



2024
WORKFORCE
REPORT



Data on the Missouri hospital workforce from 2023 finds a continued easing of the record-high vacancy and turnover rates experienced during the pandemic. Although this limited relief is good news for hospitals and the communities they serve, 2023 rates remain higher than prepandemic, historical rates. Real challenges remain — among today's workforce and in building the workforce of the future.

Hospital leaders increasingly cite the stability of the workforce as a top concern. The aging of skilled workers, and the challenges of a highly dynamic and sometimes stressful work environment, contribute to the difficulties. Constraints on the pipeline for new workers, and the cultural shifts to new models of work and care, add to these difficulties.

While the immediate operational challenges of staffing are of concern, additionally important are longer-term considerations. Expected increases in demand for care, resulting from an aging population and comparatively poor health in Missouri, will require ongoing attention to the supply-demand gap for caregivers and support workers. Continued investments will be necessary to ensure hospitals have the workforce needed for the future.

This year's report focuses primarily on the status of the workforce. However, new and existing programs in support of workforce development — through MHA, the hospital community and partners, and the state of Missouri — are generating opportunity to stabilize and grow the workforce. Additional information about these programs and partnerships is available on MHA's website at <https://web.mhanet.com/workforce-overview/workforce/>.

All Missourians have a stake in the strength of the hospital workforce. Continued investment and dynamic thinking about how to deliver the hospital and health care workforce that Missourians need and deserve will be essential to hospitals' ability to deliver care.

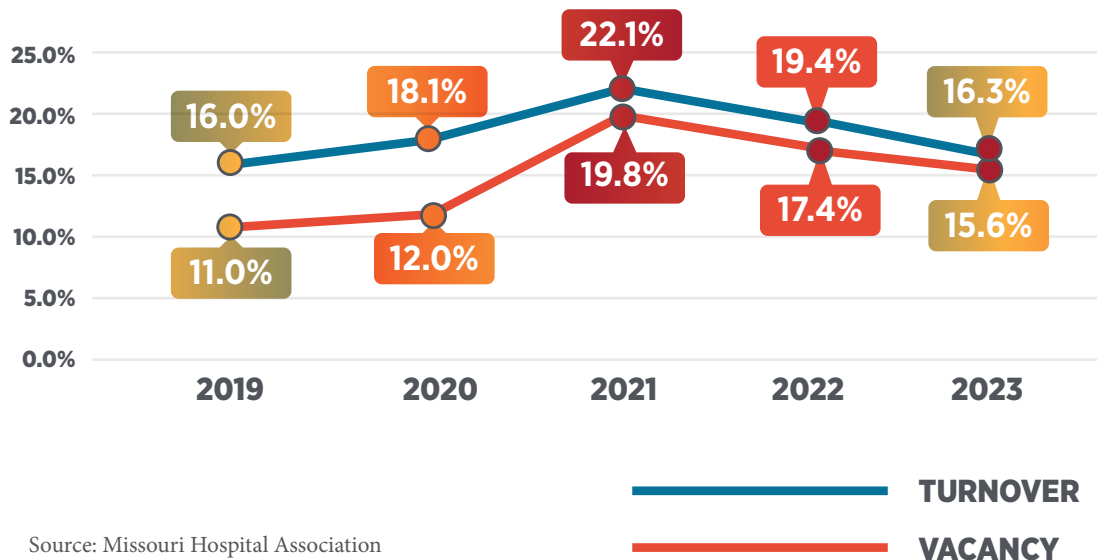
This report includes statewide and regional data from 128 hospitals and includes vacancy and turnover rates for 33 hospital- and clinic-based positions.

Status of the Statewide Nursing Workforce

Hospitals must have an adequate workforce to ensure access to high-quality care, all day, every day. MHA's workforce data collection focuses primarily on the influence of two components — vacancies and turnover. The inability to find staff to fill open positions at a hospital or clinic creates vacancies. When a staff member leaves and is replaced, this results in turnover. Both challenges can influence hospital operations and organizational culture.

Staff registered nurses are the largest cohort of employees at Missouri's hospitals and essential to care delivery. Statewide, the staff R.N. vacancy rate was 15.6%, while the turnover rate was 16.3% — a 1.8% and 3.1% decrease, respectively between 2022 and 2023.

Statewide Vacancy & Turnover — Staff Registered Nurse



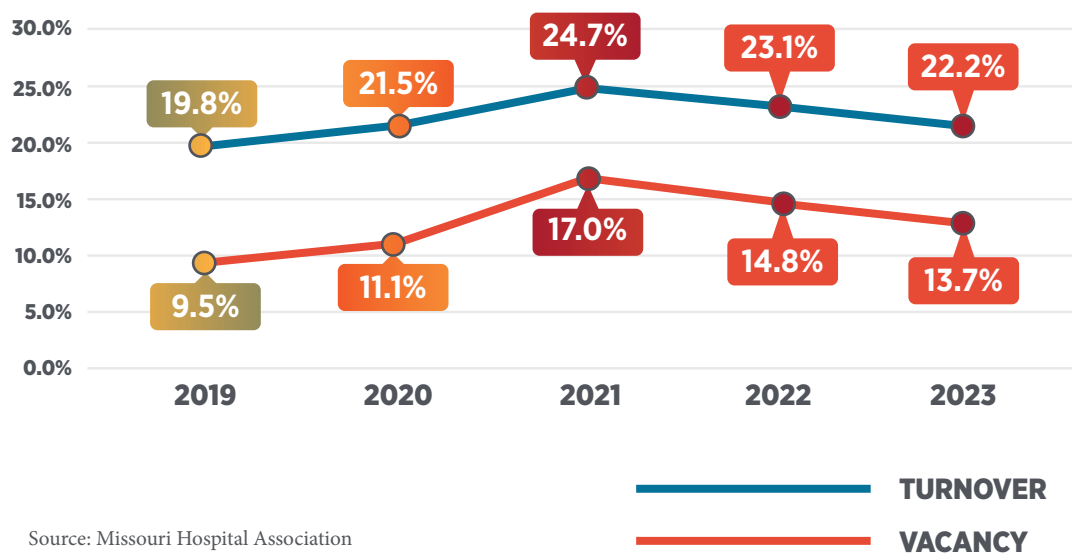
Although smaller in number in the workforce, nurse assistants and licensed practical nurses provide essential support in bedside care. Statewide, R.N., LPNs and nurse assistants — which include patient care technicians, certified nurse assistants and unlicensed assistive personnel — all rank in the top 10 for vacancy, while LPNs and nurse assistants also are included in the top 10 for turnover.



Overview of All Surveyed Positions

Hospitals face challenges throughout the workforce. Outside of the care delivery and clinical support professions, thousands of workers support hospital operations. With staff R.N. workers as an outlier, there is a strong correlation between education and licensure requirements. Most of the higher vacancy and turnover positions included in this survey occur in positions that require lower educational attainment or lack licensure.

Statewide Vacancy & Turnover — All Surveyed Occupations





Every surveyed position contributes to hospitals' ability to provide high-quality care and improve patient outcomes and experience. Although many of the high vacancy and turnover positions are not visible at the bedside, they are essential to hospital operations. Two examples included in the data are environmental services and food service-related workers. Although the vacancy rates for these positions are not remarkably high as they require little formal training, the statewide turnover rate exceeded 50% — a 10% increase over 2022. This high level of turnover is disruptive and costly for hospitals.

MISSOURI HOSPITALS Top 10 Hospital Professions With the Highest Employee Turnover

Environmental Services
Food Service Worker/Dietary Aid
Phlebotomist
Nurse Assistants
Medical Laboratory Technician
Sterile Processing Technician
Licensed Practical Nurse
Registered Dietitian
Pharmacy Technician
Occupational Therapist Assistant

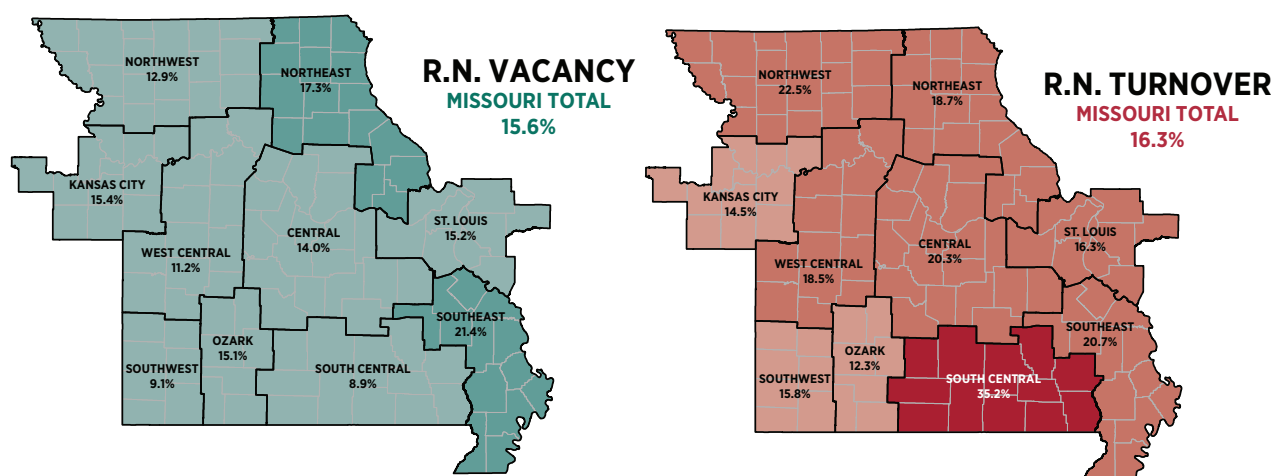
MISSOURI HOSPITALS Top 10 Hospital Professions With the Highest Employee Vacancy

Licensed Practical Nurse
CT Technologist
Staff Registered Nurse
Surgical Technician
Radiology Technologist
Nurse Assistants
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist
Sonographer/Ultrasound Technologist
Phlebotomist
Medical Laboratory Technician

Many of the fastest-growing health care roles will require minimal formal training and education. The careers included in the tables are listed in order of highest to lowest percent.

Regional Data

Although many health care workers have education, certification and licensure that allow them to move between settings and institutions across the state, a large part of the workforce are, and remain, local. Ensuring hospitals have access to a pool of skilled health care workers — nurses, therapists, imaging specialists and lab workers — is essential to care delivery. Geography can play a role in the pool of available workers.



Regional variation is evident in staff R.N. data, where turnover among staff is especially pronounced in rural parts of the state. In the South Central region, the turnover rate of R.N.s is twice the state average at 35.2%. In this same region, the R.N. vacancy rate is the lowest statewide at 8.9% against a statewide average of 15.6%. Although the number of staff R.N.s is small, 631 of 37,567 statewide, the significant turnover rate can influence a hospital's culture — within the nursing staff and throughout the organization.

In the St. Louis region, hospitals experienced a turnover rate of approximately 75% in environmental services and food service workers/dietary aids. Vacancy rates in both categories are low, which implies that filling these positions when there are separations is possible. Many hospitals indicate finding qualified entry-level staff is difficult due to competitive pay from different industries or larger companies, low unemployment, shallower job pools making qualified candidates harder to find, and a lack of training programs in rural areas. These careers are critical to patient care, and turnover in these positions presents an operational challenge for hospital leaders.

A comprehensive collection of workforce data by region, trends, and color-coded vacancy and turnover maps is available at www.mhanet.com.



2024 MISSOURI SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

JOB TITLE COLLECTED JANUARY 2024	NUMBER OF WORKING FTEs	NUMBER OF FTE VACANCIES	VACANCY RATE (FTE)	NUMBER OF WORKING EMPLOYEES	NUMBER OF VACANT POSITIONS	EMPLOYEE VACANCY RATE	TOTAL EMPLOYEE SEPARATIONS	EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATE
Nursing & Medical								
Nurse Assistants (Patient Care Technician, Certified Nurse Assistant or Unlicensed Assistive Personnel)	7,584	1,551	17.0%	12,735	2,292	15.3%	5,500	36.6%
Licensed Practical Nurse	1,391	429	23.6%	1,915	542	22.1%	654	26.6%
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse	1,107	118	9.6%	1,572	146	8.5%	167	9.7%
Staff Registered Nurse	26,057	5,042	16.2%	37,567	6,934	15.6%	7,246	16.3%
Physician Assistant	268	20	7.0%	310	22	6.6%	37	11.1%
Employed Physicians	4,531	563	11.1%	5,491	643	10.5%	708	11.5%
Diagnostic Imaging								
CT Technologist	575	112	16.3%	805	166	17.1%	126	13.0%
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist	391	53	11.9%	538	85	13.6%	80	12.8%
Mammography Technologist	251	15	5.6%	337	26	7.2%	34	9.4%
Nuclear Medicine Technologist	234	21	8.3%	296	41	12.2%	30	8.9%
Radiology Technologist	1,123	202	15.3%	1,659	301	15.4%	250	12.8%
Sonographer/Ultrasound Technologist	784	103	11.6%	1,101	172	13.5%	150	11.8%
Laboratory								
Medical Laboratory Technician	368	48	11.5%	449	64	12.5%	162	31.5%
Medical Technologist	1035	119	10.3%	1330	148	10.0%	210	14.2%
Phlebotomist	846	120	12.4%	1215	177	12.7%	579	41.6%
Therapies								
Occupational Therapist	687	48	6.5%	1,033	93	8.3%	164	14.6%
Occupational Therapy Assistant	152	15	9.0%	250	26	9.4%	46	16.7%
Physical Therapist	1,223	112	8.4%	1,700	180	9.6%	208	11.1%
Physical Therapy Assistant	420	21	4.8%	589	38	6.1%	67	10.7%
Respiratory Therapist - Certified	271	30	9.9%	393	46	10.5%	60	13.7%
Respiratory Therapist - Registered	1,405	163	10.4%	2,127	256	10.7%	378	15.9%
Pharmacy								
Pharmacist - Clinical/Staff	1,241	59	4.5%	1,646	81	4.7%	182	10.5%
Pharmacy Technician	1,129	84	6.9%	1,502	121	7.5%	390	24.0%
Surgery								
Surgical Technician	980	187	16.1%	1264	231	15.5%	240	16.1%
Sterile Processing Technician	717	86	10.7%	801	97	10.8%	271	30.2%
Miscellaneous Hospital-Based Positions								
Medical Records Coder	832	41	4.7%	867	42	4.6%	88	9.7%
Environmental Services	4,028	505	11.1%	4,574	558	10.9%	2731	53.2%
Registered Dietitian	368	36	9.0%	488	39	7.3%	135	25.7%
Food Service Worker/Dietary Aid	2,087	174	7.7%	2,740	237	7.9%	1524	51.2%
Clinic & Physician Practices								
Staff Registered Nurse - Clinic	1,807	160	8.1%	2,195	196	8.2%	357	14.9%
Licensed Practical Nurse - Clinic	1,632	190	10.4%	1,845	221	10.7%	340	16.5%
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse - Clinic	1,886	167	8.1%	2,237	191	7.9%	236	9.7%
Medical Assistant - Clinic	3,107	301	8.8%	3,419	349	9.3%	993	26.4%





Conclusion

Every Missourian benefits from hospitals that thrive at managing operations, treating patients and serving their communities. Ensuring care is available in emergencies, and in the right setting with the right staff when Missourians need it, is essential to saving lives and maintaining health.

Continued investments that attract and retain workers to health professions, and that create opportunities for rewarding careers in service to the health of their communities, will be necessary to stabilize today's workforce and build the workforce of the future. This will require coordinated efforts among education, policy, and health care stakeholders to ensure a robust, resilient, and well-supported hospital and health care workforce for all Missourians — now, and in the future.



METHODOLOGY

This report includes statewide and regional data from 128 hospitals and includes vacancy and turnover rates for 33 hospital- and clinic-based positions. Responses are collected by the Missouri Hospital Association. Data are reported as of Dec. 31, 2023. A comprehensive collection of workforce data, trends, and color-coded vacancy and turnover maps are available at www.mhanet.com.

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