



WHITE PAPER

Seven Staffing Strategies that Value, Protect, and Optimize Nurses

Overview

Nurses are healthcare's heroes – but staffing shortages and burnout put them at risk. This white paper shares seven proven strategies to give nurses more control, balance, and support. The result? Stronger teams, better care, and less turnover. Inovalon's technology makes it easy.

Nurses Are Healthcare's Heroes

Nurses are the backbone of healthcare. They lead the charge in patient care, offer unwavering support to their teams, and are often the first – and sometimes only – touchpoint for patients and families in times of need. As the most trusted profession in the United States for more than two decades¹, nurses continue to set the standard for clinical excellence, compassion, and resilience.

Yet today, nurses face escalating challenges. Staffing shortages, burnout, and lack of flexibility threaten their ability to deliver the high-quality care they are known for. In fact, workforce issues are now the top concern for hospital CEOs, outranking financial challenges.² RN turnover alone costs the average hospital between \$3.9 million and \$5.8 million annually.³ Healthcare systems can no longer afford to treat nurse staffing as a logistical challenge. It's time to recognize and support nurses as the heroes they are.

Healthcare organizations that take an empowerment-based approach to staffing will lead the way. By offering nurses more control, flexibility, and balance, organizations can reduce turnover, improve morale, and deliver better patient outcomes.

Seven Staffing Strategies That Protect Your Nurse Heroes

Strategy 1: Empower nurses with collaborative scheduling

Nurses want – and deserve – a voice in how they work. Collaborative scheduling gives them the power to help shape their shifts, balancing their personal priorities with patient care needs.

“*Schedule Management at Summit Medical Group streamlines staffing, improves communication, contributes to greater efficiency, and ultimately, produces more time for patient care.*”

– Karen Graham, Chief Operating Officer, Summit Medical Group

Strategy 2: Deliver critical staffing data at nurses' fingertips

Empowering your nurse heroes means giving them the tools they need to succeed. A [SaaS-based scheduling](#) solution ensures that nurses, unit managers, and staffing coordinators have instant access to the data they need – from open shifts to patient acuity levels, and makes it easy to take action.

Nurses can view and update their schedules on the go, ensuring flexibility and real-time communication. Managers can approve requests and adjust instantly, freeing up time to focus on leading their teams and improving patient care.



I can use the mobile app for 99% of my staffing tasks. Creating schedules is the only thing I do on my computer.”

– Pharmacy Team Leader, Large Health System

Strategy 3: Provide intuitive tools that deliver rapid results

Healthcare professionals are busier than ever. Complex, cumbersome scheduling systems only create frustration and inefficiency. Intuitive scheduling tools should be easy to implement and simple to use – so nurses can spend less time on logistics and more time doing what they do best: delivering patient care.

Quick deployment and easy adoption are key. At Presbyterian SeniorCare Network, their team saw immediate results after implementing Inovalon's Schedule Management software. Within just two weeks, they experienced a 12% increase in staff picking up open shifts.



Schedule Management eliminated all our inefficiencies in communication. In our first two weeks that we went live, we saw an increase of 12% of our own staff picking up open shifts.”

– Presbyterian SeniorCare Network

Strategy 4: Use technology to anticipate and adapt to staffing needs

Predictive scheduling tools and automated workflows give organizations the power to foresee staffing needs before they become urgent. An accurate predictive census allows nurse managers to make proactive staffing decisions, increasing schedule stability and flexibility for nurses.

By minimizing last-minute calls and schedule changes, organizations reduce stress and improve work-life balance. With better insight into patient demand, staffing teams can accommodate time-off requests and shift trades, empowering nurses to have greater control over their schedules.

“Schedule Management saved our schedulers 1.5 hours per day. A lot of them are care-givers themselves who miss that engagement with the residents. This solution has allowed our schedulers, nurse managers, and frontline staff to spend more time on value-added work and things that are meaningful for them.”

– Lisa Malosh, Senior Director of Organizational Improvement, Senior Care Network

Strategy 5: Match nurses with the right patients

Effective nurse-patient assignments ensure that nurse heroes can work to the top of their license and skill set. Technology that matches patient needs with nurses' experience, credentials, and competencies ensures balanced workloads and safer care environments.

This approach enhances patient outcomes and increases job satisfaction and career growth opportunities for nurses.

“Inovalon Schedule Management enables us to get the nurses and staff we need to deliver high-quality patient care while also giving us the ability to minimize overtime and protect our bottom line.”

– Byron Prince, Vice President, Quality Care ER



Strategy 6: Simplify open shift management

The traditional open shift management process is chaotic and inefficient. Without the right tools, staffing teams spend hours making frantic calls, while nurses are overwhelmed with repeated requests to pick up extra shifts.

With simplified [open shift management](#), staffing coordinators can identify gaps early and notify qualified nurses via push notifications. Nurses gain more notice and flexibility to select the shifts that work for them – leading to improved work-life balance and reduced burnout.

Strategy 7: Free nurse managers to lead, not just staff

Nurse managers are leaders – not schedulers. Yet many spend up to 20 hours per week managing schedules.

Freeing up nurse managers allows them to focus on mentoring, team development, and direct patient care – where their leadership can make the biggest impact.

“The time our managers spend on scheduling has been reduced from 15-20 hours per week to 3-4 hours per week with Schedule Management. Reducing the time spent on scheduling tasks by 75-80% gives our managers back a week of time every month to focus on other things that make a difference, like quality of care.”

– Mike Easley, CIO, American Senior Communities

Are You Ready to Empower Your Nurse Heroes?

Nurses are essential to healthcare's success. But addressing today's workforce challenges requires more than filling shifts; it calls for an empowerment strategy – one that gives nurses greater control, flexibility, and respect for their role as leaders in care delivery.

Inovalon's Workforce Management solutions make it easy to empower nurse heroes. Our cloud-based software provides real-time scheduling, predictive analytics, and self-scheduling capabilities to help healthcare organizations reduce turnover, improve morale, and deliver better patient outcomes.

“In my 4+ years that I have been involved with the team, I have been impressed by the partnership and collaboration on ways to further enhance the software we use. I underscore the word “partnership” because it is so much more than a vendor-client relationship. Inovalon wants to do more than just sell a product – they are invested in our success as well.”

– [Michelle Spurlock, System Chief Nursing Officer, Acadia](#)

Plus, the software was built by nurses, for nurses. Our product team includes nurses who understand what your team needs to thrive. Let us show you how we can help.

[Request a Demo](#)



Sources:

1. "Nurses Retain Top Ethics Rating in U.S., Gallup Poll, 2024," <https://nursing.jhu.edu/magazine/articles/2025/01/nursing-named-most-trusted-profession-for-23rd-consecutive-year/>
2. "Top Issues Confronting Hospitals Survey," ACHE, February 2024, <https://www.ache.org/about-ache/news-and-awards/news-releases/top-issues-confronting-hospitals-2023>
3. "2024 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report," NSI Staffing Solutions Inc., January 2024, https://www.nsinursingsolutions.com/Documents/Library/NSI_National_Health_Care_Retention_Report.pdf

About us

Inovalon is a leading provider of cloud-based SaaS solutions empowering data-driven healthcare. The Inovalon ONE® Platform brings together national-scale connectivity, real-time primary source data access, and advanced analytics into a sophisticated cloud-based platform empowering improved outcomes and economics across the healthcare ecosystem. The company's analytics and capabilities are used over 50,000 active, licensed customers.

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