

LA GENERAL NURSING RESEARCH

A Better Schedule, A Stronger Team: How LA General's Nursing Team Built a System That Works for Nurses

Original research designed, conducted, and authored by the **Los Angeles General Medical Center** Nursing Administration team, published in the *Journal of Nursing Administration*.

Los Angeles General Medical Center knows that when our nurses feel supported, our patients receive better care. That's why LA General's own nursing leadership team set out to answer a simple but important question: could a smarter scheduling and staffing system make life better for the people who care for our patients every day?

The answer, according to a new study designed and led entirely by LA General's nursing team, is a clear yes.

Leading With Innovation

Across the country, hospitals are rethinking how they support their nursing teams, and LA General wanted to be at the forefront of that shift. Our nursing leadership recognized an opportunity: build a smarter, more responsive staffing and scheduling system, designed by nurses, for nurses, that puts real-time patient needs and staff wellbeing at the center of every decision.

Our research uncovered an important insight: nurses' sense of adequate staffing wasn't just about headcount. It was about how well a schedule reflected the true, real-time needs of patients. A unit could be fully staffed on paper and still feel stretched if patient acuity ran high that day. That insight became the foundation for everything LA General built next.

How LA General Built It

Between 2021 and 2023, LA General Medical Center rolled out a new system called **ASTER** (Acuity, Scheduling, Time, Employee Resources). It replaced older, paper-heavy processes with a modern, mobile-friendly tool that lets nurses:

- View their schedules anytime, from anywhere
- Request time off and pick up extra shifts electronically
- Swap shifts with coworkers directly
- Get real-time alerts when units need extra hands
- Benefit from a system that measures patient acuity — how much care each patient actually needs — so staffing assignments are fairer and more balanced

Frontline nurses weren't just handed this system. They helped build it, testing it, giving feedback, and shaping how it worked before it ever went live.

What LA General Found

LA General's research team surveyed more than 1,100 of our own nurses and healthcare staff before and after the new system launched, and the results were encouraging across the board:

46% → 54% Satisfied with their schedule
41% → 49% Schedule fits family needs
38% → 50% Feel scheduling is fair
41% → 55% Schedule supports quality care
31% → 45% Overall job satisfaction

Among inpatient nurses specifically, perceptions of staffing adequacy improved just as much. More nurses agreed there was enough staff to provide quality care, and fewer felt that thin staffing was compromising patient care or their own job satisfaction.

Nurse turnover dropped sharply — from close to 22% in 2022 to just above 10% more recently.

Why It Matters

LA General nurses told our research team the old systems felt outdated and time-consuming, full of paper forms and manual entry. ASTER gave them back time, flexibility, and a sense of fairness. It also gave LA General leadership better visibility into real-time staffing needs, so care teams could be built around what patients actually required, not just headcounts.

Looking Ahead

This study reflects something LA General Medical Center believes deeply: when we invest in the tools and systems that support our nursing staff, everyone benefits — our nurses, our teams, and most importantly, our patients. LA General will continue leading the way in finding new ways to strengthen staffing, scheduling, and support so our nursing workforce stays strong, engaged, and ready to deliver excellent care for our community.

[Click here to read the full study →](#)

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