

WHAT NURSING SPECIALTY IS HOT?

If you could work in the ideal specialty for traveling, what would it be? What nurses are in the most demand? Who makes the most money? This is a good question especially if you haven't started traveling yet and want to get yourself well established in a specialty designed for traveling.

While the nursing shortage has created a demand for all nursing specialties, a few specialties are in higher demand than others. I recently spoke with a few recruiters and asked them what specialties were hot and which ones made the most money. They both mentioned Medical Surgical Nursing and Intensive Care specialties as being the most popular positions available. If they were to choose a specialty to travel in for the money, ICU would be their preference.

When I researched this topic, the research seems to support recruiter's opinions. Operating Room Manager 2002 Salary/Career Survey reveals the following in regards to the use of agency/travelers to fill vacancies in various specialties:

Critical Care (53%)
Med/Surg (46%)
ER (34%)
OB (28%)
OR (24%)

Then I combine these results with another survey reported by Ann Ericksen in HT Magazine (Nov2002 Vol1, No4), on the research conducted by the American Organization of Nurse executives (AONE). Again, I found Critical Care and Med/Surg specialties to win hands up. Furthermore, critical care needs appear to be the same regardless of hospital size or geographic region. Meanwhile, Med/Surg nurses, in general, are wanted more in smaller community hospitals.

Operating Room nurses and Emergency Room nurses tend to be needed more in the metropolitan areas. If you are an OB nurse, don't worry. The results show the demand for OB nurses to be on the rise. Finally, the most difficult assignments to find seem to be that of pediatric specialties (i.e. neonatal and pediatric ICU's).

Does this mean you should become an ICU nurse just to travel? Absolutely not! If you hadn't read this report, you probably wouldn't notice the difference in specialty demand. I am an OR nurse, which is on the bottom of the list, and I never had any trouble finding an assignment wherever I wanted to go. However, it is nice to see the big picture sometimes.

Bibliography

- Ericksen, A. (2002). Where does nursing stand? *HT*, 11(4), 27-30
- Recruitment and retention. (2002). *OR Manager*, September, 18(9), 7-14.