

## The Upcoming Nursing Shortage- How You Can Be Best Positioned to Capitalize

There are a variety of reasons why there is a shortage of nurses, and just as many reasons for why the shortage is expected to grow. The cost of healthcare is astronomical, and continues to get higher. One way that hospitals are dealing with the rising costs of healthcare is to increase the duties that everyone performs. Jobs that used to be handled by a physician are taken care of by nurse practitioners. In addition, nurse anesthetists do much of the work that anesthesiologists did, and registered nurses are required to perform a variety of functions, from administering medicine and taking vital signs to helping a patient to the restroom.

As a nurse's responsibilities increase, it takes more nurses to run the same size hospital. While this may not seem like a way to cut costs, every duty that can be taken from a doctor and passed to a physician's assistant, nurse, or technician is a huge savings.

Another reason that there is an increasing gap between the number of nurses available and the number that is needed is because of the aging population. As the baby boomer population ages, not only does that reduce the number of nurses due to retirement, but the aging population is at greater need for healthcare services.

A final reason that there is a nursing shortage is because of all the advancements in the healthcare industry. New treatments are helping people live longer and survive illnesses that were previously thought of as death sentences. While this is wonderful news, it creates more openings in the nursing industry as new jobs open up in different sectors of the healthcare industry.

Many nurses also choose to work outside of their main career path. Many registered nurses move from the clinical setting into writing patient brochures for pharmaceutical companies or employee wellness newsletters. There are numerous careers that are open to someone with a strong medical background but do not want the stress of working in a clinical setting.

### What Can I Expect in the Future?

Education is crucial to being in the best position for the nurse shortage. If you are a registered nurse, consider getting your bachelor's degree, if you have your bachelor's, think about getting a master's in a health related field, or your nurse practitioner's license. Any advanced degree will make you a more attractive candidate when job hunting.

Also, make an effort to stay up to date on new technology and new medical advancements. No one expects you to know every new development. However, by following developments in your field, if you choose to branch into management or a side career, as a writer or training coordinator, for example, you will know what is going on in the field, and will be capable to discuss it at length. Any outside research you can conduct can demonstrate a willingness to be "self-starting" and can help set you apart from the other applicants.

As more and more nursing duties are computerized, it is important to be comfortable using new technology. Many hospitals use hand held computers to enter patient information, and a computerized approach to dispensing medication, so it is important that you remain confident that you can use these computerized systems.

As more hospitals merge and are taken over by large corporations, the work environment gradually changes. The informal tone many hospitals sought after is becoming more formal. While there is no end in sight to nurses wearing scrubs, the way that nurses deal with coworkers and supervisors could become more formal. You should polish your business skills, know how to follow the chain of command and use a professional manner when speaking with those you work with. Some informality and stress induced behavior will always be part of the hospital culture, but as more hospitals become corporate enterprises, the importance of behaving professionally increases.

Due to the shortage of nurses, there is no reason for a nurse to be unable to find the right job or be stuck in a job that he or she does not like. The best way to position yourself for a lucrative healthcare career is to invest in your own education, stay up to date on new technologies, and develop your professional skills.

### About the Author

Stephanie Larkin is a freelance writer who writes about topics pertaining to nurses and the nursing profession such as [Nursing Scrubs](#)