

Caregiver Burnout: Healthcare's Growing Epidemic



Caregiver burnout isn't a new phenomenon, but it's reaching unprecedented levels. Staffing shortages, longer shifts, and high patient volumes continue to push caregivers to their limits, increasing physical and emotional strain. Burnout not only impacts staff well-being but can also compromise patient safety, quality of care, and staff retention. Creating environments that reduce physical strain, improve workflow efficiency, and provide opportunities for decompression can help healthcare teams stay engaged and effective.



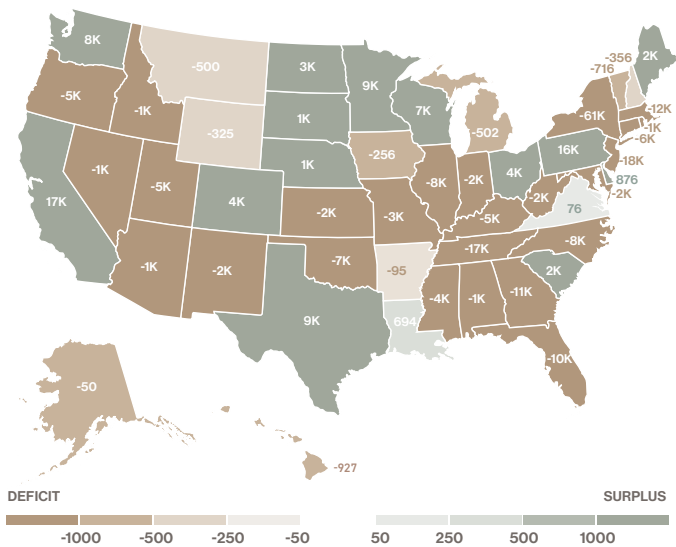
A System Under Pressure

Caregiver burnout is at an all-time high, affecting every department and role. Heavy workloads, emotional strain, and limited support systems are driving professionals out of the field.



Current Healthcare Labor Shortages

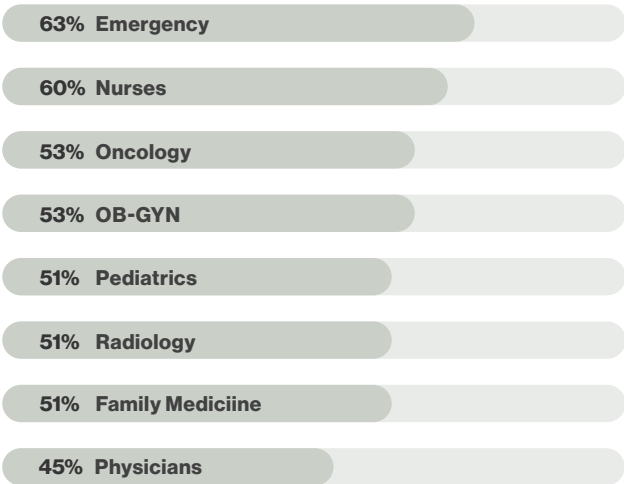
The healthcare sector is projected to create 45%, nearly half, of all new jobs between 2022 and 2032. Yet, it is projected that there will be a shortage of over 100,000 critical healthcare workers by 2028.



Mercer, Future of the U.S. Healthcare Industry, 2024

Caregiver Burnout by Role

Burnout among caregivers has surged to record levels across all departments, pointing to a systemic challenge that demands attention.



U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024

What's At Stake

For patients

- **Experience and safety suffer**

Burned-out staff are more likely to make errors, miss care cues, or provide lower-quality communication, all of which lower patient trust and satisfaction.

- **Throughput slows**

Inefficient workflows and staffing gaps increase wait times and length of stay, reducing access to care.

For organizations

- **Costs rise**

Higher turnover, increased agency use, overtime, and training for replacements drive up labor costs and shrink margins.

- **Operational fragility**

Recurrent vacancies and low morale reduce scheduling flexibility and increase risk during surge events.

For caregivers

- **Health and retention decline**

Physical strain, chronic stress, and lack of recovery time lead to injury, illness, and people leaving the profession.

- **Emotional toll increases**

When staff can't deliver the standard of care they expect, burnout accelerates, further eroding team cohesion.

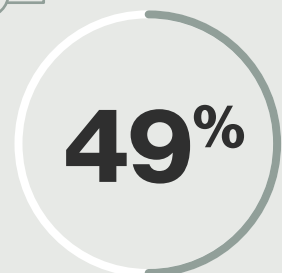


of participants say there's nothing a provider/health system could do to make them return once they've lost trust.¹



\$3.9M - \$5.7M

are the annual losses hospitals face in 2025 from RN turnover alone.²



57% of nurses³ and 49% of physicians⁴ report feelings of burnout.



Design Thinking:

Thoughtful space design is key to addressing stress, fatigue, comfort, and inclusivity, impacting wellness and creating better experiences for caregivers.

Reimagined break areas for mental reset

- **Dedicated staff respite rooms**

Quiet, private rooms with reclining seating, dimmable lighting, acoustic buffering, device charging, secure lockers, and a small beverage station. These should be easily reachable from clinical units for short restorative breaks.



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- **Micro-break decompression nooks**

Small wellness nodes (soft seating, biophilia, low sound) placed near nurse stations for 5–10 minute decompression.



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Design Thinking:

Streamlined environments and intuitive layouts reduce wasted steps and mental load, enabling staff to focus energy on patient care.

Workflow optimization for efficiency and fatigue reduction

- **Integrated, visible storage**

Use of Forge Casework with clear zones for meds, PPE, and supplies reduces search time and cognitive load.

- **Standardized, intuitive layouts**

Repeatable furniture modules across units shorten onboarding and reduce task switching.

- **Decentralized work points**

Embedding stations closer to patients streamlines response times and reduces steps to minimize caregiver fatigue, while also enhancing visibility.



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Design Thinking:

Designing places for connection fosters camaraderie, encourages collaboration, and builds team cohesion, strengthening the caregiving community.

Communal spaces to foster social connection and informal peer support

- **Casual gathering lounges**

Comfortable lounge-style areas with mixed seating, natural light, and greenery create opportunities for informal conversation, peer support, and team cohesion outside of clinical intensity.



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- **Team huddle zones**

Flexible seating clusters encourage quick collaboration, shift updates, and shared problem-solving.



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