



# W O R K F O R C E TRENDING NOW

From the office of William J. Grubbs, President & CEO of Cross Country Healthcare

June 5, 2015

## THE LABOR MARKET STRENGTHENED IN SPRING BY ADDING 280,000 JOBS IN MAY.

The nation's economy seems to be thawing out from the extreme weather that hampered the jobs market this winter. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Report, 280,000 jobs were created in May, while April/March were revised upward by 32,000. This gain was above the average of 251,000 of the past twelve months. The unemployment rate went up slightly from 5.4% to 5.5% as a result of more people coming back into the jobs market. Unemployment for college-educated individuals remained at 2.7%.

Healthcare added 47,000 jobs accounting for 16.8% of all jobs created in May and up from the average of 13% over the past twelve months. Within the healthcare segment, employment in Ambulatory Healthcare services rose by 28,000 and continues to outpace hospitals. Ambulatory employment grew 6,000 in Offices of Physicians, 5,000 in Outpatient Care Centers, and 8,000 in Home Healthcare Services. Hospitals had considerably strong growth with 16,000 jobs, while Nursing and Residential facilities contributed 4,000 jobs. Over the past year, in total, healthcare has added 408,000 jobs.

### MAY JOBS ADDED BY SEGMENT

#### ALL U.S. JOBS

+280,000

HEALTHCARE JOBS +47,000

AMBULATORY +28,000

HOSPITAL +16,000

NURSING & RESIDENTIAL CARE\* +4,000

\* Numbers are rounded up and may not equal total

## INADEQUATE NURSE STAFFING IS A NATIONWIDE PROBLEM CREATING THRIVING DEMAND.

Today, with the exception of California, not a single state sets a minimum standard for hospital-wide nurse-to-patient ratios. This is despite the dozens of studies that have been performed that have found that the more patients assigned to a nurse, the higher the patients' risk of death, infections, complications, falls, failure-to-rescue rates, readmission to the hospital and the longer the hospital stays. In fact, the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research found that if every hospital improved its nurses' working conditions to the levels of the top quarter of hospitals in the country, more than 40,000 lives would be saved nationwide every year.

### PATIENT-TO-NURSE RATIO EFFECTS MORTALITY

Safe Maximum Ratio

4:1

Safe Maximum in ICU

2:1

Typical Hospital Ratio

8:1

For every 3 deaths at a 4:1 Patient-to-Nurse ratio,  
Expect 4 deaths at an 8:1 Patient-to-Nurse ratio.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/28/opinion/we-need-more-nurses.html>

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## HEALTHCARE STAFFING IS A HOT AND GROWING INDUSTRY.

The topic of supplemental staffing, in particular travel nursing, is garnering national attention with headlines appearing in many of the major news circuits. The underlining message of many of these articles is that hiring temporary nurses can alleviate shortages that could produce higher patient mortality.

Right now, the national economy is in an upswing and with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, millions of people are gaining health coverage. This has created a demand for nurses that is at a 20-year high. As a result, travel nurses have been called upon to provide a vital role in helping hospitals fill gaps in staffing so they can serve more patients.

A recent article by Phil Galewitz of Kaiser Health News titled, [Demand for Travel Nurses Hits a 20-Year High](#), chronicles the stories of two veteran travel nurses. For the past three years, Reynolds, 55, has been a travel nurse – working for about three months at a time at hospitals in California, Washington, Texas and Idaho, among other states. Her husband accompanies her on the assignments. "It's been wonderful," she said in May after starting a stint in Sacramento. "It's given us a chance to try out other parts of the country." [Read more...](#)

**Demand for travel nursing is expected to increase by 10% this year "due to declining unemployment, which raises demand by increasing commercial admissions to hospitals," according to Staffing Industry Analysts, a research firm. That trend is expected to accelerate, the report said, because of higher hospital admissions propelled by the health law.**

Closely related to this topic is the idea that the nurse deficiency that hospitals are facing nationwide is resulting in higher mortality rate. Consequently, travel nurses have been called upon to provide a vital role to help the hospitals fill gaps in staffing so they can serve more patients. A recent New York Times piece by Alexandra Robbins, [We Need More Nurses](#), begins with a frightening scenario. "The nurses were regularly assigned seven to nine patients at a time, when the safe maximum is generally considered four (and just two for patients bound for the intensive-care unit). Molly — whom I followed for a year for a book about nursing, on the condition that I use a pseudonym for her — was assigned 20 patients with non-life-threatening conditions." [Read more...](#)

**Nurses are the key to improving American health care; research has proved repeatedly that nurse staffing is directly tied to patient outcomes. Nurses are unsung and underestimated heroes who are needlessly overstretched and overdue for the kind of recognition befitting champions.**

