Next-Generation Nurses
Empowered + Engaged
Social distancing. Panic buying. Flattening the curve. Those are some of the expressions we started using at the beginning of 2020. And even though the lives of nurses across the world have changed dramatically—perhaps permanently—since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the words we use to describe nurses are still the same: Resilient. Selfless. Powerful.

Nurses are the true heroes who serve on the front lines of patient care. They bring not only care but also hope to patients in need. Even at times of great personal risk and under sometimes suboptimal conditions, the world’s nurses unite in a common mission to defeat an invisible enemy. And they have been at patients’ bedsides despite the lack of hospital equipment, the under preparedness, and in many cases, the necessary protective gear.

Wolters Kluwer commissioned a survey that took place before the advent of the global COVID-19 pandemic, but it came at a time that we had the opportunity to both celebrate nurses’ contributions and recognize them.

The survey results yield insights based on the views of a group of next-generation nurses (in practice less than 10 years) who are tuned in to today’s rapidly changing healthcare system. The responses reveal those nurses’ confidence and social savvy—qualities that are certainly helping them navigate the perils of the pandemic and that are also making them the best poised to navigate changing care models.

The survey results also show that these nurses are making their mark. They’re bringing a new perspective on such topics as societal needs, the patient’s role in care, technology, the opioid crisis, and continuing education for nurses.

We also see the alignment and differences in their mindsets and perspectives relative to more-experienced nurses (those practicing 10 or more years). The differences—and how hospitals should respond to them—are crucial to the future of nursing. Their varying viewpoints are a wake-up call to both schools of nursing and hospitals, which must recognize that the global workforce of nurses is rapidly transitioning and that its education, training, retention strategies, and availability of technology and tools must keep pace.

It’s become a very different world, but we hope we can learn from the generational characteristics of this committed group of nurses, who are among the best positioned to sustain the profession while becoming key architects of what the future healthcare system might look like.

—Julie Stegman
Vice President,
Nursing Segment,
Health Learning,
Research & Practice
Wolters Kluwer

—Anne Dabrow Woods
DNP, RN, CRNP, ANP-BC,
AGACNP-BC, FAAN
Chief Nurse,
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Wolters Kluwer
Online Exclusives

Recognizing the Power of Nurses

Wolters Kluwer is proud to join the global effort to spotlight the role that nurses and midwives play in improving health. Throughout 2020, we will be focusing on four themes: lifelong learning, the changing healthcare system, whole person care, and nurses as leaders. Check out our resource center. View our videos. And join in the conversation.

They lead. They learn. They teach. They heal. They care without judgment and treat everyone with great respect. Balancing the art and science of nursing. That’s the power of nurses. We’re recognizing nurses with dedicated content across our sites and social spaces.

Year of the Nurse
We celebrate nurses for all they do.

From the Desk of the Chief Nurse
Watch our video as we salute those on the front line of care.

Social Spaces
Join in the conversation as we celebrate the power of nurses.
Adapting to Changing Care Models

CARE MODELS ARE CHANGING, AND SO TOO IS THE NURSING WORKFORCE. We were already facing a nursing shortage well before the unprecedented health crisis emerged. Although the global nursing shortage declined from 6.6 million—as had been estimated in 2016—to 6 million in 2018, the bottom line is that by 2030, 9 million additional nurses and midwives are needed—a total of 36 million nurses practicing around the globe if we’re to meet the needs of every individual on the planet.¹

But the broader trends paint a picture that is of far more concern. Certain sobering statistics show that the nurse shortage is just one component of a complex problem that could potentially mean a loss of expert knowledge and the inability to replace nurses who are leaving the profession or transitioning to advanced practice at faster speeds and on greater scales. In addition, the situation is made only worse when we consider the potential for nurse burnout or the numbers of nurses who are retiring or leaving the profession as a result of months of extreme stress due to the intensity of the global pandemic.

Enter next-generation nurses—those in practice for a decade or less. In our survey, they represent 35% of the total nurse respondent base (122 nurses out of 352 nurse respondents). The survey finds that next-generation nurses understand how to effectively manage under new models of care, they want more access to evidence-based best-practice information, and they are superusers of technologies. These nurses will have to negotiate an unquestionably changed world, but their consistent responses when it comes to putting patients first reinforce a patient-centered-care approach to nursing that focuses on the needs, wants, desires, and goals of individuals—and paints a picture of a group with the energy and momentum to take us into the future.

Nurse respondents recognize that healthcare is transforming, putting a spotlight on the disconnects and the changes they say will have positive impacts on patient outcomes.

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¹World Health Organization 4 April 2020 State of the World’s Nursing, Executive Summary.
Voices for Value
71% believe value-based care is making a positive impact on treatment.

Care Crusaders
89% believe they would see better outcomes if there were more consistency in care practice.

Promoters of Preparation
73% say nurse education varies and impacts the preparation of nurses for practice.

Medication Crisis Interventionists
80% report it’s likely there would be a drop in the use of incorrect medications if providers could tackle variability challenges.

Patient Champions
72% say we must do better at involving patients so that they become more empowered to participate in their own care.

Tech Titans
63% report optimism that the use of artificial intelligence will help providers make better care decisions.

WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF GENERATIONAL CHANGES that are unprecedented and will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications for the future of the healthcare workforce. We are experiencing radical shifts in the ways we access and use information, communicate, interact and learn. In order to understand how to prepare, it is important to analyze the similarities and differences in the mindsets and characteristics of next-generation nurses versus their more-experienced nurse counterparts. By taking a closer look at the findings, healthcare stakeholders can understand the actions they must take to educate, orient, and support the healthcare workforce of tomorrow.

Where Nurses Align

Following is a snapshot of where nurses align in their attitudes and priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>% next-generation nurses</th>
<th>% experienced nurses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care Variability</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient-Centricity</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- There is variability in the protocols and best practices that guide care delivery.
- Care handoffs are difficult.
- Specialized systems that provide treatment recommendations and integrate with electronic health records (EHRs) improve how care is delivered.
- Clinical-decision support systems at the point of care are making it easier to make the best care decisions.
- There has been a significant increase in availability of information that drives patient behaviors to comply with clinicians’ recommendations.
- Patients are fully empowered to take an active role in their own care.

The Takeaways

The disconnects between next-generation nurses and experienced nurses present both challenges and opportunities for today’s healthcare organizations. Hospitals have the opportunity to educate next-generation nurses who appear to be generally less aware of transparency challenges, care variations, and differences in prescription prices. Further, hospitals must reinforce to these nurses the importance of having access to all of the evidence (allied health, medical, and nursing) in order to provide optimal care, and to deliver the best patient outcomes.

Where Nurses Differ

Following is a snapshot of where nurses differ in their attitudes and priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>% next-generation nurses</th>
<th>% experienced nurses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patient outcomes</strong></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthcare is</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
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There would be a significant increase in price transparency if provider organizations tackled variability.

There is a need to better align care teams for patients so that all care teams are practicing based on the same evidence. A majority of all nurses feel strongly that that’s true, but experienced nurses are more convinced of the need.

There is a lack of transparency in pricing of healthcare services.

Have access to tools and resources to stay current on care practices today.

Healthcare organization leaders must acknowledge the generational and experience gaps and develop plans that recognize each group’s unique needs, understanding, and actions required so that (1) next-generation nurses can be poised to take the reins and (2) experienced nurses can take advantage of all the advances that technology offers.

Meanwhile, nurses on both sides of the experience divide have something to offer one another: as digital natives, next-generation nurses can help experienced nurses navigate emerging technologies, and experienced nurses can share their expertise and insights on the true costs of care and medications and where care variations exist.

The True Hidden Costs of Care Breakdowns: Experienced Nurses Have the Insight

- 90% of experienced nurses report there are pricing differences for the same treatment or procedure.
- 73% of next-generation nurses.
- 88% of experienced nurses believe there are cost differences for medications.
- 81% of next-generation nurses.

## Preparing for Generational Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Gaps</th>
<th>The Call to Action for Hospitals: Educate, Educate, Educate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both generations saw variability as a challenge, but they viewed it through different lenses.</td>
<td><strong>Attack variability from every angle</strong> by focusing on continuing nurse education for both next-generation and experienced nurses to enhance consistency and quality of care across their own departments, healthcare systems, and geographic regions and spot ways to improve pricing transparency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next-generation nurses are not as aware of the pricing and cost differences that exist across healthcare.</td>
<td><strong>Take every opportunity to raise awareness</strong> of the costs of healthcare and pricing transparency among next-generation nurses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next-generation nurses do not seem to prioritize the need for access to all best-available evidence, which indicates the need for them to leave their silos.</td>
<td><strong>Educate next-generation nurses</strong> on the use of evidence-based practice and accessibility to evidence across disciplines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced nurses don’t recognize the full power of technology in advancing healthcare treatment.</td>
<td><strong>Educate more experienced nurses</strong> on technology’s uses and benefits in order to advance healthcare treatments and how they can improve healthcare overall.</td>
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Nurse Education Remains a Challenge

Nurses recognize things will need to change to meet healthcare’s evolving requirements and shifting industry challenges. Inadequate training and lack of preparation for practice were identified as the top challenges in preparing new nurses to be ready. Not only is lack of practice preparedness a challenge for nursing overall, but also nurses say lack of preparedness directly contributes to care variability.

73% report there is a great deal of variability in training of new nurses, which impacts their preparedness for practice.

What became abundantly clear with COVID-19, is education spans a nurse’s career and has implications regardless of whether the nurse is new to practice, is transitioning from one hospital unit to another, or is an advanced-practice professional. Both hospitals and academia must be agile and implement programs to adequately prepare nurses for the realities of practice so they can practice to the full extent of their educations and licensures—and then continue their training and lifelong learning as care trends and evidence evolve.

When we look at evidence-based care, it’s really important to step out of our silos. We’re taking care of people, and healthcare is interdisciplinary, so we have to go beyond what is available ‘to nursing.' To make the best-informed decisions, all healthcare professionals need access to the same set of evidence-based research that currently exists.”

Dr. Anne Dabrow Woods, Chief Nurse
Care delivery is undergoing a paradigm shift from focusing on "sick care" toward caring for people in the community using a more-sustainable value model. Nurses are positioned to effect positive change by blending the art and science of care delivery to move patients toward optimal health. Their focus on patient-centered care models, and skills in health maintenance and improvement enable patients to make informed decisions about their own individual care, thus owning their own care, and potentially driving down overall healthcare costs.

As a group that is highly aware of patients’ varied lifestyles and differing societal considerations, next-generation nurses have prioritized efforts that put patients in the centers of care models. Results show they also understand how the dynamics of social determinants of health (SDoH) fit into population-health strategies. In fact, respondents report that a top priority for the nursing profession in the next few years is to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities through SDoH efforts, making it a top five priority for the nursing profession over the coming few years.

Nurse respondents also recognize the health information dependencies to support SDoH, reporting that a top five priority for hospitals is to acquire health information about patients’ health needs so they can recognize and respond to patients’ social and/or lifestyle needs.

These nurses also say they feel strongly that patients are—and should be—involving in and own their care. As advocates for patients, 72% say nurses should more closely involve patients so they become more empowered to be engaged and participate. Patients are in charge, and healthcare professionals are there to provide the latest, evidenced-based information so that patients can make best-informed decisions.
Inconsistent Care Puts Patients in Peril

In line with how next-generation nurses responded to most of the questions, their focus is on how care disconnects affect patients. Based on a patient-centered view, nurses identified lack of care-team alignment and the potential for medical errors as the greatest risks when care approaches lack consistency.

According to next-generation nurses, the lack of accurate or complete data may be the real culprit of errors, with nearly 40% of nurses attributing wrong treatment to incomplete information.

On the Cutting Edge

This next generation of nurses grew up in a time of widespread use of the Internet, social media, and mobile communication. So, it’s no surprise that these digital natives are proponents of technology—especially artificial intelligence (AI). Some 63% say they are optimistic that the use of AI will help providers get the information they need to make better care decisions.

Experienced nurses weren’t as convinced, with 50% agreeing AI will help in making better care decisions. Their reticence should be a sign of caution for hospitals that are moving rapidly to implement AI solutions without the knowledge of clinicians, patient behaviors, clinical needs, and decision support to complement, inform and advise clinical behavior.

Tuned in to Tech

The More Tech, The Better

77%

Respondents believe the more technology there is in medicine, the better it is for care overall.

Point of Care Matters

84%

Nurses say new types of clinical-decision support systems at the point of care are making it easier to make the best care decisions.

Powering the EHR

84%

Nurse respondents believe specialized systems that provide treatment recommendations and integrate with EHRs improve how care is delivered.

When care is better, it is because of technology, report nurses. But while this group are proponents of technology, they also recognize that their lack of access to quality data contained in hospital systems creates limitations. They report trouble spots they’ve experienced, such as lack of interoperability, bad-quality data, and the need for more-comprehensive patient information.

And though next-generation nurses see the technology gaps that exist, experienced nurses seem to be more aware of its shortcomings; for example, 88% say incorrect or bad-quality data is a source of risk to patient safety or today’s increased costs, and 90% say healthcare providers need more-comprehensive patient information in order to deliver better patient care.

**Healthcare Value on the Rise**

NURSING IS EVOLVING based on a changing paradigm of healthcare—from disease to wellness—and on a shift to providing care based on evidence that improves outcomes. The shift to a value-based care model has been shown to improve practice, patient outcomes, and healthcare reimbursements. Nurses play a vital role in the value-based care model because they are responsible for delivering much of the care and patient education. Nurses must take a coordinated approach to patient care, which is the reason that communication and collaboration between members of an interdisciplinary team are crucial to the development and streamlining of patient care.

Next-generation nurses are proponents of value-based care, and they say these care models yield results, with 71% reporting that the new care models are having a positive impact on treatment, which is much higher than their physician counterparts who are practicing 10 years or less report, at 55%.

The survey confirms that every individual deserves an optimal level of health, and nurses are at the forefront of ensuring that patients have access to quality healthcare services. As the US nursing workforce ages and retires, we can feel confident that next-generation nurses will be ready to take charge and lead us into a future in which everyone has the power to own their own health.

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**The Value of Value-Based Care**

81%
There have been consistent and widespread improvements in patient outcomes.

78%
Have the tools and resources to stay current on care practices today.

71%
Value-based care models are having a positive impact on treatments.

Survey Methodology

WOLTERS KLUWER commissioned Regina Corso Consulting to conduct the only cross-stakeholder survey of its kind to look across many facets of care. The online survey of various stakeholder groups was conducted in order to learn how these groups feel about care variability and risk in healthcare today compared with both the past and the future.

The survey comprised 1,837 respondents in total and included consumers, physicians, hospital executives, and nurses (352). Next-generation nurses made up 35% of the total nurse respondents; these nurses have been practicing for 10 years or less. More-experienced nurses made up the remaining 230 nurse respondents; these nurses have been practicing for 10 years or more.

The initial report, *Mending Healthcare in America 2020: Consumers + Cost*, was released in November 2019 and covered the consumer impact when variations exist. The report is available here.
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