



Coronavirus Pandemic Means a Critical Need for Added Nurses FAST

Results from a [recent COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) survey by National Nurses United](#) of 6,500 nurses in 48 states plus Washington D.C. and the Virgin Islands report that only 14% of their employers have an overflow plan to place additional, trained staff to support safe care to patients on isolation for possible novel coronavirus. This reveals that the vast majority of United States hospitals and health care facilities are enormously unprepared to handle and contain cases of COVID-19.

Concerns over the novel coronavirus (or COVID-19) and the staffing deficiencies continue to grow with no end in sight. Certainly, when it comes to making sure your healthcare nursing staff is ready to meet the needs there is nothing *novel* about it.

“As the United States continues to address an outbreak of the novel coronavirus that has confounded governments across the world, our already-frayed health care system is quietly incubating a deadly disease of its own: An acute nursing shortage that will undermine patient safety and confidence at a critical time for public health,” according to an [article in The Hill](#). “America doesn't have enough nurses, and it's the country's caregivers and most vulnerable populations that will pay the price.”

Reasons for the shortages

There are several reasons for serious staffing support shortages in the very near future (if they haven't already occurred).

- There will be an influx of many high-risk COVID-19 cases as more and more people become seriously

ill and require added nursing assistance and ICU care.

- Vulnerable, yet essential, staff will become ill themselves and require replacements.
- Healthcare workers are “wildly unprepared” for caring for coronavirus cases, according to an [article in The Guardian](#).

If the United States already had too few nurses to meet pre-coronavirus demand for care, what is going to happen in the event of sustained transmission of a deadly pathogen that also claims a sizable percentage of health care workers?

Concerns over the novel coronavirus (or COVID-19) and the staffing deficiencies continue to grow with no end in sight. Certainly, when it comes to making sure your healthcare staff is ready to meet the needs there is nothing *novel* about it. Indeed, the real question isn't whether we'll have enough protective gear like face masks for our health care professionals, but whether we'll have enough caregivers when this crisis reaches a crescendo.

What can your hospital do now to make up for shortages?

How will healthcare facilities get the number of trained nursing staff personnel to meet the critical need created by the coronavirus pandemic?

Here a few suggestions...

Possible solution #1 — Increase the number of patients per nurse

Most healthcare facilities try to control the number of patients assigned to each nurse. However, before this pandemic is all over, it will expose what those of us in the industry have known for decades.

America doesn't have enough nurses, and it's the country's caregivers and most vulnerable populations that will pay the price.

Hundreds of thousands of nursing positions at U.S. hospitals are projected to go unfilled this year. A [recent forecast](#) says that, all told, one-in-eight nursing positions will go unstaffed. Add to those already existing shortage the lack of nurses created by the growing number of incoming COVID-19 cases.

The takeaway: At first glance it seems that simply adding to nurses' caseloads would solve the problem. However, that's not true. The fact is that increasing nurse workloads by even just one patient, [increases patient mortality by 7 percent](#). Additionally, nurses that care for more than six patients in a day get burned out and cannot provide adequate patient care, [according to research from Linda Aikens](#). Imagine what would happen if caseloads caused by the pandemic were increased by substantially higher numbers. It's frustrating and frightening.

Possible solution #2 — Educate staff on how to protect themselves, so fewer nurses get sick

This is a great idea and should happen no matter what. Of course, staff should be trained to use masks, wash hands and surfaces properly, enforce social distancing and learn how to effectively use personal protective equipment (PPE) used to keep themselves safe and healthy, like gowns, N95 respirators, surgical masks, gloves and eye protection.

“If nurses and health care workers aren't protected that means patients and the public are not protected,” [said Bonnie Castillo](#), a nurse and executive director of

National Nurses United and the California Nurses Association. “This is a major public health crisis of unknown proportions. Now is not the time to be weakening our standards and protections, or cutting corners. Now is the time we should be stepping up our efforts.”

The takeaway: There are not enough nurses in the first place. How are they going to take time to train other nurses? Plus, hospital administrations need to do a better job of notifying healthcare workers when they’ve been or will be exposed to patients with coronavirus.

Possible solution #3 — Recruit additional new nursing staff hires

Hospitals were already doing this even before the crisis. There simply are not enough qualified, trained nurses. As health care professionals watch the potential future unfold across the Atlantic, they are [growing increasingly anxious](#) that the novel coronavirus, which is particularly dangerous for the elderly and people with underlying medical conditions, could overrun the American healthcare system. One estimate [reportedly presented](#) by the American Hospital Association predicts there could be 96 million cases of coronavirus in the U.S. in the next couple of months, with 1.9 million intensive care unit admissions, 4.8 million hospitalizations, and 480,000 deaths associated with the virus.

The takeaway: It takes a process to recruit and hire qualified people. That takes time we simply do not have. Plus, there are no mass quantities of available nursing staff to hire anyway. Where are the nurses going to come from?

Best possible solution — Turn to Blue Eagle Consulting NOW to

provide temporary nursing staff to fill in during the crisis and help train your current staff

Blue Eagle Consulting nurses and training experts can analyze your current and rapidly approaching needs to best understand your pain points and objectives and help your organization discover appropriate and immediate staffing and training solutions in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

We can add resources as soon as possible. We average only 3-10 business days to present someone, and then can follow up with as many as needed.

If you have current or future nursing needs that we can help fill, please call us at 1 (866) 981-1095 or email info@blueeagle-consulting.com.

“Now, more than ever, America needs its nurses, and every corner of government should be working in concert to make it happen,” [The Hill article](#) tells us. Blue Eagle Consulting is ready and able to step up and help healthcare organizations do just that.

Blue Eagle Consulting can provide you with the experienced consulting resources you need. [Get in touch](#) today to let us know how we can help you.

