

# Current research agenda for nurse leaders

Topic	What we're researching	Why it matters
<b>State of the Nursing Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What disconnects exist between what nurses need and what their roles and work environments provide?</li> <li>• What are the most urgent gaps in physical and psychological safety, staffing, workload, flexibility, and career development?</li> <li>• What actionable strategies can health systems use to address these gaps?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursing leaders are facing a workforce at a tipping point. Understanding the root causes of dissatisfaction and burnout is essential to improving retention, workplace culture, and long-term sustainability of nursing teams.</li> </ul>
<b>Nurse Career Pathing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which elements of career development matter most to which nurses and why?</li> <li>• What problems do current career pathways aim to address, and how must they evolve as new challenges emerge?</li> <li>• How can organizations balance system need with the individual aspirations of each nurse?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing meaningful career pathways strengthens nurse engagement and builds future-ready strategies that enhance retention, elevate care quality, and align organizational success with individual growth.</li> </ul>
<b>Care Variation Reduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the urgency for system-wide care variation reduction today?</li> <li>• What new challenges and approaches exist to reducing variation across a system?</li> <li>• What are the cost-saving opportunities in inpatient and outpatient settings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardizing care across facilities improves quality, reduces costs, and ensures consistent patient experiences. Nursing leaders play a key role in implementing and sustaining these standards.</li> </ul>
<b>AI for Clinical and Coverage Decision-Making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are health system stakeholders investing in AI to support clinical decision-making?</li> <li>• What are their future plans for AI adoption, including partnership strategies and anticipated barriers?</li> <li>• What inflection points and potential futures should leaders prepare for as AI becomes more embedded in care delivery?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AI is reshaping how clinical decisions are made, influencing everything from diagnosis to treatment selection. Nursing leaders must understand how this transformation affects clinical workflows, coverage determinations, and nurse engagement strategies.</li> </ul>