

# Nursing Professionals - The Generational Gap

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Nursing is the largest healthcare profession, with more than 3.1 million registered nurses nationwide, and approximately 2.6 million RN's are employed as nurses, meaning that 500,000 registered nurses do not work in nursing. Issues of supply and demand for the nursing field are currently being questioned, due to the number of graduations taking place in the nursing field, the supply vs the demand.

In a recent survey conducted by [AMN Healthcare](#), the results showed a bit of a gap between veteran nursing professionals and those coming right out of school. Changes are taking place in nursing – with the healthcare reform currently underway, technology implementations and new nursing students coming into the workplace. Several factors from the survey show a difference of opinion among veteran nurses and nursing students stepping into the workplace.

Younger nurses seem to have a more positive outlook than those who have been in the workplace for a number of years. “In a time of unprecedented change in the healthcare industry, it becomes even more important to study how the nursing workforce is responding to the myriad new systems, requirements and quality measurements that accompany healthcare reform,” said Marcia Faller, PhD, RN, and [Chief Clinical Officer of AMN Healthcare](#). The vast majority of nurses currently in the workforce remain positive about their career choices, however are not as positive about some of the current changes taking place like implementation of certain technology and the affect the healthcare reform will have on the industry. The younger generations of nurses beginning to enter the field are more receptive to the changes currently taking place and remain positive about the future of nursing, agreeing they feel the healthcare reform is a positive change instead of a negative one.

When it comes to embracing the changes that are taking place regarding electronic medical records, younger nurses view it as a positive change and embrace the use of EMR's in the field, while older nurses do not embrace the technology changes and see it as a negative for the industry. Below are a few of the key findings:

1. Twenty-three percent of nurses age 55 and older will change their work dramatically, including opting for retirement or leaving the nursing field for other types of work.
2. Younger nurses are much more positive about the quality of nursing today. When asked to respond to the statement, “Nursing care has generally declined,” 37% of nurses age 19-39 agreed compared to 66% for nurses age 55 and older.
3. Younger nurses are much more likely to agree that electronic medical records positively
4. influence job satisfaction, *productivity*, time management and the quality of patient care.
5. About 40 percent of nurses age 19-39 plans to pursue a master's degree in nursing or higher degree.

Overall nurses remain very positive about their career paths, with approximately 90% of nurses remaining highly satisfied with their career. This survey has a lot of positive reflections for the nursing industry as a whole. One thing is certain, change is coming to the nursing industry – embracing it is inevitable.

How do you feel about the changes the industry is facing?