

Preserve talent by supporting the whole nurse

By Catherine Spader, RN

A key factor in nurse recruitment: *Work-life balance*

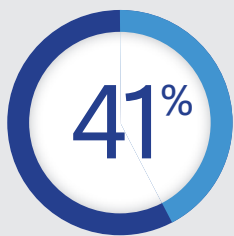
Today's nurses are looking for employers that help them balance the challenges of work with the need to rest and recharge, care for family, and improve wellness. In fact, work-life balance was the most important factor considered by nurses when accepting their current positions, according to a 2019 survey conducted by Bright Horizons in partnership with the journal *American Nurse Today*.* This top choice was consistent across all generations.



Family-friendly benefits that attract nurses

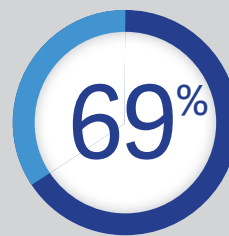
76% of millennial nurses prefer or will **only accept** a position that offers **paid parental leave** (compared to **34%** for baby boomers and **45%** of Gen Xers).

42% of millennial nurses want **better family care** supports, such as **childcare**, **elder care**, and **backup care**.



of **Gen X nurses** give preference to an organization that **offers emergency back-up care** for adult relatives.

Work-life balance impacts turnover



of nurses say **poor work-life balance** would make them **leave their current jobs**.

Unmet family needs impact absenteeism



- Nurses with caretaking responsibilities were overwhelmingly more than noncaretakers to miss/cancel a shift in the past 6 months (**56%** vs. **44%**).
- Caretakers report a much greater need than noncaretakers to miss/cancel a shift to care for a sick child or adult (**30%** vs. **1%**).

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*The survey was conducted in May 2019 and represents 1,323 nurses. Respondents represent a cross section of employment settings, educational levels, and ages, including baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials. Sixty percent work in a hospital, 85% work full-time, and 70% have attained a BSN or higher degree.

Nurse wellness **optimizes patient** care

A report from Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ revealed that 64% of nurses surveyed put the health, safety, and wellness of their patients before their own.¹ The report also says that “Nurses give the best care to patients when they’re operating at their own peak wellness.” This underscores the need for employers to champion nurse wellness and make it part of their work culture.

1. American Nurses Association. *Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation: Year One Highlights 2017-2018*. nursingworld.org/~4ab629/globalassets/docs/ana/practice/hnhn17-18highlights.pdf.



Tips and strategies

Help nurses **strike** the optimal **work-life balance** by **creating** a **foundation** of **support**.

Establish a wellness committee that champions good health for the staff. Examples of committee activities include distributing healthy recipes and planning staff activities, such as yoga classes.

Consider offering benefits that help nurses balance family and work responsibilities. Examples include paid parental leave, on-site childcare, and backup child and adult care.

Provide plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain carbohydrates, and low-fat protein and dairy foods in the cafeteria. Stock vending machines with low-sodium, low-fat snacks with no added sugar.

Offer free health screenings and programs to address smoking cessation, dietary and meal planning, and mental and emotional health, and track associated reductions in health plan costs.

Communicate wellness benefits in personalized ways, related to nurses' life stage, family needs, and health goals.

“At Houston Methodist we prefer the term work-life integration. How do we encourage our nurses and other employees to integrate work into their lives? We make it easier for them to access support for what they prioritize in life. For many, staying healthy and fit is a priority, so all our facilities have fitness centers that are open 24/7. We also provide hundreds of wellness classes every year from yoga to managing stress to nutrition and weight loss. We also encourage ongoing education by offering direct billing (up to \$4,000 per year) from colleges for employees enrolled in courses. We know the better our employees can integrate work with their priorities, the more engaged and committed they are to our patients and to Houston Methodist.”

—Carole Hackett, Senior Vice President of Human Resources

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