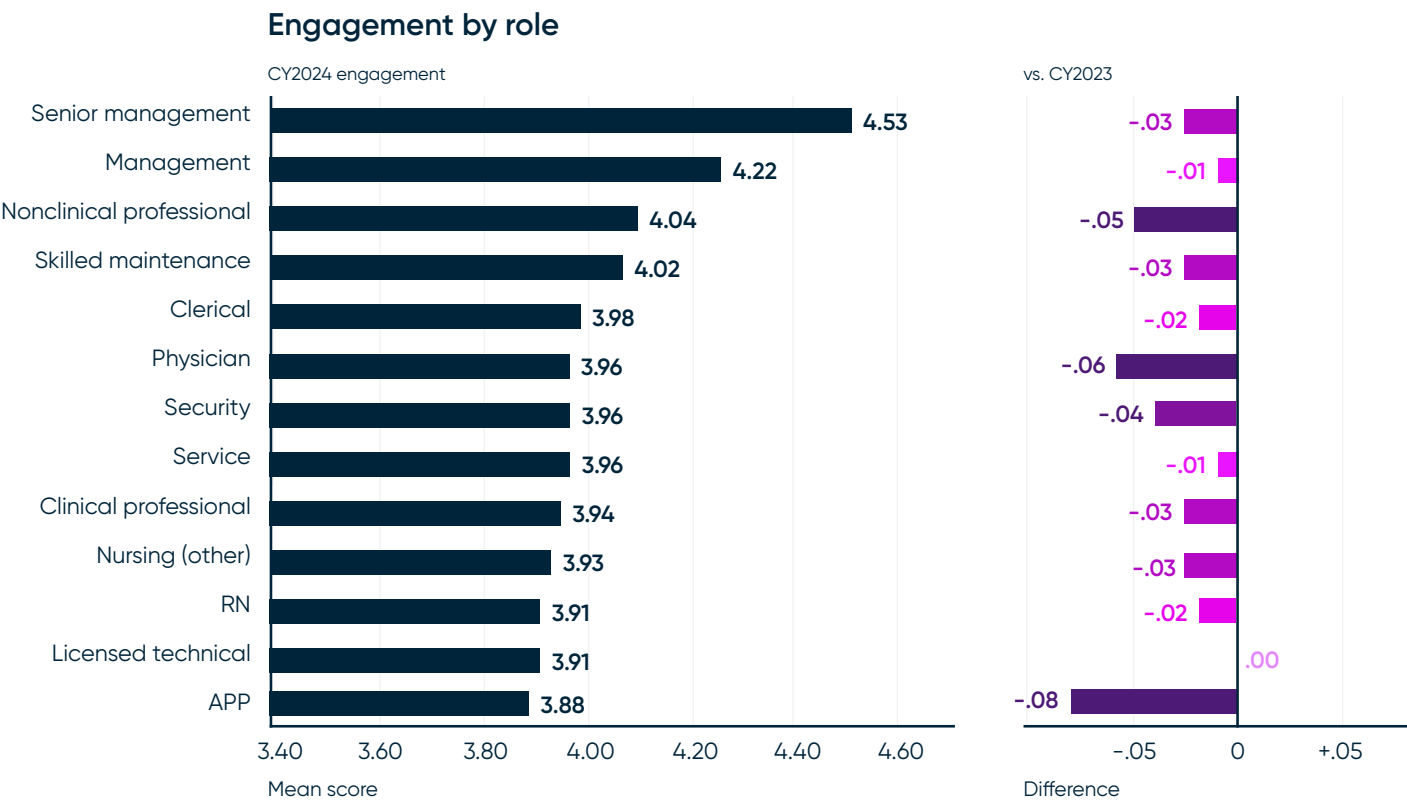
Low perceptions of physical and psychological safety among Gen Z nurses may be accelerating the rift. That sense of vulnerability is a critical, often overlooked driver of turnover that healthcare leaders must take seriously to retain this generation of nurses and develop the next generation of nurse leaders.



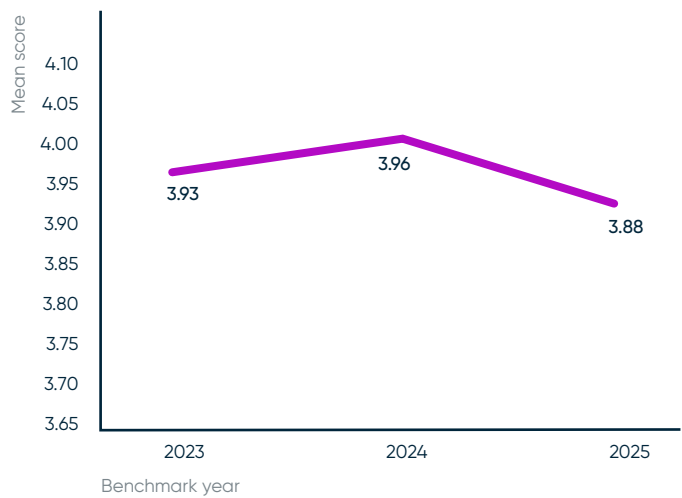
Traditional work models fall short of what the younger generations value most—a sense of purpose, support, and alignment, as well as flexibility, inclusion, and opportunities for growth. Since millennials and Gen Z now make up half the workforce—and play a critical role in healthcare’s future—organizations must adopt more intentional strategies to engage and retain them.

Reimagining and elevating the APP experience

APPs are essential to contemporary care delivery models, bridging gaps in access, supporting care teams, and expanding the capacity of overburdened systems. But despite their growing presence on the front lines, APPs remain one of the least engaged groups in the healthcare workforce. Last year, this group experienced the sharpest drop in engagement among all roles.



National APP engagement trends



This disengagement reflects the fact that many APPs feel overlooked—caught somewhere between physicians and clinical nurses—as well as disconnected from leadership and the decisions that impact their work. Increased responsibility and limited authority have created a sense of professional limbo. Only 55% feel they have a voice in decisions, while just 52% say leaders are responsive to their feedback.

APPs are asking for a seat at the table—shared governance, voting rights, and representation in decision-making bodies. They want to shape the systems they’re part of, not simply work within them.

APPs want more than acknowledgment. They want meaningful participation, and:

1. Leadership that listens and acts
2. Respect and recognition of their contributions
3. Adequate resources to deliver high-quality care

What keeps APPs committed?

The most important drivers of retention—in both the short and long term—aren’t compensation or workload. They are organizational pride, leadership support, teamwork, staffing, and resilience.

Resilience is made up of two competing states: activation (i.e., the connection to the work) and decompression (i.e., the ability to disconnect and recharge.) Decompression scores are a stronger signal of intent to stay in the near term, whereas activation scores are a better predictor of retention over the longer term. Performance on these measures reflect the overall workplace culture—and whether APPs feel supported, respected, and empowered to do their jobs well. A deeper dive into the data reveals the relative importance of each key driver’s influence on retention.

Teamwork also stands out as a powerful driver, with 2x the impact of leadership and resilience factors. One of the primary currencies of social capital, positive assessments of teamwork is critical to building social capital within and across teams, and a catalyst for optimizing performance and outcomes.

Organizational pride is the single strongest predictor of APPs’ intent to remain at their organization for both the near and long term. Even small increases in scores on questions related to pride lead to significant improvements in retention: Pride and reputation has 2x the effect of teamwork on retention—and 4x that of leadership and resilience.

Where APPs are seeking support

Engagement is declining, with the biggest challenges in influence, teamwork, and financial security.

| | |
|---|--|
| — My ideas and suggestions are seriously considered (–0.23) | — Employees in my work unit help others to accomplish their work (–0.12) |
| — I am satisfied with my benefits (–0.21) | — I rarely worry about having enough money to manage my expenses (–0.11) |
| — I have the opportunity to influence nursing practice in this organization (–0.12) | |

Holding the front line: The realities of today's work for clinical RNs

Registered nurses are the bedrock of care delivery—managing patient needs, coordinating across teams, and anchoring safety culture at the bedside. But their experience in the workplace is increasingly strained.

The clinical nurse experience hinges on four core factors: resources, teamwork, leadership, and staffing. The strength (or weakness) of these factors determines whether RNs feel they can do their jobs effectively and whether they feel a sense of professional fulfillment. When any of these is lacking, there is a quantifiable impact on retention. For example, nurses with negative perceptions of resources and teamwork are 1.53x more likely to leave than those with positive views.

RNs with a negative view of “resources and teamwork” are 1.53x more likely to leave.

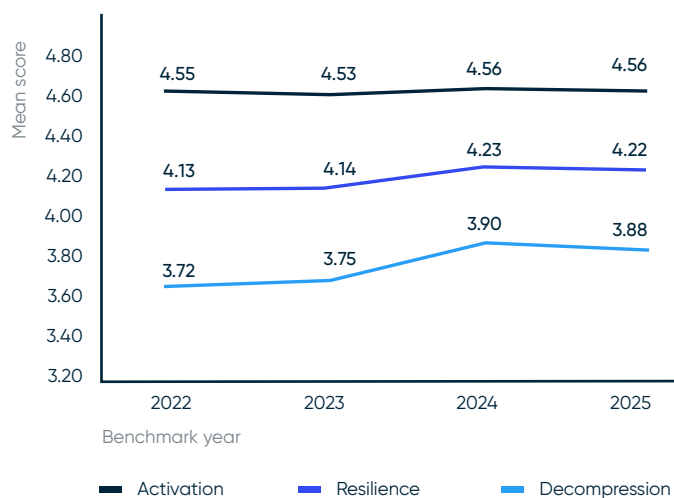
Nurse satisfaction—and ultimately retention—is about more than workload. It's driven by control, connection, and respect. It's about the ability to influence one's environment, feel part of a team, and be valued for one's contributions and expertise. Far from perks, these are essential conditions for long-term loyalty—and for clinical RNs to thrive.

What keeps clinical RNs committed?

As with APPs, organizational pride is the single strongest predictor of intent to stay. Nurses who believe in the quality of their organization's care and its reputation are significantly more likely to remain in their jobs in the short and long term, even when outside offers are on the table.

While resilience plays a smaller role, decompression consistently influences both short- and long-term retention. In contrast, activation predicts only a nurse's intent to stay for three years, not whether they would stay if another opportunity arose. In other words, meaningful work matters, but it isn't enough without the time, space, and support to recover from this demanding work.

Nurse resilience trending



Rebuilding safety culture from the inside out

Strong safety culture is characterized by an engaged and psychologically safe workforce.

And trust is what makes that possible—among all employees, but especially among bedside caregivers. When nurses feel psychologically safe—when they are confident that they will be listened to and can speak up without fear of reprisal—they are more likely to speak up, report concerns, and work collaboratively. The positive impact on safety scores is well-documented.

Yet the data shows that trust is on the decline. Only 74% of healthcare workers say that mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, a drop from 77%. This creates enormous risk for patient safety and quality, as well as for engaging and retaining healthcare's most essential front-line workers.

Better teamwork, safer care

Optimal teamwork, which depends on safety culture, is one of the most powerful predictors of clinical performance. Facilities where nurses report high levels of teamwork consistently perform better on critical patient outcomes, including falls, catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI), central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI), and pressure injuries. And it's not just staff who notice: Facilities where patients agree that "staff worked well together" see stronger performance on safety metrics across the board.

There's a clear alignment between teams working well together and the patient experience. Specifically, patients' "Likelihood to Recommend" (LTR) increases by:

- +9.23% when nurses report a strong safety culture
- +7.79% when nurses report adequate resources and staffing
- +6.12% when nurses report strong interprofessional relationships
- +5.99% when nurses report having autonomy in their role

Safety culture is one of the strongest measures of social capital—reflecting if the levels of trust, respect, and teamwork will enable consistent performance across teams. But consistency can be hard to achieve in 12-hour shifts across multi-campus systems. While many nurses value the flexibility of three-day workweeks, it can lead to variability in how care is delivered across days, nights, and weekends.

This is where the value of adopting high reliability organizing (HRO) practices becomes evident. HRO reduces variation, aligns behaviors, and ensures safety isn't dependent on who's working—or when people work. Building and sustaining safety culture means creating environments where nurses can speak up, collaborate, and be confident that the system will support them—every shift, every time.

The power of presence

Leader rounding and safety huddles are foundational to a strong safety culture. When done with intention, leader rounding fosters trust with nurses, surfaces concerns early, and makes caregivers and patients alike feel seen and heard.

Safety huddles provide a daily opportunity for teams to share risks, align priorities, and act quickly. Together, these habits strengthen communication, elevate front-line voices, and hardwire high reliability principles into daily operations and nurse behaviors.

When teams feel safe, supported, and empowered, they communicate more openly, collaborate more effectively, and deliver better care. So, if a stronger safety culture is the outcome, social capital is the infrastructure to build it. Rebuilding safety culture means investing in the relationships, behaviors, and environments that allow nurses to speak up, work together, and trust that the system will support them.

If a stronger safety culture is the outcome, social capital is the infrastructure to build it. Rebuilding safety culture means investing in the relationships, behaviors, and environments that allow nurses to speak up, work together, and trust that the system will support them.

High reliability starts with psychological safety

A strong safety culture is grounded in psychological safety. That means creating an environment where employees feel empowered to speak up, report concerns, and learn from mistakes without fear of blame or punishment.

Today, only 74% of healthcare workers say mistakes are treated as learning opportunities—a drop from 77% in 2023. Confidence in prevention and reporting systems is lowest among front-line staff, including APPs, RNs, and licensed techs.

When staff fear consequences for raising concerns, trust erodes and the risk of safety events increases. A punitive culture is unsafe for both patients and caregivers. But, to turn the tide, organizations must embed safety as a core value, commit to zero harm, and erase behaviors that silence workers’ voices. This starts with leadership. Senior and front-line leaders must model, reinforce, and recognize the everyday behaviors that build and sustain safety culture.

When employees report strong teamwork—a critical component of safety culture—facilities are:

- 80% more likely to be in the top quartile for pressure injury 2
- 70% more likely to be in the top quartile for pressure injury 1
- 70% more likely to be in the top quartile for central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI)
- 50% more likely to be in the top quartile for catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI)
- 20% more likely to be in the top quartile for total falls
- Over 3x as likely to be in the top quartile for falls with injury rate

Culture, connection, safety, and social capital

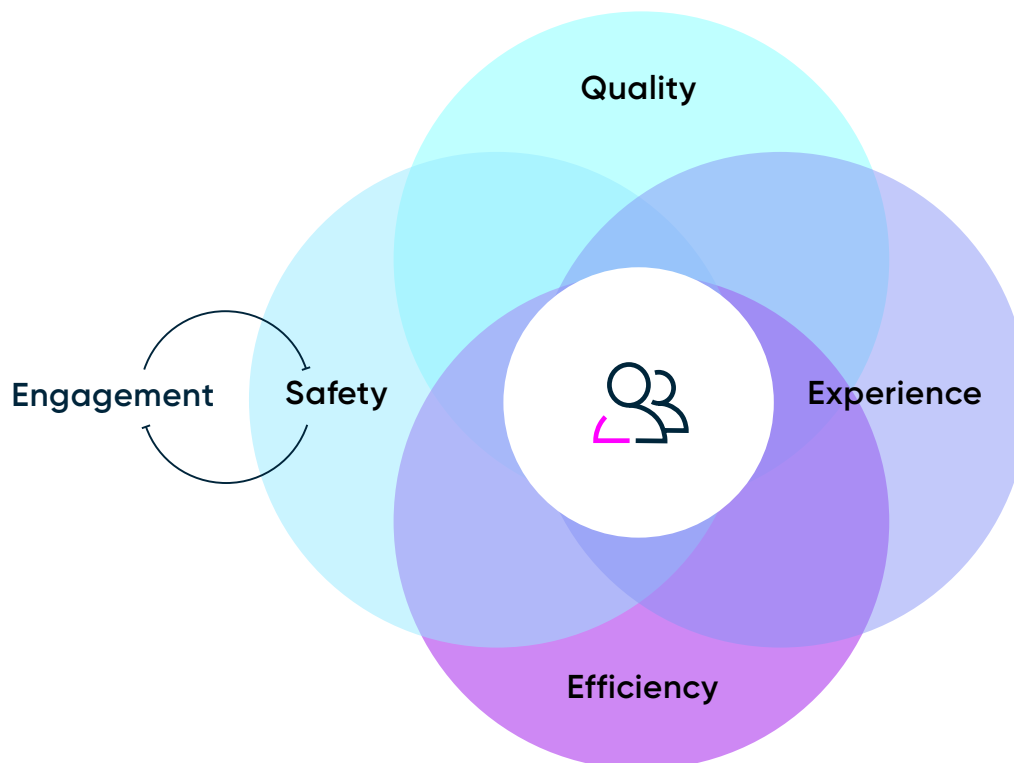
Respect, civility, and alignment on mission are baseline nurse expectations. In healthcare, where high stakes meet high stress, they're also the foundation for trust, safety, and performance.

Social capital (n): The value created through relationships, trust, and collaboration, enabling people to work together effectively and achieve shared goals that drive organizational success.

Social capital—i.e., the trust, connection, and mutual support that hold teams together—is what turns culture into action. When social capital is strong, teams move faster, communicate better, and recover more quickly. It's what allows organizations to be agile and absorb challenges without breaking. It's also what fuels psychological safety and keeps nurses from walking out the door.

Poor teamwork isn't just a morale issue—it's a patient safety risk and a retention problem. Think of social capital as a multiplier. When it's weak, everything cracks. Trust erodes. Teamwork falters. Engagement drops. And good nurses leave. But when it's strong, it creates a virtuous cycle—one where people and teams support each other, adapt quickly, take pride in their work, and realize the best possible outcomes for patients.

The virtuous cycle



Leadership as infrastructure, not just influence: Key tactics for nurse leaders and managers

Effective leaders do more than set direction. They shape the culture and conditions for success. That starts with listening—so they can identify barriers to great work and then remove them. When leaders follow through—closing the loop between feedback and action—they build trust, reinforce culture, and unlock peak performance. Whether at the bedside or in the boardroom, healthcare leadership shapes how nurses work, how they feel, and whether they stay with an organization or seek greener pastures.

Strong leadership, stronger ROI

Investing in nurse leadership development, engagement, and alignment is one of the most powerful ways to drive culture, performance, and results. Press Ganey's work with healthcare organizations across the country demonstrates clear ROI—reinforcing the connection between leadership investment, retention, and financial impact.*

- Coaching and developing 15 nurse leaders can save an estimated **\$3.5 million** in turnover costs.
- Engaging and coaching 100 nurse leaders can reduce turnover, saving an estimated **\$18.5 million**.

Listen deeply. Act intentionally. A [continuous listening strategy](#) builds on annual surveys to capture real-time feedback that reveals patterns, pain points, and opportunities.

Close the loop. Listening is step one. Action matters more. When [leaders](#) follow through on feedback and close the loop, they build trust—demonstrating to their teams that their input leads to real change.

Segment your data to sharpen your strategy. Data gives you a front-row seat to what's working—and what's not. And [segmenting that data](#), whether by location, role, or demographics, gives you the precision to understand the different needs of their teams.

Invest in the next generation of nurse leadership. The strength of tomorrow's leadership depends on what you do today. [Developing early-career leaders](#) sets the foundation for a sustainable culture and continued clinical excellence.

Deepen interprofessional relationships through nurse managers. Nurse managers lead by example, setting the tone by modeling respectful behaviors, establishing clear expectations, and holding team members accountable. [Strong interprofessional teams](#) are built through connection, compassion, and a shared commitment to respect and trust.

Use nurse managers as the conduit to build social capital. [Social capital](#) fuels teamwork, trust, and better outcomes—for patients and for the people who care for them. But when that foundation is weak, the consequences ripple across an organization: higher turnover, lower morale, and greater risk.

Put AI to work. [Artificial intelligence](#) can't replace human empathy and connection. But it can work behind the scenes, surfacing early warning signs of burnout and turnover, reducing administrative burden, and giving teams insights they need to solve problems faster and collaborate more effectively.

*ROI was calculated by analyzing YOY shifts in intent to stay, factoring in regional salary data and turnover trends from repeat survey responders

Trust, safety, engagement, retention—it's all connected. A resilient nursing workforce is built through cultures where people are heard, supported, and empowered. Invest where it matters most—because the quality of care will never outpace the health and well-being of the people delivering it.

About the data

Drawing on data from nearly 500,000 registered nurses in Press Ganey's Nursing Excellence Benchmark—along with APPs and clinical staff nationwide—the study identifies critical threats to trust, engagement, and workforce stability, and outlines the strategies healthcare leaders must embrace to meet this moment.

Turn insight into action—and action into impact

An investment in safety culture drives better financial performance, workforce engagement, consumer experience, and patient outcomes. To discuss the latest data and findings, your organization's unique challenges, and how our technology and consulting can help, reach out to the Press Ganey team at:

pressganey.com/speak-to-an-expert

