



Closing the Gap: Virtual Nursing as a Solution to Workforce Challenges

Innovative healthcare delivery through virtual nursing support

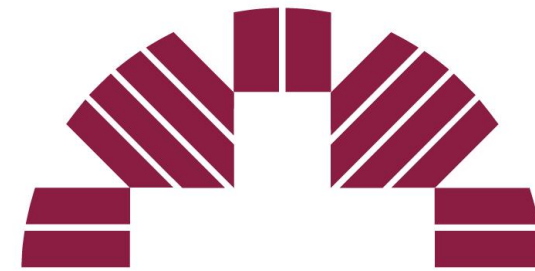
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Disclaimer

We have no real or perceived conflicts of interest that relate to this presentation.

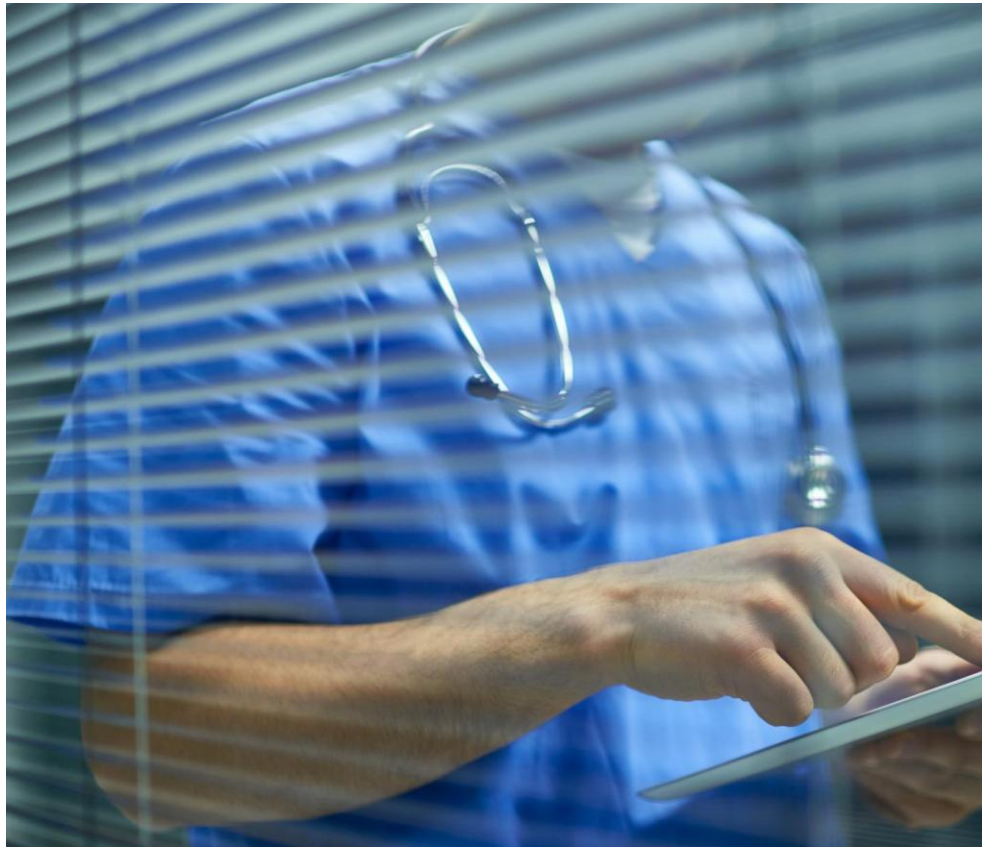
Virtual Nursing
at Mount
Carmel Health
System:
Together Team



MOUNT CARMEL

A Member of Trinity Health

Introduction and Session Overview



Virtual Nursing Concept

Introduction to virtual nursing as implemented via the TogetherTeam Virtual Connected Care model.

Healthcare Workforce Challenges

Current nursing shortages and high patient acuity create pressure on bedside staff.

Session Goals

Goals include understanding workforce issues, evaluating virtual nursing impact, and implementation guidance.

Rationale for Care Model

Focus on sustainable staffing, nurse retention, and support for early-career nurses.

Identifying Workforce Gaps in Hospital Nursing

- Nursing Shortages and Turnover
- Contributing Factors
- Impact on Care and Staff
- System-Level Challenge



Nursing Turnover and Shortage



Pandemic-Driven Turnover & Vacancy (2021–2022)

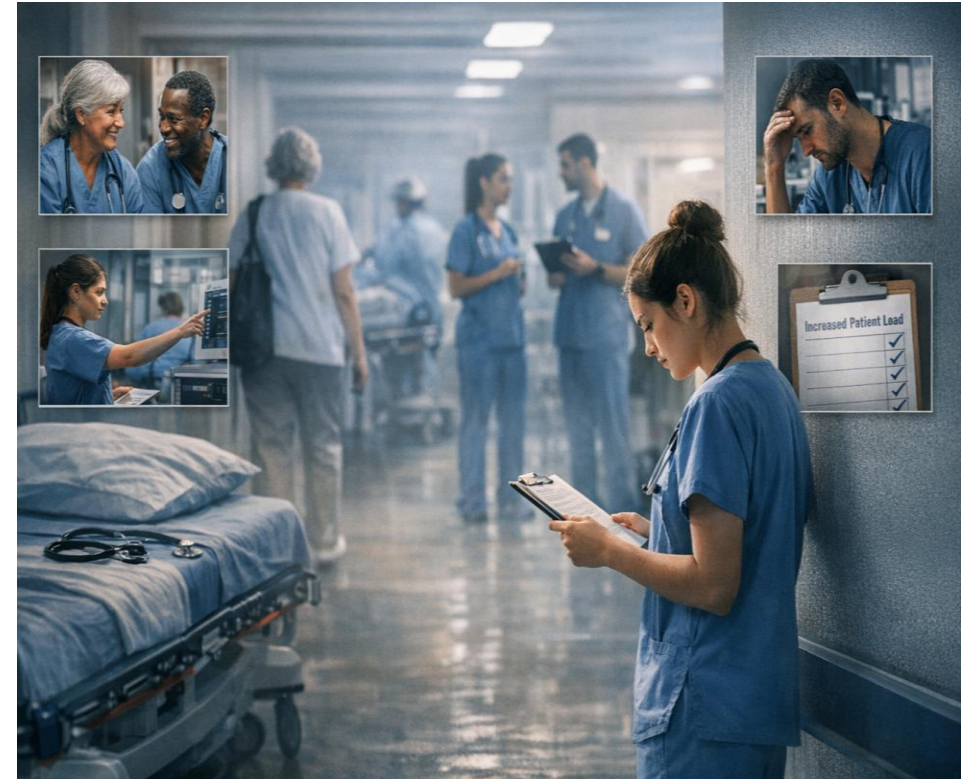
1. Turnover and vacancy peaked in 2021–2022 as nurses faced sustained COVID-19 surges, chronic understaffing, moral distress, physical exhaustion, and dramatically higher patient acuity.
2. National data show over **100,000 nurses exited the workforce during the pandemic**, with burnout, unsafe staffing, and emotional strain cited as leading causes. [\[bhw.hrsa.gov\]](https://www.bhw.hrsa.gov), [\[ncsbn.org\]](https://www.ncsbn.org)

Ongoing Workforce Strain in Ohio

1. In 2024, **63% of Ohio's direct care nurses reported considering leaving bedside nursing** due to unsafe workloads, staffing shortages, and workplace conditions (Ohio Nurses Association). [\[ohnurses.org\]](https://www.ohnurses.org)

Effects of Increased Turnover and Shortage

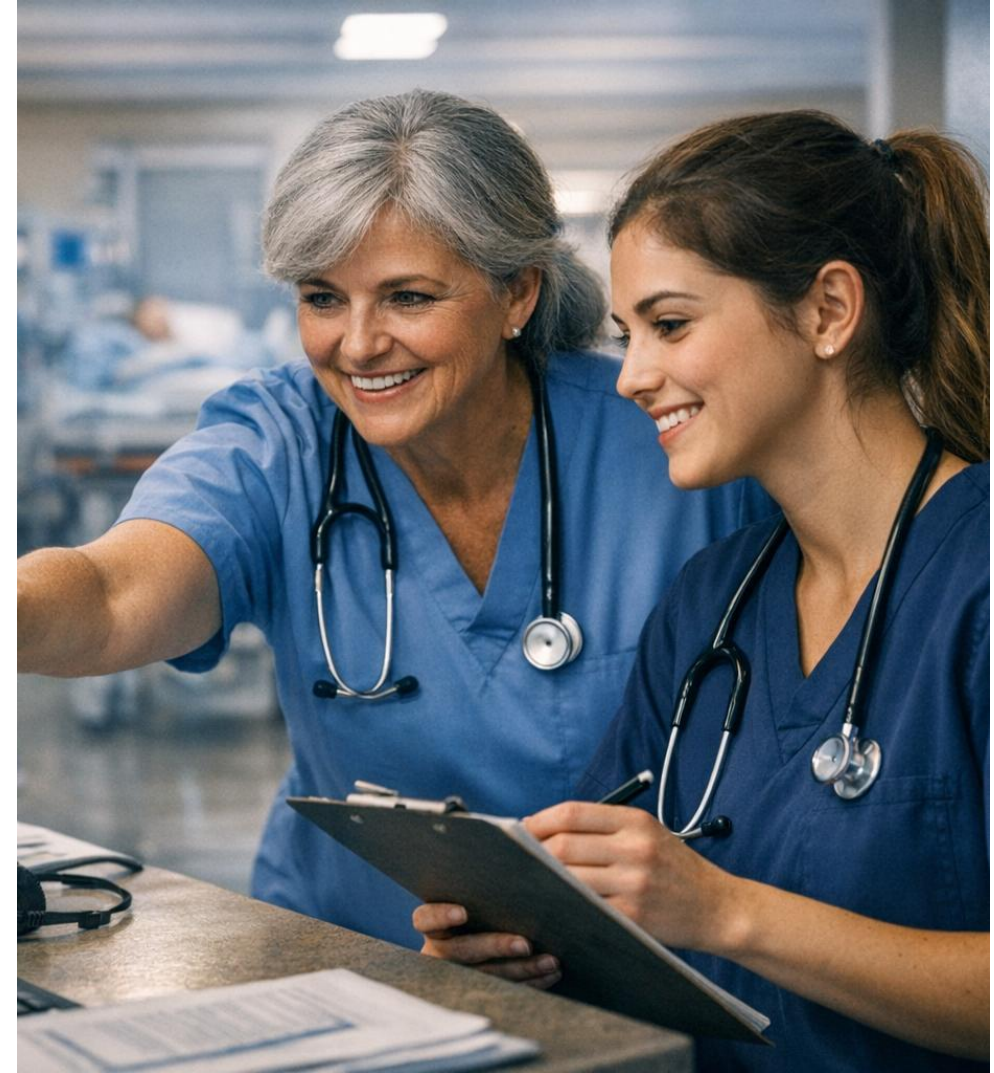
- Loss of Tenured Nurses & Experience Gaps
- New Nurses in Accelerated Leadership Roles
- Higher Ratios, Fewer Resources, Higher Acuity
- Less Real-Time Support
- Increased Risk for Burnout, Errors, and Turnover. [\[myamericannurse.com\]](https://myamericannurse.com)

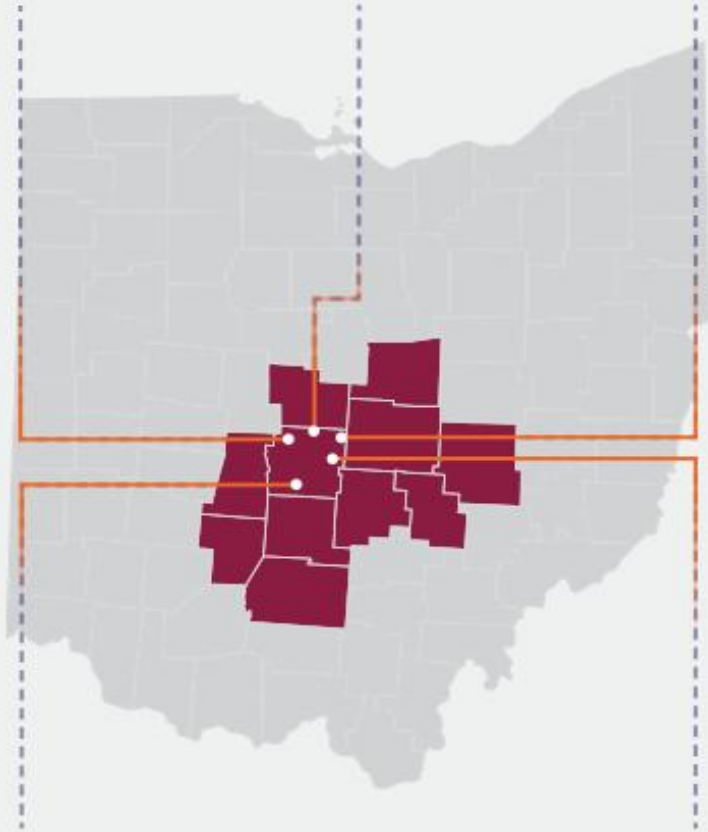


What the Workforce Needs Now

- Real-time clinical support and mentorship without increasing physical bedside workload.
- A way to **redistribute work and expertise**, not just add more tasks to overstretched nurses.
- Sustainable roles that **retain experienced nurses** and support early-career nurses simultaneously.

Virtual Nursing emerges as a workforce stabilization strategy





Mount Carmel Health Systems

WHO WE CARE FOR AND WHAT WE DO



1.3M Patient Visits



52,200 Admissions & Observations



30,300 Surgeries



554,000 Outpatient Visits



217,000 ED Visits



Mount Carmel's Together Team Virtual Connected Care™

TogetherTeam IMPLEMENTATION

MORE THAN **2** DOZEN 

Trinity Health hospitals have implemented TogetherTeam Virtual Connected Care

IMPACT OF CARE DELIVERY MODEL

Data from these units is continuously monitored to evaluate the impact of this care delivery model on a variety of metrics, including:



PATIENT SAFETY



COLLEAGUE ENGAGEMENT/ TURNOVER



PATIENT THROUGHPUT

Overview of the Virtual Nursing Care Model



- Collaborative Care Team
- Role Delineation and Workflow
- Enhanced Patient Support
- Improved Work Environment

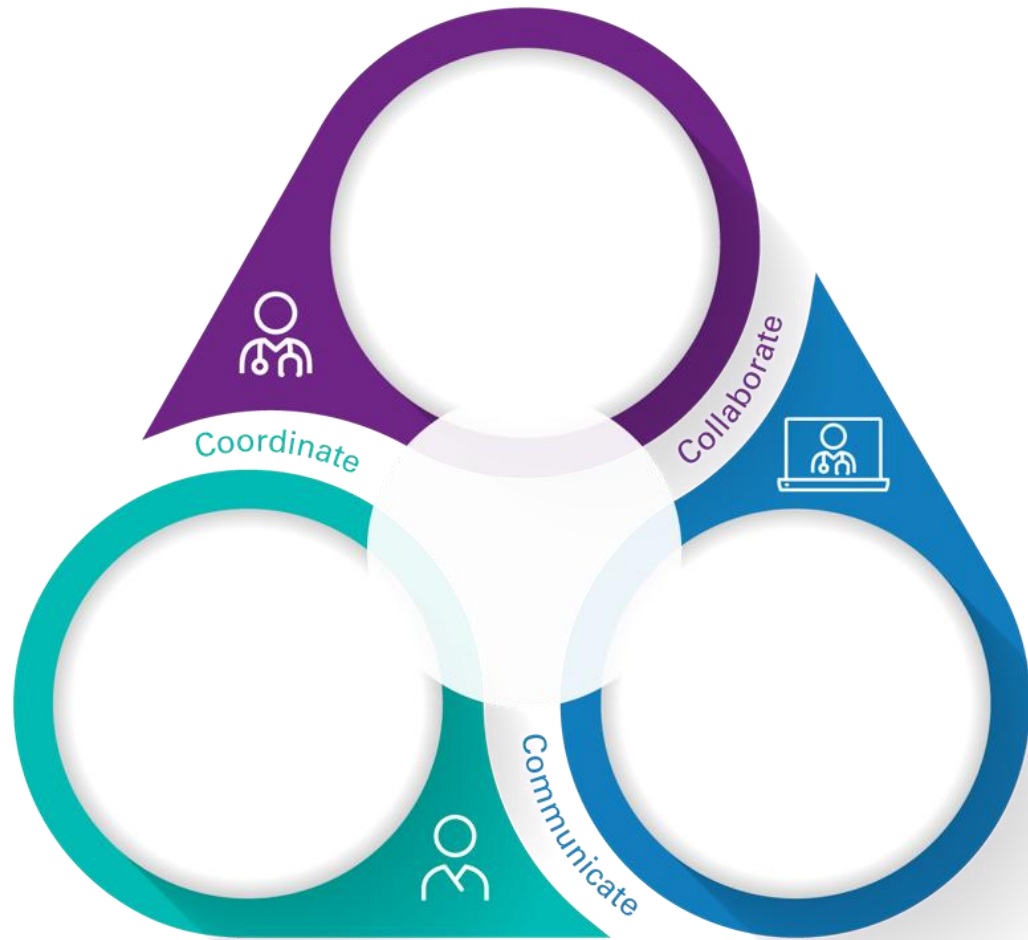


Virtual Nursing Together Team Model

Together Team Model:

- Together Team Virtual Connected Care™ is Trinity Health's three-person nurse care model—combining a bedside RN, an RN partner, and an onsite virtual RN
- Brings tenured nurses back to the bedside
- On average, our virtual nurses have around 20+ years of experience each

Role Delineation and Workflow



Clarifying Roles to Reduce Burden and Improve Care

- Defined responsibilities across the care team
- Intentional workflow redistribution
- Standardized communication pathways
- Less role confusion, more clinical focus

Outcome: Improved efficiency, reduced cognitive load, and safer, more reliable care delivery.

What can the Virtual Nurse do?



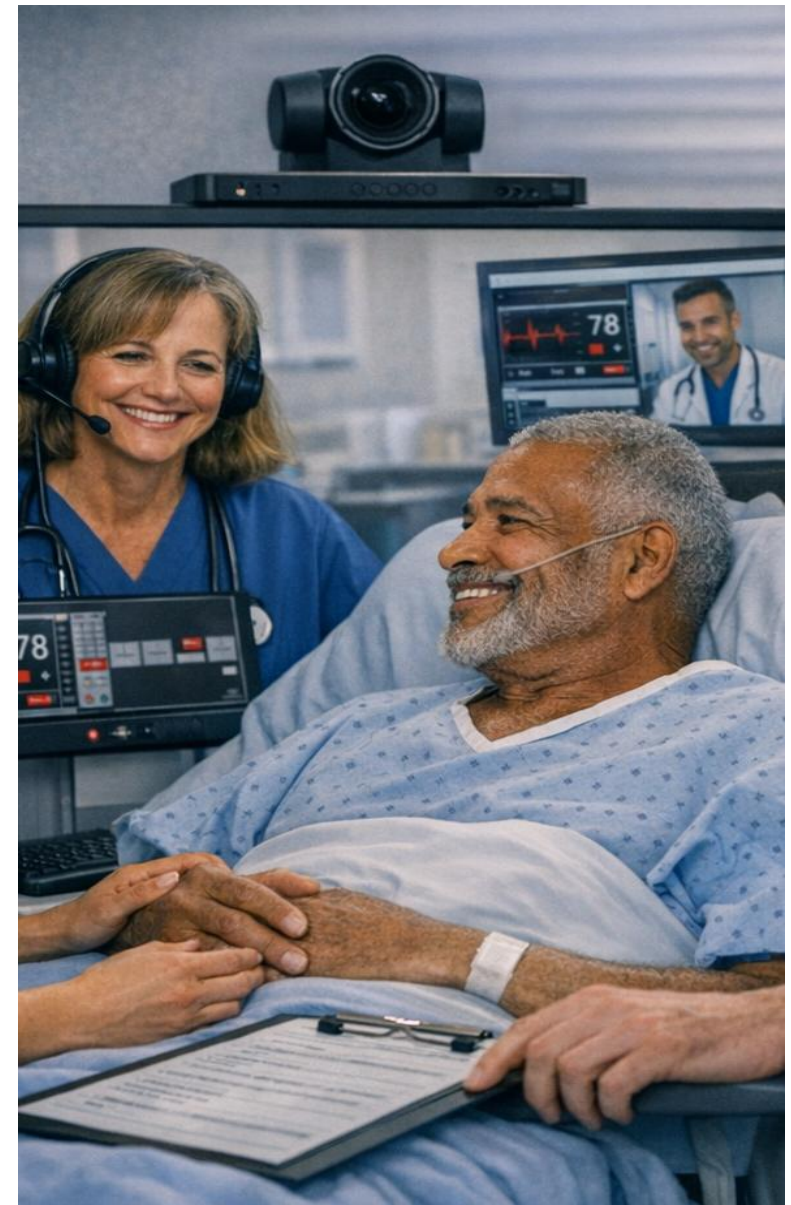
- Perform patient assessments using high-resolution camera technology that can zoom in to assess IV pumps, oxygen settings, etc.
- Complete daily screenings
- Expedite documentation, discharges, MRI screenings and Care Plans
- Support new nurses with real-time mentoring and expert guidance
- Call Report to facilities on patients preparing to discharge
- Answer questions for patients and family members
- Communicate with providers
- Providing ongoing Stroke education to patients during their admission and at discharge.
- Spend time at discharges preparing the AVS, reviewing it in detail with the patient and ensuring the education portion aligns to their hospitalization
- Round on patients to ensure environmental safety, address issues and arc up concerns in real time

Enhanced Patient Support Through Virtual Nursing

Extending Care Beyond the Physical Bedside

- Real-time clinical support
- Consistent patient education
- Discharge planning and care coordination
- Mentorship at the point of need

Outcome: Safer patient care, better communication, and stronger support for both patients and bedside nurses.



Improved Work Environment and Sustainability

Creating a Safer, More Sustainable Nursing Practice

1. Enhanced Patient Outcomes
2. Workforce Wellbeing
3. Sustainable Nursing Careers
4. Clinical Support and Escalation

Outcome: Improved morale, reduced burnout, stronger retention, and a safer clinical environment across all career stages.

Enhanced Patient Outcomes

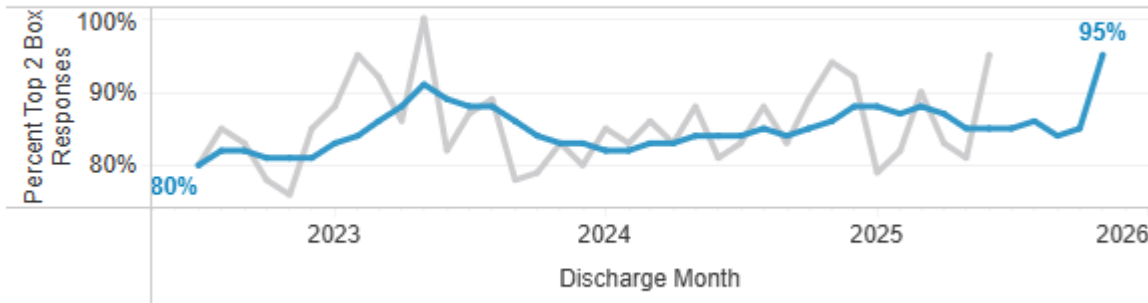
Increased clinical oversight

- Virtual RN's offer clinical support
- Improved communication and consistency
- Stronger care coordination
- Better patient experience

Impact: Safer care delivery, improved patient satisfaction, and more reliable outcomes.

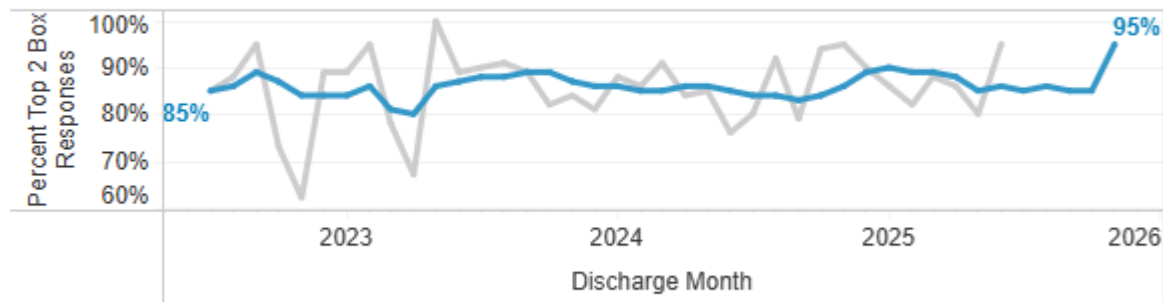
Staff Work Together

Rolling 6-month percent top 2 box responses **Digital Survey Only**



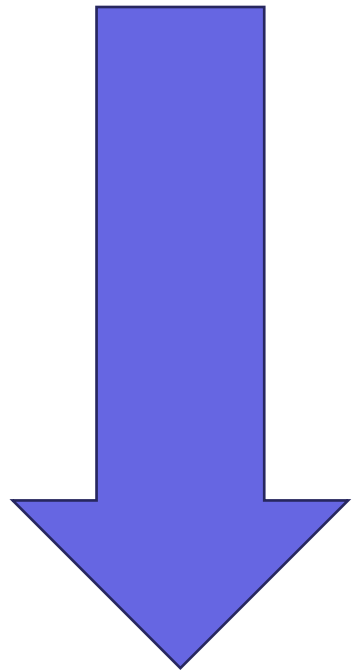
Staff Visits Met Needs

Rolling 6-month percent top 2 box responses **Digital Survey Only**



Qualtrics data updated on 4/20/2026. Data retrieved from Qualtrics inpatient all modes scorecard on 4/20/2026.

Workforce Wellbeing



27% Decrease in
Voluntary RN Turnover
since Virtual Nursing Go
Live

Reducing Burnout and Supporting Nurses at the Bedside

- Reduced cognitive and task overload
- Real-time mentorship and support
- Less isolation for new nurses
- Improved job satisfaction

Impact: Lower burnout risk, improved morale, and increased nurse engagement.

Sustainable Nursing Careers

Retaining Experience While Supporting the Next Generation

- A sustainable role for experienced nurses
- Preservation of clinical expertise
- Career longevity and flexibility
- Knowledge transfer at scale

Impact: Improved retention, preserved institutional knowledge, and a more balanced workforce

Clinical Support and Escalation

Strengthening Safety Nets at the Point of Need

Immediate escalation support

Virtual RNs assist bedside staff during rapid changes in patient status, deterioration, or complex clinical scenarios.

Second-nurse verification

Support for high-risk tasks (medication verification, procedures, assessments) adds an extra layer of safety.

Complex discharge support

Virtual nurses assist with education, reconciliation, and coordination—reducing delays and readmissions.

Confidence in decision-making

Nurses escalate concerns earlier and more effectively when supported by real-time expert guidance.

Impact: Faster response to clinical risk, safer care transitions, and improved staff confidence.

Together, these impacts demonstrate how virtual nursing improves patient care while stabilizing and sustaining the nursing workforce.

Implementation Best Practices and Lessons Learned



- Technology Infrastructure
- Workflow and Role Definition
- Training and Mentorship
- Overcoming Challenges

Technology Infrastructure

Building the Foundation for Virtual Nursing Success

1. Reliable audiovisual technology
2. EHR integration and access
3. Secure, HIPAA-compliant platforms
4. Consistent connectivity and support

Key Takeaway: Virtual nursing success depends on dependable, integrated technology that supports clinical care—not workarounds.

Workflow and Role Definition

Designing Clear, Predictable Teamwork

- Clear role delineation
- Standardized workflows
- Intentional task redistribution
- Structured communication pathways

Key Takeaway: Clarity in roles and workflows is essential for trust, efficiency, and sustainable adoption.

Training and Mentorship



Preparing Teams for Confident Adoption

- Comprehensive onboarding
- Clinical mentorship and coaching
- Change management and engagement
- Ongoing competency development

Key Takeaway: Training and mentorship turn technology into a trusted clinical partnership.

Training, Adoption, and Hiring the Virtual Nursing Team



Key Enablers for Safe, Scalable Implementation

- Clear care model & role alignment
- Deliberate training and change management
- Experienced virtual nursing workforce
- Technology and local integration
- Measured, disciplined rollout

Takeaway: Virtual nursing succeeds when implemented as a **trained workforce strategy**, not a technology add-on—preserving expertise, improving safety, and strengthening retention.

Overcoming Challenges

Ensuring Sustainable Implementation

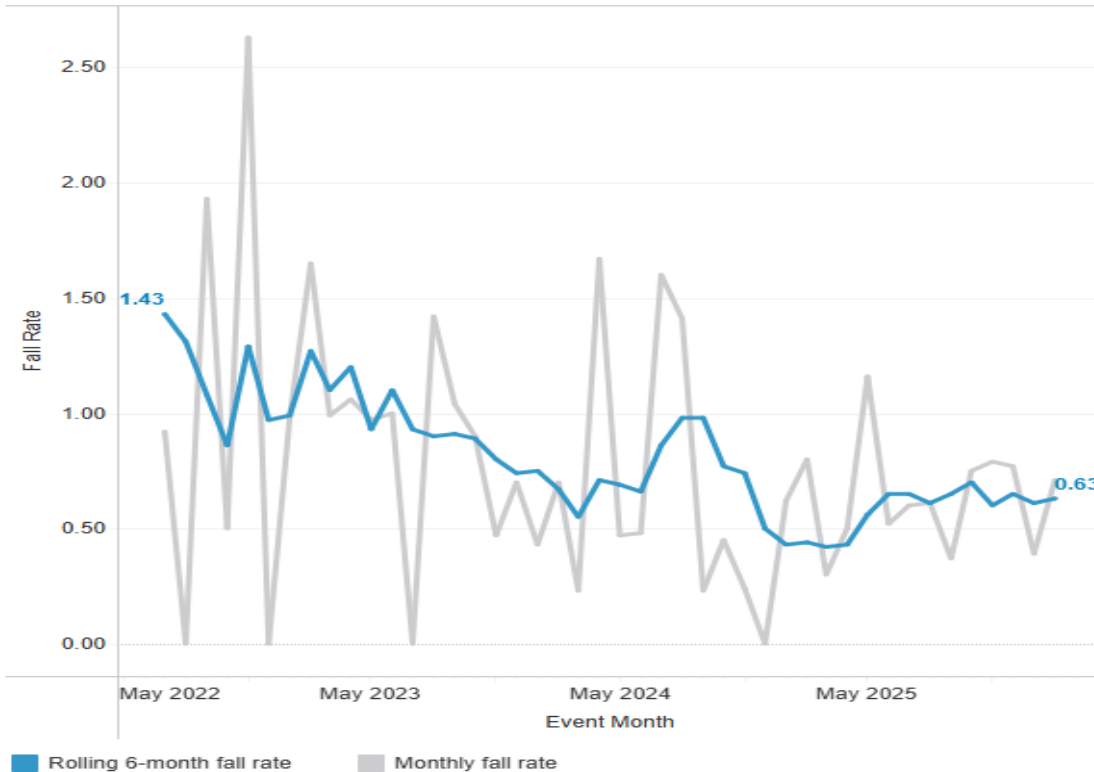
1. Addressing workflow resistance
2. Managing technology learning curves
3. Iterative improvement
4. Leadership alignment and support

Key Takeaway: Proactive problem-solving and adaptability are critical to long-term sustainability.

Data Trends

NDNQI Falls with Injury Rate

Rolling 6-month falls with injury (minor or greater) per 1,000 patient days



Trinity Health's public data consistently shows that Virtual Nursing via the TogetherTeam model has resulted in:

- ✓ Improved patient safety
- ✓ Higher nurse job satisfaction
- ✓ Increased employee engagement
- ✓ Improved patient satisfaction
- ✓ Reduced bedside RN workload
- ✓ Strong support and mentoring for new nurses
- ✓ Faster response times and improved clinical workflows
- ✓ Better retention pathways for experienced nurses
- ✓ System-wide adoption across numerous hospitals (Trinity Health, 2023-2024)

Success Stories

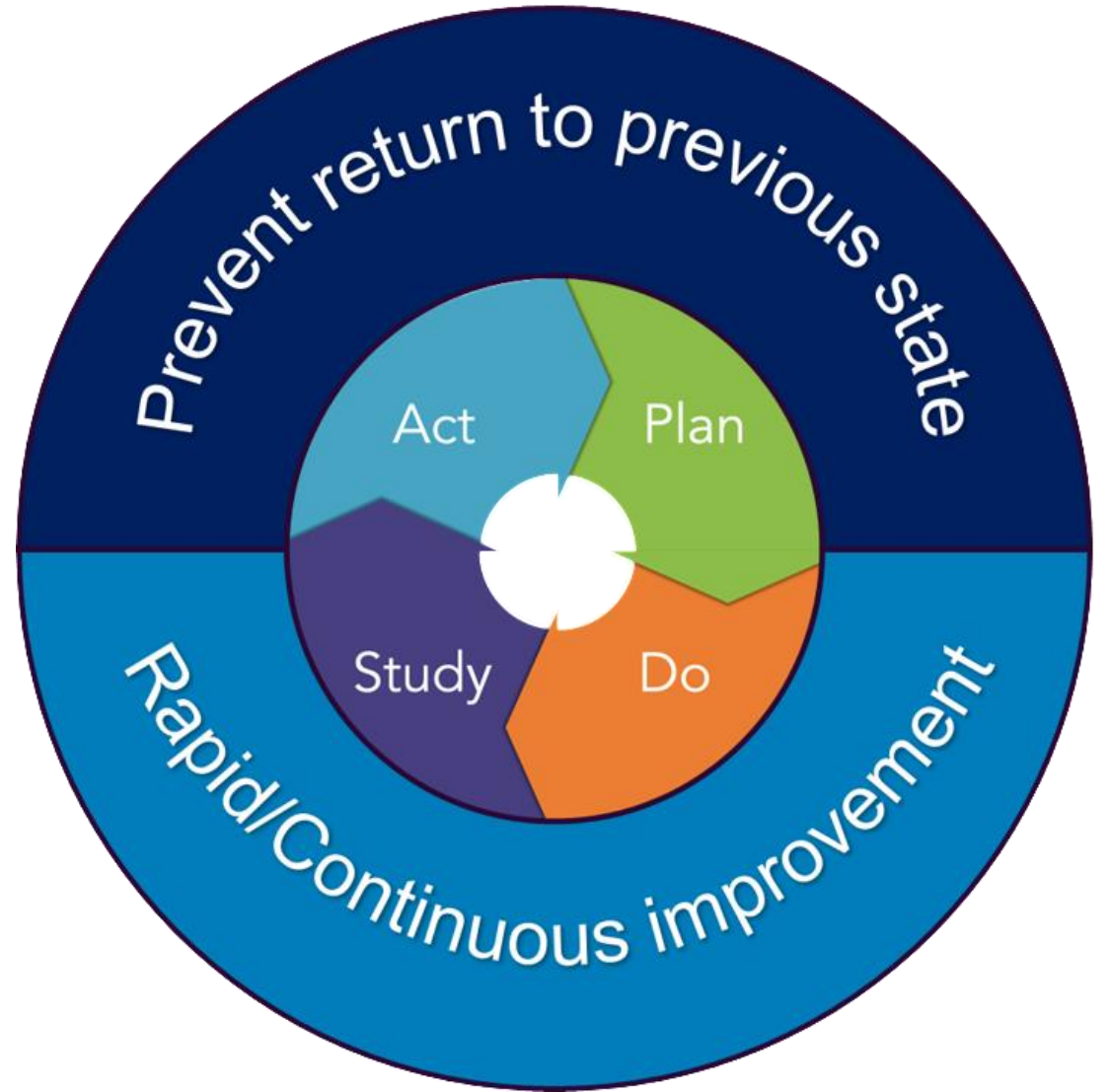
- A patient on a heparin drip and plan was to discharge in 24H- MD was contacted regarding possible bridge to Coumadin or discontinuance of Heparin
- vRN noted during admission process that the patient was confused and unable to be redirected. An order was placed for Avasure and the vRN rounded more frequently. Bedside RN, Charge Nurse and Nursing Supervisor were made aware
- “A patient’s AVS/Med.Rec. had conflicting information on it regarding insulin and aspirin from the provider’s note. The provider didn’t realize that it wasn’t correct. After multiple communications with the provider, the AVS was corrected. This was a non-English speaking patient, so ensuring the information is correct for discharge was even more critical. I know this is the purpose of what this position does, but it just proves how effective this staffing model is.”
–vRN at Mount Carmel
- vRN was able to comfort a dementia patient who was very afraid and aggressive with staff. She engaged with general conversation (before turning on the camera) to calm her down and establish trust. The patient was receptive and engaged freely in conversation and successfully de-escalated.
- The vRN provided discharge education to a patient who was extremely anxious to be discharged and did not understand the discharge plan. The vRN answered all questions and called the patient’s family to review the plan as well
- “During my second rounds, sometime after midnight, I found a pleasantly confused patient out of bed, dressed and packing his things. I was able to converse with him while I called his bedside nurse who sent the tech in to the room to check on the patient and reorient him. Later in the night when I checked him again, he was back in bed, sleeping with his bed alarm on.”- vRN at Mount Carmel

Looking To The Future

Adapting the Model to Meet Real-Time Workforce Needs

- Responsive care model design
- Hybrid Virtual Nursing Model
- Supplemental Virtual RN Support During Staffing Crises
- One-on-One Mentorship for Early-Career Nurses

Takeaway: Virtual nursing is not static—it is a continuously adapting workforce strategy designed to strengthen bedside care, support new nurses, and maintain stability during operational strain.





Agenda, Key Takeaways, and Closing

Virtual Nursing Importance

Virtual nursing is presented as a scalable, strategic solution to workforce instability, not a temporary fix.

Encouraging Collaboration

We must discuss, collaborate, and learn to innovate workforce solutions in healthcare.

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