Windy City Wisdom: Inspiring Leaders to Drive Nurse Residency Success

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Aim statement

Highlight the strategic role of leadership engagement in transforming nurse residency programs into engines for retention, succession planning and high-quality care delivery.

Background and significance

The transition from student to professional nurse is one of the **most critical periods in a nurse's career**.

More than 22% of newly licensed registered nurses leave their first position within the first year. [1]

Nurse residency programs strengthen:

- Clinical competence
- Professional confidence
- Resilience and well-being
- Professional identity formation

Structured transition-to-practice **programs improve outcomes**. [2,3]

The Vizient / American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Nurse Residency Program™ — **one of the first of its kind** — helps transition newly licensed nurses into their clinical roles and build their confidence.

The Vizient/AACN Nurse Residency Program includes an **evidence-based curriculum** designed to help increase the nurse retention rate, improve decision-making skills, enhance clinical nursing leadership practices and promote the incorporation of evidence into practice. [4]

Methods

Design:
Cross-sectional national leadership survey (Vizient, 2024)

Sample:
N = 7,845 nurse leaders

Roles:

- Supervisory leaders (56 percent)
- Educational leaders (44 percent)

Measures:
Four domains rated on a 1 to 4 Likert scale

Qualitative themes:

- Retention
- Succession planning
- Multigenerational leadership
- Leading through transformation

Vizient data insights – nursing leadership survey results

Vizient Nursing Leadership Survey Results - on a 4.0 scale [5]

Mean Scores:

- Leadership of graduates: **3.01**
- Impact on unit and institution: **3.20**
- Impact on nurse residents: **3.24**
- Overall program views: **3.26**

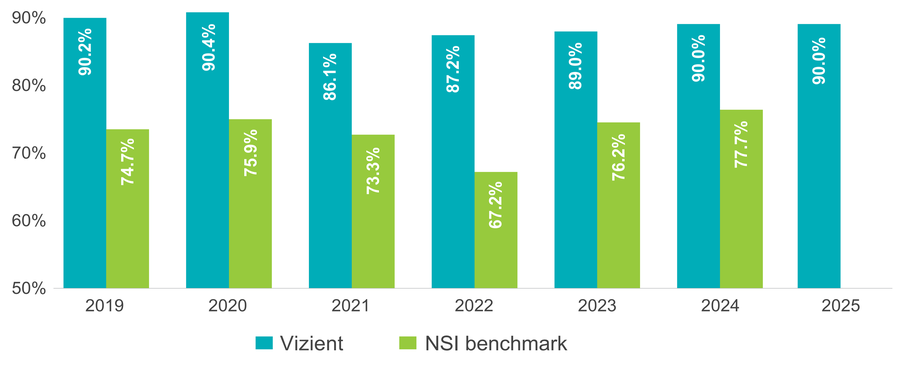
Highest Rated:

- Positive impact on patient care: **3.26**
- Recruitment tool: **3.28**

Leadership impact:

- Elevates quality and safety
- Strengthens collaboration
- Increases confidence
- Improves recruitment and retention

Vizient/AACN Nurse Residentcy Program vs. U.S. benchmark first year retention rates [4,1]



Practical takeaways for nurse leaders

- Visible engagement matters
- Nurse Residency Programs are leadership incubators

Staff nurse → Charge nurse → Manager → Executive leader

- Embedding outcomes into current organization structures:
  - Shared governance
  - Safety huddles
  - Strategic planning
  - Quality dashboards
- Multigenerational mentorship
- Scalable across settings

Conclusions

When championed across leadership levels, nurse residency programs become leadership accelerators.

Vizient Nursing Leadership Survey findings affirm impact on:

- Workforce stability
- Mentorship and growth
- Succession planning
- Organizational

Structured support prepares the next generation of nurse leaders.

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