

## Talk about the nursing shortage

As most of you nurses are aware of.....we have a continued nursing shortage on our hands. It makes it difficult in the work force to be working with people's lives under less than adequate staffing conditions.

It turns out that we have a critical shortage and yet thousands of people are being turned down every year to get into nursing schools. We don't have enough teachers. What is up with that?

Now a days, getting into nursing school is like winning the lottery. From what I understand, the government is getting involved to some extent and providing some good scholarships for those wanting to go into nursing and doing what they can to provide incentives for those willing to teach.

Not only is it hard for people to get into nursing school, but the nursing schools are having a high drop out rate too. I recommend that any young person spend time volunteering in a hospital to see what nursing is all about before going to school. Anybody wanting to enter a profession needs to check it out first hand to see what it is really like before plunging in and the deciding it isn't what they want to do. I mention this because when I was young, it didn't occur to me that I could do this. I didn't really realize there were ways to observe professional careers before going into them? Luckily, I managed to guess well and picked a good career that has provided lots of opportunities and income for my family.

I believe the nursing shortage will continue for along time especially as the demand for nurses increases with our ever aging population. The baby boomers are getting older and living longer. One report indicates (<http://www.discovernursing.com/job-opportunities>) that the demand for nurses will be 213, 500 by 2010 and up to 800,000 by 2020.

Regardless, the need for traveling nurses will continue even if the shortage were to get better. There is always a need to fill in the gaps for vacations and seasonal demands. Travel nursing is a great opportunity and if you aren't sure, find a traveling nurse and ask them about it.

For older nurses looking at retirement, perhaps you may want to contribute to the nursing profession in a different way by teaching for awhile.

With all this in mind, make sure to ask about the nurse to patient ratio and working conditions when you take an assignment in another state. You need to make sure you know what you are getting into.