

VIRTUAL CARE CONNECTIONS

The expanding role of virtual nursing in healthcare

Highlights from our interview with Tammy Cress, MSN, RN



Tammy Cress, MSN, RN

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Tammy Cress, MSN, RN has a demonstrated record of leading strategy, operations and transformative initiatives with deep telehealth subject matter expertise across inpatient care solutions. Cress completed her undergraduate education at the University of Maryland and a Master of Science in Nursing from Seattle Pacific University.

As technology evolves and care delivery demands grow, hospitals and health systems are increasingly leaning into the power of inpatient virtual nursing to improve processes, support patients and balance key operational functions. Hear the perspective of Teladoc Health's Tammy Cress as she explores this rapidly changing landscape, what hospitals and health systems need to be considering and what lies ahead for virtual nursing.

Q: How did the need for virtual nursing emerge, and is it still relevant today?

Short answer: staffing. There was a survey completed in March of 2022 that revealed the top concerns for hospital executives are workforce shortages and rising costs. In that same survey, 94% of these executives said that their greatest area of concern for shortages is nursing. Before that was the "great quit" in healthcare in 2021, so these concerns are neither new or going away. Because of this, we see healthcare leaders actively exploring innovative care delivery methods to address these challenges and to improve their market position, while keeping quality of care front and center.

2.1M
PROJECTED DEFICIT
OF NURSES IN THE
U.S. BY 2025¹

Q: What are some of the most innovative uses of virtual nursing you see being used today?

Organizations usually take one of two approaches to start a virtual nursing program: the first and most common is the redesign of workflows to incorporate telehealth into daily care delivery. The second is the redesign of the bedside staffing mix and inserting a virtual nurse to oversee the bedside team. In both these scenarios we see wonderful results, including faster discharges, more efficient rounding and the opportunity to mentor less experienced staff. We see virtual nursing as an innovative redesign of care delivery—a great first step of transforming how organizations provide care by blending in-person and virtual care for increased success.



Q: What would you say are the most important features for hospitals and health systems to look for when implementing virtual nursing?

The top influencing factors in healthcare today are workforce staffing and challenging financial circumstances. We also know that the approaches taken during COVID-19 to try to keep nursing units open are not sustainable and that health systems are actively exploring new and more aggressive strategies to address these issues. Here are my suggestions:

- 1. Sustainability and scalability are key.** Look for a partner who can grow with you and your needs.
- 2. Future-proof your virtual solution.** Nursing might be front and center at the moment, but all departments are being affected. Allow ALL providers to virtualize their care when needed.
- 3. Start the work now.** Connect with industry experts on this, and your colleagues who have already started this journey.

>19%
OF HOSPITALS ARE
EXPERIENCING
CRITICAL STAFFING
SHORTAGES²

18%
OF CAREGIVERS
QUIT DURING THE
PANDEMIC³

Hear the full interview

Hear how the integration of virtual nursing into your care delivery model can help address current and future challenges.

¹Kayser, A. 2022. "Nurse deficit could reach 2.1 million by 2025, study finds." Becker's Hospital Review. September 15, 2022. <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/workforce/nurse-deficit-could-reach-2-1-million-by-2025-study-finds.html>

²Healthdata.gov. "COVID-19 Reported Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity." January 2022. <https://healthdata.gov/Hospital/COVID-19-Reported-Patient-Impact-and-Hospital-Capa/g62h-syeh/data>

³Galvin, G. 2021. "A Sinking Ship: Pandemic's Mental Health Toll Continues to Roil Health Care Workers." October 4, 2021. <https://morningconsult.com/2021/10/04/health-care-workers-burnout/>

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About Teladoc Health: Teladoc Health is empowering all people everywhere to live healthier lives by transforming the healthcare experience. Recognized as the world leader in whole-person virtual care, Teladoc Health leverages clinical expertise, advanced technology and actionable data insights to meet the evolving needs of consumers and healthcare professionals.

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