



Industry Trends

## 2023 Forecast: The Future of Travel Staffing

By  **Moirra K. McGhee** | Feb 06, 2023

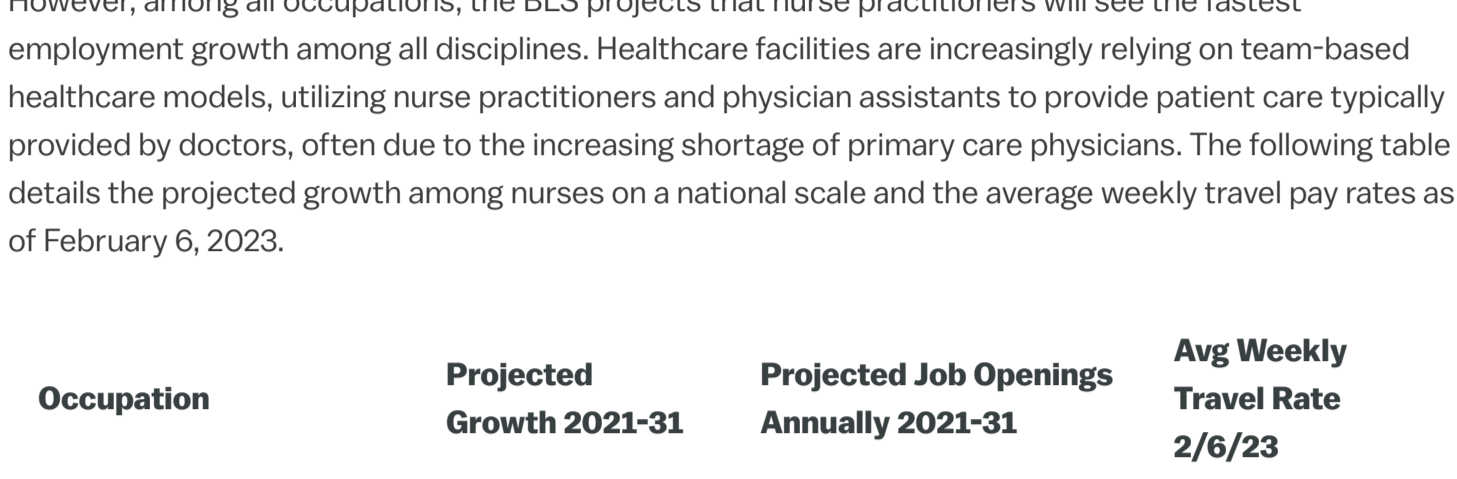
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Staffing shortages aren't new in healthcare. There was a critical need for healthcare workers before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the demand has only increased since the pandemic hit in 2020. Shortages in nursing and every healthcare occupation aren't likely to go away, with many reports predicting these shortages will soon become critical. Many healthcare facilities turn to travel staffing to help fill staffing gaps until they can secure employees for permanent nursing jobs and staff allied health openings. Although it's difficult to predict the future of travel staffing, one thing holds true – as long as the demand for nurses and healthcare professionals continues to increase and supply remains low, the need for travelers to take up the slack will remain steady.

### Projected Employment Growth

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicts an additional 8.3 million jobs from 2021 to 2031 in the United States. Among all industries, it indicates that the healthcare and social assistance sector will add the most jobs, with an additional 2.6 million jobs during this 10-year period. Aging Baby Boomers and an increased prevalence of chronic conditions primarily drive growth within this sector. Within the healthcare field, growth varies across occupations, ranging from as low as 2% up to a staggering 46% increase in demand.

### Growth and Shortages in Nursing



Nurses are a vital part of healthcare and comprise the largest segment of healthcare professionals. According to the American Association of the College of Nurses, the United States has nearly 4.2 million registered nurses (RNs) nationwide. The BLS projects a need for 203,200 additional RNs annually between 2021 and 2031.

The BLS expects job growth for RNs in most healthcare settings, including hospitals and outpatient care clinics. Because many older patients prefer receiving treatment in their homes or long-term care facilities, an increased need for services within these settings will also likely occur. Some openings will be due to older nurses retiring or nurses transferring to different occupations, potentially due to burnout.

However, among all occupations, the BLS projects that nurse practitioners will see the fastest employment growth among all disciplines. Healthcare facilities are increasingly relying on team-based healthcare models, utilizing nurse practitioners and physician assistants to provide patient care typically provided by doctors, often due to the increasing shortage of primary care physicians. The following table details the projected growth among nurses on a national scale and the average weekly travel pay rates as of February 6, 2023.

Occupation	Projected Growth 2021-31	Projected Job Openings Annually 2021-31	Avg Weekly Travel Rate 2/6/23
Nurse Practitioners	46%	26,800	\$3,705
Nurse Anesthetists	12%	2,900	\$6,239
Nurse Midwives	7%	500	N/A
Licensed Practical / Vocational Nurses	6%	58,800	\$1,588
Registered Nurses	6%	203,200	\$2,550
Certified Nursing Assistants	5%	212,700	\$1,603

Source: Vivian Health, O\*NET OnLine, BLS

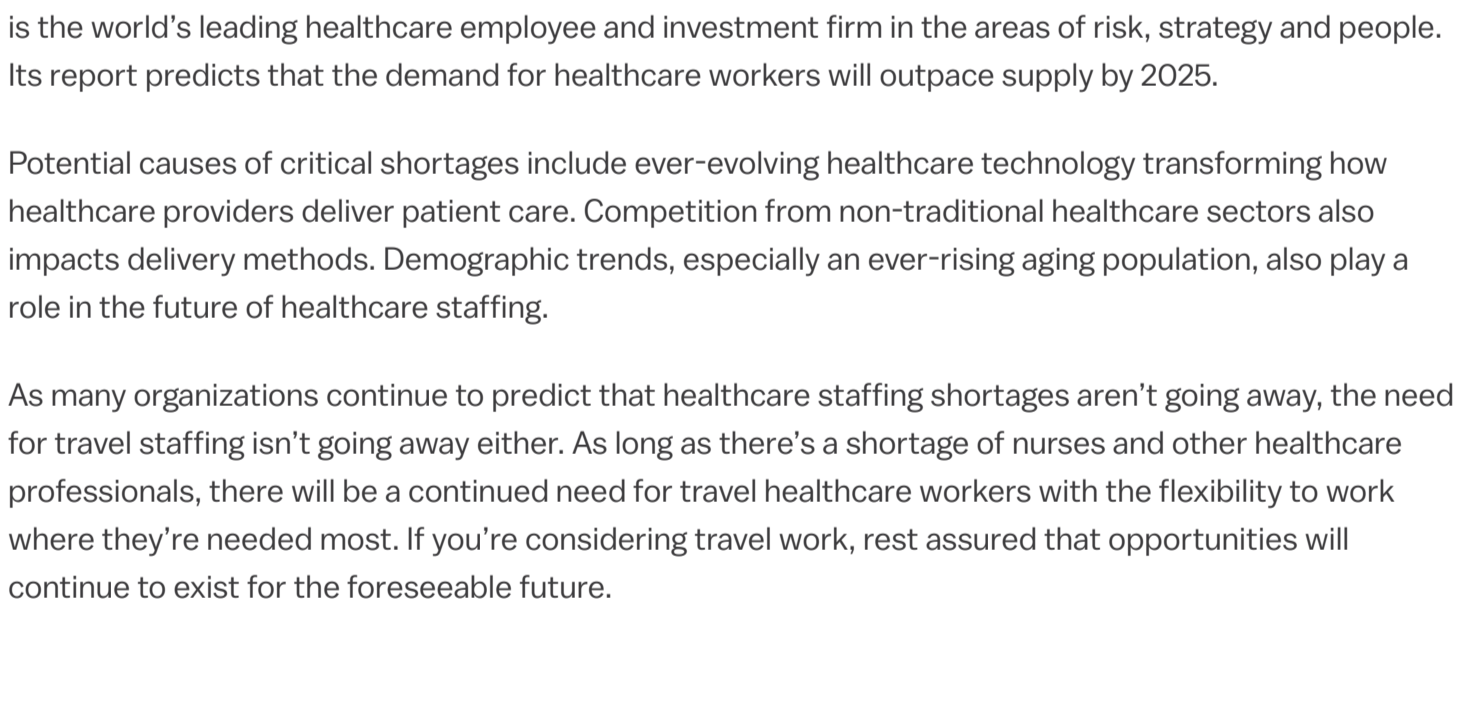
### Registered Nurses Employment Trends by State 2020-2030

Although the BLS predicts the nationwide growth of registered nurses only to be 6%, the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET), the nation's primary source of occupational information, predicts much higher rates in many states across the country for the 2020 – 2030 decade. The following table outlines the projected growth of RNs by state.

State	Projected Growth 2020-2030	Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	Projected Annual Job Openings
Arizona	39%	58,480	81,460	5,930
Colorado	29%	53,100	68,270	4,430
Nevada	23%	24,040	29,630	1,950
Idaho	20%	15,350	18,400	1,110
Utah	20%	24,840	29,820	1,920
Georgia	18%	73,180	86,440	5,460
Maryland	17%	71,390	83,710	5,250
New York	17%	197,160	230,580	14,430
Tennessee	17%	64,280	75,150	4,700
Texas	17%	220,980	258,720	16,210
Washington	16%	61,560	71,550	5,430
Delaware	15%	11,660	13,350	820
Florida	15%	189,120	216,510	13,250
Alaska	14%	5,680	6,500	400
Mississippi	14%	29,270	33,220	2,010
New Mexico	14%	18,740	21,350	1,300
North Dakota	14%	10,060	11,460	700
Iowa	12%	33,110	37,070	2,220
Massachusetts	12%	87,860	98,560	5,900
North Carolina	12%	102,150	113,920	6,780
Oklahoma	12%	39,130	43,800	2,620
Oregon	12%	41,000	45,980	2,580
South Dakota	12%	13,440	15,050	900
West Virginia	12%	21,550	24,110	1,440
California	11%	323,900	358,900	21,200
Montana	11%	10,680	11,810	700
South Carolina	11%	47,050	52,040	3,070
Wyoming	11%	5,080	5,630	330
Vermont	10%	6,920	7,610	450
Arkansas	9%	25,890	28,240	1,640
Hawaii	9%	11,770	12,800	740
Kentucky	9%	43,320	47,140	2,730
New Hampshire	9%	14,010	15,240	880
New Jersey	9%	83,660	90,850	5,240
Pennsylvania	9%	147,280	160,380	9,280
Alabama	8%	51,280	55,540	3,180
Indiana	8%	66,740	71,950	4,120
Michigan	8%	102,590	110,750	6,350
Nebraska	8%	27,670	29,810	1,700
Virginia	8%	67,340	72,900	4,190
Kansas	7%	30,920	33,190	1,890
Minnesota	7%	71,780	76,540	4,320
Missouri	7%	73,330	78,130	4,410
Ohio	7%	131,400	140,780	7,990
District of Columbia	5%	10,580	11,150	620
Illinois	5%	136,640	142,890	7,870
Rhode Island	5%	12,680	13,340	740
Connecticut	4%	34,470	35,830	1,960
Wisconsin	4%	64,590	67,120	3,670
Maine	3%	14,950	15,440	840
Louisiana	2%	41,940	42,690	2,270

Source: O\*NET OnLine

### Shortages in Allied Health Professions



Besides a shortage among nursing staff, you've probably been hearing for years about the need for more healthcare workers in all types of allied health fields. According to the American Hospital Association (AHA), allied health professionals make up more than 60% of all healthcare providers, with more than 5 million allied health workers across the nation. The AHA indicates that every doctor receives assistance from an average of eight allied health professionals while providing patient-centered care.

The projected job growth within specific fields can significantly influence travel staffing. The fastest-growing allied health careers with the highest demand typically have some of the highest projected job growth and openings. Increased demand often leads to facilities having open staff positions.

Travelers have the opportunity to fill these staffing gaps until the facilities can fill these openings permanently. The following table demonstrates the projected growth of popular allied health jobs and average weekly travel rates as of February 6, 2023.

### Projected Job Growth by Healthcare Profession

Occupation	Projected Growth 2021-31	Projected Job Openings Annually 2021-31	Avg Weekly Travel Rate 2/6/23
Physician Assistants	28%	12,700	\$3,992
Physical Therapy Assistants	26%	17,900	\$1,395
Occupational Therapy Assistants	25%	8,700	\$1,896
Speech-Language Pathologists	21%	14,000	\$1,950
Physical Therapists	17%	15,400	\$1,989
Medical Assistants	16%	123,000	\$1,080
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers/Ultrason Techs	15%	6,000	\$2,465
Marriage and Family Therapists	14%	6,400	\$1,717
Occupational Therapists	14%	10,100	\$1,944
Respiratory Therapists	14%	9,400	\$2,106
Audiologists	10%	800	\$2,970
Phlebotomists	10%	21,500	\$1,333
Social Workers	9%	19,700	\$2,288
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	7%	2,800	\$2,494
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	7%	25,600	\$2,228
Paramedics	7%	6,000	\$1,629
Psychologists	6%	5,100	\$4,760
Radiation Therapists	6%	800	\$2,833
Radiologic Technologists	6%	13,800	\$2,292
Surgical Assistants	6%	1,300	\$2,562
Surgical Technologists	6%	8,300	\$2,199
Cardiovascular Technologists	5%	4,100	\$3,136
Pharmacy Technicians	5%	43,500	\$1,389
Nuclear Medicine Technologists	2%	1,000	\$2,656
Pharmacists	2%	13,600	\$3,079

Source: Vivian Health, O\*NET OnLine, BLS

### Critical Staffing Shortages and the Future of Healthcare Staffing

According to a report from Mercer critical workforce gaps will impact every healthcare provider. Mercer is the world's leading healthcare employee and investment firm in the areas of risk, strategy and people. Its report predicts that the demand for healthcare workers will outpace supply by 2026.

Potential causes of critical shortages include ever-evolving healthcare technology transforming how healthcare providers deliver patient care. Competition from non-traditional healthcare sectors also impacts delivery methods. Demographic trends, especially an ever-rising aging population, also play a role in the future of healthcare staffing.

As many organizations continue to predict that there's a staffing shortages aren't going away, the need for travel staffing isn't going away either. As long as there's a shortage of nurses and other healthcare professionals, there will be a continued need for travel healthcare workers with the flexibility to work where they're needed most. If you're considering travel healthcare, rest assured that opportunities will continue to exist for the foreseeable future.



**Moirra K. McGhee**

Moirra K. McGhee is Vivian's Content Writer & Editor. As part of the Vivian Health team, she strives to help support the empowerment of nurses and other medical professionals in their pursuits to find top-notch travel, staff, per diem and local contract positions.

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