

2025 Future Ready Healthcare Survey Report

# Nursing Insights: Redefining nursing practice for an AI-driven future



# Redefining nursing practice for an AI-driven future



## Foreword

Across the healthcare industry, innovation is accelerating, but for nursing, the stakes feel especially urgent. Ongoing workforce shortages, rising patient acuity, technological advancements and financial pressures have converged to create one of the most challenging environments in recent history. Five years after the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations are still navigating burnout, turnover, and constrained capacity — all of it while demand for nursing care continues to grow.

At the same time, a new era of possibility has arisen. Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and emerging technologies are reshaping care delivery in ways we couldn't have imagined just a few years ago. Nurses are already testing new AI-driven models of care — from predictive analytics that flag patient deterioration to staffing platforms that reduce reliance on agency labor and return time to frontline care teams. These are not abstract possibilities; they're real-world solutions that are helping nurses work more effectively.

The 2025 *Wolters Kluwer Future Ready Healthcare Survey*, conducted by independent market research firm Ipsos, underscores this pivotal moment. Among all healthcare roles, nurses emerged as the most optimistic segment with regard to AI's potential. That optimism reflects both necessity and opportunity. Across care settings, nurse leaders are

balancing immediate pressures to relieve administrative burdens, stabilize staffing, and protect clinician well-being while experimenting with new capabilities that promise a fundamentally different future for nursing practice.

As our survey confirms, AI's promise can become realized only when it is implemented thoughtfully. Nurses have consistently emphasized that technology must serve to *enhance*, not *replace*, the human touch.

For many organizations, the next challenge doesn't involve deciding whether to adopt AI, but how to adopt it. Pilots are showing meaningful impacts, but broader implementation requires governance, workflow alignment, and investment in workforce development. Our hope is that this report offers a road map to illustrate the ways nurse leaders and health system leaders can work together to shape solutions that both relieve today's pressures and prepare for tomorrow's possibilities.

The nursing workforce is leading a critical transition — by embracing this moment, we can collectively create a future in which technology amplifies nursing expertise, strengthens care delivery, and safeguards the well-being of those on the front lines.



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# Key survey findings



To better understand the ways that nurses are experiencing workforce pressures and adopting emerging AI tools, Wolters Kluwer surveyed a panel of healthcare professionals, including a dedicated segment of nursing respondents across roles and settings. The panel's responses pinpoint the challenges shaping nursing practice today, the ways GenAI is predicted to transform the nursing workforce, and the opportunities ahead.

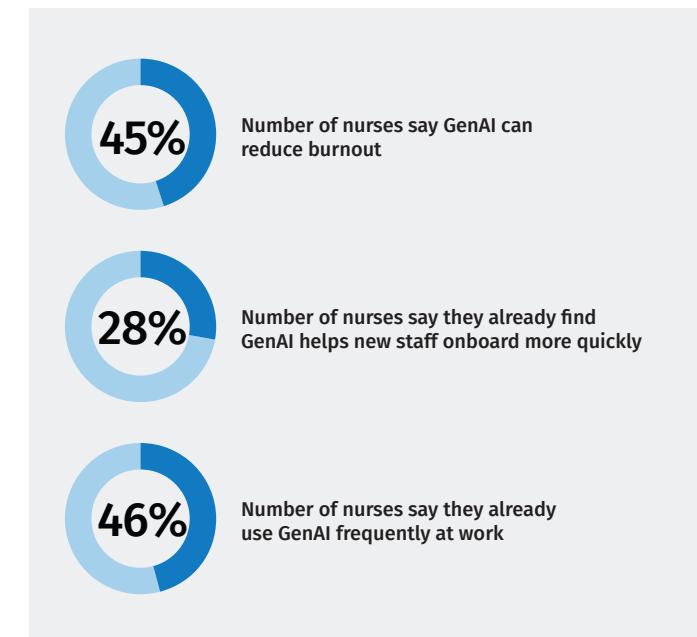
## Four major themes emerged from the survey data:

- Staffing pressures dominate**  
Throughout 2025, staffing pressures continue to impact nursing teams across all care settings. Among nurses surveyed, 85% cite recruiting and retaining qualified staff as top organizational priorities. Shortages remain severe: 20% report they are “always short-staffed,” and another 47% say they “frequently lack coverage” when a colleague is absent. Those realities underscore why leaders are seeking strategies and tools that give time back at the bedside and improve retention.
- AI optimism vs. the readiness gap**  
At the same time that optimism is growing with regard to AI's potential, readiness for AI lags behind. Some 77% of nurses say they see GenAI as important to their organizations' productivity future, yet only 46% say they feel prepared to implement it effectively. The gap reflects the need for stronger governance, role-specific training, and integration strategies that will make AI a trusted tool in practice.
- Workforce transformation emerges as a near-term opportunity**  
Some 54% of nurse respondents say GenAI can enhance innovation, and another 54% say it can improve collaboration and communication. Additionally, 62% of nurses say the integration of AI into onboarding and training helps staff become more productive by accelerating the time it takes new graduates and transfers to contribute confidently on the unit. When thoughtfully applied, AI-supported orientation and education can improve consistency across teams.

- Burnout is becoming a catalyst for adoption**

Nearly half of nurses (45%) say GenAI could help reduce nursing staff burnout by automating documentation, triaging routine patient questions, and streamlining workflows. For many, the promise lies in removing low-value administrative work so they can focus on direct care, mentorship, and practicing at the top of their licenses.

In this report, we will take a deep dive into how healthcare organizations are approaching GenAI implementation and how well their initial efforts are aligned with their current and future goals.



# Looking ahead: Predictions and what's next

As organizations test new technologies, nurses are balancing optimism with caution by weighing the promise of AI-driven automation against the realities of staffing shortages, burnout, and use of technology in practice. Three trends stand out in the data, and they're signaling where things may be headed next.

- **Nurse-led care will need a model redesign**

More than half of nurses — 56% — say they expect AI to optimize workflows and facilitate greater cross-functional collaboration, which signals a broader shift toward nurse-led-care model innovation. As AI improves data sharing between disciplines, nurses can coordinate more seamlessly with physicians, pharmacists, and allied health professionals, accelerating decision-making and improving patient experience.

- **Digital upskilling will become essential**

Some 80% of organizations say they plan to use digital strategies for professional development to create a direct opportunity to prepare nurses for AI-enabled practice. Almost one-third (28%) of nurses say GenAI-enhanced onboarding and training make new staff more productive and confident more quickly.

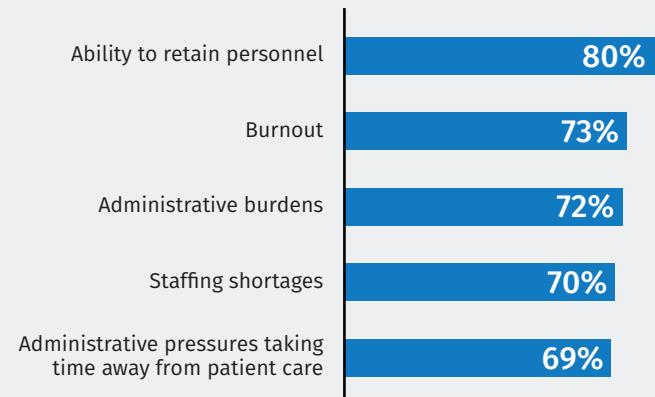
Nurses already see potential benefits: integrating AI into onboarding and training helps staff become productive faster and relieves pressures on educators and preceptors. Plus, upskilling goes beyond technical proficiency: it builds trust, confidence, and a sense of agency in the use of new tools.

- **The gap between AI haves and AI have-nots will widen**

Early adopters are already reporting measurable productivity gains through their use of AI to streamline workflows, reduce documentation burden, and accelerate staff confidence levels. As adoption accelerates, the divide between organizations that embed AI effectively and those that hesitate will have long-term implications for nurse retention, positive patient experience, and operational resilience.

The findings make one thing clear: AI will be a defining force in the future of nursing practice, but success depends on deliberate decision-making. Nurse leaders who focus on integrating AI into workflows, on supporting collaboration, and on investing in digital skills will set the pace for sustainable change while protecting the clinical judgment and patient trust that remain at the heart of nursing.

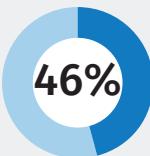
## Workforce-focused trends affecting nursing in the next three years



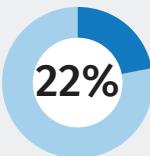
# Gaps between priorities and preparedness



58% of nurses report using GenAI in their personal lives



46% of nurses report using GenAI at work



22% of nurses report their organization has formal guidance or training in place on the use of GenAI

Across the survey findings, one theme is impossible to ignore: organizations know where they have to go in implementing GenAI, but many lack the infrastructure, governance, and investment to get there. Even though staffing pressures, workforce inefficiencies, and burnout dominate their priorities, the operational readiness required to take advantage of GenAI effectively remains uneven.

- **Readiness versus importance**

Eighty percent of nursing respondents rank optimization of workflow as a top organizational priority, yet only 59% say they feel prepared to make meaningful progress. Among nurses, the gap is even clearer: although 77% of nurse leaders rate GenAI as important to their administrative productivity, just 46% say they feel ready to deploy it effectively.

The disconnect highlights a critical inflection point. Without strategic planning, change management, and integration into nurses' workflow, GenAI's potential to relieve administrative burdens and stabilize the workforce could remain untapped.

- **Governance and policy disconnects**

Only 22% of nurse respondents report having published policies in place for GenAI use, and just 22% require formal training before deploying the tools in nursing workflows. Without clear guardrails, organizations risk fragmented adoption, uneven accountability, and erosion of trust among frontline clinicians. For nurses, that lack of clarity is especially pressing: GenAI may influence clinical decisions, communication, and patient engagement, but confidence in its safety depends on transparent standards and shared oversight.

The combination of ambition and un readiness creates both risk and opportunity. Health systems that act now to close the infrastructure gap by aligning governance, training, and funding can accelerate nursing-led innovation and set the tone for responsible GenAI adoption. Systems that hesitate may face deeper fragmentation in which tools and processes evolve in silos and lead to inconsistent care experiences and widening disparities in workforce support.

At its core, today is a pivotal moment for nursing leadership. GenAI's potential is real, but achieving it will require deliberate designs, cross-disciplinary alignments, and investments in readiness. Organizations that succeed won't just adopt technologies; they'll transform practices in ways that protect nursing judgment, reduce cognitive load, and return time and energy to patient care.

## Expert Voices

*"Nurse leaders have long understood that the faster a new nurse feels confident at the bedside, the stronger the entire team becomes. What's different now is the role GenAI can play in making that confidence happen faster and be more focused. When we use these tools to surface answers in the moment and adapt learning to individual needs, we're investing in continuous professional development."*

Bethany Robertson  
Wolters Kluwer Health

# Designing AI for trust and safety

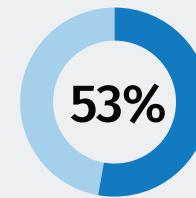
Nurses are among the health professionals most optimistic about the potential of GenAI, but they are also among the most cautious about where and how GenAI gets deployed. For nursing leaders, trust must be earned, not assumed. Building confidence in GenAI requires deliberate choices that prioritize transparency, safety, and equity from the start.

- **Guarding against erosion of clinical judgment**

More than half of nurses — 53% — say they worry that GenAI could undermine decision-making skills or lead to overreliance on algorithmic outputs. That concern reflects a core professional value: protecting the role of nursing expertise in patient care. Responsible implementation must ensure that GenAI augments, not replaces, nursing judgment by keeping clinicians firmly in the decision-making seat.

- **Protecting data privacy and security**

Some 57% of nurses cite privacy and security as top risks in adoption of GenAI. With health data becoming increasingly complex and interconnected, trust hinges on clear safeguards around access, use, and compliance.



of nurses worry about the erosion of clinical decision skills because of overreliance on GenAI

Nurse leaders must embed security into every stage of GenAI deployment by evaluating vendor standards, enforcing internal controls, and communicating protections transparently to both clinicians and patients.

To overcome those barriers, nursing leaders have to position GenAI not just as a technology investment but also as a transformation in practice. That means establishing transparent governance, building trust through rigorous training, and measuring real-world impacts on safety and patient outcomes. Responsible innovation begins by designing with nurses, not around them — to ensure GenAI enhances nurses' expertise, strengthens collaboration, and preserves the human judgment at the heart of care.

## Expert Voices

*“Nurses won’t trust AI because someone tells them to — they’ll trust it when they see that it protects what matters most in their work: sound clinical judgment, patient safety, and equitable care. The real opportunity is to design GenAI with nurses from the start, so it becomes a partner that sharpens their expertise. That’s how you build technology that earns its place at the bedside.”*

**Bethany Robertson**  
Wolters Kluwer Health

## In conclusion

Nursing stands at a turning point. The same forces that have strained the workforce in recent years — from persistent shortages to rising patient acuity and administrative complexity — are now also fueling a wave of innovation that could redefine the profession.

GenAI is not a distant prospect; it is already reshaping care delivery, education, and collaboration. As our survey shows, nurses are embracing that potential with both optimism and caution, seeking tools that lift the weight of low-value work while strengthening the human expertise that defines practice.

Realizing that potential will require deliberate choices. Governance frameworks, workforce training, and clear policies must evolve in step with technology to ensure that AI enhances, rather than undermines, clinical judgment and patient trust. Equally important is designing for equity: if only well-resourced organizations advance, the gap in workforce readiness, patient experience, and care outcomes will widen. Nurse leaders who prioritize transparency, security, and inclusive access from the start will build a stronger foundation for trust — and for sustained impact.

The opportunity ahead is larger than any single tool or workflow change. GenAI has the power to:

- accelerate confidence among new nurses
- strengthen collaboration across care teams and disciplines
- return critical time and energy to the bedside

The future of nursing will be defined not by technology alone, but by how well it is used to serve people — clinicians and patients alike. By pairing AI's capabilities with the compassion, judgment, and expertise that have always been the profession's foundation, nursing leaders can shape a future where care is more connected, equitable, and resilient.





## About Wolters Kluwer

Wolters Kluwer (EURONEXT: WKL) is a global leader in information, software solutions and services for professionals in healthcare, tax and accounting; financial and corporate compliance; legal and regulatory; corporate performance and ESG. We help our customers make critical decisions every day by providing expert solutions that combine deep domain knowledge with technology and services.

Wolters Kluwer reported 2024 annual revenues of €5.9 billion. The group serves customers in over 180 countries, maintains operations in over 40 countries, and employs approximately 21,600 people worldwide. The company is headquartered in Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands.

## Methodology

The 2025 Future Ready Healthcare Survey Report is based on a nationally representative survey conducted by Ipsos (an independent marketing research firm) from February 26, 2025 through March 24, 2025. A total of 312 healthcare professionals throughout the US were recruited using online B2B panels. Professional roles were broken down into six segments: Nursing, Pharmacy, Administration, Physician, Allied Health, and Medical Librarian.



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