International Nurses: A Model for Staffing Innovation and Transforming Patient Care

A Cross-Sectional Study on the Performance of International Nurses in U.S. Healthcare Facilities

Written by: Earl Dalton, CNO, MHA, MSL, RN, NEA-BC
Co-authored by: Tyler Grote
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Nurse Performance Data</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Quality of Clinical Skills and Competency Including Age-Specific Care</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritizing and Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows facility policies &amp; procedures including safety and</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency protocols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriately communicates with patients, families</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and other patient care team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility / Adaptability</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation/Teamwork</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Appearance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Punctuality</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Logic Behind International Nursing Solutions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In today’s healthcare landscape, nothing is more important than the patient experience. But few things jeopardize the patient experience more than a national nursing shortage that’s left countless facilities short-staffed. There’s already plenty of data on the ramifications of an understaffed facility - the point of this paper is to reinforce a long-term solution. That solution is the international nurse.

The perception of international nurses has long been defined by misinformation, stereotypes and hearsay. This white paper aims to methodically dispel common misconceptions surrounding these skilled healthcare professionals. With over 10 years of CNO and hospital administrative feedback, the data dispels a range of common concerns shared by hospital leadership.

There are four major takeaways you’ll get from this white paper. International nurses will:

1. **Integrate seamlessly into your facility**

2. **Communicate easily with you and your staff**

3. **Help support your facility’s mission to Magnet Status**

4. **Possess equivalent or better clinical skills than the average US-trained nurse**
Just the Facts: International Nurses Perform Well in US Healthcare Facilities

The ensuing data was captured by “Quality Assignment Evaluation” surveys. Here’s a breakdown of the sampling:

• 10+ years of sampling
• 650+ responses
• Responses provided by Chief Nursing Officers and other hospital administrators
• Questions measure satisfaction, relative to the US-trained nurse

The categories the international nurses were ranked in are as follows, along with the percentage of healthcare leaders that ranked their performance relative to the average US-trained nurse:

- Quality of clinical skills and competency including age specific care: 95%
- Prioritizing and critical thinking skills: 93%
- Follows facility policies & procedures including safety and emergency protocols: 99%
- Communication with patients, families and other patient care team members: 99%
- Attitude: 98%
- Flexibility / Adaptability: 97%
- Cooperation / Teamwork: 98%
- Personal Appearance: 99%
- Attendance and Punctuality: 98%

To see the most current version of the PassportUSA International Nurse Report Card, visit: www.passportusa.com/report-card
The Quality of Clinical Skills and Competency Including Age-Specific Care

**OVER 95%** of respondents considered the international nurses’ quality of clinical skills and competency to be average or better.

This category assessed international nurses based on the quality of care they provided to patients, both overall and by age-specific care. Few things are more important than the quality of care. Better care ensures better overall patient outcomes, which is increasingly paramount to the overall patient experience.
Prioritizing and Critical Thinking Skills

How focused can international nurses stay throughout a shift, and are they able to critically think through difficult scenarios? One major advantage of international nurses is their education. Virtually every international nurse arrives to the United States with a bachelor’s degree, which is more conducive to critical thinking and prioritizing than an associate’s.

More BSN nurses on your staff can help support your facility’s mission to Magnet Status. And as concluded by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, lower mortality rates, fewer medication errors and positive outcomes are all linked to nurses prepared at the baccalaureate and graduate degree levels.
Follows facility policies including safety and emergency protocols

OVER 97% of respondents considered the international nurses’ ability to follow safety and emergency protocols to be average or better.

To improve the patient experience, you need your staff functioning as a unit. Compliance with facility policies, including safety and emergency protocols, is essential. It’s often the little things that if ignored can result in bigger problems, both for staff and patients. International nurses reduce waste by demonstrating an overwhelming propensity to follow facility protocols.
OVER 94% of respondents considered the international nurses’ average or above average communicators with patients, families and other team members.

One of the more common misconceptions surrounding international nurses is the language barrier. But as the data demonstrates, the fears are unfounded. Before their US arrival, international nurses must pass a rigorous English exam that tests both verbal and written English proficiency.

Reputable international staffing companies conduct thorough screenings and interviews, even before hospitals conduct their own, which allows candidates to demonstrate their English speaking skills well in advance.
According to a recent study conducted by nursing faculty at the University of Pennsylvania*, which featured survey data from over 95 thousand nurses, nurse burnout is happening on a large scale, and it’s reducing an already shrinking workforce.

This means you need your nursing staff to exhibit a positive attitude. A positive nursing staff should translate into better retention, which in turn results in better patient care and a better overall patient experience with your facility.
Flexibility / Adaptability

OVER 97% of respondents considered the international nurses’ flexibility and adaptability to be average or better.

Flexibility and adaptability are highlighted strengths of the international nurse. As the language barrier has already been debunked (94 percent of respondents ranked international nurses either average or better in communication), it’s no surprise that they can quickly change directions, follow instructions and adapt to whatever is needed of them.
Cooperation / Teamwork

OVER 98% of respondents considered the international nurses’ cooperation and teamwork skills to be average or better.

Can your international nurse properly assimilate into his or her unit? Do they work well with others? These are important questions. Nurses need to work as a cohesive unit and there’s little room for those who can’t work alongside other nurses.

Happier nurses play an obvious roll in higher retention rates. Increasing your staff with nurses who are team-players (and nurses who are likely to join your hospital full-time) is an easy way to boost team morale and better the patient experience.
Facility administration may wonder if international nurses will meet high standards of personal appearance in a professional healthcare setting. They want nurses who demonstrate a concern for their image. The data demonstrates that international nurses take a lot of pride in a professional personal appearance.

**OVER 99%** of respondents considered the international nurses’ personal appearance to be average or better.
**Attendance and Punctuality**

**OVER 98%** of respondents considered the international nurses’ attendance and punctuality to be average or better.

As attendance and punctuality speak to teamwork, it’s not surprising that the data illustrates international nurses overwhelmingly exceed standards in timeliness. This is especially important when some of your nurses are finishing 12-hour shifts and relying on a timely shift change.

Punctuality is another area where facilities can improve their patient experience. Timely nurses make happier nurses and happier nurses are less likely to leave, mitigating turnover, and improving your facility’s overall level of care.
THE LOGIC BEHIND INTERNATIONAL NURSING SOLUTIONS

It’s not just the data in this white paper that confirms how exceptionally skilled international nurses are. Another major study, *The Relative Quality of Foreign Nurses in the United States*, reached the same conclusion the aforementioned data did. The report concludes: “...in terms of their education levels and their place of work, foreign nurses appear to have higher levels of skill as compared to native nurses.”

The following are just a few compelling reasons why your facility should consider using international nurses:

1. **The nursing shortage requires innovative staffing solutions**

   The nursing shortage is expected to worsen at an increasing rate as patient demand for their services increases beneath the Affordable Care Act. The projected number of job openings for nurses through 2020 is 1.6 million.

   By 2025, the shortage is expected to be “more than twice as large as any nurse shortage experienced since the introduction of Medicare and Medicaid in the mid-1960s,” a team of Vanderbilt University nursing researchers wrote in 2009 paper.

2. **A long-time, proven solution**

   As the data demonstrates, international nurses are a highly skilled and accessible resource to help providers address their most acute shortages. But what many providers don’t realize is that international nurses are not a new solution.

   The presence of the international nurse in the US dates back to 1903 when the Pensionado Act established a formalized framework to send Filipino pensionados, (government subsidized scholars) to the US for training and education. The amount of international nurses in the US has only risen since. And that’s happening everywhere.

   According to Reuben Seguritan, general counsel of the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA), the Philippines is the world’s largest supplier of international nurses with 429 nursing schools and 80 thousand nursing students.
The aftermath of the American Colonial project in the Philippines was an Americanized hospital training system that was able to produce nurse professionals with the required training, language and work culture that mirror the United States (Cortes, 8).

Thanks to support from groups like the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA), these nurses are ready to assimilate into US culture. And as the data illustrated, international nurses are doing just that.

International nurses are experienced, highly educated and extremely versatile. Studies show international nurses are more likely to work hard-to-staff shifts like holidays, nights and weekends, which is why the international nurses ranked so well in flexibility, cooperation and teamwork (Cortes, 13).

The Institute of Medicine recommends that the proportion of US nurses with baccalaureate degrees be increased to 80 percent by 2020. That only emphasizes how important it is that international nurses arrive with a bachelor’s degree in nursing. In that respect, these nurses are ahead of the curve.

That’s especially important when you consider Magnet status. In a typical Magnet facility, 48.4 percent - nearly half of your staff - of direct care nurses hold a BSN.

There’s also research that suggests Magnet hospitals have better retention. Critical analysis of a study housed on American Nurse Today, the official journal of the American Nurse Association, confirmed that Magnet designation correlates to positive work environments and nurse satisfaction, both of which can influence nurse retention.
There’s a lot of misinformation surrounding the usage of international nurses in American facilities. But anecdotal evidence is seldom a good barometer. The reality is, these nurses are some of the best nurses available. This position is supported by not only 650-plus CNO’s and hospital administrators, but other studies that are listed at the completion of this white paper.

International nurses have the education, the work ethic and the professional demeanor to become a significant contributor in any facility.

**About Health Carousel**

Respondents were asked about working with Health Carousel. The format was yes and no, and the following were the questions asked, along with the percentage of yes responses:

- **Have you found the Health Carousel staff to be helpful and courteous?** 97.51%
- **Have you found the Health Carousel staff to be knowledgeable?** 96.89%
- **Have we met your expectations in relation to this assignment?** 95.18%
- **If you had an inquiry, did we resolve it in a timely manner?** 96.42%

With more than a decade of experience, PassportUSA is among the largest and most reliable providers of high-quality international healthcare talent. No other international recruitment brand can boast greater expertise or has demonstrated success in navigating the complexity of healthcare immigration regulations than PassportUSA.

If you’re ready to address your nursing shortage, think outside of the box. There is real nursing talent willing and ready to join your team. Contact your PassportUSA representative today to discuss your vacancies and an optimal long-term solution.
i. **Relative Quality of Foreign Nurses in the United States**
Cortes, Patricia & Pan, Jessica England. Relative Quality of Foreign Nurses in the United States. CReAM Discussion Paper Series, Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CReAM), Department of Economics, University College London.

ii. **Nursing: Supply and Demand through 2020.**

iii. **Prioritizing Immigration Access for Healthcare Professionals**

iv. **Immigration From the Philippines**

v. **The Future of Nursing: Focus on Education**

vi. **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**

vii. **Buerhaus, P. I., D. I. Auerbach, and D. O. Staiger.**