



The Exciting Emergence of
Nurse Coaching
Where We Are & Where We're Headed



Content

[1 Executive Summary ↗](#)

[2 The State of the Nursing Workforce ↗](#)

[3 What is Nurse Coaching? ↗](#)

[4 Why Nurses Choose To Become Nurse Coaches ↗](#)

[5 What Credentials Are Required to Become Nurse Coach ↗](#)

[6 How Patients and Clients Benefit From Nurse Coaching ↗](#)

[7 The Science of Nurse Coaching ↗](#)

[8 About YourCoach ↗](#)

Executive Summary

Nurses are an undeniable necessity to the healthcare profession and society as a whole. In fact, they make up the majority of healthcare professionals in the U.S. healthcare system at present. Especially during the pandemic, these healthcare heroes stepped up to the frontlines, sacrificing their safety to protect our most vulnerable.

Even before and definitely after the pandemic, nurses are no strangers to sacrifice. They often work long, difficult hours to prioritize patient needs and more and more have had to make adjustments because of a growing shortage of nurses across the country. They encounter burnout, stress, disproportionate pay, staffing pressures and sometimes unsafe working conditions—each of which contributes to the shortage of individuals pursuing this profession.

One of our priorities for today's Deep Dive is to confront some of the major issues facing nurses today. Our second priority is to highlight the emerging field of nurse coaching, including the many unique benefits these dually-certified professionals can offer clients and patients.

Evidence strongly suggests nurse coaching is effective for patients with chronic conditions such as Type 2 Diabetes and other chronic illnesses. On the flip side of the coin, we also share how nurse coaching can benefit nurses by providing opportunities for personal and professional growth, increased job satisfaction, diverse career opportunities, competitive salary and benefits, and improved patient outcomes. We're proud to support a growing cohort of nurse coaches on the YourCoach platform, providing them more opportunities to grow their business through our Industry Partnerships.

The State of the Nursing Workforce

Nurses are undeniably the backbone of the American healthcare system. Their roles range from direct patient care, triaging and case management to establishing standards for care, offering counseling and education and navigating complex nursing care systems.

Nursing is the largest profession in the entire U.S. healthcare workforce with registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) making up the two largest subsets of this profession.

■ Data:

Almost **4 million**

nurses work in the US healthcare system, which translates to 1 in every 85 Americans. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of 2021, there were [3.1 million](#) RNs and [657,200](#) LPNs in the U.S.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a disconcerting [gap](#) in the supply of registered nurses and the demand for nurses at large. Nursing shortages persisted due to exacerbating factors like economic downturns, population growth, the aging of the nation's population, waves of retiring nurses, as well as an increased demand in healthcare.

Once the COVID crisis hit, nurses faced an even more threatening plight—burnout. The COVID frontlines brought about even more pressure; exceptionally distressing conditions, PPE shortages, staffing shortages and more - all contributing to severe cases of [burnout](#) most healthcare professionals had never before encountered. This catalyzed a cascading effect, leading to high turnover rates, poor performance on the job, decreased patient safety, and even more nurses leaving the profession forever.

The State of the Nursing Workforce

As a result, burnout continues to persist even today, as more and more nurses fulfill roles above and beyond the scope of their practice—filling gaps in healthcare at times left by other nurses, doctors, medical assistants and others in the healthcare profession.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the United States will need more than

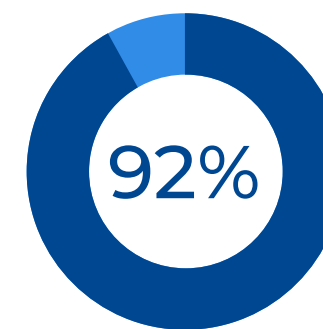
203,000 ↗

new registered nurses and

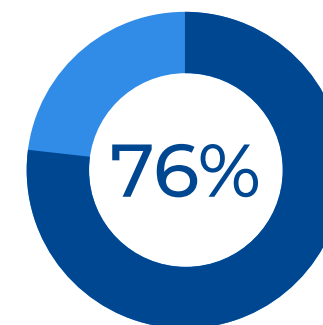
58,800 ↗

new licensed practical nurses every year through 2031 to fill the gap in care left by a retiring workforce. However, the data shows that the nursing shortage isn't going away anytime soon.

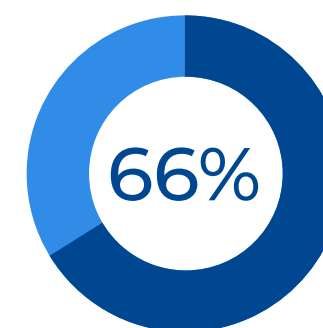
In a [2021 survey](#) conducted by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses,



92% of nurses said they believe the pandemic has depleted nurses at their hospitals and, as a result, their careers will be shorter than intended



76% said that unvaccinated patients "threatened nurses' physical and mental well-being"



66% said they were considering leaving the profession because of their experiences with COVID-19

The State of the Nursing Workforce

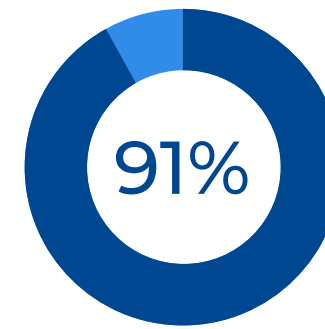
A new [report](#) released by McKinsey & Company estimated that the U.S. will have a nursing shortage between 200,000 and 450,000 registered nurses (RNs) by 2025 if healthcare stakeholders and federal leaders don't take action to address this shrinking workforce.



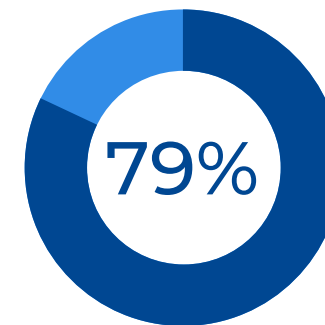
We want to be able to make sure our patients get the care they need. We want to make sure we are getting our documentation done. We don't want to make mistakes by having too many patients and not enough staff.

[2023 State of Nursing report](#)

The same is true from the nurses' point-of-view. In a new [2023 State of Nursing report](#), based on 2,145 responses,



91% of nurses believe the nursing shortage is getting worse



79% report that their units are inadequately staffed

In their opinion, burnout, poor working conditions, and inadequate pay are the primary causes of the nursing shortage.

What Is Nurse Coaching?

Nurse coaching is defined as skilled, purposeful, results-oriented and structured client interaction provided by registered nurses to fulfill client health and wellness goals.

The nurse coaching process involves six simultaneously occurring steps:

- ✓ Establish the relationship and assess patients' readiness for change
- ✓ Identify their opportunities and issues
- ✓ Guide patients in establishing goals
- ✓ Structure the coaching interaction
- ✓ Empower patients to reach their goals
- ✓ Assist them in evaluating their achievements

What Is Nurse Coaching?

Nurse coaches concentrate on the whole person's strengths, knowing that patients are experts on their desires and decisions and use science-backed tools and strategies to help clients achieve success. These include but are not limited to:

Motivational Interviewing

Asking open-ended questions that guide clients to provide reasons for wanting to change and define their goals



Establishing accountability

Regularly checking in and leveraging technology to help clients keep their goals in mind

Positive psychology

Supporting a mindset that's conducive to change, improving confidence and self-efficacy through affirmations, gratitude and more



Insight: [What is Motivational Interviewing?](#)

What Is Nurse Coaching?

According to [The American Holistic Nurses Association](#), nurse coaches integrate coaching competencies into any setting and specialty area of nursing practice to facilitate a process of behavior change and help individuals and/or groups to actualize their potential. Some nurse coaches operate in private practice, while others are employed or work in a group practice with other health professionals.

Here at YourCoach, we have one of the fastest growing cohort of validated nurse coaches on the market. These inspiring professionals are both practicing independently on our platform and also participate in our ongoing Industry Partnerships with a range of innovative digital health companies.



I feel that nurse coaching is a mix of case management, health coaching, and patient advocate. We pick up where the PCPs leave off. We pick up the pieces between the office visits and what happens between those visits. We help incorporate the instructions given at appointments and move them into real life implementation



Beth Olmstead

Nurse Health Coach; BSN, RN,
CCM, NASM-CNC, NBC-HWC



Why Nurses Choose To Become Nurse Coaches

Nurse coaching has been recognized by the [American Nurses Association \(ANA\)](#) since 2010 and is a fast-growing field, with [many active opportunities](#) in the US. So, what makes the profession so compelling?

Work on your own terms

At YourCoach, we coined the term “Health Coach-Preneur” to represent health and wellness coaches building their own practice, leveraging their knowledge, unique skill set, niche and experiences to address client needs. As independent business professionals, Health Coach-Preneurs control their hours and schedules, with the flexibility to work part or full-time, depending on client load and capacity. Nurse coaches absolutely fall under this umbrella, where they can combat burnout by setting their own schedules.



Hint: [What does it mean to be a Health Coach-Preneur?](#)

Why Nurses Choose To Become Nurse Coaches

Make valuable connections with clients

In traditional healthcare settings, nurses may have limited time to spend with each patient, which can make it difficult to provide individualized care that enacts lasting health change. Nurse coaching allows nurses to work one-on-one with patients and create deeper connections, thus leading to lasting health change. Not only will these client wins help foster greater self-efficacy, but also eliminates the pressure of having to move quickly from patient to patient—and often feeling like there's not enough time to deliver adequate care.



Why Nurses Choose To Become Nurse Coaches

Provide and observe lasting health change

Many nurses might feel limited by the traditional healthcare system and its focus on treating symptoms instead of addressing the root cause of patients' health issues. Nurse coaching allows them to, instead, support patients beyond the doctor's office. By supporting a patient's holistic health by enacting appropriate behavior change, nurse coaches see and celebrate real results with their patients.



Why Nurses Choose To Become Nurse Coaches

Access diverse career opportunities

Thanks to their dual competencies in nursing and health coaching, nurse coaches are highly marketable across healthcare, health coaching, and digital health industries. As a result, they have more freedom and flexibility, with opportunities to work in hospitals, clinics, corporate wellness programs, or their own coaching practices. Nurse health coaches are in high demand, and their specialized skills can afford access to competitive salaries and benefits.

At [YourCoach](#), we're proud to offer new client opportunities to many of the nurse coaches practicing on our platform through our industry partnerships. Especially since we work with a variety of digital health companies—with focuses across health concerns—nurse coaches are always in high demand, especially those with a deeper knowledge across specialties like mental health, diabetes, women's health and more.



What Credentials Are Required to Become Nurse Coach

Nurse coaches are required to have a nursing degree from an accredited institution, which typically includes completing a program that leads to a variety of degrees, like an associate degree in nursing (ADN), a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN), a master of science in nursing (MSN), a doctor of nursing practice (DNP) or others. On top of existing nursing degrees, nurse coaches then have received their coaching credentials through accredited coaching programs, or have pursued specific nurse coaching credentials.

Several organizations offer nurse coaching certification programs, including the [International Nurse Coach Association \(INCA\)](#) and the [American Holistic Nurses Credentialing Corporation \(AHNCC\)](#). These programs involve completing coursework and clinical hours, passing an exam, and maintaining continuing education requirements.

Currently, the [American Holistic Nursing Credentialing Corporation \(AHNCC\)](#) offers two types of nurse coaching certifications:

- **NC-BC – Nurse Coach Board Certified**
- **HWNC-BC – Health and Wellness Nurse Coach Board Certified**

To apply and qualify for the HWNC-BC credential, one must be a certified nurse coach AND a certified holistic nurse.



I love what I do. I love the people I serve. I love helping to link things together to create the “aha” moments. I love accompanying people on the journey towards better health. I love the victories of reducing medications, meeting A1C goals for elective joint replacements, and helping to bridge the gaps that modern medicine often leaves behind.



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Nurse Health Coach; BSN, RN,
CCM, NASM-CNC, NBC-HWC

How Patients Benefit From Nurse Coaching

Patients can benefit from nurse health coaching in several ways, including:

Personalized care

Nurse health coaching focuses on the patient as a whole person, taking into account their unique needs, values, and goals. Patients and clients receive personalized care that is tailored to their individual health needs and goals.

Nurse competencies

Nurses are highly trained and skilled healthcare professionals who have the experience and skills to provide patients with informed care and health coaching plans. They have practical knowledge from working with and treating patients with chronic diseases, which informs their health coaching approach.

Improved health outcomes

Nurse health coaching helps patients make sustainable changes to their health behaviors, such as improving their diet, increasing physical activity, and managing chronic conditions. This can lead to improved health outcomes, like fewer associated symptoms, better disease management, and a better quality of life.

Enhanced self-awareness

Through coaching techniques such as active listening and motivational interviewing, nurse coaches can help patients develop self-awareness and a deeper understanding of their health needs and goals.

Empowerment

Nurse coaching empowers patients to take an active role in their health and well-being. Patients learn how to make informed decisions about their health and develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their goals.

The Science of Nurse Coaching

Evidence from studies suggests nurse health coaching is an effective intervention method for patients with chronic conditions such as Type 2 Diabetes and other chronic health conditions.

A [*2020 randomized controlled trial*](#) with the aim to evaluate the effectiveness of a nurse coaching program using motivational interviewing paired with mobile health (mHealth) for patients with Type 2 Diabetes reported that participants in the intervention group had significant improvements in diabetes self-efficacy and decreased in depressive symptoms compared with usual care at 3 months.

Results from [*a pilot study*](#) on nurse coaching and its effectiveness in improving A1C levels, diet, and overall satisfaction among women with Type 2 Diabetes showed encouraging results. Women who participated in a 6-month coaching program showed better exercise self-management and BMI.

Another [*study*](#) evaluating the benefits of nurse telehealth coaching for patients with diabetes living in rural communities found significantly higher self-efficacy scores for those who worked with a nurse coach, compared with the control group. The authors of the study concluded that nurse MI/telehealth coaching shows promise as an effective intervention method for diabetes self-management in rural communities.

[*A 12-month randomized controlled trial*](#) found that nurse coaching patients achieved the hemoglobin A1C goal and were more likely to achieve the LDL cholesterol goal compared with usual care.

The Science of Nurse Coaching

Results from a [2014 study](#) with the purpose to test the effectiveness of a tailored nurse coaching intervention to promote adherence to oral chemotherapeutic medications in 45 adult patients with cancer showed that adherence rates were superior to the standard group with chemotherapy education provided at the cancer center.

[The Healthy Aging Project](#) found that 6 months of nurse-delivered coaching through in-person and follow-up telephone/email contact was a feasible approach to support healthy behavior change in older adults.

A [2021 study](#) suggests that a nurse-led, individually-tailored health coaching intervention was effective in improving patient activation in primary care users with chronic conditions in the short-term but did not show significant differences in secondary outcomes over the study period.

A recent [2022 study](#) evaluated the effectiveness of nurse health coaching in improving cognitive-behavioral outcomes related to health behavior change, using a measurement tool called Indicators of Health Behavior Change, and found promising results in both non-social determinants of health and social determinants of health groups.

The Science of Nurse Coaching

Researchers have found that nurse coaching can benefit not only the clients but the nurses themselves as well.

What's more, nurse coaching has even showed to have a positive impact on nurse coaches, themselves. Results from a national survey of certified nurse coaches, published in May 2018 in the [Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners](#), showed that coaching helped nurses improve their own health behaviors (85%), interpersonal relationships (80%), and increase job satisfaction (71%).

We're continuing to explore how nurse coaching impacts clients firsthand through our Industry Partnerships and are excited to roll out proprietary data, as available.

Another study with a literature review of articles [suggests](#) that coaching strategies can foster emotional self-management and self-adjustment to daily life among nurses. *"Coaching strategies can contribute to nurses' well-being, empower them, and consequently bring clinical benefits to patients, through humanized care focused on the particularities of end-of-life patients and their families,"* the authors conclude.

Expert opinion

Currently, the majority of studies exploring the efficacy of nurse coaching center on its impact on Type 2 Diabetes patients, and have several limitations, such as small sample size, self-reported outcomes, and lack of standardization. While current results are encouraging, we are looking forward to more research, especially on the impact of nurse coaching on other chronic disease health outcomes. We, at YourCoach, are proud to support this emerging workforce with more opportunities to help those most in need.

About YourCoach

[YourCoach.Health](https://yourcoach.health) is the only operating system for behavior change, powered by health coaches. Our industry partners entrust us to stand up or augment their health coaching operations utilizing our APIs, widgets and tech-augmented army of validated and credentialed health coaches to surround their existing product or service. We're the premier virtual home for health and wellness coaching, an ecosystem built to empower health coaches while expanding access to their services through our industry partnerships. Join us on the Health Coaching Revolution as we strive to deliver the power of health coaching to the 8.5 billion global population by 2030.



Our mission

By the year 2030 our mission is for the projected 8.5 billion people in the world to have access to Health Coaches, creating even more Happy and Healthy Humans.

Health Coaching
Industry Report V2.0

