

2025 Nurse Migration Report

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Report Purpose

The 2025 TruMerit Nurse Migration Report examines global nurse migration through a workforce systems lens, recognizing migration as both a fundamental right and a defining feature of the global health workforce. The report explores how migration affects health equity, workforce distribution, care delivery, and system resilience across regions, and outlines policy pathways to manage nurse migration more equitably and sustainably.

Key Context

- The global health workforce faces persistent shortages and unequal distribution of nurses, contributing to gaps in access to essential health services worldwide.
- Nurse migration is shaped by complex push and pull factors, including workforce shortages, working conditions, economic opportunity, regulatory environments, and geopolitical shifts.
- There is currently no permanent global multilateral forum dedicated to nurse migration and health workforce development, limiting coordinated policy responses.

Key Findings

- **Global workforce imbalance:** Although the global nursing shortage was estimated at 5.8 million in 2023, nurses are unevenly distributed, with approximately 78% of nurses serving less than half of the world's population. More than 4.6 billion people lack access to essential health services.
- **Shifting migration patterns:** While the United States and the United Kingdom remain top destination countries, a growing share of internationally educated nurses are finding work in Europe and Southeast Asia, indicating changing global migration dynamics.
- **Declining U.S. inflows:** Applications for U.S. VisaScreen® services declined in FY2025 compared to prior years, reflecting compounding factors such as visa retrogression, processing delays, and policy uncertainty.
- **Migration challenges:** Migrant nurses face barriers before, during, and after migration, including language and communication challenges, lack of professional support, discrimination, deskilling, and difficulties integrating into destination health systems.
- **Data limitations:** Global nurse migration data remain inconsistent and incomplete, constraining longitudinal analysis and evidence-based policy development.



Policy Recommendations

The report outlines eight initial policy recommendations to advance a more nurse-migrant-friendly global environment:

1. Establish a permanent global, multistakeholder forum on nurse migration and workforce challenges.
2. Expand the use of bilateral nurse migration agreements aligned with multilateral policies and ethical frameworks.
3. Improve cross-border recognition of qualifications and skills through digital, portable, and competency-based systems.
4. Develop a globally harmonized and standardized nursing terminology to enhance visibility, quality of care, and portability.
5. Strengthen collection, sharing, and analysis of data related to nurse migration and workforce development.
6. Build secure systems that combine human expertise with AI-enabled fraud detection to address occupational fraud.
7. Promote global certifications that recognize nursing knowledge, skills, and qualifications through truly global frameworks.
8. Advance tools and policies that uphold ethical international recruitment practices in line with existing global standards.

U.S.-Specific Insights

- TruMerit VisaScreen® data provide a unique intermediary perspective on nurse migration to the United States, offering insight into credentials evaluation and licensure pathways.
- In FY2025, VisaScreen® applications declined by 19% year over year, while registered nurses remained the largest professional category seeking certification.
- Recent U.S. immigration and education policy shifts are expected to further complicate nurse migration flows and exacerbate domestic workforce shortages.

How to Cite the Report

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