

# LTC 100 and AAPACN Executive Summary

## LTC 100-AAPACN SURVEY RESULTS: WHAT MAKES POST-ACUTE CARE NURSES TICK?

This proprietary report offers an insider's view of a career in skilled nursing, as seen from the perspective of post-acute care nurses. With a focus on likes, dislikes, and areas of potential improvement, the survey results uncover fresh perspectives on how to improve nurse recruitment, retention, and development. This executive summary highlights themes from both quantitative survey data and qualitative responses to the survey's open-ended questions.

### METHODOLOGY

The LTC 100-AAPACN Survey ("the survey") was fielded nationwide to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses (RNs and LPNs) and certified nursing assistants (CNAs) working in SNFs in November 2025. The survey included 16 questions, which yielded quantitative data regarding job satisfaction and its drivers as well as challenges facing nursing staff's ability to do their job (including an assessment of AI concerns).

Qualitatively, the survey also included three open-ended questions, two required and one optional. These questions were as follows:

- "In 10 words or less, what do you like most about your job as a post-acute care nurse or CNA?" (Required)
- "In 10 words or less, what do you like least about your job as a post-acute care nurse or CNA?" (Required)
- "In 50 words or less, what additional information would you like to share about your job as a post-acute care nurse or CNA?" (Optional)

Of the 489 surveys returned, all surveys returned a response to the required questions, and 318 surveys left a comment in the optional questions. These responses were uploaded into Dedoose qualitative analysis software and manually coded using an inductive coding process. In total, 1,509 excerpts from these responses were coded into 29 themes and detailed in a code frequency spreadsheet. These themes were grouped into positive comments, negative comments, and miscellaneous comments.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The LTC 100-AAPACN Survey uncovered generally high job satisfaction rates among nurses and CNAs. The majority of respondents, 65 percent, reported being “Very Happy” or “Somewhat Happy” with their job satisfaction. Among RNs with seven or more years in the field, 58 percent reported being “Very Happy” with job satisfaction. Conversely, only 48 percent of RNs with less than three years in the field reporting being “Very Happy.”

Respondents were also asked to identify the factor that contributes most to their job satisfaction. Four factors scored nearly equally: sense of purpose (23 percent), flexibility of hours (21 percent), company culture (20 percent), and pay (18 percent). Interestingly, RNs with less than one year of service scored “sense of purpose” at 67 percent versus 0 percent for both “flexibility of hours” and “company culture.” For this group, “pay” scored 33 percent.

More broadly, LTC 100 and AAPACN identified three primary themes from analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative responses. The three primary themes identify workplace culture, regulatory and documentation burden, and respect for supervisors as critical aspects to job satisfaction, morale, and retention of nursing and CNA staff in skilled nursing facilities.

The qualitative comments may seem to be modestly at odds with the quantitative data. In the numeric survey questions, the responses are strongly skewed to indicate respondents have high job satisfaction, with 65 percent of respondents indicating they are “Somewhat Happy” or “Very Happy” in their job. Yet negative comments made up 62 percent of all comments left in response to the open-ended survey questions. Interpreting qualitative analysis in this way, though, can be misleading. When given the opportunity, people often have concerns to voice or complaints to make—even if they are happy in their job. This can give a skew toward negative feedback in qualitative analysis and is why the quantitative data tables should be trusted as the primary source for assessing outcomes of interest in this survey, such as job satisfaction.

### ***Theme: Workplace Culture***

The LTC 100-AAPACN Survey found that workplace culture created by SNF administrators and leaders is one of the most profoundly impactful determinants of job satisfaction and retention. Only 8 percent of respondents rated “company culture” as the factor with which they are most content. Twenty percent identified “company culture” when asked which factor they were least content with in their jobs. “Company culture” was cited more often than all other factors (pay, benefits, training, etc.) as the least contented factor.

Respondents who reported being “Very Unhappy” or “Somewhat Unhappy” in their job most commonly cited workplace culture as the primary reason. Specifically, respondents cited regulatory burden, poor staffing levels, and poor facility management as challenges to job satisfaction and positive workforce culture. Respondents reported feeling unsupported by facility leadership, having little respect for managers, and being overburdened due to lower than necessary staffing levels.

### ***Theme: Survey Documentation and Regulatory Burden***

Regulations and their associated documentation burdens are increasing administrative workload on SNF nurses and CNAs. Amid these challenges, many nursing staff feel unsupported by their facility administration who are focused on financials and regulations that, in nursing staff's perspective, do not contribute positively to patient care. These comments are supported in quantitative survey data, with 81 percent of respondents reporting their administrative workload has "Somewhat Increased" or "Significantly Increased" in the last 18 months. Even stronger supporting evidence shows that 87 percent of respondents feel that the regulations affecting their jobs have "Somewhat Increased" or "Significantly Increased" over the last 18 months.

This documentation burden seems closely tied to complaints about regulatory burden and unrealistic expectations placed on nursing staff by SNF administration. Respondents voiced concerns about the overbearing nature of regulations, making up 15 percent of all negative comments. Survey respondents felt that regulations were negatively impacting their ability and capacity to care for patients, which is aligned with the quantitative data. Respondents mentioned that these regulations felt punitive and were out of touch with the realities of post-acute care nursing.

### ***Theme: Job Satisfaction and Respect for Supervisors***

Perhaps the most striking quantitative finding from the LTC 100-AAPACN survey is the correlation between respondents' job satisfaction and respect for their managers. Respondents included staff treatment and communications by managers as the most common factors in earning respect, at 39 percent and 20 percent, respectively. Those who reported having little respect for their manager most commonly cited staff treatment. Conversely, respondents who reported having respect for their manager most often cited communication and treatment of staff as key drivers of respect. Those respondents who reported the lowest job satisfaction also most often reported that they strongly disagree with the statement "I have respect for my manager, the person I report directly to." These correlations highlight the importance of good management in employee satisfaction and subsequent retention.

## **CONCLUDING NOTES**

Overall, the quantitative data and qualitative comments align quite well to identify the primary themes. Company culture, overbearing regulations, shortcomings in facility staffing, and frustrations with administrative staff were identified as common themes in both quantitative and qualitative analysis. These themes appear to be uniform across all respondents, regardless of tenure, as reflected in both qualitative and quantitative data.