

Current research agenda for nurse leaders

Topic	What we're researching	Why it matters
State of the Nursing Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What disconnects exist between what nurses need and what their roles and work environments provide?• What are the most urgent gaps in physical and psychological safety, staffing, workload, flexibility, and career development?• What actionable strategies can health systems use to address these gaps?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
Nurse Career Pathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which elements of career development matter most to which nurses and why?• What problems do current career pathways aim to address, and how must they evolve as new challenges emerge?• How can organizations balance system need with the individual aspirations of each nurse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
Care Variation Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the urgency for system-wide care variation reduction today?• What new challenges and approaches exist to reducing variation across a system?• What are the cost-saving opportunities in inpatient and outpatient settings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
AI for Clinical and Coverage Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are health system stakeholders investing in AI to support clinical decision-making?• What are their future plans for AI adoption, including partnership strategies and anticipated barriers?• What inflection points and potential futures should leaders prepare for as AI becomes more embedded in care delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.