



Courtesy of connectRN / Elizabeth LaDruca

## How to gain radical flexibility and improve staff development in 2023, and beyond

For the past three years, many white-collar professionals have been gaining more balance and freedom in their lives as organizations embrace the power of flexibility, providing remote working models that empower their employees to work around their own schedules.

While these professionals have been redefining work-life balance and re-engaging with their work, nurses and CNAs have been working longer shifts more often, facing the worst of the pandemic head-on. It's no wonder nurse burnout and staffing shortages continue to challenge facility operators.

Many providers have been embracing a new approach to nurse scheduling that promises to help ease some of the burdens caused by the pandemic and subsequent nurse burnout and staffing shortages. With the nurse community platform connectRN, facilities can fill in gaps in their nursing schedules with highly qualified nurses who choose to pick up shifts on their own terms. This software is designed to bring a radical approach to flexibility into the way nurses work.

"The nurses are given the opportunity to work in the facilities and shifts that they select," says con-

nectRN CEO Ted Jeanloz. "We never fit anyone into a shift. Our goal is to make this a transparent place where nurses can understand what is available to them."

Through this new approach to scheduling, nurses and CNAs can achieve the level of radical flexibility workers in other industries have been enjoying, helping to fill staffing gaps, elevating the care delivered and enriching their careers as well.

### **Building careers on their own terms**

Flexibility brings with it economic value, but it also provides nurses with opportunities for enrichment

and career advancement. Thousands of nurses sign on to use connectRN in any given month, picking up shifts that have been posted by connectRN's partner facilities across the country. Most of the nurses who use connectRN are part-time nurses looking for shifts close to home that fit into their personal schedules, whether that means picking up an evening shift so they can care for an aging parent in their home, working while their children are at school, or scheduling around coursework and classes while they pursue advanced degrees.

"By far, one of the biggest demographics in the nursing community is nurses who are going back to school to advance their degree," says Kalyn Weber, senior vice president of clinical experience at connectRN. "Our favorite success stories come when we talk with nurses in school who started using connectRN as an LPN while they were in school, and then start looking for RN positions."

Weber also has worked with nurses who use the connectRN platform and realize that the pay is more for certain positions. She and her team can help those nurses find courses to achieve the certifications necessary to pick up higher-paying shifts.

"Since we launched, connectRN has been a way for nurses to earn flexible income and increase their overall lifetime earning potential."

More than five years later, connectRN is also a way to help elevate the nursing profession,

creating a higher-paid and better qualified nursing pool. The flexibility to choose shifts that fit into the demanding schedule of a nurse going back to school to achieve certifications and advanced degrees helps to elevate the profession, providing facilities with a greater pool of more experienced and better qualified nurses.

### Remembering their calling

Healthcare facilities are facing labor shortages and staffing challenges like never before. The costs associated with filling in scheduling gaps through overtime and with the help of agencies continue to rise. connectRN provides an alternative, by helping facilities match with

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— Ted Jeanloz, CEO, connectRN

part-time skilled nurses who can fill in gaps. Because these nurses are choosing the shifts, the pressure is off of full-time staff nurses, alleviating some of the burnout that continues to pervade healthcare.

"Our mission here is to help nurses and facilities work in new ways to solve the labor shortage crisis we are experiencing," says Jeanloz. "By giving nurses flexibility, we can pull nurses back into the profession, create new hours and shifts and help alleviate some of the pressure they've been experiencing lately."

connectRN provides flexibility to the nurses using the app to pick up shifts. One of the most common complaints that full-time nurses share is dissatisfaction with the inflexibility of their facility's schedule.

When a facility is able to reliably schedule full-time nurses for shifts they prefer, its staff will achieve workplace satisfaction that translates to higher quality care for patients.

One of the most acute effects of the pandemic is that it drove nurses away from the bedside. Facilities can encourage nurses to come back into the fold by providing them with the ability to work on their own terms.

"Many nurses, particularly those who work in long-term care, got into the profession because it was a calling," says Weber. "They will lose sight of that when they show up to work and feel burnt out and taken advantage of by the system. Flexibility can help give nurses the room they need to remember their calling." ■

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